

Nonfiction Books About Some of Washington DC's Most Interesting Places

By Edith Ching, Children's Literature Specialist

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The White House

First Mothers by Beverly Gherman and Julie Downing

Most presidents' mothers get a 2 page spread, discussing their upbringing, marriage, personality and a bit about their role in the President's life.

The President's Stuck in the Bathtub by Susan Katz, illustrated by Robert Neubecker

Humorous poems dealing with one often little known fact about each president.

Presidential Pets by Julia Moberg, illustrated by Jeff Albrecht Studios

The weird wacky, little big, scary, strange animals that have lived in the White House.

White House Kids by Joe Rhatigan

The perks, pleasures, problems and pratfalls of the President's children.

Brick by Brick

Charles R. Smith, Jr., illustrated by Floyd Cooper

Describes the involvement of African Americans in the building of the White House.

So You Want to Be President? by Judith St. George

Short funny vignettes about the president's and their weight, pets, idiosyncrasies.

Air and Space Museum

Eight Days Gone by Linda McReynolds, illustrated by Ryan O'Rourke

Elegant rhyme with simple but powerful illustrations tells of the successful mission to the moon.

Moonshot by Brian Floca

A picture book that conveys the excitement and challenge of the mission to the moon.

Red-Tailed Angels: The Story of the Tuskegee Airmen of World War II by Patricia and Frederick L. McKissack

The story of how dedication and passion on the part of these flyers overcame hardships and prejudice.

The Mighty Mars Rovers: The Incredible Adventures of Spirit and Opportunity by Elizabeth Rusch

Part of the Scientists in the Field series, a complete description of the vision and challenges in this program.

Almost Astronauts: 13 Women Who Dared to Dream by Tanya Lee Stone

A look at the 13 women who, early in the space program, worked hard to pass the requirements and what prevented their success.

American History Museum

They Called Themselves the KKK by Susan Campbell Bartoletti

A look at the rise of this group and how it still functions today (the author visited a Klan meeting).

Bootleg: Murder, Moonshine, and the Lawless Years of Prohibition by Karen Blumenthal

An in-depth look at this unusual period in American history.

The Notorious Benedict Arnold by Steve Sheinkin

An award winning book that personalizes this notorious figure in American history by a former text book author.

Art Museums

George Bellows: Painter with a Punch by Robert Burleigh

A well-researched biography that explains the popularity of this versatile artist.

Face Book by Chuck Close

Background information about this artist and then a series of his paintings that can be manipulated by the reader.

Action Jackson by Jan Greenberg and Sandra Jordan, illustrated by Robert Andrew Parker

Picture book about Pollock's unique way of creating art.

Chuck Chose Up Close by Jan Greenberg and Sandra Jordan

A look at this artist's life and work.

The Hero of Little Street by Gregory Rogers

Picture book of a young boy who ends up in a painting (based on the National Gallery of London but fun for any museum visitor).

Diego Rivera: His World and Ours by Duncan Tonatuck

A look at the work of this famous artist.

Look! Look! Look! at Sculpture by Nancy Elizabeth Wallace with Linda K. Friedlaender

Young mice have an introduction to various forms of sculpture, with suggested activities to create personal artworks.

Frederick Douglas National Historic Site

Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglas: The Story Behind an American Friendship by Russell Freedman

An insightful look at the issues that united these two great men and those that divided them.

Holocaust Museum

Hitler Youth by Susan Campbell Bartoletti

An award winning author researches how Hitler used the young people of Germany to gain popularity and power.

His Name was Raoul Wallenberg: Courage, Rescue and Mystery During World War II by Louise Borden

The biography of this heroic figure written in poetic style.

Hannah's Suitcase by Karen Levine

The true story of Japanese children who, in 2000 began a search to discover the identity and life story of the owner of a suitcase that arrived at a Holocaust education center.

Beyond Courage: The Untold Story of Jewish Resistance During the Holocaust by Doreen Rappaport

Tales of individual escapes as well as individual efforts to thwart the Nazis.

Islamic Center

Golden Domes and Silver Lanterns: A Muslim Book of Colors by Hena Khan, illustrated by Mehrdokht Amini

A picture book that describes some of the basic concepts of Muslim culture and shows what we all have in common.

Japanese/American Memorial

Dear Ms. Breed by Joanne Oppenheim

True stories of the Japanese American incarceration during World War II and a librarian who made a difference.

Martin Luther King Memorial

Marching to the Mountaintop by Ann Bausum

How poverty, labor fights and civil right set the stage for Martin Luther King Jr.'s final hours

We March by Shane Evans

A picture book that dramatically shows one family rising early in the morning to join the march on Washington.

Heart and Soul: The story of America and African Americans by Kadir Nelson

Powerful illustrations add to the appeal of this book which looks at the role of African Americans in American history.

Miles to Go for Freedom by Linda Barrett Osborne

Segregation and civil rights in the Jim Crow years.

Hand in Hand: Ten Black Men Who Changed America by Andrea Davis Pinkney

Brief biographies of Benjamin Banneker, Frederick Douglass, Thurgood Marshall, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Barack Obama, among others. Powerful illustrations add to this book.

When Marian Sang: The True Recital of Marian Anderson by Pam Muñoz Ryan, illustrated by Brian Selznick

Picture book biography of this incredible young woman who overcame the prejudice of her own society to become an internationally famous singer.

Museum of Natural History

Bailey at the Museum by Harry Bliss

Bailey, an energetic and inquisitive young dog is reminded of the rules when visiting the Natural History museum but he still needs extra help to behave properly. A good way to promote discussion of museum behavior.

Buried Alive: How 33 Miners Survived 69 Days Deep Under the Chilean Desert by Elaine Scott

A tale of personal heroism and ingenuity in the rescue.

Washington Nationals Park

We Are the Ship by Kadir Nelson

The story of the Negro leagues in baseball.

National Zoo

Thunder Birds: Nature's Flying Predators by Jim Aronsky

Through powerful illustrations and well-researched text, the author informs us about some of nature's biggest, most powerful birds.

The Elephant Scientist by Caitlin O'Connell and Donna M. Jackson

Part of The Scientist in the Field series, this book chronicles the author's work with elephants in Africa to understand them and help them thrive.

Mrs. Harkness and the Panda by Alicia Potter, illustrated by Melissa Sweet

A picture book for older readers that tells the story of how Pandas came to be known and loved in America.

Native Museum of the American Indian

Faces of the Past by James M. Deem

A nonfiction book that describes how specialists work to reconstruct faces from ancient skeletons to give us a sense of those who went before us. A unique book.

Buffalo Bird Girl: A Hidatsa Story by S.D. Nelson

A recounting of the life of a young girl growing up in the Hidatsa tribe, with period photographs as well as illustrations and lots of end notes.

The Horse and the Plains Indians by Dorothy Hinshaw Patent

The text offers a clear, fluent presentation of how the Plains Indians lived before the horse (with dogs) and how the horse transformed and influenced their lives and culture.

And a fiction series just thrown in ...

Capitol Hill

Melonhead series by Katy Kelly

Melonhead is a typical 10 year old living on Capitol Hills whose intentions are good but whose actions don't always match. A fun read.

For additional children's book recommendations:

- [Capitol Choices](http://www.capitolchoices.org): <http://www.capitolchoices.org>
- [The Children's Book Guild](http://www.childrensbookguild.org): <http://www.childrensbookguild.org>
- [Booklist online](http://www.booklistonline.org/): <http://www.booklistonline.org/>