

# Georgetown National Park Units



Relaxing at a hip, new, urban green space and watching the river and people go by; strolling through a naturalistic garden landscaped by the first professional female landscape architect in U.S. history; discovering Georgetown's connection with the author of the Star Spangled Banner; and more! The sites administered by the U.S. National Park Service within the Georgetown neighborhood of Washington, D.C. offer you respite, relaxation and lessons in history. This guide will provide a brief introduction to each park unit. It can also serve as a walking tour of the sites if you utilize the map on the back page. Please enjoy your national park units of Georgetown.

## **Old Stone House** 3051 M Street NW

Old Stone House is the oldest structure on its original foundation in the District of Columbia. Initial construction was completed in 1766. Additions were made over the next thirty years until the house became the structure you see today.

Exhibits inside and throughout the house introduce you to its history, and that of Georgetown. An English-style garden behind Old Stone House is a popular place to wander and relax for a few minutes while escaping the hustle and bustle of the city.

## Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park

Between M and K Streets NW

Chesapeake and Ohio (C&O) Canal National Historical Park is comprised of a 184 1/2 mile long canal and adjacent towpath.

The canal opened in 1831 and operated for nearly 100 years, serving as a lifeline to communities along the Potomac by bringing coal, lumber, and agricultural products to market. The canal enabled boats to safely transport items up and down river without the dangers of the Potomac River rapids, most notably those at Great Falls. The canal connected the bustling port

of Georgetown with communities almost 200 miles upriver until 1924.

The faster speeds of the railroad signaled the demise of the canal and it fell in to disrepair. Conservationists like Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas fought to preserve the canal in the 1950s and were successful. Today, the visitors along the canal can observe historic locks, lock houses and beautiful scenery. Stroll a few blocks along the canal in Georgetown and imagine life on the canal.

## Georgetown Waterfront Park 3303 Water St NW

What is now a beautiful new green space known as Georgetown Waterfront Park was once an area of busy docks, wharves, and industry. From the founding of Georgetown in 1751 through the early 1900s, the area served as the port of Georgetown.

Eventually, in the mid 1900s, the future park site became a parking lot. Only within the past 10 years has this changed. With construction costs paid for by the National Park Service and the

Friends of Georgetown Waterfront Park (thanks to their fundraising efforts), the park was officially opened and dedicated in 2011.

Today, stroll through the park, sit on a bench, and enjoy the views. If it's summer time, you might choose to cool off in the splash fountain. Historic granite photos throughout the 10 acre park introduce you to the waterfront's history and culture.

## Francis Scott Key Memorial 34th and M Street NW

Francis Scott Key lived very close to where the memorial park is located today. He ran a successful law practice while serving as Attorney General for the United States. Key is most famous for penning the lyrics to what would eventually become the National Anthem of the United States of America.

The Francis Scott Key Memorial was lobbied and paid for by the Francis Scott Key Memorial Foundation in the 1900s. The memorial includes a bronze statue of Key, exhibits explaining his life and legacy, and a replica of the 1814 American flag that inspired Key to pen his now famous poem.

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## Dumbarton Oaks Park Lovers Lane NW

Diplomat Robert Bliss and his wife Mildred purchased 55 acres of land along the Georgetown Heights in 1920 and named their new estate Dumbarton Oaks, in a nod to the original name bestowed on the acreage in the 1700s--The Rock of Dumbarton.

In 1940, the Bliss's donated their formal estate to Harvard University and the lower garden to the National Park Service.

They hired landscape architect Beatrix Farrand to design their gardens. Farrand developed a series of formal gardens close to the estate, but used a "naturalistic" approach in the bottom portion of the estate. The 27-acre natural garden was designed to cultivate a feeling of being surrounded by nature while still being in the middle of the city.

Unfortunately, over the years, the naturalistic garden was overcome by invasive, nonnative plants from surrounding properties.

Today, Dumarton Oaks Park Conservancy (formed in 2011) has partnered with the National Park Service and is actively working to restore the park to the way it looked during its heyday. A free map and guide to Dumbarton Oaks Park, created by the Conservancy is available at the park's entrance.

## Montrose Park R Street NW

The oldest park in Georgetown, Montrose Park today seems like a classic city park with tennis courts, a playground, and green grass. The park actually has a unique history though.

In the early 1800s, the land belonged to rope-making magnate Robert Parrott, who also owned a mill situated just downhill along Rock Creek. Parrott generously allowed Georgetown residents to use his tract of land for picnics and

meetings. As a result, the area became known as Parrott's Woods.

By the early 20th century, the land had fallen into disrepair. Sarah Louisa Rittenhouse, Georgetown resident and social activist, spearheaded a group of women, who petitioned congress to buy the acreage. Montrose Park was established "for the recreation and pleasure of the people."

Map of Georgetown National Park Units

