

The George Washington Memorial Parkway

A Photo History Guide



A Grand Gateway That Became a National Park

Travel through time along the George Washington Memorial Parkway and explore the stories, changes, challenges, and natural wonders of the past and present. Located in Virginia, Maryland, and Washington, D.C., the Parkway offers a wide variety of experiences for everyone.

The Potomac River, a central feature adjacent to the George Washington Memorial Parkway, has drawn people to the area for centuries. It was a “water highway” long before roads ever existed here. For example, several Native American tribes hunted and fished in the area, for water brought life of all kinds, including plants, deer, bears, foxes, etc. Captain John Smith explored and traveled along the Potomac River. A ferry traversed along the river to Theodore Roosevelt Island. Colonial farmers made use of the lands adjacent to the river for fertile soil, and some shipped their goods (including tobacco, grains, wheat and produce) through the thriving port city of Alexandria, Virginia, to England and the Caribbean.

Stories of George Washington, one of the best-known colonial farmers, have intrigued the public for centuries. Few figures in United States history are more revered than George Washington—Revolutionary commander-in-chief, founding father, and first U.S. President. Henry Lee’s 1799 eulogy to Washington still rings true: “First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen.” Washington lives on through innumerable places of tribute and through countless national and popular icons. Yet, the sites in and around his namesake city can claim special significance, for this is where he lived, worked, worshipped and planned for the future of the nation.

Given his sterling reputation, Washington’s home at Mount Vernon became a tourist attraction even while he was alive. For many years, people used steamboats and the Washington, Alexandria and Mount Vernon Railway (a trolley) to get there, as well as to commute to Washington and picnic along the river. Changes to transportation came with new technology. If you drove to Mount Vernon in 1904, you would have been one of the first to visit by automobile. Imagine a challenging, six-hour trek from Washington, D.C.! By the mid-1920s, Mount Vernon was inundated with motorists, who were forced to make their way through crowded commercial districts over hazardous railroad crossings, around dangerous curves, and along narrow, poorly maintained roads. Billboards, gas stations, and other unsightly developments lined U.S. Route 1, which served as the main approach to Mount Vernon.

To remedy these conditions in time for the nationwide celebration of the bicentennial of Washington’s birth in 1932, Congress authorized construction of the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway in 1928. The goal: To develop an attractive and efficient parkway that would accommodate the rapidly growing tourist traffic and serve the community while preserving scenery, linking sites associated with Washington’s life, and providing recreational opportunities along the Potomac shoreline. This grand gateway would provide a scenic, historic and commemorative drive between the National’s Capital and Mount Vernon.



The Mount Vernon Memorial Highway was renamed as the George Washington Memorial Parkway, and it has become an integral part of local, regional, and national history for over 75 years. Dedicated on November 15, 1932, the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway opened from Arlington Memorial Bridge to George Washington's home. This 16-mile road not only improved automobile access through Virginia, but also ushered in a new era of road building. Constructed by the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Public Roads, the forerunner of today's Federal Highway Administration, the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway was proclaimed "America's Most Modern Motorway". Key features included improved circulation, including cloverleaves, teardrop-shaped traffic islands, staggered entrances, and the extensive use of landscape design to highlight views of Washington, D.C.

During the construction of the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, the passage of the Capper-Cramton Act of 1930 authorized the federal government to acquire additional land on both sides of the Potomac River from the Great Falls area to Mount Vernon in Virginia and Fort Washington in Maryland for the creation of the George Washington Memorial Parkway. This new parkway would include the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway and would serve to protect the Potomac River shoreline and palisades, preserve many historic sites, and provide for public recreation areas. While construction of the full George Washington Parkway road system was never realized in its entirety, this legislative foundation has allowed the federal government to preserve and protect many lands from development on both sides of the Potomac River.

Following its opening in 1932, the Parkway's length was extended several times north of Memorial Bridge along the Virginia shoreline, with the last stretches constructed during the 1950s and 1960s. Traversing more difficult terrain than the southern leg, this section displayed the latest road engineering methods of its time—a wide, gently curving road with a grassy median, low stone guiderails and soaring steel-and-concrete arched bridges. In 1970, an additional 6.8 miles of road in Maryland was completed and was renamed in honor of Clara Barton in 1989. This section of the George Washington Memorial Parkway is called the Clara Barton Parkway.

Today, George Washington Memorial Parkway is a national park with grand, scenic landscapes and over 25 possible stops at historical, natural and recreational sites in Virginia, Maryland and Washington, D.C. Traveling along the Parkway and into its site provides visitors with many opportunities to experience the stories, challenges, changes, and natural wonder located in or near the heart of our National's capital. This more than 7,000 acre park protects the landscape, historic sites, and native habitat of the Potomac shoreline. Here, visitors can explore more than 25 sites associated with George Washington's life and the nation he helped to establish.

To learn about George Washington Memorial Parkway take a scenic drive along the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway section of the park on your way to the first U.S. President's home in Mount Vernon. Imagine farm fields along the southernmost section, as the area would have looked when it was part of Washington's river farm. Stop at Great Falls Park to learn more about the challenges Washington faced during development of the Patowmack Canal. Or, visit Jones Point Park to see a cornerstone laid by Washington when he defined the city limits of Washington, D.C.

Learn about freedom and honor at the U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial (also known as the Iwo Jima Memorial) with a short self-guided visit, a ranger-led tour, or by experiencing the sunset parades or Marine Corps Birthday events. Take a tour of Clara Barton National Historic Site to learn about the founder of the American Red Cross. Take your children to a museum, puppet show, or to ride the Denzel carousel at Glen Echo Park. Then, "kick up your heels" and dance the night away at the same location. Hike on beautiful trails and view natural wonders at Great Falls Park or Theodore Roosevelt Island.

Visit Arlington House to learn more about Robert E. Lee. Stop at Fort Hunt Park to learn about top-secret military operations during WWII or its earlier use during the Spanish-American War era. Or, spend a leisurely afternoon walking, jogging or riding a bicycle along the 18.5 mile Mount Vernon Trail. These are just a few of the many opportunities for you to explore the stories, changes, challenges and natural wonders of the past and present at George Washington Memorial Parkway.

Did You Know?

- Major interest in preservation of what is now the Parkway dates back to the 1880s!
- What you see today is the result of planning efforts from the 1930 Capper-Cramton Act (and earlier Parks and Playgrounds Act) to present.
- George Washington Memorial Parkway, via the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, was the first federally-funded and constructed Parkway.
- The George Washington Memorial Parkway is one of just a handful of parkways in the National Park System.
- Ironically, while the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway/George Washington Memorial Parkway was designed as a slow speed road, its plans were used as a basis for development of the Autobahn in Germany.
- In 2005, the section of George Washington Memorial Parkway in Virginia was designated by the U.S. Department of Transportation as an All-American Road in the National Scenic Byways Program. This program recognizes selected roadways throughout the U.S. based upon their archeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational, and scenic qualities. To receive an All-American Road designation, a road must possess multiple intrinsic qualities that are nationally significant and contain one-of-a-kind features that do not exist elsewhere. For more information about America's Byways, visit www.byways.org.

For more information about the George Washington Memorial Parkway, call 703-289-2500 or visit www.nps.gov/gwmp.



Mount Vernon Memorial Highway

Today's George Washington Memorial Parkway, including the Clara Barton Parkway, originated with the construction of an early 20th century scenic transportation route that was initially called the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, which ran from Arlington Memorial Bridge in Washington, D.C., to Mount Vernon, the estate of George Washington. This roadway owes its genesis to the late 19th century vision to provide a pilgrimage route to patriotic tourists who wished to visit the home of George Washington by connecting our national's capital to Mount Vernon through the construction of an improved thoroughfare that would be memorial in character.



In 1877, a group of Alexandria businessmen chartered the Mount Vernon Avenue Association to help establish a grand thoroughfare to Mount Vernon, and the federal government soon picked up the interest in 1889 when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers identified potential routes. After a few false starts, Congress provided authorization in 1928 for the construction of a suitable memorial highway between Mount Vernon and Washington, D.C.



Ground was broken in 1929, and George Washington Memorial Highway would be officially opened and dedicated in 1932. During its construction, the roadway was incorporated into the authorization by Congress for the George Washington Memorial Parkway through the Capper-Cramton Act of 1930. In an attempt to preserve the shore of the Potomac River from development, a scenic, landscaped and modern parkway that would lie lightly on the land was envisioned to run on both sides of the Potomac from the Great Falls vicinity north of Washington, D.C., to Mount Vernon and Fort Washington in the south.

The Mount Vernon Memorial Highway portion of the George Washington Memorial Parkway was the first modern roadway to be constructed by the federal government and would prove to be a model parkway. It incorporated state-of-the-art highway planning and engineering with landscape design. Brand new traffic circulation features like cloverleaves were employed; rustic-style design was used for roadway features such as guardrails, light poles and bridges; the route of the roadway was carefully landscaped with plantings to augment the natural forest cover; and views of the Potomac River and Washington, D.C., were carefully planned and created.



Great Falls

Great Falls Park is an 800-acre park located just 12 miles from Washington, D.C. The park is located in the northernmost part of the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

People have been drawn to Great Falls for thousands of years. The first people to come to the falls were Native American Indians. As many as 10 thousand years ago, they used Great Falls as a seasonal hunting and fishing ground. They left behind artifacts, petroglyphs and other signs.

In the 1600s, the first European explorers arrived. Captain John Smith ventured up the Potomac as far as he could easily travel. The explorers began calling the river Patowmack, which means “where the goods are brought in,” after conversations with the Native American Indian tribes.

Much later, George Washington, who had a lifelong interest in the Potomac River, saw a way to expand trade routes. He hoped that trade would strengthen the ties between the settlements at the frontier and the original colonies. Washington founded the Patowmack Company in 1785.

The company built five bypass canals next to the Potomac River, providing an easy way for boats to get around rough areas on the river. The canal at Great Falls was the most challenging project, taking 17 years to complete. Five locks raised and lowered boats 77 feet around the falls. Slaves, indentured servants and freemen built the canal, using black powder to blast through a cliff to create the last two locks.

During construction, another man saw an opportunity at Great Falls. Lighthouse Harry Lee, the father of Robert E. Lee, built a town next to the canal. He named it Matildaville in honor of his first wife. The town had an inn, storage buildings and home sites. A larger stone structure was built to house the canal’s superintendent.

Matildaville and the Patowmack Canal would eventually share in the same fate. When the canal opened for business in 1802, they made a profit from the tolls that were collected for the use of the locks. However, the canal never made a profit after that first year. The unpredictable Potomac, with its flood and drought cycles, had an impact on the canal and the town. The canal remained in operation until 1828, when it was bought out by the newly formed Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company in Maryland. Matildaville was abandoned soon after the Patowmack Canal ceased operations.



Even after the canal had closed, the falls remained a destination. In the early 1900s, two businessmen, John McLean and Stephen Elkins, started an amusement park here. Attractions included an observation tower, a light show on the falls, a carousel, a dance hall and a lover's lane that followed the path of the old canal. Visitors rode a trolley which started in Georgetown to the park, and could spend the night in the tent city here.

A flood, an unfortunate fire and the advent of the automobile all played a part in the end of the amusement park. Even after the amusement park had closed, people continued to come to

Great Falls. In 1952, part of the land was purchased by Fairfax County as one of the county's first parks. In 1966, Great Falls became part of George Washington Memorial Parkway.

Today, Great Falls Park protects and preserves 800 acres of land along the Potomac River. The park lies within the Potomac Gorge, a 14-mile-long river/valley that is home to many rare plant communities. Whitetail deer, foxes, chipmunks, raccoons, snakes and over 125 species of birds can be found in Great Falls Park.

Great Falls has something to offer everyone, whether you are interested in exploring history, seeking a peaceful trail or looking for a place to enjoy a picnic with family and friends. Visitors can explore 15 miles of trails along with the ruins of the Patowmack Canal and Matildaville. Rock climbing, biking, horseback riding and kayaking are popular activities. Ranger-led hikes are another way to explore the park. Younger visitors can become a Great Falls Junior Ranger by completing a self-guided hike and activity book.

Because of the treacherous currents in the Potomac, visitors are reminded that swimming and wading are prohibited at all times. Help protect the park by staying on established trails and not disturbing plants or wildlife.



Theodore Roosevelt Island

Theodore Roosevelt Island, the 88.5-acre memorial to our 26th president and his commitment to conservation, stands as a symbol of life and change. In this peaceful place, it seems as if the world stops or slows down for a few minutes. Yet, change alters the environment with each turn of the clock and calendar.

Here, people can experience nature throughout the seasons, as Roosevelt did, and perhaps develop the same lifetime love affair with conservation. Theodore Roosevelt Island is a living memorial to a man who faced many challenges during his life. As a young boy, Roosevelt had asthma and did not have the strength to play outside like other children. However, he filled his days by collecting scientific specimens and creating his own small natural history museum. Later in life, he became an adventurer, Rough Rider and big game hunter. His fun was tempered with a strong sense of duty and responsibility. He held positions as assistant secretary of the Navy, governor of New York and vice president and president of the United States.



Theodore Roosevelt's conservation legacy included:

- Signing the Antiquities Act into law in 1906.
- The creation of five national parks and 18 national monuments.
- The establishment of the United States Forest Service, a federal land management agency.
- Providing protection for more than 230 million acres of land during his tenure in office.

In 1932, the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Association (now the Theodore Roosevelt Association) purchased the island and dedicated it to the public in memory of the president. Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., a leading landscape architect, worked closely with the Civilian Conservation Corps to create what has become the woodland sanctuary of today.

Today, the National Park Service is honored to preserve and protect the living memorial to our 26th president. Here, visitors may experience and enjoy the change of seasons while pondering Theodore Roosevelt's conservation legacy and the history of the island.



◀ REVOLUTIONARY WAR 1775-1783 ▶ FRENCH NAVAL WAR 1798-1801 ▶ TRIPOLI 1801-1805 ▶ WAR OF 1812



COMMON
VALOR
A COMMON
VIRTUE

FIDELIS

Scott Eastlund
Fountainhead
Fountainhead
Fountainhead

U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial

The U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial stands as a symbol of Americans' gratitude to Marines and their comrades of other services who sacrificed their lives in defense of freedom. This memorial is a testament to honor, bravery and courage.

With one single image upon which the memorial is based, Associated Press photographer Joe Rosenthal captured the hearts of a war-weary nation during WWII. On February 23, 1945, Rosenthal took a Pulitzer prizewinning photograph of the second flag raising on top of Mount Suribachi during the Battle of Iwo Jima. This powerful image fueled Americans' resolve to push for victory. The flag, salvaged from Pearl Harbor, was raised by Marines Michael Strank, Harlon H. Block, Franklin R. Sousley, Rene A. Gagnon and Ira Hayes, as well as Navy corpsman John H. Bradley.

The Battle of Iwo Jima, fought on a desolate island of black, volcanic rock and located 660 nautical miles south of Tokyo, served a pivotal role during WWII due to its location midway between the Japanese home islands and American bases in the Mariana Islands. The Japanese had built airfields on the island to launch attacks on American B-29 long-range bombers and bases in the Marianas. With this location, Americans could lead raids on the Japanese and maintain a sanctuary for damaged planes and injured pilots.



Yet, the Battle of Iwo Jima would not be easy to win. It lasted from February 19 to March 26, 1945. During this time, 70,000 American troops, mostly Marines, engaged over 21,000 Japanese defenders in one of the bloodiest battles of WWII. Approximately 1,100 Japanese soldiers survived.

The importance and the bloodiness of the battle spurred public interest in the photograph. Sculptor Felix W. de Weldon, then with the U.S. Navy, found Rosenthal's photograph so inspiring that he immediately began sculpting a small wax model of the scene. Eventually, de Weldon was commissioned to sculpt the present 78-foot-high memorial. Gagnon, Hayes and Bradley, the three flag raisers who survived the Battle of Iwo Jima, posed for the work. De Weldon modeled the three other men using available pictures and physical descriptions.

The completed memorial is a testament to honor, courage, bravery, sacrifice and gratitude, that depicts six 32-foot-high figures raising a 60-foot flagpole from which a flag flies 24 hours a day. The men stand upon a mass of igneous rock that represents Mount Suribachi. The names of principal Marine Corps campaigns and battles are engraved and burnished in gold around the memorial's polished base. On the base of the memorial, you will find the words of Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz to the fighting men on Iwo Jima: "Uncommon Valor was a Common Virtue." Below this is inscribed: "Semper Fidelis" – Latin for "Always Faithful" – the motto of the United States Marine Corps.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower dedicated the memorial on November 10, 1954, the 179th anniversary of the U.S. Marine Corps. No public funds were used in the building of the memorial. Marines, naval service members and friends donated the entire cost (\$850,000).



Netherlands Carillon

The Netherlands Carillon, a large bell tower, was a gift from the people of the Netherlands to the people of the United States for American aid during and after World War II. The carillon is dedicated to the friendship between the two countries and their common allegiance to the principles of freedom, justice and democracy.

Originally installed in 1954 in a temporary location, the 49-bell carillon was moved to its current location in 1960. Dutch and American sponsors paid for renovations completed in 1995. On May 5 of the same year, a 50th bell was dedicated on the 50th anniversary of the liberation of the Netherlands from the Nazis.

The carillon tower, designed by leading Dutch architect Joost W. C. Boks, is an open steel structure reinforced by steel plates. It is approximately 127 feet high, 25 feet deep and 36 feet wide. It stands on a quartzite plaza enclosed by a low wall, with two bronze lions. A small circular staircase leads to a glass-enclosed playing cabin 83 feet above the ground.

The 50-bell carillon is cast from approximately four-fifths copper and one-fifth tin. The smallest bell weighs 35 pounds and the largest weighs 12,654 pounds. Each bell carries an emblem and a verse by Dutch poet Ben van Eysselsteijn.

Today, visitors may enjoy the memorial in several ways. The Netherlands Carillon recital series is held from May to September on Saturdays. Times vary depending upon the seasons. Visitors may visit year-round to read an outdoor exhibit about the memorial, pick up a brochure or listen to medleys, which play automatically at 12 p.m. and 6 p.m. each day.

Arlington House

Arlington House was the home of Robert E. Lee and his family for 30 years. The home is uniquely associated with three of Virginia's most influential families: the Washingtons, Custises and Lees. It was built by George Washington Parke Custis, the grandson of Martha Washington and her first husband, Daniel Custis. After his father died, the young Custis went to live at Mount Vernon. There, Martha Washington and her second husband, George Washington, raised him as their own son. As an adult, Custis wanted to build a home to be a memorial to the president. He filled it with his "Washington Treasury," which included Washington's china, portraits and other Mount Vernon heirlooms.

Custis' slaves and hired craftsmen constructed Arlington House from 1802 to 1818. The home was located on a high bluff surrounded by a forest of oaks and a 1,100-acre farm. The Greek revival design features a two-story central section framed by a Doric-columned portico and flanked north and south by lower wings. Custis is believed to have had George Hadfield, an English architect, draw plans for his house. Hadfield had supervised part of the construction of the U.S. Capitol.

Custis married 16-year-old Mary Lee "Molly" Fitzhugh in 1804. Their daughter, Mary Custis,



wed her distant cousin and childhood sweetheart, Lt. Robert E. Lee, in the parlor at Arlington in 1831. The marriage united two of Virginia's "first families." Lee was descended from a long line of famous soldiers and statesmen. His father was "Light Horse Harry," American Revolutionary War hero, governor of Virginia and member of Congress. Two of Lee's father's relatives signed the Declaration of Independence.

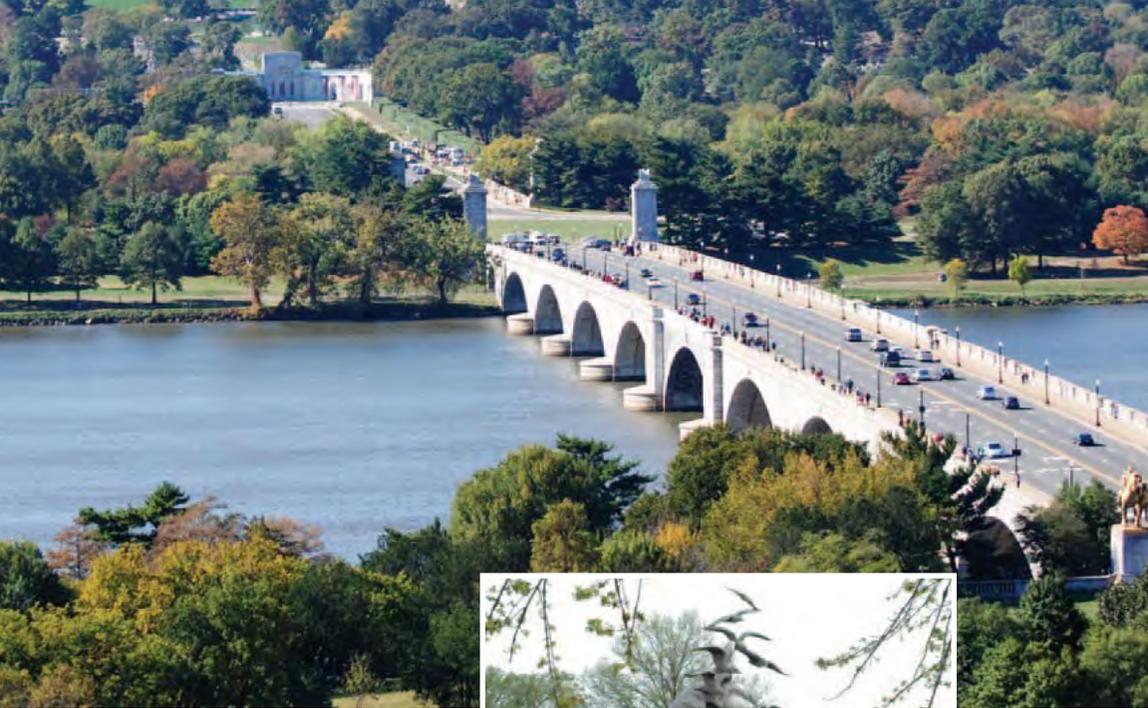
Arlington House was home to Robert E. Lee during much of his adult life. He spent many of his happiest occasions here. Between 1832 and 1846, Mrs. Lee gave birth to seven children. Three generations of the family lived happily at Arlington for over 20 years.

Army service took Robert E. Lee throughout the country. From 1852 to 1855, Lee was superintendent of West Point. In 1859, he commanded the military forces sent to subdue John Brown and his raiders at Harpers Ferry, Virginia. The Civil War (1861-1865) brought irrevocable changes to Arlington. It was here that Lee made the difficult decision to resign from the United States Army after more than 30 years of service. His decision ultimately cost the family their beloved home. The Lees left Arlington in the spring of 1861 never to return. The U.S. Army occupied the home throughout the war.

In 1864, Mrs. Lee lost Arlington for failing to pay her property taxes in person. The federal government purchased the estate when the property was put up for auction. That same year, Arlington was put to use as a national cemetery for Union war dead. Lee became commander-in-chief of all Confederate forces in January 1865 until his surrender in April.

For many years, Arlington House served as the headquarters of Arlington National Cemetery. In 1925, Congressman Louis Convers Cramton sponsored legislation to have the mansion restored to its pre-Civil War appearance. Cramton wanted to recognize Lee's efforts to help heal the nation's wounds after the war. "There was no man in the South who did more by example to help bring about our reunited country," Cramton declared. Today, Arlington House is preserved as a memorial to Robert E. Lee in honor of his dedication to peace and reconciliation after the Civil War.





Memorial Bridge

The graceful span of the Memorial Bridge extends from the stately Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., into Arlington National Cemetery and ends at the beautiful entrance to the Women in Military Service for America Memorial in Virginia. On the Virginia side, Memorial Avenue is lined with several military monuments and memorials.

In addition to those already discussed in this publication, there are numerous military memorials throughout the rest of the George Washington Memorial Parkway. The majority of these are located along Memorial Avenue, which connects Arlington Memorial Bridge to Arlington National Cemetery. Memorials along this corridor include the United Spanish War Veterans Memorial (the Hiker), the Seabees Memorial, the 4th (Ivy) Infantry Division Memorial, the Admiral Richard E. Byrd Monument, the Armored Forces Memorial and the 101st Airborne Division Memorial. The most recently constructed memorial along this corridor is the Women in Military Service for America Memorial that was dedicated in 1997 and is located in the Arlington Hemicycle.

Just to the south of Memorial Avenue at the southern tip of Columbia Island, is the Navy-Marine Memorial. This statue was dedicated in 1934 and memorializes all Americans who gave their lives at sea. It is unique among memorials in the Washington area because it is constructed of cast aluminum.

Lyndon Baines Johnson Memorial Grove on the Potomac and Lady Bird Johnson Park

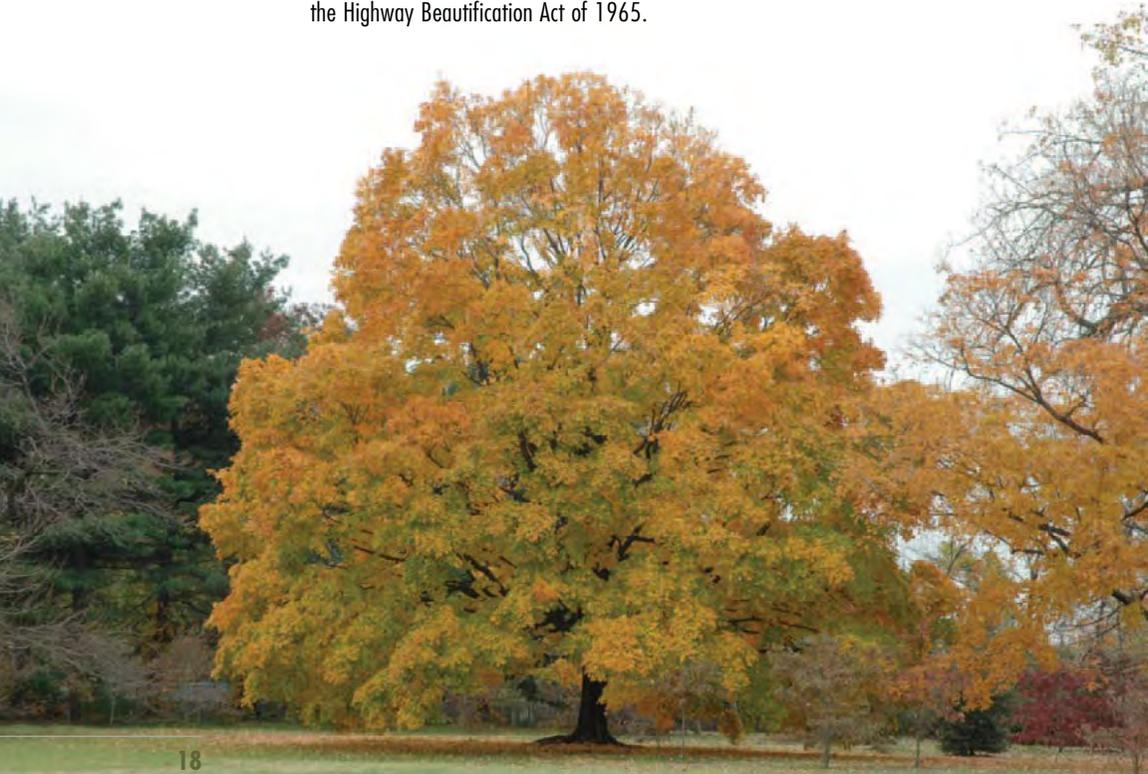
Lyndon Baines Johnson Memorial Grove on the Potomac and Lady Bird Johnson Park, located in Washington, D.C., near Columbia Island, stand as living memorials to the legacies of our 36th president and his first lady. Both held public service in high regard.

For example, during his career as a congressman, vice president and president (1963 to 1969), Lyndon Johnson focused on:

- Rural electrification, public housing and the elimination of government waste.
- Passage of major civil rights legislation.
- Passage of legislation to promote economic opportunities through education, employment and training as part of his “War on Poverty.”
- Promotion of the “Great Society” program through education programs (including Head Start), urban renewal, Medicare, conservation, beautification, control and prevention of crime and delinquency, promotion of the arts and consumer protection.

As part of her lifetime legacy, Lady Bird Johnson:

- Enlisted the aid of friends to plant thousands of tulips and daffodils which continue to delight visitors to the Nation’s Capital.
- Managed a national campaign for beautification which later resulted in the Highway Beautification Act of 1965.





- Became the honorary chairperson of the LBJ Memorial Grove on the Potomac.
- Founded the National Wildflower Research Center, a non-profit environmental organization dedicated to the preservation and re-establishment of native plants in natural and planned landscapes.
- Authored and co-authored several books.
- Held numerous positions on state/national committees.
- Was presented with various awards, including America's highest civilian award – the Presidential Medal of Freedom – and honorary degrees throughout her life.

Today, visitors may ponder the legacy of the Johnsons while enjoying a short walk through the grove using the Mount Vernon Trail, or getting lost in the “natural world” while watching great blue herons, egrets or gulls. Visitors may pause here, just as Lady Bird and Lyndon did, to enjoy the beautiful view of the panoramic skyline of Washington, D.C.



Fort Hunt Park

The fields of Fort Hunt Park have a long and rich history that spans many periods in American history. What were once the fields of George Washington's River Farm were transformed into a coastal defense fortification that was commissioned on the eve of the Spanish American War. First known as Sheridan's Point, its name was changed to Fort Hunt in 1899 in honor of the late Brevet Major General Henry Jackson Hunt. Its concrete gun batteries stood watch over the Potomac River until 1917, when the guns were removed and shipped to Europe for use in the First World War. A small garrison remained, and the post was essentially abandoned by 1923.

In 1933, Fort Hunt was turned over to the National Park Service and was transformed into a major installation for the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). It served this purpose until early 1942 when the CCC was disbanded upon America's entry into WWII. Even in the years before America entered the war, Fort Hunt had begun to prepare for hostilities. In 1939, the Signal Intelligence Service utilized the installation as a listening post to intercept radio messages from potential enemies. Immediately after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the National Archives gained permission to use several concrete gun batteries to store archival materials.

On May 15, 1942, the secretary of war obtained a special use permit from the Department of the Interior that gave the military use of Fort Hunt for the duration of the war. Over the next four years, the U.S. Army's Military Intelligence Service operated at Fort Hunt. They communicated with American soldiers held captive by the enemy and attempted to coordinate their escape. The service also interrogated 4,000 enemy prisoners of war and scientists. These interrogation programs resulted in the discovery of enemy war secrets. The work at Fort Hunt not only contributed to the Allied victory during World War II, but also led to advances in military intelligence and scientific technology that directly influenced the Cold War and space race.

Today, Fort Hunt Park is a popular picnic and recreation area along the George Washington Memorial Parkway, with only a few reminders of its important history.

Fort Marcy

One of the cornerstones of the Civil War defense of Washington, D.C., was Fort Marcy, which overlooks the strategic Chain Bridge approach to Washington. Construction of Fort Marcy began on September 25, 1861. The initial fortification was named “Fort Baldy Smith” after the brigade commander of the regiments who constructed the fort. Shortly thereafter, the site became known as “Camp Marcy” and then was officially named Fort Marcy after General George McLellan’s chief of staff and father-in-law, Brigadier General Randolph Barnes Marcy.

By the fall of 1861, Fort Marcy had a perimeter of 736 yards and was an average-sized fort compared to the other defense systems of Washington. The fort initially held 17 guns: three 20-pound Parrott rifles and three 10-pound Parrott rifles, all mounted in embrasure; and three 24-pound howitzers, two 12-pound howitzers and six 30-pound Parrott rifles in barbette. The fort also mounted one 10-inch siege mortar and two smaller 24-pound Coehorn mortars. Improvements in 1862 attempted to address damage from erosion — an ever present problem with earthen fortifications. Although the fort never fired a shot in anger or defense, it stood as a daunting obstacle to the approach to Washington, D.C. Thousands of Union soldiers were stationed at Fort Marcy at various times during the Civil War, and today its earthen walls and gun emplacements can still be viewed by park visitors.





Plants and Animals of the GWMP

The 7,374 acres that comprise the George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP) provide habitat and protection for at least 76 species of plants and animals listed in Virginia or Maryland as rare, threatened or endangered. These include 50 species of vascular plants and 26 animals (six vertebrates and 20 invertebrates). Additionally, 77 species documented from GWMP were first records for Virginia, including species of plants, beetles, true bugs, a moth, a bee, a copepod and an amphipod.

Important habitat for these species can be found at Great Falls Park, Turkey Run Park and Dyke Marsh in Virginia; at Glen Echo Park in Maryland and on Theodore Roosevelt Island in the District of Columbia. Great Falls Park is the only known location in Virginia for two of the rare plants found there, and Turkey Run Park is the only known Virginia site for the Variegated Brindle moth. Together these two parks contain 51 species of beetles unknown to the rest of Virginia. The natural areas within GWMP are so rich in biodiversity that they are far from fully known. In all, at least 243 species of birds, 24 mammals, 20 reptiles, 16 amphibians, 60 fish, 43 mollusks, 14 crustaceans, 76 butterflies, 722 moths and 420 beetles have been documented as existing within the habitats of the GWMP.



Many of these rare species are associated with globally rare plant communities found in the Potomac River Gorge occupying the bedrock terraces, exposed rocks and frequently flooded river shores. The primary vegetation types found within the GWMP include a complex of upland, floodplain forest and tidal marsh communities. Although disturbed, secondary forests are common in formerly cleared areas of the park. Much of the contemporary forest consists of maturing second-growth stands. Exceptions include stands more than 100 years old on ridges at both the northern and southern ends of Great Falls Park. The northern ridge contains several white oaks more than 200 years old.

Turkey Run Park puts on one of the most spectacular spring wildflower shows found anywhere in Virginia. The rich floodplain forest floors are swept in carpets of blue by the abundance of Eastern Bluebells and also provide habitat for many rare species of herbaceous plants. Along the shores of the Potomac River, near the southern end of the parkway, lies Dyke Marsh, one of the largest freshwater tidal marshes in the jurisdiction of the National Park Service. The vegetation here is dominated by narrow-leaved cattails but also contains some large stands of arrow arum, sweet flag, yellow bullhead lily, jewelweed, river bulrush and wild rice. In total, 44 ferns and fern allies, 89 trees (six coniferous and 83 deciduous), 114 shrubs and other low woody vegetation, 21 woody vines, and 869 herbaceous taxa (including 40 vines, 19 submerged or floating aquatic species, 105 grasses, 107 sedges, 11 rushes and 587 herbs) have been documented in GWMP.



Clara Barton

Clara Barton was the founder of the American Red Cross. The Clara Barton National Historic Site preserves the home where Miss Barton lived from 1897 until her death in 1912. Initial construction was completed in 1891 by Edward and Edwin Baltzley. Between 1891 and 1897, the Glen Echo building was used as an American Red Cross warehouse. Miss Barton began remodeling the interior of the house in January 1897. She used her Glen Echo, Maryland, home as American Red Cross warehouse and dormitory for American Red Cross volunteers from 1897 until her resignation from the organization in 1904. Everything about Clara Barton's home reflects her practical ways and her dedication to serving others. The original design for the house was copied from American Red Cross shelters used in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, after the 1889 flood.



The building is three stories high. It also has an almost full basement. There are over 30 rooms and approximately 50 closets. The first floor center hall is surrounded by built-in, hidden closets where she stored emergency relief supplies ready to use for victims of disaster or war.

A fascinating feature of the home is the large, open air well in the central hall. The opening above the central hall affords views of the second and third floor hallway balconies and the bottom of the "top most" room. From the main hallway, the "top most" room appears to be suspended from the center of the open third floor construction. Another surprising feature of the interior construction is the use of cotton muslin for the finish on ceiling and wall surfaces. Originally, Clara Barton installed newspaper for insulation, and after the cotton muslin was tacked to the ceiling or wall, it was covered with paint. A few of the original 1897 cotton muslin ceilings still remain, and visitors to the Clara Barton National Historic Site may view them in the restored rooms.

In nearly everything she did, Clara Barton saw little distinction between her public and private lives. In 1891, when the Baltzley brothers offered her a home, Miss Barton accepted their offer. In *The Life of Clara Barton*, William E. Barton, her cousin and early biographer wrote:

"Clara Barton lived and died surrounded by all that went into the daily performance of her work. The author of this volume confesses to a certain chill and sinking of the heart when he first saw the interior of the Glen Echo home. He wanted to take Clara Barton out of it and house her in a cozy little place of her own, where for a few hours of the day she could forget the Red Cross and all its cares. But Clara Barton gloried in those undecorated board walls as if they had been palatial...It was a place for service, and that service was the joy and glory of her life."

Clara Barton was remarkable in her accomplishments to America and the world. She influenced change and instituted programs that continue to benefit current generations. It is important to understand her legacy as we can learn from her example. If you cannot visit her Glen Echo home, you may learn more about Miss Barton's life and experience a virtual tour of her home through the National Park Service's web site at www.nps.gov/clba. But nothing can compare to actually standing in the home in which she once lived and worked.



Glen Echo Park

Glen Echo Park has been a popular attraction for residents in and around the Nation’s Capital since 1891. Conceived and originally developed in 1891 by founders Edward and Edwin Baltzley, Glen Echo was an early suburb of Washington, D.C. The Baltzley brothers hoped to lure homebuyers by placing the National Chautauqua Assembly at Glen Echo Park in the center of the development. The Chautauqua was a grand experiment in public education and cultural enrichment, bringing orators, teachers and performers from around the country to create a citadel of culture for the region.

The Chautauqua at Glen Echo was a financial failure, and by the turn of the 20th century the park was purchased by the Washington Railway and Electric Company that operated the area’s streetcar and trolley lines. The trolley company used the parkland to develop a major amusement park so that people would ride the trolleys to see all the lights and sights – roller coasters, swimming pools, dance hall, fun house, penny arcades, ice cream stands, carousels and much more. It was the era of the “Trolley Park” in America. There were many similar parks throughout the United States.





Not all area residents could participate in the fun. The park was segregated for much of its time as an amusement park. This changed in 1960 when a group of students from area universities staged a protest “sit-in” on the park’s beautiful Dentzel carousel. Five students were arrested that day in what sparked an 11-week protest against the park’s racially discriminatory practices. Hundreds of area residents, from all backgrounds and of all ages, participated in this important chapter of the country’s civil rights movement. When Glen Echo Park’s owners opened for the 1961 season, all were welcomed — the picketing at the park was successful!

The economics of the amusement business had changed by the 1960s, and the owners decided to close the park in the hope of redeveloping the land. The federal government acquired Glen Echo Park in 1970 with the aim of preserving the natural beauty of this section of the Potomac valley. Over the following 30 years, under the management of the National Park Service, Glen Echo Park has seen a great rebirth of popularity. The 1921 Dentzel Carousel operates from May to





September and brings smiles to “children of all ages.” The delicately carved wooden animals on the carousel and its elaborate decorations have been painstakingly restored to their original look.

The Spanish Ballroom, restored to its 1933 splendor, boasts a golden-hued 7,500-foot sprung maple floor and has resumed its place as the finest social dance spot in the metropolitan area. Big band swing orchestras, Cajun and zydeco bands, salsa or square dance musicians take the stage Fridays through Sundays. People who enjoy “cutting a rug” at the park ardently support the dance schedule.

Old buildings that once housed games and refreshment stands now host theaters and art studios. There is always something new at the park — a nature museum, a puppet show, a fine arts gallery and hundreds of art classes to choose from at the park’s 12 art studios.

In the nearly 40 years of public ownership, the park has flourished as a center for arts and learning — as well as a place to have some fun. It remains a special place for the area’s residents and for visitors from around the world.



VE FORD



Wonderland of Fun!

SWIM
DANCE

GLEN ECHO

Amusement Park

Mount Vernon Trail

The trail begins at Mount Vernon and follows the Potomac River north to its terminus at Theodore Roosevelt Island. Along the 18.5 mile trail, you can picnic at Riverside Park, at the historic Fort Hunt Park or Belle Haven Park. You can take side trips to Dyke Marsh Preserve or to Jones Point Lighthouse. The trail passes through the historic district of Alexandria and proceeds north past Reagan National Airport. Take time to visit the Lyndon Baines Johnson Memorial Grove and Theodore Roosevelt Island. As you travel the northern section of the trail, enjoy one of the best views of the monuments and memorials of our Nation's Capital.

You can utilize the Mount Vernon Trail to access Washington, D.C., Maryland and other areas of northern Virginia through a network of connecting trails and bridges. For your safety on this popular, multi-use trail, stay to the right and move off the trail to stop. Bicyclists must give audible warning before passing others on the trail. The speed limit is 15mph; slow down and be alert when the trail passes through picnic areas and adjacent playing fields. Good etiquette will help everyone have a safe and enjoyable visit.



Potomac Heritage Trail

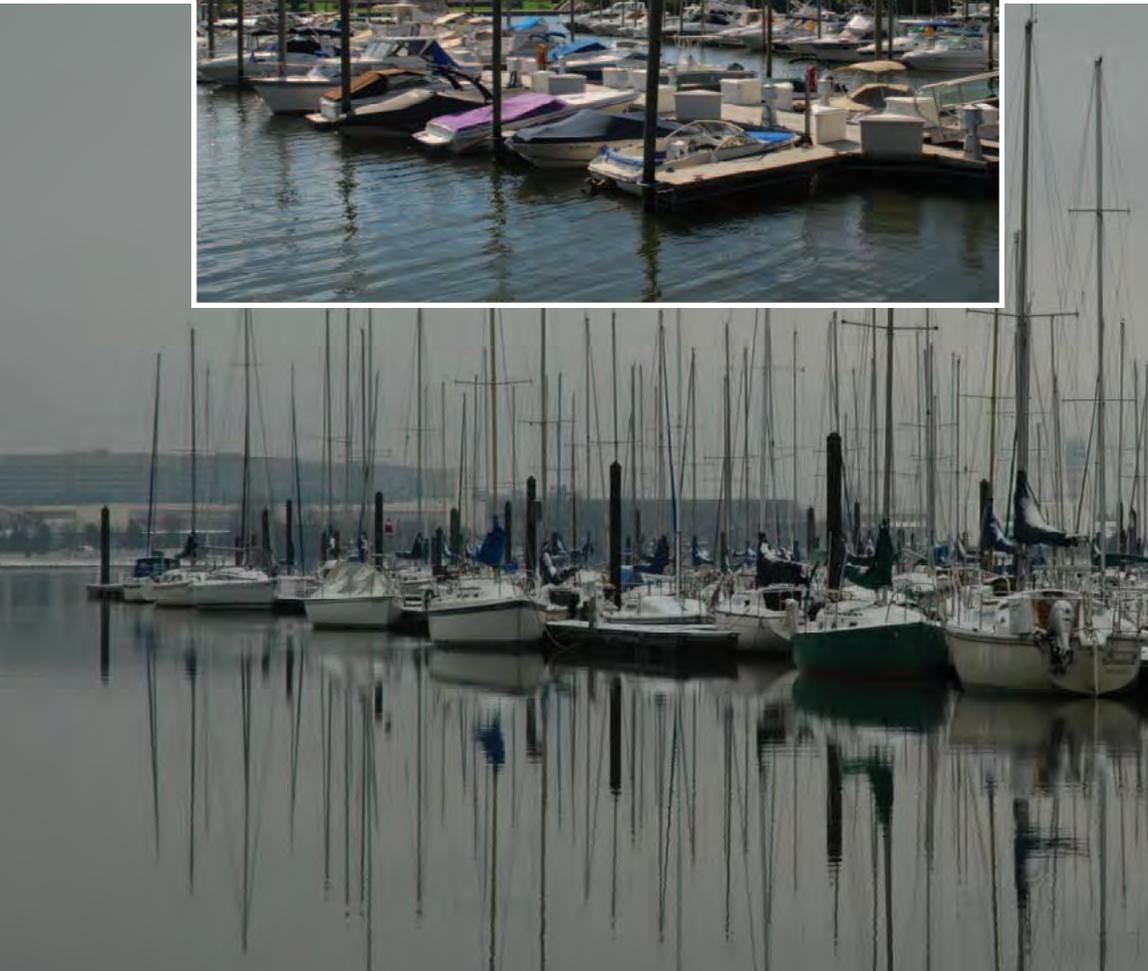
Along the Virginia shoreline, beginning at Theodore Roosevelt Island and heading north, the Potomac Heritage Trail winds for 10 miles along the Potomac River through steep, rocky hillsides, forested stream valleys and years of history. For centuries, Native Americans lived and traded along this route. Captain John Smith explored the area in 1608. George Washington envisioned the river and land as a “great avenue into the Western Country.” The river was the dividing line between North and South during the Civil War. Quarries, mills and farms along the Potomac helped create a strong local economy and provided building materials for Washington, D.C.

Today, the area is referred to as the lower portion of the Potomac Gorge, a 15-mile stretch of protected land known for its biodiversity, beauty, and rare plant communities. It is also part of the larger network of trails that forms the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail. Enjoy your visit as you walk along the trail. Do your part to continue the preservation of this area by practicing “Leave No Trace” principles. Ensure enjoyment of future generations of visitors and continued habitat protection by staying on the trail, packing out trash, leashing your pets and leaving the area as undisturbed as you found it.

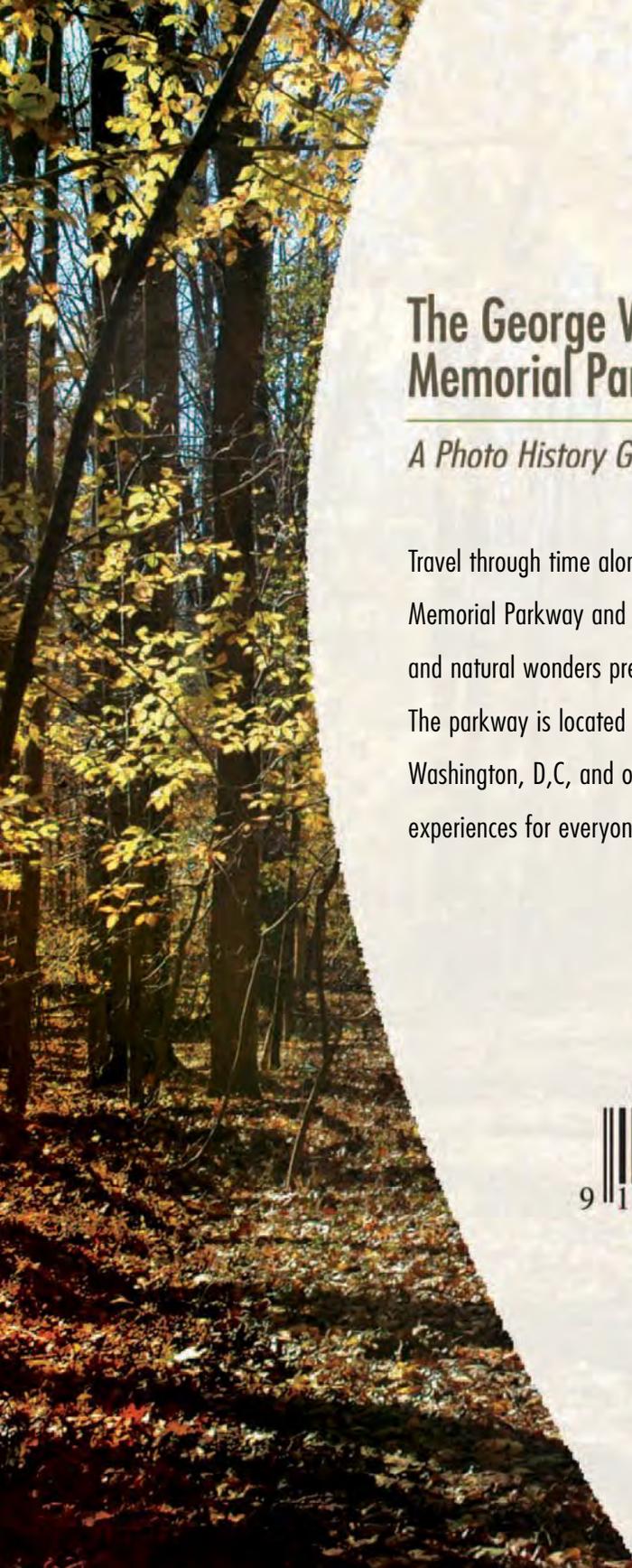


Marinas

One of the parkway's missions is to promote opportunities for visitors to learn about and experience parkway resources. Providing access to the Potomac River is an important goal in fulfilling that mission. The parkway is home to three concessioner-operated marinas, whose locations along the scenic river provide spectacular views of the nation's capital and its monuments. Columbia Island Marina, located in Lady Bird Johnson Park, provides nearly 400 slips, a boat launch, and a small café. Washington Sailing Marina, a premier facility south of National Airport, offers rentals, sailing lessons, and camps for adults, children, and families. Quaint and scenic Belle Haven Marina, located just south of Old Town Alexandria and surrounded by Dyke Marsh, is an oasis for recreation enthusiasts in the busy Washington, D.C. area. Beyond the marinas, visitors can always enjoy use of the free boat ramp at Gravelly Point just north of the airport.







The George Washington Memorial Parkway

A Photo History Guide

Travel through time along the George Washington Memorial Parkway and explore the historic sites and natural wonders preserved along its path. The parkway is located in Virginia, Maryland, and Washington, D.C, and offers a wide variety of experiences for everyone.

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