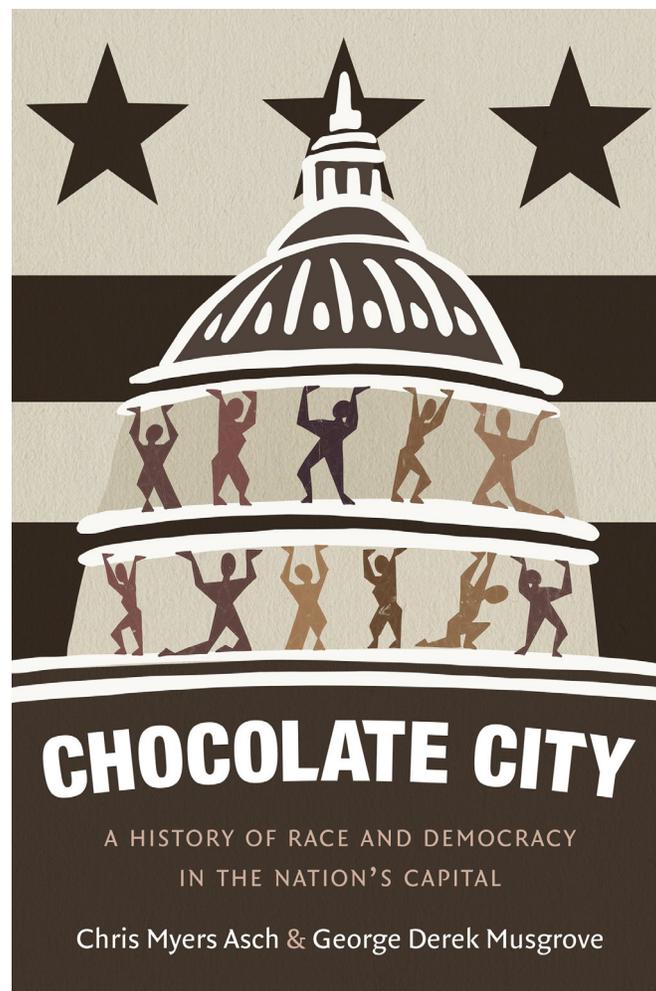


# Chocolate City: A History of Race and Democracy in the Nation's Capital

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## Reading and Discussion Guide

Developed for use at the Foundry United Methodist Church and the Edlavitch DCJCC by Will Ed Green, Sonya Weisburd, and Chad Kinsman



# CHAPTERS 7-8

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**Additional Resources:** [Chocolate City Interactive Map](#)

## ***Chapter 7: National Show Town: Building a Modern Prosperous, and Segregated Capital 1890-1912***

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**Chapter Overview:** This chapter outlines the development of DC in several directions and the establishment of several urban and suburban neighborhoods that remain on the map today. Along with real estate development, this period also saw the rise of Citizens' Associations and the Washington Board of Trade and the power this entity wielded for several decades. As Jim Crow set in, downtown Washington was remade into the grand city of neoclassical columns, monuments, and wide streets we know today based on the McMillan Plan, which set out to make DC a grand capital on par with capital cities all over Europe.

### **Comprehend**

- What were Citizens' Associations, how did they form, and what was their importance during this period?
- How did suffrage efforts suffer from the formation and development of the Washington Board of Trade?
- How did black Washingtonians successfully fight to have control over black schools in DC, and what was the end result of this battle?

### **Respond**

- In what ways was progressivism problematic and what were the racial undertones of both progressivism and the "City Beautiful" movement?
- What are the parallels between the movement to "beautify" the city and get rid of alley dwelling as well as the real estate boom over 130 years ago with what's been happening in DC over the last two decades?

### **Reflect**

- How have white people's attitudes about home values and what brings them up or down not changed in 130 years? What does your neighborhood look like today, and how does its racial and ethnic make-up make you feel about where you live?

# Key Terms, Names, and Definitions

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## ***Chapter 7: National Show Town: Building a Modern Prosperous, and Segregated Capital 1890-1912***

**LeDroit Park:** Developed by Amzi Barber, a white minister-turned-real estate who moved to Washington from Ohio in the early 1870s, LeDroit Park was DC's first post-Civil War residential suburb that attracted wealthy residents. It was exclusive and offered residents many amenities. By the early 1900s, LeDroit Park included many black homeowners and slowly became home to the city's best-known black leaders and black upper class elite.

**Octavius Williams:** A black barber who became the first black homeowner in LeDroit Park; his daughter lived in the neighborhood until the 1970s.

**Howardtown:** Area surrounding Howard University where black residents of all classes lived. Howardtown grew rapidly in the 1880s.

**Myron M. Parker:** A Vermont Civil War veteran, Parker came to DC in 1865 to work for the War Department. He quickly got into real estate and established himself as a major player in DC's business community. Eventually, Parker would be chosen as the first president of the Washington Board of Trade and then a city commissioner.

**West End:** Originally on the outskirts of the city, West End (which includes present-day Dupont Circle) used to be a racially integrated lower-income neighborhood with small farms, slaughterhouses, and other small businesses. By the turn of the 20th century, however, it turned into an exclusive, fashionable, upper-class white neighborhood dotted with embassies.

**William Stewart:** Stewart came to DC as senator from the brand-new state of Nevada. Originally a New Yorker who made a fortune in mining out west, he immediately got into the real estate business when he moved to DC and bought a large amount of land in the West End, including Pacific Circle – today Dupont Circle.

**Chevy Chase:** A neighborhood in upper Northwest purchased and developed in the 1880s by Francis Newlands, a racist Nevada mining millionaire turned real estate mogul. Newlands financed a streetcar line that went eight miles from downtown to Chevy Chase and spent 30 years making Chevy Chase a "model" and segregated community.

**Tennallytown:** Today Tenelytown, it started out rural in the late 1800s and was about one-third black. After the Civil War, black residents bought land here from the army and lived on large plots alongside white neighbors. Although blacks and whites went to separate churches and schools, Tennallytown was an exception in being an integrated community for decades.

**Citizens Associations:** Made up of white male property holders, citizens associations were created to maintain property values, keep taxes low, and lobby for city services in their neighborhoods. These were a way for voteless (white) Washingtonians to make their voices heard. These groups helped justify and enforce residential segregation.

**Civic Associations:** Counterparts to the citizens associations, which were for whites only, civic associations were formed by black folks.

**Committee of One Hundred:** A short lived committee formed in 1886 by leaders of many citizens associations to come together as a more unified voice; it disbanded due to disagreements on DC suffrage and governance.

**Michael Weller:** An Englishman who moved to DC after the Civil War, he became the city's most aggressive white advocate for suffrage.

**Washington Board of Trade:** Formed in 1889 as a splinter from the Committee of One Hundred, the Board of Trade accepted disenfranchisement and became the most important political organization in the city focusing on economic development and city beautification. It portrayed itself as nonpartisan and civic-minded, representing the entire city's interests rather than individual neighborhoods. It gained direct access to the city commissioners as well as members of Congress.

**Charles Moore:** Aide to Republican Senator James McMillan from Michigan, Moore became the clerk to the Senate Committee on the District of Columbia which placed him right in the middle of and wielding a lot of influence over debates about DC's future for over a decade.

**"Coxey's Army":** Integrated group of several hundred unemployed men who marched from Ohio to the Capitol during the Panic of 1893 to demand a public works program to put people back to work.

**Progressivism:** Arising in response to the social ills that developed from the growth of urban areas all over the country, this movement, led by white middle-class reformers, tried to create stability and order in urban areas. Efforts included limiting alcohol consumption, instituting a secret ballot, and building settlement houses to improve living conditions in poor neighborhoods.

**"City Beautiful" Movement:** A Progressivism effort, the movement aimed to beautify the physical structures of the city, believing that if they could improve how the city looked and functioned, they would improve how residents behaved.

**James McMillan:** Michigan Senator who chaired the Committee on the District of Columbia and the McMillan Plan.

**McMillan Plan:** A plan that succeeded in reshaping and beautifying Washington, DC based on L'Enfant's original plans and the layout of major European cities, it created the Lincoln Memorial and the National Mall as we know it today. The 171-page document mentioned low-income people once, and its implementation removed poor black people's dwellings from many parts of the city.

**Union Station:** Part of the McMillan Plan, it was designed by architect Daniel Burnham and built from 1903-1907 by imported Italian stoneworkers. It displaced over 1,500 poor Irish and black people when constructed and led to the disappearance of Swampoodle from the map.

**Charles Frederick Weller:** Progressive movement activist and reformer who took on alley life in DC. He wrote the *Neglected Neighbors*, where he detailed stories of alley dwellers from across the city and called for a "McMillan Plan for the poor". He was also a strong supporter of suffrage and self-rule.

**The Alley Dwelling Act:** Passed by Congress in 1914, the legislation was supposed to end alley housing in DC by 1918 but did not do so due to severe shortages of affordable housing, particularly after WWI.

**Mary Church Terrell:** Born in 1863 to formerly enslaved parents, Terrell was a highly educated, wealthy black Washingtonian who founded the National Association of Colored Women in 1896 and became the first black woman in the country to serve on a school board when she was appointed to DC's Board of Education.

**Robert H. Terrell:** The Harvard-educated husband of Mary Church Terrell who was appointed by President Teddy Roosevelt as DC's first justice of the peace and then elevated to become the nation's first black federal judge.

**Plessy v. Ferguson:** 1896 Supreme Court case that resulted in legalizing segregation and "separate but equal" treatment of blacks in public institutions.

**Thomas Heiflin:** A Congressman from Alabama who sponsored a bill to segregate DC's streetcars. He shot and wounded a black man he claimed was using foul language on a streetcar, spent no time in jail, and continued to try and push racist policies in DC through Congress.

**Charles Douglass:** Son of Frederick Douglass, Charles Douglass was a big proponent of blacks building up a business and civic life sector for and by black people, not one catering to whites.

**Andrew F. Hilyer:** Born enslaved in Georgia, Hilyer attended Howard University Law School. He was a leading advocate of a black business movement and started publishing the *Union Directory* in 1892, a compendium of black business achievement in DC.

**Nannie Helen Burroughs:** The daughter of formerly enslaved persons, Burroughs' life mission was to create educational and employment opportunities for low-income black women. She spoke out against discrimination and violence against black people and founded the National Training School for Women and Girls in 1909. The school taught self-reliance and focused primarily on Christian education, preparing its students to work, even as domestic laborers.

**Anna Julia Cooper:** A formerly enslaved person, Cooper graduated from Oberlin and became principal of M Street High School where she fought to hold onto administrative independence from the white director of high schools. She was an ambitious educator, raising the number of graduating students and helping graduates get scholarships to prestigious colleges.

## ***Chapter 8: There is a New Negro to be Reckoned With: Segregation, War, and a New Spirit of Black Militancy, 1912-1932***

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**Chapter Overview:** This chapter covers the increase in black workers inside federal government agencies and the introduction of segregation into these agencies with the inauguration of President Woodrow Wilson; the birth and rise of the NAACP; and the contradictions of black service members fighting for freedom and democracy in other parts of the world during World War I while being second-class citizens at home. The period saw a rise in racial violence and the deep rooting of Jim Crow in DC. Despite these huge setbacks, black cultural and intellectual life flourished in the New Negro Renaissance during this time.

### **Comprehend**

- Who were the “Radicals” and the “Bookerites” and what was their philosophical difference of opinion?
- What were the contradictions for black service members in fighting for the United States during WWI?
- Why were some black intellectuals disenchanted with DC’s black elite community?

### **Respond**

- What similarities in neighborhood make-up and status do you see between the early 1900s and present-day DC?
- What parallels do you see between the phenomena of segregation and gentrification? Are their effects and outcomes similar or different?

### **Reflect**

How much did you learn about the New Negro Renaissance of this era in school and its writers, poets, playwrights, and intellectuals, as well as their achievements? How do you think a lack of teaching about black excellence, contributions, and talent contributes to the racist narratives we absorb in the present-day as well as have absorbed throughout history?

## Key Terms, Names, and Definitions

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### ***Chapter 8: There is a New Negro to be Reckoned With: Segregation, War, and a New Spirit of Black Militancy, 1912-1932***

**Bureau of Engraving and Printing:** Launched in 1862 out of the Treasury Department, the Bureau employed many black workers towards the end of the 1800s.

**Frances Flood:** The first black female employee at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, hired in 1890.

**Rosebud Murraye:** A native Washingtonian who worked as a printer's assistant at the Bureau, she refused to follow the segregation of the Bureau's lunchroom that occurred as a result of Woodrow Wilson taking office in April 1913 and after being fired, took the case to the NAACP.

**National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP):** Founded in 1909 by an interracial group, it sought to create a nationwide network of civil rights organizations that would fight the spread of Jim Crow and push for full political and civil equality. The DC chapter of the NAACP was the largest and most influential branch in the country.

**"Bookerites":** Followers of Booker T. Washington, who during this time encouraged black self-sufficiency and economic sustainability within the reality of segregation. Dr. Washington founded the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, which became a powerful political machine.

**"Radicals":** Followers of W.E.B. Du Bois, who was a driving force behind the NAACP and rejected segregation in all of its forms, dismissing the "accommodationsim" of Booker T. Washington.

**J. Milton Waldron:** The Pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church, he was the founding president of the DC branch of the NAACP. After switching his political alliances from the Republican to the Democratic Party and a controversial speech in Richmond, he was ousted in 1913.

**Archibald Grimke:** Grimke was born enslaved in 1849, nephew to Angelina and Sarah Grimke, perhaps the most important white Southern abolitionists in the antebellum era. He was the second black graduate of Harvard Law School, and was elected president of the DC branch of the NAACP in 1914. Grimke forcefully rejected white supremacy and became one of DC's most effective black leaders of the 1910s.

**John Abraham Davis:** A valedictorian graduate of M Street High School, Davis started working at the Government Printing Press in 1882 and embodied the toll President Wilson's segregation policies took on black lives. Over 3 decades, Davis worked up to a white-color clerk position earning a salary that afforded his family a middle-class lifestyle with their own home on S Street, NW and a farm in Virginia. After Wilson's inauguration, Davis was demoted back to the laborer position he had started with 30 years ago, throwing his family out of their middle-class existence and into poverty.

**East St. Louis “race riot”:** In summer of 1917, tensions and resentment on the part of whites in East St. Louis were high and after two white people were killed in a black neighborhood, angry white mobs spent three days rampaging through the black part of town burning homes and murdering over 100 black people. No one was apprehended.

**Houston incident:** In summer of 1917, black soldiers in Houston retaliated against ill treatment at their segregated base by marching into town in assault formation and killing more than a dozen white people. Thirteen of the soldiers were executed immediately and another sixteen were sentenced to death.

**Major Walter Loving:** The only black agent of the Military Intelligence Division (MID), Loving was dispatched to investigate the “feeling of unrest” among blacks in DC during WWI as white officials feared German propaganda spreading through the black community. He defended the loyalty of the black community but also reported that some of them were taking economic advantage of the war to earn a better living and better wages. This did not constitute German propaganda, however, he pointed out.

**Elsie Williams:** A young white woman who was reportedly accosted by two black men who tried to steal her umbrella. She was unharmed but the incident sparked what was dubbed the “Race War in Washington”.

**The “Race War in Washington”:** Spanning over four days in 1919, a white mob that started out as several hundred white men, mostly soldiers, and eventually swelled into between 1,000 and 2,000 people went after black people and black neighborhoods in DC. Virtually unchecked by authorities, it spurred black Washingtonians, particularly war veterans, to arm and defend themselves and their communities. The media sensationalized the violence and further enflamed it. Eventually, Secretary of War Newton Baker dispatched hundreds of federal troops to stop the violence. Six people were left dead and hundreds put in jail. The riot, however, revealed the physical, legal, and political power of the black community in DC, who was determined not to become “another East St. Louis”.

**Neval Thomas:** Born in Ohio, Thomas worked at the Library of Congress and taught history at Dunbar High School for three decades. In 1925, he replaced Grimke as the head of the DC NAACP chapter. Thomas spoke out about his frustration with the staying power and impact of segregation in DC.

**U Street Corridor:** The center of DC’s middle and upper-class black culture in the 1920s, the area boasted over 300 black-owned businesses and organizations including Whitelaw Hotel and Industrial Savings Bank. It was also dubbed “Black Broadway” with many theaters and music clubs, where Edward Kennedy “Duke” Ellington rose to fame.

**Alain Locke:** Howard philosophy professor and first black Rhodes Scholar, Locke was a driving force behind the “New Negro Renaissance”. He published the New Negro in 1925 – a compilation of works by 35 black authors, poets, and playwrights, many of them women.

**New Negro Renaissance:** Nationwide cultural movement associated more with Harlem, but in which black Washingtonians played an active role.

**Jean Toomer:** Grandson of P.B.S. Pinchback, who briefly served as the first black governor in the country, Toomer was part of the black Washington elite and published his breakthrough novel, *Cane*, in 1923. Toomer rejected a rigid classification of race and instead put forth a vision of racial hybridity that was very ahead of its time.

**“Passing”:** When very light-skinned blacks “passed” for being white to enjoy the benefits of whiteness and/or as resistance to the culture of white supremacy otherwise prevalent everywhere. “Passing” was both risky and also challenged black identity and undermined the elite black community.

**Marita Bonner:** A black writer who came to DC in 1924 to teach at Armstrong High School, she wrote the essay *On Being Young – A Woman – and Colored* which catapulted her to fame within black intellectual circles. She named the rage within many black women of the New Negro era and the particular injustices of being both black and female during that time.

**Langston Hughes:** An aspiring poet at the time and grandnephew of Reconstruction-era leader John Mercer Langston, Hughes spent a year living in DC. He criticized the arrogance and self importance of DC’s black elite and, disenchanted with the city’s black upper class, left for Harlem along with Toomer and other black thinkers and intellectuals.

**Racial restrictive covenants:** Private contracts in which white property holders agreed to restrict the sale, rent, or transfer of their properties to racial and religious minorities. Restrictive covenants multiplied after a 1917 Supreme Court decision that prohibited state and local governments from mandating segregation through zoning but didn’t address exclusionary agreements between individuals. These covenants often also targeted Jews, Arabs, “Persians”, and others.

**Helen Curtis:** A well-to-do black Washingtonian who hired a white real estate agent and bought a three-story row house in Dupont Circle (at 1727 S Street, NW), a predominantly white area at the time. A group of homeowners on the 1700 block of S Street had signed a racial restrictive covenant though and one of them, Jack Buckley, took the issue to court.

**Corrigan v. Buckley:** The court case that arose from Helen Curtis purchasing a home from Irene Corrigan, who had signed a racial restrictive covenant with her neighbors and then broke it by selling her home to Helen Curtis. The DC Court of Appeals supported Buckley and upheld the constitutionality of restrictive covenants, citing DC’s widespread segregation laws as precedent. This set a devastating precedent for the use of restrictive covenants.

**Four-and-a-Half Street area:** Located in Southwest DC, where segregation failed to spread nearly as much, was a “tough area” and home to three distinct communities: black residents, native-born white residents of German and Irish descent, and Jewish immigrants. The communities developed business, if not social relationships, interracial relationships that were increasingly rare in other parts of the city.