

1962 *Washington:  
Village and Capital,  
1800–1878*

Constance McLaughlin  
Green

Winner of the 1963 Pulitzer Prize in History, Constance McLaughlin Green's history of Washington, D.C., remains the most comprehensive history of the city. Green wrote her sweeping history in two volumes: *Washington: Village*

*and Capital, 1800–1878* and *Washington: Capital City, 1879–1950*, published the following year. Despite stopping at 1950, the two volumes are still considered the standard work on the subject. Green described what made Washington unique—the constant presence of politics, the lack of representation in Congress, and the prominent role of African Americans in city life—as well as what made it like other American cities: crime, a desire to improve public education, suburbanization, and population growth. For, as Green wrote, “These strands of the unique, the distinctive, and the universal interweave to form the fabric of Washington’s history.”

Specifically, she examined real estate tendencies, race relations, business interests, and the role of public schools in the District. Still, in exploring the bureaucratic workings of the capital, Green never lost sight of Washington as a national symbol and source of national feeling—a city where, in the author’s words, visitors rarely “failed to experience an emotional response compounded by pride, pleasure, dismay, anger, and an intense interest in the future.”

Green served as head of the Washington History Project administered by American University. She wrote a third, follow-up volume to these two entitled *The Secret City: A History of Race Relations in the Nation’s Capital* (Princeton, 1967).

