

MARA CHERKASKY, HISTORIAN
603 Rock Creek Church Road NW Washington, DC 20010
202-997-1542
mara@prologuedc.com
PrologueDC.com
MappingSegregationDC.org

SUMMARY DC-based historian and expert writer/editor. Completed projects include exhibit panels; books, brochures, and articles; and historic site signage. Presents often to civic and business groups, as well as classrooms from elementary school to law school. Other notable skills include the following:

- Research: ferreting out information in libraries and archives, online, and through interviews
- Image research
- Oral histories
- Analyzing and simplifying complex, often technical information for public consumption
- Writing and leading walking tours
- Processing archival materials
- Managing time and meeting deadlines
- Juggling multiple projects
- Working with people of diverse backgrounds
- Fluency in Danish and French; reading fluency in Spanish
- Software: Word, Excel, Photoshop, PowerPoint, Audacity
- Project management

WORK EXPERIENCE

5/18-Present [Non-resident Senior Scholar, George Washington University Institute of Public Policy](#)

7/18-Present **Text and Image Researcher, PhotoAssist Inc.**

Research and write copy, locate images for the US Postal Service Stamp Development Program. The copy is used in USPS catalogs, press releases, stamp products, first-day-of-issue speeches, and more. Work with NASA, National Park Service, and other federal agencies, depending on the topic. Stamp projects include The Underground Railroad (issued March 2024); Constance Baker Motley (issued January 2024); OSIRIS-REx (issued 2023); and Railroad Stations (issued 2023). Topics include science, technology, space exploration, history, music, art, sports, animals, plants, and almost everything under the sun.

1/14-Present **Historian/Principal, Prologue DC, LLC, Washington, DC**

- Direct the digital public history project [Mapping Segregation in Washington, DC](#)
- Co-created two [centennial exhibitions](#) for the National Capital Planning Commission, one physical and one digital (opened June 6, 2024)
- Conducted oral history interviews and, with them, co-created two podcasts for the DC Office of Planning's [North Capitol Crossroads Project](#) (launched February 2024)
- Conducted a series of oral history interviews and wrote a [history of Walter Reed](#) National Medical Center based on those interviews, 2022
- Developed [National Underground Network to Freedom signage](#) for Walter Pierce Park, DC (dedicated December 2021)
- Conducted research for a documentary on a 1980s-era LGBTQ arts collaborative (premiered August 2021)
- Developed a ten-sign heritage trail for the Northeast DC Eckington neighborhood (in permitting process)
- Conducted research for the Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum's *Food for the City* exhibition (August 2021–September 2022)
- Developed/consulted on historical themes for nine Downtown DC police/fire call boxes, for a public art project by sculptor Charles Bergen; developed a [walking tour](#) of the call boxes, 2019

- Developed themes for six police/fire call boxes along Rhode Island Avenue NE, for a public art project by sculptor Charles Bergen, 2018
- Developed the [20th Century African American Civil Rights Tour](#) for the DC Historic Preservation Office, 2018-2019
- Developed National Underground Network to Freedom signage, brochure for Kalorama Park, DC, 2018
- Researched still photos, footage for WETA-TV's *Bygone DC* and *DC in the Nineties* documentaries, 2017
- Conducted research for the Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum's *Right to the City* exhibition (open April 2018 – March 2020)
- Assisted in various projects related to the Smithsonian Anacostia Museum's 50th anniversary, including an exhibition, a book, a literature review, and oral history interviews, 2017-2018
- Co-wrote, and presented to the Historic Preservation Review Board, a successful DC Historic District nomination for DC's Bloomingdale neighborhood, 2018
- Researched history of Bowie, Maryland for a public art project by sculptor Charles Bergen, 2016
- Researched, wrote, oversaw design of a book-length history of the [DC Public Service Commission](#), 2016
- Co-wrote, and presented to the Historic Preservation Review Board, a successful DC Historic Site Nomination for Kalorama Park, 2016
- Conducted oral history interviews with Yiddish speakers for the Jewish Historical Society of Greater Washington, 2016
- Co-developed a Jewish-themed walking tour and associated pamphlet for the H Street NE corridor of Washington DC, for the Jewish Historical Society of Greater Washington, D.C., 2015
- Assisted with the production of short videos on the recipients of the Historical Society of Washington, D.C.'s Visionary Historian Awards and Making History Awards in 2015–2018
- Researched the history of business in the DC area, and provided images, for a permanent exhibit at the American University Kogod School of Business, 2015
- Researched, wrote, and oversaw the design of panels on the history of the railroad in DC and the Union Station neighborhood for an information kiosk in the station's interstate bus area, 2014

10/11-1/14 **Independent Historian/Writer, Washington, DC**

- Wrote and produced exhibit panels and a booklet on a historic street and streetcar rail restoration project for the DC Department of Transportation
- Reviewed nominations to the *African American Heritage Trail, Washington, DC*, and recommended their addition or denial, for the DC Historic Preservation Office
- Researched, wrote, oversaw design of exhibit panels on the history of the DC Public Service Commission
- Researched and wrote the Anacostia Heritage Trail for Cultural Tourism DC
- Wrote the Anacostia and Federal Triangle Heritage Trail booklets for Cultural Tourism DC
- Wrote copy for a map, historical markers on the 1814 Burning of Washington for the National Park Service
- Researched, wrote, oversaw design of a brochure on the history of the Hotel Harrington (DC)
- Produced and presented PowerPoint photo shows documenting the history of Kalorama Park (DC); the Public Service Commission of the District of Columbia; the Mount Pleasant (DC) neighborhood; and the Near Southeast (DC) neighborhood

4/06 – 10/11 **Historian and Writer, Cultural Tourism DC, Washington, DC**

Applied historical research, photo research, oral history interviews, writing, editing, and community outreach to production of DC Neighborhood Heritage Trails, a city-wide system of signs that create self-guided walking tours. Managed the *African American Heritage Trail, Washington, DC*, a database, booklet, and series of historical markers. Wrote eight Heritage Trail booklets. Managed translation of trail booklets into Spanish. Assisted in production of audio tours. Developed and conducted walking tours for children and adults. Wrote content for Cultural Tourism DC website.

5/05 – 4/06

Historian Consultant, Cultural Tourism DC, Washington, DC

Conducted primary and secondary research, conducted oral history interviews, secured historic photos and images, and drafted a manuscript for *Village in the City: Mount Pleasant Heritage Trail*. Submitted regular progress reports. Met with and made presentations to neighborhood groups about the project. Worked with Cultural Tourism DC staff to edit and perfect the manuscript, and to gather additional information and images.

RELATED EXPERIENCE

2012-Present **Archivist**

Direct the archives of All Souls Church, Unitarian, 16th and Harvard streets, NW, Washington, DC. Manage a team of assistant archivists, sort and process documents, create an organizational system and finding aids, scan and process photographs and documents, oversee digitization of recorded sermons and interviews, create exhibitions for the congregation and the public, and meet with researchers/respond to queries. Oversaw the production of a revised history of the church (published January 2022).

2010-2015 **Consulting Scholar**

Served as Consulting Scholar on projects funded by Humanities DC's Community Heritage Program grants. In 2017: James Reese Europe American Legion Post 5 Archival Project. In 2015: River Terrace School Perimeter Fence Project Guide. In 2013: Lorton Prison Stories Project. In 2012: All Souls Unitarian photograph archiving; Riverside Baptist Church photograph archiving; and Park View walking tour booklet. In 2010: The Architectural Legacy of Mount Pleasant Street.

2006-2007 **Associate Producer, *The Legend of Merv Conn***

Worked with Producer/Director Jeff Krulik (of *Heavy Metal Parking Lot* fame) on a documentary film about the "King of the Strolling Accordionists."

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

"'They Want Us Out of This Place': How One DC Family Lost Five Homes to Eminent Domain," *Washington History*, Fall 2022 (co-author with Athena V. Scott)

"History of Resistance at Lafayette Square and the Black Lives Matter Movement," for the DC Historic Preservation Office, 2023, at <https://planning.dc.gov/node/1681486> (co-author with Bryan Jenkins)

"Unfinished Business in a Divided City," *Washington History*, Fall 2020

TED Talk on Mapping Segregation in Washington DC, TEDx Foggy Bottom, April 13, 2019, <http://tedxfoggybottom.com/2019/details>

"The rise and demise of racially restrictive covenants in Bloomingdale," adapted from the 2017 *Washington History* version and published April 3, 2019, by the D.C. Policy Institute, at https://www.dcpolicycenter.org/publications/racially-restrictive-covenants-bloomingdale/?fbclid=IwAR0h0x5xrXieIdS5xaufEehr0pxOb9VoWF17sBTu-4yneV7_DN3o981IUbQ#_ftn32

"A Century for James Reese Europe American Legion Post 5, D.C.'s First Black American Legion Post," *Washington History*, Fall 2018

"'A Strictly White Residential Section': The Rise and Demise of Racially Restrictive Covenants in Bloomingdale," *Washington History*, Spring 2017 (co-author with Sarah Jane Shoenfeld)

[*The First 100 Years: Protecting the Public Interest*](#), illustrated book on the Public Service Commission of the District of Columbia published in March 2016; PowerPoint photo show presented at a March 15, 2013, public symposium and at the DC Historical Studies Conference on November 16, 2013

Mapping Segregation in Washington DC: Presentations at DC History Conference, 2014-2019; Regional GIS conference (Mount Vernon, Virginia), February 2015; Mount Pleasant Branch Library (DC), March 2015; Park View Recreation Center (DC), June 2015; Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library (DC), June 2015; US Department of Housing and Urban Development, July 2015; George Washington University Museum, October 2015; Branch Library (DC), April 2016; Shepherd Park Branch Library (DC), April 2017

“Milestone: Hillcrest Children and Family Center Marks 200th Anniversary,” *Washington History*, Fall 2015

“Milestone: The Hotel Harrington Marks 100 Years,” *Washington History*, Fall 2014

The Hotel Harrington: A Witness to Washington DC’s History Since 1914 (pamphlet, 2014)

Remembering Georgetown’s Streetcar Era: The O and P Streets Rehabilitation Project (Washington, DC: District Department of Transportation, 2013)

Historic Park View: A Walking Tour (Washington, DC: Park View United Neighborhood Coalition, 2012);

Heritage Trail booklets: *Village in the City: Mount Pleasant Heritage Trail* (2006); *Battleground to Community: Brightwood Heritage Trail* (2008); *A Self-Reliant People: Greater Deanwood Heritage Trail* (2009); *Cultural Convergence: Columbia Heights Heritage Trail* (2009); *Top of the Town: Tenleytown Heritage Trail* (2010); *Civil War to Civil Rights: Downtown Heritage Trail* (2011); *Lift Every Voice: Georgia Ave./Pleasant Plains Heritage Trail* (2011); *Hub, Home, Heart: H Street NE Heritage Trail* (2012); *Make No Little Plans: Federal Triangle Heritage Trail* (2012); and *A Fitting Tribute: Logan Circle Heritage Trail* (2014); see <http://www.culturaltourismdc.org/portal/neighborhood-heritage-trails>

“Mount Pleasant” chapter in Kathryn Schneider Smith, editor, *Washington at Home: An Illustrated History of Neighborhoods in the Nation’s Capital* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 2010)

Mount Pleasant (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, Images of America series, 2007)

“Career Choices of Middle Class African American Women in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s,” presented at Towson University Multidisciplinary Conference on the Scholarship and Creativity of African Americans, Towson, MD, April 1998

“For Sale to Colored: Racial Turnover on S Street, NW,” *Washington History*, Winter 1996 (https://www.jstor.org/stable/40073250?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents); also presented at Towson University Multidisciplinary Conference on the Scholarship and Creativity of African Americans, Towson, MD, April 1997

EDUCATION

George Washington University, Washington, DC
M.A. American Studies

Thesis: *Slices of the Pie: Black and White Dupont Circle from the 1920s to the 1950s*

University of Wisconsin, Madison
B.A. Scandinavian Studies

Served as Consulting Scholar on projects funded by Humanities DC’s Community Heritage Program grants. In 2017: James Reese Europe American Legion Post 5 Archival Project. In 2015: River Terrace School Perimeter Fence Project Guide. In 2013: Lorton Prison Stories Project. In 2012: All Souls Unitarian photograph archiving; Riverside Baptist Church photograph archiving; and Park View walking tour booklet. In 2010: The Architectural Legacy of Mount Pleasant Street.

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“A Century for James Reese Europe American Legion Post 5, D.C.’s First Black American Legion Post,” *Washington History*, Fall 2018

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Mapping Segregation in Washington DC: Presentations at DC History Conference, several presentations annually, including these early ones: 2014-2019; Regional GIS conference (Mount Vernon, Virginia), February 2015; Mount Pleasant Branch Library (DC), March 2015; Park View Recreation Center (DC), June 2015; Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library (DC), June 2015; US Department of Housing and Urban Development, July 2015; George Washington University Museum, October 2015; Branch Library (DC), April 2016; Shepherd Park Branch Library (DC), April 2017

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