

Introduction

In retirement, I had been using my time to prepare lectures about the history and politics of cruise ship destinations around the world. When the ravaging coronavirus stopped international travel in spring 2020, I turned to local sites, setting out each day in a different walk from our home in the Tenleytown/American University Park area of northwest Washington, DC. Finding so much to see and learn, I decided to write about my neighborhood's rich history. For seven weeks, I daily posted narratives on Facebook about places within a half-hour walk of my home. This volume is in response to suggestions from friends that I make a book out of the postings. I revised many of the original stories and added a score more.



(Matt Johnson, amended by author)



Several of the stories rely on the work of local historians, particularly the late Judith Beck Helm, who in 1981 published a detailed history: *Tenleytown, D.C.: Country Village into City Neighborhood*. (A hardcover version was republished in 2000.) I was also inspired by the *Top of the Town: Tenleytown Heritage Trail*, produced in collaboration with the Tenleytown Historical Society in 2010. Part of the District of Columbia Neighborhood Heritage Trails program initiated by Cultural Tourism DC, it consists of 19 illustrated signs along a two-hour walking tour, starting at the Tenleytown-AU Metro (subway) station.

As a former US diplomat, I am particularly interested in foreign relations and the work of embassies, including by staff in the intelligence field who must pretend to be diplomats. As a concerned citizen, I am keen to understand the roots of disparities and racial cleavages in our society. The national awakening to Black Lives Matter took place while I was writing my stories. These interests are reflected in my selection of sites to write about. Tenleytown has many more places of local interest worthy of narration, but in general I sought to tell stories that also would appeal to outside audiences.