

MARA CHERKASKY, HISTORIAN
603 Rock Creek Church Road NW Washington, DC 20010
202-997-1542 (M) - 202-882-0105 (O)
mara@prologuedc.com
PrologueDC.com

SUMMARY I am a DC-based historian and researcher, as well as an expert writer/editor. My completed projects include exhibit panels, books and articles for print and online publications, multi-media presentations, and historic site signage. Other notable skills include the following:

- Research: ferreting out information in libraries and archives, online, and through interviews
- Photo and footage 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

WORK EXPERIENCE

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

- Co-direct *Mapping Segregation in Washington, DC*, funded in part by Humanities DC, the DC Preservation League, and the National Park Service (see PrologueDC.com/blog/Mapping-Segregation; ongoing)
- Manage Prologue DC's business side; manage all Prologue DC grants
- Develop a 20th Century African American Civil Rights Trail for the DC Historic Preservation Office (current)
- Researched still photos and footage for documentary on Vernon Jordan
- Researched still photos and footage for WETA-TV's *Bygone DC* and *DC in the Nineties* documentaries
- Researched history of Bowie, Maryland for a public art project by sculptor Charles Bergen
- Developed historical themes for six police and fire call boxes along Rhode Island Avenue NE, for a public art project by sculptor Charles Bergen
- Assisted with research for the Smithsonian Anacostia Museum's *Right to the City* exhibition (opened April 2018)
- 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, in 2017-2018
- Organized the archives of James Reese Europe American Legion Post 5
- Co-wrote a DC Historic District nomination for DC's Bloomingdale neighborhood
- Researched, wrote, and oversaw design of a book on the history of the DC Public Service Commission
- Prepared a successful DC Historic Site Nomination for Kalorama Park
- Assisted in the development of 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.
- Conducted oral history interviews with Yiddish speakers for the Jewish Historical Society of Greater Washington
- 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, 2016, 2017, 2018
- Researched and wrote the history of East-of-the-Anacostia neighborhoods and provided images for a public art project by sculptor Charles Bergen, to be installed on the River Terrace School's perimeter fence
- Researched the history of business in the DC area, and provided images, for a permanent exhibit at the American University Kogod School of Business
- Researched and 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

- 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 and wrote, and 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 and historical markers on the 1814 Burning of Washington for the National Park Service
 - Researched and wrote, and 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
 - Served as consulting historian for the Canal Park (Southeast DC) Public Art Project, *This Place Has a Voice*

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 for residents and tourists. 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. Reviewed historic neighborhood tours for content accuracy. 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, oversee digitization of recorded sermons and interviews, create exhibitions for the congregation and the public, and meet with researchers/respond to queries.
- 2010-Present Consulting Scholar
- Serve 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

“‘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 Historical Studies Conference, November 2014-2017; 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); <http://www.wdchumanities.org/docs/2012DCCHP/ParkViewFinal.pdf>.

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; 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