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To ○ Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at W&M

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Date: January 25, 2024 at 9:46:19 PM EST

To: Chris Collins <c.h.collins.esq@gmail.com>

Subject: Osher Lifelong Learning Institute--City of Washington: The Origin and History of the Federal City--1/30-2/13

Greetings! I am looking forward to seeing all of you at our first class at 9:30 am on Tuesday, January 30 in the Campus Center's Little Theater on the W&M campus. The primary focus of this course is on the history and development of the Mall area in Downtown DC, otherwise known as "the Monumental Core". I originally taught this course at Osher as a one-day overview, and then expanded it to two days, and now it's a three-day course. So, whether you have previously taken this class or not, and whether you are a DC native, or maybe just visited the Mall once in your grade school class trip, you are bound to learn something new.

There is no "required reading" for this course, but the Osher staff will be posting some slides to the Course Notes portion of their website before our first class which are intended to orient you to the L'Enfant Plan, the Monumental Core and one of the key components of the 1790 decision where to locate new seat of the federal government. The attachments will include:

1. a current tourist map of the buildings and monuments in the Monumental Core (as well as other buildings in Downtown DC). There are plenty of maps of the Mall area available on-line. I have found that the various maps do not include all the same buildings and features, so it's better to look at more than one. You should look on-line now (search "Downtown Washington DC map") for other easily-readable maps that contains the buildings and monuments in the Mall area. This will help familiarize you with the locations of the important features that we will be discussing in this course. One student in a prior class told me that she printed the map and brought it with her, so that she could follow along in class on the various sites as I discussed them;
2. the Residence Act of 1790, and the Amendment to the Residence Act of 1790, in which Congress approved a general location for the Temporary and Permanent Seat of the Government of the United States. You will see that the exact location was left to the President to decide. (Just remember that back then, they used "f" instead of "s" in certain places. So, in these documents, you will see that the "Congrefs of the United States" adopted this Act in "one thoufand feven hundred and ninety");
3. the L'Enfant Plan, and enlarged portions of the Plan containing explanatory notes; and
4. a list of my source materials for this course.

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So, before our first class, go to the same Osher website that you used for spring semester registration (<https://learnatosher.wm.edu>) and click on "Course Notes" to find the above materials for "City of Washington" -

Also, here's a link to a short YouTube video that you may find interesting, discussing the shape and contours of the land where the City of Washington was laid out in 1791. You will probably need to hold down the "ctrl" key as you click on the link. If that doesn't work, you will need to copy and paste the link into your web browser:

<<https://ghostsofdc.org/2012/01/25/video-visualizing-early-washington-d-c/>>
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One final note--The streets in the City of Washington that run east-west are lettered A through W (north of the Mall) and A through V (south of the Mall). I have often been asked why there is no "J Street" in the City.

Here is a great article that explains why: Why Is There No J Street in Washington, DC? - Ghosts of DC

<<https://ghostsofdc.org/2013/01/30/why-is-there-no-j-street/>> . If holding down the "ctrl" key and clicking on the link doesn't work, then you can try this one, or copy and paste it into your web browser:

<https://ghostsofdc.org/2013/01/30/why-is-there-no-j-street/>

See you on January 30!

Chris Collins