

The Library of Congress and The Washington Revels *present:*

# HIDDEN WASHINGTON



## The Alley Communities of the Nation's Capitol

**May 15, 2003**

A Learning Guide for Teachers:

This handout is designed to help you and your students enjoy, prepare for, and discuss ***Hidden Washington: The Alley Communities of the Nation's Capitol***. Included inside are background information, an introduction to our co-sponsors, *The Library of Congress* and *The Washington Revels*, and local history and storytelling activities.

Contents:

- ★  About our Co-sponsors
- ★  What is Hidden Washington?
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## About Our Co-Sponsors:

**The Library of Congress** is the largest library in the world, with more than 120 million items on approximately 530 miles of bookshelves. The collections include more than 18 million books, 2.5 million recordings, 12 million photographs, 4.5 million maps, and 54 million manuscripts. Founded in 1800, and the oldest federal cultural institution in the nation, it is the research arm of the United States Congress and is recognized as the national library of the United States.

When you visit the Library of Congress you can expect to find comic books, baseball cards, some of your favorite television programs, motion pictures, the latest music recordings, newspapers from all over the world, street maps, even the contents of Abraham Lincoln's pockets the night he was assassinated.

Be sure to visit LC's online resources at [www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov)



**The Washington Revels** is dedicated, through performance, community involvement and education to reviving, nourishing and promoting celebrations of the cyclical renewal of life that have drawn and bound people together through the ages and across cultures. Revels productions are joyful celebrations of the seasonal and cyclical traditions of various cultures including African American, Celtic and medieval France, among others. These theatrical presentations illuminate important tradition bearers who keep alive the integral links between artistic expression and folk rituals.

To learn more, visit: [www.revelsdc.org](http://www.revelsdc.org)

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## Emancipation Celebration

The District of Columbia Emancipation Act, passed on April 19, 1862, abolished slavery in the nation's capital and provided up to \$300 compensation to owners for each freed slave. The African American population in the District regularly celebrated this Emancipation Day with bands, parades, sermons and speeches.

On April 19, 1866, African American citizens of Washington, D.C., 5,000 people marched up Pennsylvania Avenue, past 10,000 cheering spectators, to Franklin Square for religious services and speeches by prominent politicians. Two of the many black regiments that had gained distinction in the Civil War led the procession.

December 18, 1940, was the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which ended slavery or "involuntary servitude" in the entire United States. To commemorate this anniversary, the Library of Congress sponsored an exhibit of books, manuscripts, music, paintings and other works of art, and a concert series.

A major exhibition, African American Odyssey was presented at LC from February 5 -May 2, 1998. You can see this exhibit on line at:

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/aaohhtml/exhibit/aointro.html>

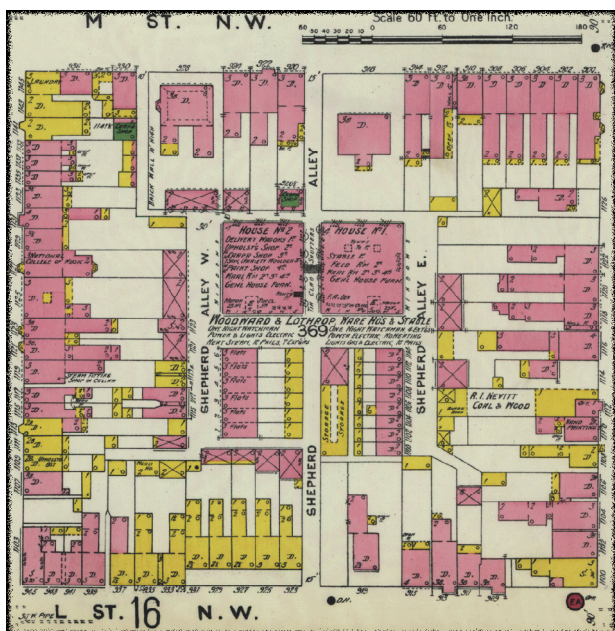
## African American History Month

Carter G. Woodson (1875-1950) first organized the celebration of African American history in 1926 with Negro History Week. February was chosen as the month when both Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln celebrated their birthdays. Woodson collected more than 5,000 manuscripts and publications documenting African American history for the organization he founded, The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, and *The Journal of Negro History*, now available in LC's Manuscript Division.

## Hidden Washington: The Alley Communities of Washington DC

This program brings to life the alley communities where people lived, raised families, worked, played, and worshipped. This interesting and little known period in the history of our nation's capitol began after the Civil War when people migrated north looking for jobs. There simply was not enough housing to accommodate all of the newcomers to the city as it experienced such dramatic population growth. Census statistics from the period show that the city's population grew from 61,122 to 109,199 between 1860 and 1870. As a result, the number of inhabited alleys rose from an estimated 53 in 1858 to 170 in 1871. Conditions in the alleys were difficult. People built their dwellings with whatever scraps they could find: timber and cloth scavenged from local building sites or former army camps. There was no indoor plumbing, no electricity and infant death rates were high because of the unsanitary conditions.

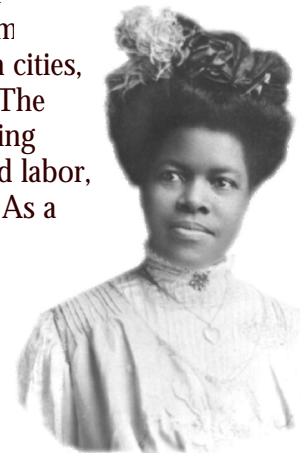
Life in those alley communities will be presented through song, dance, and children's games, and also through the historic collections of the Library of Congress including manuscripts, photographs, period newspapers, and maps. Students will also meet a very special person, an educator and self-made woman who dedicated her life to speaking out against injustice and to helping others, especially women and children. **Our story will take place in the alley community known as Shepherd Alley** (shown below), located between the boundary blocks of 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> streets and L and M NW.



## Meet Nannie Helen Burroughs: A Self SMade Woman

Nannie Helen Burroughs was born on May 2, 1879 in Orange, Virginia. Her widowed mother brought her to Washington, D.C. in pursuit of a better education. At the M Street High School, she excelled under the guidance of dedicated teachers like Mary Church Terrell, her mentor. Ms. Burroughs graduated with honors in 1896.

In Ms. Burroughs' time, African American women had limited occupation choices. Her mother, like the many of African American women in cities, worked as a domestic servant. The work they performed maintaining homes was considered unskilled labor, and therefore, paid low wages. As a result, many African American domestic servants and their families lived in poverty in places like Shepherd Alley.



Ms. Burroughs wanted to offer women domestic science training so they could earn a higher salary and afford better living conditions. Despite her qualifications, she was denied a teaching job because of the color of her skin. The pain of that disappointment inspired her to establish a school that would give all girls, regardless of their race, an opportunity to achieve.

Ms. Burroughs worked for over fifty years with the National Baptist Convention's Women's Auxiliary, first as recording secretary and then as president. Through persistent effort, she was able to convince the organization to endorse the establishment of the National Training School for Women and Girls in the Lincoln Heights section of Washington, on October 19, 1909.

An ardent follower of Booker T. Washington, Ms. Burroughs stated that in addition to the three R's--reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic, these young women needed the three B's--the Bible, the bath, and the broom. Students took classes in domestic science, and other areas of vocational study; all students were required to take a course in Black history, and there were classes in grammar, English literature, Latin, drama, public speaking, music, and physical education.

**Note** - Personal papers of Burroughs, Terrell, and Washington are located in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress. See on-line description at: <http://www.loc.gov/rr/mss>

## Vocabulary List:

- activism:** a set of beliefs or practice that emphasizes direct vigorous action and involvement in support of or opposition to a cause (e.g., peace activist, healthcare activist).
- artifact:** something created by humans usually for a practical purpose; especially an object remaining from a particular period (e.g., early inventions, caves containing prehistoric artifacts).
- census:** a periodic enumeration of the population conducted by the government.
- community:** a body of persons or nations having a common history or common social, economic, cultural and political interests.
- convention:** an assembly of persons who meet for a common purpose; especially, a meeting of the delegates of a political party for the purpose of formulating a platform and selecting candidates for office.
- curator:** one that has the care of something; especially, one in charge of a museum, art gallery, library collection or other place of exhibit.
- documentation:** the act of creating an historical record for purposes of later study; the use of historical documents.
- domestic science:** the study of or relating to the household or the family, like home economics; Ms. Burroughs taught domestic science at *National Training School for Women and Girls*.
- emancipation:** to be freed from bondage.
- empowerment:** the self-actualization or influence of (e.g., the empowerment of women has been achieved through the women's rights movement).
- mentor:** a trusted counselor or guide; a person who is charged with the instruction of or guidance of another.
- migration:** to move from one country, place, or locality to another.
- self-made:** made such by one's own actions; especially, having achieved success or prominence by one's own efforts (e.g., a self-made woman).
- social injustice:** absence of social justice; the violation of right or of the rights of another.
- unskilled labor:** not skilled in a branch of work; lacking technical training.

## Activities for Students: Get to Know Your Community:

- ★ **Where do you live? How has your neighborhood changed since you moved in?** Talk to your parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, even the people who own the corner grocery store, about the Washington or neighborhood they knew or the neighborhood they grew up in.
- ★ **Draw or take photographs of what your neighborhood looks like today.** Draw pictures of what you think it looked like a long time ago. Create a time line of important events that shaped your community.
- ★ **Think about a person who has made a difference in your life.** Interview that person and talk to them about how his or her experiences. Take a photograph or draw a picture of that person. Keep a scrapbook of interviews and pictures of people who are important to you in your life.
- ★ **Tell us your Stories ...** Everybody has a story to tell, who they are or where they came from. Tell us your story and send it to the Library of Congress so we can post it on our website: [www.loc.gov/kidslc/](http://www.loc.gov/kidslc/)

## Resources for Teachers:

**American Anthropologist. Vol.1 "Games of Washington Children." July 1888. Pages 243-284.**

**Bicknell, Grace Vawter. The Inhabited Alleys of Washington, D.C. Committee on Housing, Woman's Welfare Department, 1912**

**Borchert, James. Alley Life in Washington: Family, Community, Religion, and Folklife in the City, 1850-1970. Chicago, IL and London, England: University of Illinois Press, 1980**

**Clark-Lewis, Elizabeth. Living In, Living Out: African American Domestic Workers and the Great Migration. New York: Kodansha International, 1996.**

**Easter, Opal V. Nannie Helen Burroughs. Garland Publishing, Inc., New York & London, 1995**

**Frankel, Godfrey. In the Alleys, Kids in the Shadow of The Capital. Washington, D.C. and London, England: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995**

**Green, Constance McLaughlin. Secret City: A History of Race Relations in the Nation's Capitol. Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1967.**

**\_\_\_\_\_. Washington. Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1962-63.**

**Johnston, Allan. Surviving Freedom, The Black Community of Washington, D.C. 1860-1880. New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc, 1993.**

**Jones, Dr. Thomas Jesse. Directory of the Inhabited Alleys of Washington, D.C. Printed through the generosity of Mrs. Medill McCormick, Mrs. William Belden Noble and Mrs. John Van Schaick, Jr., 1912.**

**Langstaff, Nancy and John, compilers. Sally Go Round the Moon: Revels Songs and Singing Games for Young Children. Ashland, Ohio. Bookmasters, 1997.**

**Library of Congress. Discovering Hidden Washington Home Page <http://www.loc.gov/kidslc/>**

**Mayer, Elizabeth L. . Making Music With Children Ages 7-11 (The Langstaff Video Project). Cambridge, Mass., Revels, Inc., 1994**

**The Smithsonian National Museum of American History. Field to Factory: African-American Migration to the North <<http://americanhistory.si.edu/youmus/ex11fact.htm>> (on display).**

**The Washington Revels. Behold that Star! An American Song Quilt (Original Cast studio recording from the 1998 'Shepherd Alley' Christmas Revels). Cambridge, Mass. Revels, Inc., 1997.**

**The Washington Revels Web Site. [www.revelsdc.org](http://www.revelsdc.org)**

### **Upcoming Performance at the Library of Congress:**

**June 5, 2003 at 10:00 am**

**Coolidge Auditorium, Jefferson Building**

***Black Diamond: Satchel Paige and the Negro Baseball Leagues***

Music and theatrical performance with an opportunity to meet former Negro Baseball Leagues players.

For more information call: (202) 707-3303