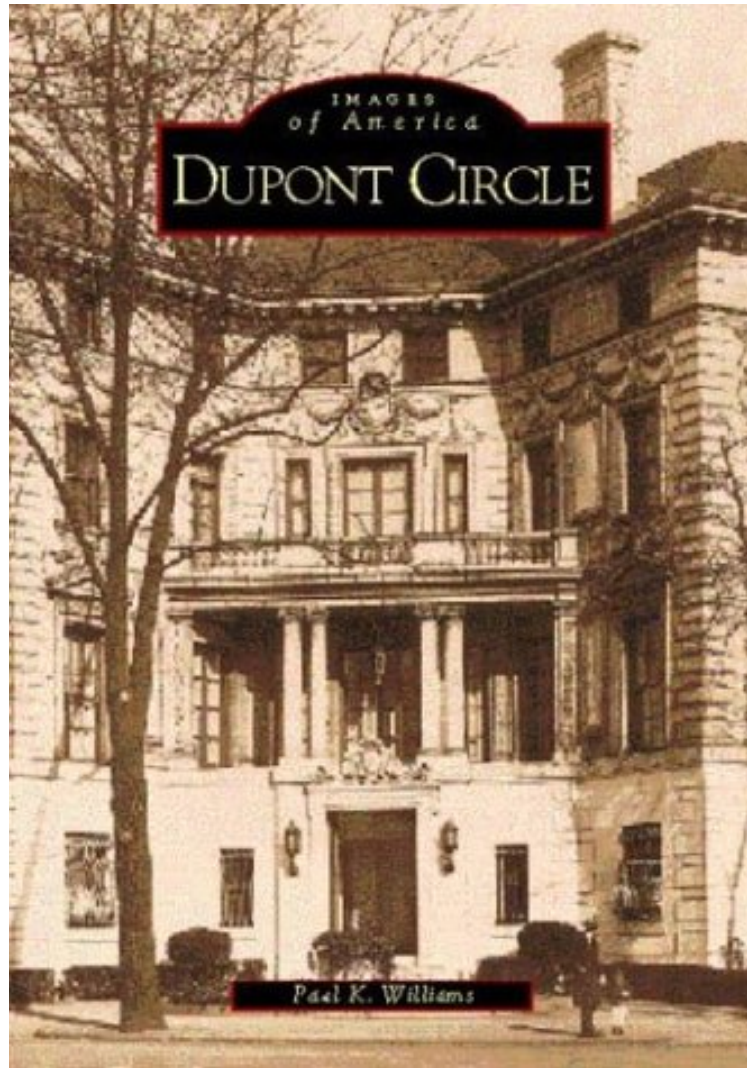


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Dupont Circle (DC) (Images of America)

Paul K. Williams

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Paul K. Williams : Dupont Circle (DC) (Images of America) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Dupont Circle (DC) (Images of America):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Brenda BaltonGreat gift to share. Very pleased.0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A ClassicBy A CustomerThe author's first of a dozen books on DC; this one is a classic must have!1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Vibrant City LifeBy Robin FriedmanLocated about two miles north of the White House at the intersection of Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire Avenues, the Dupont Circle area of Washington D.C is a promise of what urban life can be. With its diverse and active population, its colorful,flamboyant and changing character, its ambience that combines the old and

the new, its opportunities for both high seriousness and fun, the area has long been my favorite part of the city in which I have lived for over 30 years. It is an ideal place for a leisurely walk on the main thoroughfares and the side streets. The heart of the area is Dupont Circle itself with its magnificent fountain. The Circle is a place of constant traffic with the cars around it and with people passing through. At all hours people sit close to the fountain or around the park's perimeters playing chess, reading, sleeping, being with a loved one or with children, flirting, or just hanging out. It is urban life in microcosm. Paul Williams has written his photographic history of Dupont Circle as part of the Images of America Series which celebrates neighborhoods across the United States. Williams is a local architectural historian who has prepared several books on D.C. neighborhoods for Images of America. He resides in the Dupont Circle area. Williams's collection of photographs and his detailed annotations offer an excellent overview of the history of Dupont Circle, focusing on its earlier years. Until the 1870s, the area remained rural and was on the outskirts of Washington, D.C. With the influx of population following the Civil War, the area became studded with large mansions owned by the wealthy and powerful. The circle originally was called Pacific Circle until its name was changed in 1884 by Act of Congress to Dupont Circle in memory of the Civil War naval hero, Francis DuPont. A statue to DuPont was constructed in 1884 in the Circle that bears his name, but it was replaced by the famous fountain at the center of Dupont Circle in 1922. Williams's book includes many photos of the early mansions constructed on Dupont Circle, some of which still remain, together with pictures of early residents, including James Blair, Alexander Graham Bell, William Howard Taft, Duncan Phillips, Thomas Walsh, and many more. He documents the changing character of the area from a preserve of the wealthy and notable to an area consisting of townhouses, apartments, commercial development and the bustle of the city. His book shows the many embassies, schools, museums, and other institutions that surrounded and continue to grace the Dupont Circle area. But the most memorable parts of this book are the photographs which show the endless liveliness of Dupont Circle. I would have liked much more. There are photographs of old trolleys and streetcars running through and under the circle and of drawings for the Dupont Circle metro stop, with its enormous escalator. I enjoyed the photos of the park over the years, both with the Dupont statue and with the current fountain, as people over the decades have come to sit, wade in the fountain, engage in political activity, listen to music and enjoy an afternoon in the city (see, for example pp. 6,8,25,59, 118-127) There is a beautiful image of the Circle, with the Dupont statue on taken on a cold winter evening in 1918 (p.22) Each of these photographs captures a single moment in time and yet, taken together, they establish a sense of urban continuity surrounding the circle and its fountain. Williams includes several photographs and sketches made by local artist Lillian Spandorf in the late 1960s. Spandorf's work admirably catches the character of Dupont Circle. I would have liked to have seen more of it. Williams shows the change the WW II worked on Dupont Circle, with the influx of workers to help in the war effort, many of whom remained to make Washington D.C. their home. His photographs show the growing commercial character of the area, as stores, businesses, and apartments grew together with the remnants of the mansions. Many of Williams's photographs show a Dupont Circle commercial area before the rise of shopping centers, when the area was the premiere shopping street in Washington. Today the Circle is much more of a melange. Trendy fashionable stores sit side-by-side with restaurants of every stripe, new and used book stores and magazine outlets, bead and print stores, nightclubs and bars, music stores, ice cream parlors, and much more. It is an ever-changing experience to walk through the circle and up and down Connecticut Avenue. With its admixture of people and places and its ever-present feeling of life and change, Dupont Circle offers an open window upon urban living. Paul Williams has presented it well in this collection of photographs. Robin Friedman

From the vast estates of the mid-1800s to the rowhouses built at the end of the 19th century, from Charles Lindbergh's balcony address at the Patterson House to the various political rallies staged in the urban neighborhood, Washington, D.C.'s Dupont Circle has for many years been at the center of a rich history. Boasting a fascinating heritage of architectural, cultural, and political activity and diversity, the Dupont Circle neighborhood has played a part in the great story of the capital city and has witnessed many of the people and events that have challenged our national community. Following the area's use as a Civil War encampment, Dupont Circle slowly began to develop a more urban character. At the neighborhood's social zenith in the early 1900s, gracious mansions surrounding the circle hosted lavish parties attended by diplomats, presidents, and wealthy socialites. The photographs in this informative visual history capture the elegant homes that were later replaced by office buildings and the fashionable era that was soon to fade. Rare World War II images of former mansions used as rooming houses bring readers into the 20th century, along with the early 1960s photographs of gay activists who gathered at the circle and began the modern restoration of the neighborhood.

About the Author In Dupont Circle, author and local architectural historian Paul K. Williams has collected over 200 vintage black-and-white images that document the growth and development of the historic Dupont Circle neighborhood in our nation's capital. Mr. Williams is a resident of the Dupont Circle area, owns a preservation firm that specializes in building histories, and has also served as a host for numerous Home and Garden Television

programs focusing on the Dupont Circle neighborhood.