



Iron workers,  
Muirkirk, at  
the turn of the  
twentieth century.  
Courtesy Maryland  
State Archives.

## *African-Americans in Prince George's County*

A Brief History of the First 300 Years

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**F**rom the seventeenth century until today, African-Americans have been integral to the founding and development of Prince George's County. Active in the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, African-Americans served as soldiers and aided the nation while simultaneously laying the foundation for African-American communities that exist today. Many of these communities were first formed by slaves.

### **Slavery**

The African presence in Maryland predates Prince George's County's founding by several decades. There were two passengers of African descent among the settlers on the *Ark* and the *Dove*, British ships that landed in southern Maryland in 1634. Like many of the Europeans who were aboard the ships, the African passengers came to the colony as indentured servants. In the 1660s, when settlers began moving north to the area that would become Prince George's County, they brought indentured servants and African slaves with them. Europeans and Africans, both servant and slave, were put to work cultivating tobacco, the colony's and the county's first cash crop.

The initial success of tobacco in Maryland was due to an array of factors including European demand for smoking tobacco, the colony's pressing

need for a commercial product for the London export market, and a system of natural inlets and navigable rivers to transport the product. Tobacco cultivation increased rapidly for settlers once Maryland and Virginia began shipping tobacco to Britain. It soon became the colonies' leading cash crop, with sales of over 100 million pounds a year by the time of the Revolutionary War. With increasing demand for labor, by the mid-1600s planters turned to the African slave trade.

In 1666, Maryland's Provincial Legislature passed a declaration that stated, in part, that "all Negroes and other slaves already within the Province shall serve as *Durante Vita*<sup>1</sup>. And all children born of any Negro or other slave shall be slaves as their ffathers [sic] were for the terme of their lives." Later legislation determined slave

status according to that of the mother. As a result of the colony's rigid labor code, Maryland prospered and slavery grew. In 1720, 25 percent of Maryland planters owned slaves; by 1760 that number had grown to 50 percent. With the growing population of slave labor, the economy became more complex and began to include wheat production, iron working, and shipbuilding.

Despite the overwhelming odds against Maryland's enslaved men and women, they managed to create close-knit communities that emphasized home and family. Most children lived with their mothers and extended family. Weekends were reserved for supplementing meager rations and time with family, including visiting with spouses and family on neighboring plantations.

Provided with a minimum of food and supplies to care for and clothe themselves throughout the year, most slaves had to supplement their provisions. They became accomplished foragers, skilled hunters, and fishermen and were able to vary their diets by exploiting the natural resources of the region. Most plantations were located near a river where fish were plentiful. Along the coastal areas, shellfish such as crabs and oysters were seasonally available, and provided a substantial portion of a slave's diet.

While struggling to supplement their food rations slaves continued to dream of emancipation. In Maryland, as in every other slave-holding colony, the best method to attain freedom was to escape. Harriet Tubman, an escaped slave from Maryland, is famous for providing hundreds of slaves with the means to their freedom through the Underground Railroad. But the escapes, rebellions, plots, and court cases did not impede the growth of slavery or Maryland's significant role as a slave trading center. In Prince George's County, there were several slave markets, the most active in Upper Marlboro, the county seat. Slaves could be purchased on credit or in exchange for silver, paper money, or tobacco.

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<sup>1</sup> "For the duration of their lives."



**The Black Swamp School near Aquasco, prior to its restoration. The one-and-a-half story addition (now demolished) was added by the Daniel Skinner family after they purchased it for use as a residence in 1936.**

The Revolutionary War did little to disrupt slavery's prominence in the colony. For all of their rhetoric, most whites did not recognize any irony in their fight for freedom from England and the colonial system that they erected to enslave African-Americans. However, the war did result in some slaves gaining their freedom. In Prince George's County, Cupid Plummer was an example of a slave being freed upon completion of his duty in the Revolutionary Army. Plummer, like many African-American soldiers in the Revolutionary and subsequent wars, served as a draft substitute. His children, however, remained enslaved because they retained the status of their mother.

Between 1790 and 1850, the number of free blacks in the county increased from 164 to 1,138. Some were descendants of those slaves manumitted in the years following the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, while others purchased their freedom from their masters. These free black laborers earned their living hiring out to farms, in some cases working side by side with slaves. Although few in number, they formed the basis for many of the black communities that developed in the county after the Civil War.

During the Civil War, Maryland did not secede from the Union. The state, however, was bitterly divided over slavery, principally along geographic lines. Generally, whites in areas that did not depend heavily on slave labor for economic survival sided with the Union. Many tobacco-growing counties, including Prince George's, sympathized with the Confederacy. Maryland's divided loyalties are illustrated by the state's relationship to emancipation. Slaves in Maryland were not freed by the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, for it applied only to those states that were in rebellion against the Union. Slavery in Maryland was not abolished until January 1865, when the state's constitution of 1864 went into effect. But abolition did not mean that freedmen were regarded as equal, and the legislature attempted to maintain this inequality.

One of the most egregious examples is the law that allowed free black children to be apprenticed; using this law, former slave owners could take black children without parental consent, declare them orphans, and bind them for labor. Another law, the Disabilities Bill of 1865, disqualified blacks from bearing witness in court cases involving white defendants. While these and other laws were passed to limit the newly freed Marylanders, the black population worked and greatly improved their living conditions.

### **Reconstruction**

In the post-Civil War era, African-Americans embarked on a path of migration, education and self-help. During Reconstruction and into the twentieth century, the cities of Washington, D.C., and Baltimore experienced an increase in their black populations. Outlying areas, such as Prince George's County, absorbed some of this growth, and the county witnessed a new generation of black community formation. Many of the Freedmen continued to work in the same industry they worked in as slaves and extended the bonds formed during slavery into new communities. Gradually, they began to build their own communities near their jobs or railroads or other forms of transportation. At the center of these communities was often a school, church or lodge.

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As they struggled with new challenges in the period just after emancipation, African-Americans came to regard their survival as a collective effort. They pooled their limited resources and, often after years of fundraising, constructed houses of worship. Once built, churches of various denominations throughout the county served many purposes. In addition to providing tangible evidence of the strong religious beliefs of African-Americans, churches such as St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Croom and Mount Nebo African Methodist Episcopal Church in the Queen Anne area were also gathering places for the community, and schools for its children.

The African-American community of Rossville was formed by ironworkers from the Muirkirk Ironworks. Members of the community worked in the ironworks as slaves while it was owned by the Ellicott family and continued after it was purchased by a family of Quakers, the Coffins, in 1847. Charles Coffin was involved in every facet of his employees' lives, providing homes for families, schools for their children and employment for workers' wives. Muirkirk ironworkers were encouraged to shop at the company store on credit against their salaries. While these conditions contributed to a restrictive environment at the ironworks, they also encouraged strong communal bonds among those who worked and lived there. By 1868, the ironworkers established a Methodist meetinghouse, Queen's Chapel. Twenty years later, land adjoining the chapel was subdivided into 12 lots and purchased by black families who built houses and cultivated small farms on the land. In 1889, the community built Rebecca Lodge 6 of the Benevolent Sons and Daughters of Abraham. The lodge, known as Abraham Hall, became the nucleus of the Rossville community. It served at various times as a church, school, gathering place, and mutual aid society. In a somewhat different way, St. Paul's Baptist Church, founded by freedwoman Sarah Miranda Plummer, became the focal point of the African-American community of Bladensburg.

In the regions of the county where tobacco plantations were prevalent, emancipated slaves continued to work in the fields. The end of the war did not result in the redistribution of land that African-Americans had expected. With few options, most remained as tenant farmers and sharecroppers on the land where they were once enslaved. While land ownership in the county remained concentrated in the hands of former slaveholders and their descendants, some African-Americans were able to acquire land of their own.

In the northern area of the county a mid-size farm was acquired by Josiah Adams, who was born around 1814, probably as a slave. There is evidence he worked as a gardener at the Riversdale plantation, owned

**The Holly Grove  
Rosenwald School,  
circa 1930.**



by the Calvert family. Between 1871 and 1883, Adams purchased parcels of land near Riversdale; by the time of his death in 1884, he owned 48 acres. According to the instructions in his will, one of the parcels of land was to be set aside for use as a family cemetery. Adams' descendants retained ownership of the land throughout the first half of the twentieth century; their family burial ground, Cherry Hill Cemetery, is carefully tended and marked with interpretive signage.

In 1929, the Ridgley family acquired 52 acres of land in the central section of the county that the family had occupied and used to cultivate tobacco since 1871. Near the farm, a smaller parcel of land was trusted to Joseph Beall and Richard Cook to "be kept and used as place of divine worship for the use of the ministry and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church." Subsequently a church named for the Ridgley family was built and within two decades a burial ground added west of the church. Later the community added a school also known by the Ridgley family name.

The largest African-American owned parcels of land were located in the southern region of the county. Joseph Moore and his family owned and farmed nearly 400 acres of land in the county and more than 200 just south of the county. His large family including eight sons and their families worked to maintain both farms. Other families including the Mills, Parkers, Pinkneys, and Walls, each owned and worked 100 to 200 acre farms.

### **Education**

When Maryland's state constitution passed in 1864, it provided money for the first time to develop and build public schools for white children, but made no provisions for black children. The federal government assisted in providing education to freedmen across the nation with the formation of the Freedmen's Bureau, which began operating in Maryland in 1865. Obtaining access to the formal education they had been denied under slavery was a priority for newly freed African-Americans, and in Prince George's County they were determined to secure an education for themselves and their children. The Freedmen's Bureau, along with assistance from private charitable agencies, built

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schools specifically for blacks in the county. African-Americans were involved in this effort also; their contributions of land, labor, and money guaranteed the schools' operation and success. In 1872, after the Freedmen's Bureau ceased activity, the Prince George's County government began its involvement with the operation of schools for black children. Again, community members were faced with a school board unwilling to spend available resources on African-American schools. In 1917, the Julius Rosenwald Fund was established to aid in the construction of schools for black children. It had a profound effect on black education in the county.

Marlboro High School was opened for African-Americans in 1921. Championed by the Supervisor of Colored Schools, Doswell Brooks, the school was located in Upper Marlboro and served students in the southern part of the county. A new and larger high school for African-American students was built in Upper Marlboro in 1934, and named for Maryland-born abolitionist Frederick Douglass. Since then, many of the segregated schools in the county have been named for African-Americans who serve as an inspiration to students.

For more advanced studies, the Bowie Normal School provided post-high school education for those pursuing careers as teachers. Originally located in Baltimore, the school relocated to Bowie in 1910 and graduated many of the teachers in Prince George's County. Even with the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* Supreme Court decision banning segregation in schools, Prince George's County schools were not fully integrated until the early 1970s. These schools, however, were staffed with extraordinary African-American teachers usually educated at historically black colleges and universities. G. James Gholson, who served as a principal of Fairmont Heights High School before being promoted to Assistant Superintendent for the Administration and Supervision of Secondary Education in Prince George's County, was a well respected leader of educators in the county. Robert Gray, another school administrator, also served as the mayor in the same predominately black town of Fairmount Heights where he had previously served as principal of the local elementary school.

### **Railroads**

In the post-Civil War years, the rapid expansion of the federal government in Washington, D.C., influenced the growth and character of development in Prince George's County. Towns and suburbs grew along railroad lines. As the railroads extended further into the county, entrepreneurs purchased large tracts of land to develop along these transportation lines. The extension of railroads and streetcars into the county prompted the development of Fairmount Heights. Its residents were members of the emerging black middle class who worked in

the District of Columbia. North Brentwood holds the distinction as Prince George's County's first African-American incorporated town. By 1935, Fairmount Heights had achieved the same incorporated status. Residents proudly viewed incorporation as another avenue of governance for those long denied that privilege. In addition to modest, affordable housing, communities such as Fairmount Heights and North Brentwood provided residents with improved services such as well-lit streets, paved roads, trash removal, and fire and police protection. Small shops maintained by local entrepreneurs emerged to provide neighborhoods with the range of services they needed. Residents soon had access to grocery stores, restaurants, wood, coal and ice dealers, and in the case of Fairmount Heights, a social hall.

African-American migrants populated many communities as they moved into Prince George's County at the turn of the twentieth century. Other communities, such as Glenarden and Lincoln, grew along the short-lived Washington, Baltimore, and Annapolis (WB&A) line, which began operating in the county in 1908. Brookland, an African-American farming community, developed near another railroad, the Baltimore and Potomac (B&P) that had operated in the county since 1872. The B&P made daily stops at the nearby Glenn Dale station, transporting commuters, mail and freight to the area. Many of Brookland's residents were also employed by the railroad.

In the northern end of the county, also around the turn of the twentieth century, Edwin Newman, a white land developer, surveyed, mapped and developed property located along the B&O railroad tracks. The community that emerged, now known as Lakeland, developed along racial lines, with whites living on the west side and black residents on the east. African-Americans continued to move into the area seeking employment with the B&O and the University of Maryland. They eventually settled west of the railroad and whites quickly moved out of the area. The railroad also facilitated the development of early industries. The Muirkirk Ironworks had its own

branch line on the B&O. Workers would load the pig iron produced at the ironworks onto railroad cars for shipment throughout Maryland and to Pennsylvania. When the ironworks closed in 1920, many of the African-American workers who built the community of Rossville near the ironworks after the Civil War found new jobs on the B&O Railroad.

### Sports and Entertainment

While at play, the American public demanded that traditional roles be observed, especially in public. Whether at sporting events or at the racetracks, social mixing between whites and blacks was not tolerated. Since recreation was to remain largely segregated, African-Americans created their own resort communities and leisure time activities for their families to enjoy throughout the year.

Notley Hall Amusement Park, owned and operated by African-Americans, was established in 1890. Excursion steamboats from

**BELOW:** Sign at now-demolished Fairmount Heights Municipal Center.





*African-Americans not only participated in but dominated many recreational and sporting activities.*

**BELOW:** Freddy Powell, first coach and manager of the Wee Wee Tigers, later known as the Mitchellville Tigers. Photo taken in 1945.



Washington, D.C., ferried groups of African-American families, social clubs, and other organizations to the park where they enjoyed the bowling alley, shooting gallery, pony track, and dance pavilion until it closed in 1924. To escape the summer heat, African-Americans regularly organized day trips by car or bus to Carr's and Sparrows' Beach in Annapolis. Retreat communities such as Lincoln, Eagle Harbor and Highland Beach began to emerge in the early twentieth century. In these private retreats, African-Americans could spend time with their families in safe havens where the realities of racial discrimination and Jim Crow laws were not immediately apparent. Despite segregation, African-Americans not only participated in but dominated many recreational and sporting activities since the nineteenth century.

In the early colonial period, slaves were involved in horse racing. In southern states such as Maryland, it was not uncommon for wealthy planters to own both the horse and its rider, creating opportunities for both free and enslaved African-Americans to become involved in horse racing. After emancipation, African-Americans continued to excel in racing. In fact, the post-war period was an era of dominance for black jockeys. They dominated the first Kentucky Derby in 1875, filling 13 of 15 slots and winning the title. However, African-American jockeys began to face systematic discrimination and were gradually excluded from major stake races. Their continued participation was relegated to smaller regional and state racing venues.

As an industrialized America waxed nostalgic about its rural past, spectator sports played outdoors became increasingly popular. Baseball quickly became the national pastime and drew large enthusiastic crowds. African-Americans played the sport almost from its inception, but from the beginning there were efforts to exclude them from the game's professional ranks. Excluded from national games, African-Americans throughout the county formed sandlot teams that competed on a weekly basis. Attending games generated a sense of pride and provided entertainment for entire communities. Communities banded together to raise money for uniforms, supplies and other expenses. Local teams such as the Brentwood Flashes, Lakeland White Sox, and Glenarden Braves, played baseball on sandlots in communities throughout the county. Forming teams and leagues was just one strategy African-Americans employed to assert themselves and escape the realities of segregation.

In the off-season, one of Prince George's best known local teams, the Washington Black Sox, often played Negro League teams such as the Homestead Grays and the Pittsburgh Crawfords on its home field in Mitchellville. With the elimination of segregation in the

sport, several players signed with Major League teams and by 1960, the Negro National League disbanded. Locally, sandlot teams remained popular and play continued in Prince George's County and the surrounding area under the direction of the Tri-State League.

More recently, African-American Prince Georgians have excelled in other sports including track and field and young adult basketball. The Glenarden Track Club, originally the Dellwood Avenue Striders, was organized as a summer program in 1983 by Senior Olympic track star, Larry Colbert, Sr., for his son and neighborhood children. Within four years the club became affiliated with the Glenarden Ardmore Boys and Girls Club. Competing in regional, national and international meets, the team quickly grew to include more than 200 members from across the metropolitan area. It reorganized again in 1987 as a non-profit under the name of the Glenarden Track Club. Today the club has more than 300 members of all ages.

The idea of Midnight Basketball, which offers urban youth a late night activity, began in 1985 in Prince George's County. Former Glenarden Town Manager G. Van Standifer developed the program that requires players to attend weekly practice, educational workshops and vocational counseling. Shortly after Standifer's program began, it was duplicated in urban centers around the region and throughout the nation.

### **Moving Toward Equality**

The World War II era ushered in new possibilities and struggles for African-Americans in the county and the country at large. In Prince George's County, African-Americans began to see themselves in a new light and to embrace new challenges. Pioneering African-American pilots forged a place in early aviation history. In previous decades, African-Americans worked in traditional roles as laborers and clerks in the airmail service at College Park Airport, but the establishment of Columbia Air Center significantly altered the nature of African-American involvement in aviation.

African-American soldiers returned from the WWII battlefields of Europe with renewed energy, determined to fight for their place as first-class citizens. They joined forces with the political leadership and growing middle class in the emerging black townships. This group of restless, talented, and self-reliant citizens was critical to the formation of the Civil Rights Movement that changed the lives of Prince George's residents and the county. The NAACP was at the forefront of much of this activity. The local chapter of the NAACP was founded in 1935 with Hester V. King as president. King served as president for nearly 30 years, working to desegregate the courthouse in Upper Marlboro, other public accommodations, and particularly the schools throughout the county. Most of the black schools of the earlier period were closed after desegregation began in 1954. Many were sold and converted to other uses.

The NAACP was able to make an impact in part because of the strong black community structures that had been in place long before that time, such as the church, civic and community groups. Community activist Theresa Banks made use of these institutions as she led the fight for teacher pay parity, which was finally achieved in 1947. But in the years following, public dissent from the status quo grew more aggressive. Students from

the University of Maryland, along with community activists, led sit-ins at lunch counters all along US Route 1. Members of the Prince George's County chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) marched in front of developer William J. Levitt's model homes in the Belair section of Bowie after sales agents refused to sell a home to a black family. Slowly, signs of change began to appear. In 1967, for example, Hester King's son, Arthur A. King of Beltsville, became the first black delegate to the Maryland General Assembly.

Another factor in the fight for racial equality in the county was a wave of black migration that began in the late 1960s and lasted into the early 1970s. The boom was due in part to rapid construction of garden apartments and condominiums located near the border between Prince George's County and Washington, D.C., and many of the migrants were blacks from Washington. One of the early African-American communities, Glenarden, ushered in the federal urban renewal program for Prince George's County. It was the first town to take advantage of the program and underwent dramatic physical change. Apartment homes and condominiums with low cost options, as well as a shopping center, were developed in Glenarden. These extensive changes were enacted under the leadership of long-term Mayor James R. Cousins, Jr., and Glenarden's town council. Many African-American leaders began their political careers in the black towns of Prince George's County. For example, State Senators Decatur Trotter, Tommie Broadwater, and Nathaniel Exum were all elected officials in the county before going on to the senate. Judge Alexander Williams, Jr., was elected the State's Attorney for Prince George's County in 1987 and was the first African-American to serve in this capacity for the county.

Not only did Prince George's County nourish many of the state's political leaders, it was also the home to a number of other prominent African-Americans from a variety of professions including science, education, law, and exploration. One of the first African-American judges to serve in the county was Sylvania W. Woods, Sr. Woods, like many African-Americans during the 1960s, migrated to the county in search of a family-oriented community. Dr. Henry A. Wise, Jr., moved to the county in the 1960s to provide medical services in many of the African-American towns in the county and served as the director of the medical center at Bowie State University. Glenarden resident Bonnie Johns was an advocate for children's rights and Jesse B. Mason was a pioneer in developing the field of special education. Through the work of these individuals and others, Prince George's County began to benefit considerably from this new generation of African-American leaders.

The 1980s witnessed another influx of black migrants to the county, this one engineered in part by the county government itself. The Economic Development Corporation encouraged developers to build houses and create industries to attract white-collar professionals into the county, and the majority of these new homeowners were black and middle class. These newcomers did not meet with the same intensity of white resistance that those of the 1970s did, partially because, according to one, there was "a coming of age of black identity in the county. There was a critical enough mass of black people by the '80s so blacks could feel that they were a part of the county. That's when you get people who move here because they want to live in a black community." These new migrants have changed the racial, economic and political structure of Prince



**ABOVE:** Social hall at St. Thomas Methodist Church, Baden.

county in the United States with a majority African-American population, and it has a median African-American household income of \$69,000. The African-Americans who now live here have many challenges ahead of them, along with a legacy of activism and achievement. At all levels of public and community life, African-Americans in Prince George's County are accepting the challenge.

**RIGHT:** Mildred Ridgley Gray and a friend stroll along Central Avenue near the land long-owned by her family.



George's County in numerous ways. New communities have formed, and have brought with them an economic base that is able to support the more than 8,000 black-owned businesses in the county today. In 1994, Wayne Curry was elected as Prince George's first black county executive; subsequent leaders have also been African-American.

The county's African-American population is now about 65 percent of the county's total, up from about 50 percent in 1996. Prince George's County is the wealthiest



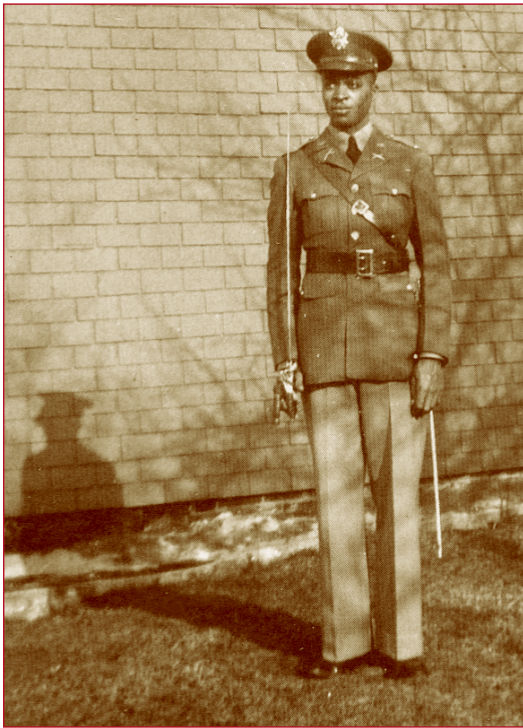
Congregants outside  
Mount Nebo African  
Methodist Episcopal  
Church after services,  
mid-twentieth century.  
Courtesy Mount Nebo  
A.M.E. Church.

## *Significance of African-American Resources*

**A**frican-Americans are inextricably linked to the narrative of Prince George's County history and to what makes Prince George's County distinctive today. The unique set of circumstances that shaped Maryland's famed "middle temperament"<sup>1</sup> left an indelible imprint on the African-American experience in the county. African-Americans first arrived in Maryland on the *Ark* and the *Dove* in 1634. By 1720, one quarter of Maryland planters owned slaves; by 1760, this percentage had risen to half. By 1850, Maryland had more free blacks than any other state, with over 29,000 living in Baltimore. In 1860, free and enslaved African-Americans constituted 25 percent of the state's population. However, unlike other states with large black populations, the power structure in Maryland was dominated by mercantile, rather than agricultural interests. Despite considerable southern sympathy, Maryland did not secede. Consequently, Maryland's large African-American population was denied many of the protections and political benefits of Reconstruction. Although the Freedmen's Bureau was active in the state, constitutional amendments that gave blacks specific legal protections and rights in the former Confederacy did not apply to Maryland. Because Maryland remained in the Union, most of its white citizens could still vote

<sup>1</sup> As historian Robert Brugger wrote, "Marylanders both championed liberty and relied on slavery....The elusive character of Maryland may lie in its search for what we can abbreviate as the middle way, between extremes, where the human spirit thrives." *Maryland: A Middle Temperament, 1634–1980*, 1988, The Johns Hopkins University Press.

and run for political office. The political vacuum that allowed former slaves to hold elective office in other parts of the south did not exist in this border state.



Louis Ridgley in his infantry uniform outside the Arthur Sr. and Mary Ridgley house, 1940s. The dwelling is no longer standing.

Within Maryland, Prince George's County occupied a unique position. By 1660, European settlers, their slaves, and indentured servants had moved north into what is now Prince George's County. In 1850, there were over 11,000 enslaved persons in the county, a number that had remained fairly constant since 1790 and was the highest numerical population of any Maryland county. In Calvert and Charles counties, the black population exceeded the white population. In 1850, there were 12,648 African-Americans in Prince George's County, of whom 1,138 were free and 11,510 were enslaved. The white population totaled 8,901. By 1870, over 45 percent of the population of the county was African-American, a percentage similar to Anne Arundel County and the rest of southern Maryland.

Thus, African-Americans played an integral role in the history of Prince George's County. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, blacks constituted the labor force that fueled the county's agricultural prosperity. Enslaved laborers and tenant farmers underpinned the agricultural system of the county.

Prince George's County's relationship with the District of Columbia, coupled with the District's unique importance to blacks, further shaped the county's destiny. Washington, D.C., held special significance for all black people. In addition to the social foundation established by Washington's large, free black population in the years before the Civil War, Howard University (founded in 1867) provided an intellectual center as well as job opportunities for educated African-Americans.

Improvements in transportation further strengthened the connection between Washington, D.C., and Prince George's County in the twentieth century. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, the development of rail and streetcar lines connecting Prince George's County with Annapolis, Baltimore, and Washington facilitated suburban growth. African-Americans constituted an increasingly important element of the county's twentieth-century suburban growth.

Historic and cultural resources associated with African-Americans are crucial to this interpretation. When trying to document these resources, traditional methodology relying on written documentation falls short when applied to African-Americans. In *Secret City*, a groundbreaking history of African-Americans in Washington, D.C., Constance Green observed that blacks have largely been ignored in traditional written sources. Thomas Battle, the curator of the Moorland-Spangarn Research Center at Howard University, catalogued and annotated the extensive documentary sources bearing on the history of African-Americans in Washington. Battle found that much more attention has been focused upon the problems and negative aspects of black life in Washington than upon the positive aspects of organization and club development, the achievements of groups and individuals, and activist efforts to improve the quality of life in the face of discrimination and indifference.

Historic settlements, buildings, and sites provide an alternate route to understanding and a powerful vehicle for interpreting history. Structures survive as a record of concrete achievement, opening a window to a heritage often not available in written sources. A close study of these cultural resources provides an important lens for viewing the African-American experience in the county. Many of these buildings are the work of African-American hands. Blacks built their own Freedmen's schools (none are extant in the county) and constructed churches such as the Union Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church in Upper Marlboro and the Brooks Methodist Episcopal Church in Croom. African-American tenant farmers constructed the Holy Family Roman Catholic Church (1890), a Carpenter Gothic church in Woodmore that is a very fine example of its form. Black carpenters constructed many of the houses in communities such as Fairmount Heights and North Brentwood. Buildings are vital elements for interpreting more recent history as well. The Van Horn-Mitchell House in Deanwood, for example, illustrates the Mitchells' wide-ranging influence and leadership in the Muslim faith.

Similarly, archeology provides evidence for how people lived in the past. Archeological investigation is particularly valuable for tracing the enduring African influence in the Chesapeake region. Excavations at Oxon Hill Manor uncovered delftware deliberately placed within the walls of a slave quarter, suggesting the influence of West-African medicinal and religious practice. The material record that standing structures and archeological investigation provide can illuminate scant written documentation to yield new historical insight. The physical record that archeological sites and standing structures furnish is potentially as valuable as written sources such as Freedmen's Bureau Records and the U.S. Manuscript Census.

Historic resources can sometimes be studied within a framework shaped by political boundaries. Resources associated with African-Americans often do not fit within this framework, as geographic boundaries shaped by political jurisdiction can be arbitrary for a disenfranchised population. Local figures and events must be considered against the broader, national backdrop of constitutional amendments, Supreme Court decisions, and social change. The broad reach of the African-American press and far-flung family, school, and church networks knit black people together across city, state, and regional boundaries.

**Detail of a quatrefoil overdoor window at the Holy Family Roman Catholic Church.**



In a similar manner, any effort to understand historic resources associated with African-Americans must be undertaken with an eye towards the process of change. Government policy considers historic preservation a public good because it grounds people with a sense of continuity and a sense of the past. Interpretation is critical to conveying meaning and to making the past live. Buildings most often embody distinct chronological moments—the date of their construction, the date of a specific event, the active life of a prominent person. But buildings can also be vehicles for interpreting what transpires with the passage of time. This reading is particularly important for the African-American experience, an experience characterized by rapid and dramatic change. In Prince George's County, African-Americans went from

Under the ownership of Joseph Montgomery, who purchased it in 1925, the Mitchellville Store became one of the earliest black-owned businesses in the area, and was the social-commercial center of the Mitchellville community. The building (Historic Site 71B-007) was destroyed by fire in 1985.



*Considerable historical meaning and associations survive, even in the locations of demolished resources and long-vanished settlements.*

slavery, to emancipation, to Reconstruction, to Jim Crow, to full civil rights, to political and socio-economic dominance—all within a 200-year span. Evaluation of resources associated with African-Americans must take the expectation and importance of physical changes in stride. Alterations often document the dynamic of political and social change which characterizes this community. Far from marring the integrity of a building, these changes are the chips and scrapes reflecting the strategies African-Americans adopted to survive within a restricted and ever-shifting environment. In addition to considering the resources presented in this publication, those interested in this subject may wish to visit the farm tenant house, now in the Smithsonian Institution, that was home to several African-American families and was originally part of the B. D. Mullikin House Site at 1200 N.E. Crain Highway.<sup>2</sup>

Segregation rooted African-Americans in particular places. Rather than moving on, blacks tended to stay in settlements and precincts that they had claimed. Buildings were continually modified to address current need. Adaptation became more prevalent than new construction of purpose-built structures. Consequently, considerable historical meaning and associations survive, even in the locations of demolished resources and vanished settlements. The end of segregation resulted in abandoned schools and neighborhoods. Resources associated with segregated and rural communities have become increasingly fragile in the face of intense development pressure. It is the associative, and not just the architectural values of these resources, that are significant.

<sup>2</sup> See also *Hearth and Home: Preserving a People's Culture* by George McDaniel, Temple University Press, 1982.





Primary school children at the Maryland Normal and Industrial School, July, 1918. Photo from the Goodloe family archives.

## Education

Education constitutes one of the most important historic themes associated with African-Americans in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Although the development of schools is closely linked with the establishment of settlements and communities, the importance of education as a strategy for advancement demands separate treatment.

As with churches, African-American schools served a variety of public purposes that extended beyond those provided by educational institutions in the white community. In many ways, education embodied a community's support for its children and its hope for better lives for future generations. When interviewed in 2008, the then-83-year-old Evelyn Quander Rattley spoke movingly of its importance: "We stand for something and all of this could be presented as evidence of what an African-American family can achieve just by hard work, clean living, believing in a higher being, praying,

and respecting each other, and love of country, and love of family, and most of all, education.”<sup>1</sup> Community efforts were not limited solely to schools and were expressed through the extended family, clubs, and community institutions such as churches. As a means of socialization, education also functioned as a vehicle for developing the emotional fortitude and self-assurance required to survive in a segregated society.

Scattered settlements and the demands of agricultural life posed difficulties for rural schools and their teachers. There were no high schools for black students outside of cities in 1895 Maryland. This lack of secondary education was common in rural areas throughout the country, but particularly acute in southern states. Many black families in Maryland and Virginia made sacrifices to send their children to board with relatives in Baltimore and the District of Columbia so that they could get high school educations.

While only the Shapersville School in Accokeek survives to represent nineteenth-century African-American education in the county, the record of the twentieth-century efforts can still be seen. The school buildings embody how complex forces combined to create a singularly important institution. With the assistance of the Freedmen’s Bureau and outside philanthropists, African-Americans in Prince George’s County succeeded in establishing a number of primary schools by the end of the nineteenth century. In Prince George’s County, the most enduring legacy of Freedmen’s Bureau schools may be the communities that formed around them. The commitment that rural African-Americans in the county made to funding and building schools testifies to their determination and drive, although the hard work and seasonal demands of agricultural labor often took precedence over learning. In rural states, movements requiring compulsory education and extending schools beyond the primary grades languished; public education was sometimes opposed for its democratizing influence. (In Maryland, school attendance was not compulsory until 1902.) The rural character of the county and scattered settlements diluted the meager resources available to sustain schools and teachers. Isolated settlements had difficulty attracting and retaining teachers. Poplar Hill, for example, could offer no place for a teacher to board.

The Freedmen’s Bureau required community participation. Encouraged by this requirement, African-Americans purchased land and formed community organizations to raise funds for churches and schools. The bureau expected settlements to provide a site for the school, \$200 for school construction, and \$15 per month for the teacher. These were considerable sums at a time when the average family made \$120 per year. Nevertheless, African-Americans in Prince George’s County successfully petitioned for ten Freedmen’s Bureau schools between 1866 and 1868, although many of them were not constructed until the 1870s. These schools were essentially one-room primary schools

<sup>1</sup> See the “John Henry Quander House” in the Upper Marlboro Community section.

*“We stand for something  
and all of this could be  
presented as evidence  
of what an African-  
American family can  
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clean living, believing in a  
higher being, praying, and  
respecting each other, and  
love of country, and love  
of family, and most of all,  
education.”*



Julius Rosenwald and Booker T. Washington at Tuskegee Institute, February 22, 1915.

focused on literacy skills. Freedmen's Bureau Schools in the county included Union Institute, Bladensburg; Marlboro Seminary, Upper Marlboro; Woodville School, Aquasco; Meadows School (near Forestville); St. Thomas School, Baden; Oxon Hill School; Lower Piscataway, Accokeek; Croom School, Nottingham; Chapel Hill School; Clinton/Robeystown, Laurel, T.B. and Muirkirk.<sup>2</sup> Establishing and maintaining the schools provided an important vehicle for African-American leadership and community organization, nurturing skills that would sustain the population in the future. Prince George's County took over the Colored Schools when the Freedmen's Bureau disbanded in 1872. Schools were built by the county for blacks, but often parents had to provide some of their own money to put up a decent building and keep it maintained. Usually a community petitioned the school board for a school and the board had to decide if there was money, whether there would be enough students, and where it would be located. In a pattern often found in declining rural areas, the schools received little support from the county government. In 1895, Prince George's was one of five Maryland counties that made no contribution to colored schools from county funds. Because of proximity to Washington, D.C., African-Americans in the county enrolled their children in the

Washington, D.C., Colored School system, utilizing trolley lines for transportation. Finally in 1921, when a new high school for whites opened in Upper Marlboro, the previous building was repurposed as a secondary school for blacks.

**I**ndustrial education provided an alternative means of gaining skills formerly learned through apprenticeship. Prior to the Civil War, Negro mass meetings, known as conventions, and militant abolitionists supported industrial education as a strategy for economic self-help. Former Union General Samuel Chapman Armstrong, who founded the Hampton Institute in 1868, was an articulate proponent of this system. Armstrong, who had commanded black troops and who had served as superintendent of the Freedmen's Bureau, viewed industrial education as a moral force that would endow African-Americans with Yankee virtues. He also recognized the possibilities it offered as a basis for agreement among northern and southern whites as well as black leaders.

The concept and purpose of industrial education has always been subject to varying interpretations. It was both a pedagogical technique for teaching the mind how to treat specific objects, and a moral force that established character traits such as thrift, morality, and respect for labor. The paradox plaguing industrial education was that it could be viewed as a tool to reconcile labor to a subordinate position, while at the same time serving as a strategy for laborers to better themselves.

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<sup>2</sup> Several of these schools were known under other names. The most common name for the school or the school's geographic location appears in this list.

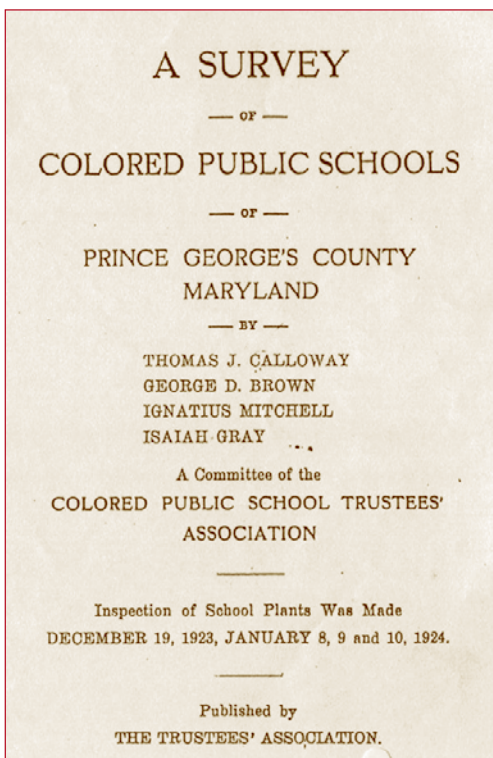
Although it was a lifeline for rural southern blacks who faced a marginal existence as share-croppers, industrial education had little relevance for wealthier African-Americans who aspired to professional positions. The intellectual community feared that industrial education limited blacks to being “hewers of wood and drawers of water.” In 1881, Booker T. Washington founded Tuskegee Institute to provide industrial education, primarily for rural, southern African-Americans. Despite Tuskegee’s enormous impact, discussions of the institute and of industrial education are often clouded by the shadow of its founder. Booker T. Washington was controversial in his own time and he remains so today. Enormously powerful, he controlled private philanthropy and influenced government policy; for example, Washington succeeded in blocking W. E. B. Du Bois’ appointment as the head of the Washington, D.C., Colored Schools. Many better-educated African-Americans reviled him because they felt that he acquiesced to the policy of “separate but equal.” At Atlanta’s Cotton States and International Exposition of 1895, two years after *Plessy v. Ferguson*, Washington gave a speech in which he said, “In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress.” Washington worked diligently behind the scenes for equality, but this activity was largely unknown until many years after his death.

In 1894 the Reverend Francis P. Willes, the rector at St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Croom, established St. Simon’s Mission on the grounds of the rectory there. The construction of a separate building for African-Americans substantially increased the size of the black congregation, which had been a part of St. Thomas’ for decades. The rector’s sisters, Suzanne and Katharine Willes, taught at the church school. St. Simon’s was so successful that the Bishop of Washington provided the church with a full-time African-American rector,

August Jensen. Heavily influenced by Booker T. Washington’s work at Tuskegee, Suzanne Willes founded the Croom Institute in 1902. Willes devoted her life to African-American education. She raised funds for the coeducational school from other states and incorporated the school in 1903, the year construction on its first buildings began. Willes proposed to use industrial education “as a means of opening better and wider avenues of employment to young colored men and women.” The curriculum at the institute included cooking, home economics, sewing and dress-making for women, and scientific agriculture for men. A private institution dependent on philanthropy, the school faced financial difficulties. In 1918, the institute was dissolved, severing its connection with the Episcopal Church. It then reopened as the Croome Settlement School, drawing students from throughout southern Maryland. The school also served wards of the Washington, D.C., Child Welfare Department. (See page 188.)

Fairmount Heights, largely settled by Tuskegee graduates, offered another setting for industrial education. In 1915 the Fairmount Heights School became the only public school offering industrial training for African-Americans in the county. James F. Armstrong, a Tuskegee graduate who settled in Fairmount Heights around 1905, served as supervisor of Colored Schools in Prince George’s County through 1919.

**BELOW:** This 1924 survey yields much detailed information for historians.



In 1913, philanthropist Julius Rosenwald instituted a program, conceived by Booker T. Washington, to construct rural schools for blacks throughout the American south. President of Sears, Roebuck and Co., Rosenwald believed that education was the key to training African-Americans for the labor force. In 1917, he set up the Julius Rosenwald Fund, following in the well-established path of previous northern philanthropic foundations such as the Southern Education Board, the General Education Board, the Jeanes Foundation, and the John F. Slater Fund. By 1928, the Rosenwald Fund had constructed 20 percent of rural black schools in the south, serving one-third of the

school population. When the program ended in 1932, it had helped fund close to 5,000 schools in 15 states, including 28 in Prince George's County.

**DUCKETTSVILLE—SCHOOL 3, DISTRICT 14.**

Miss Louise Green, Teacher.

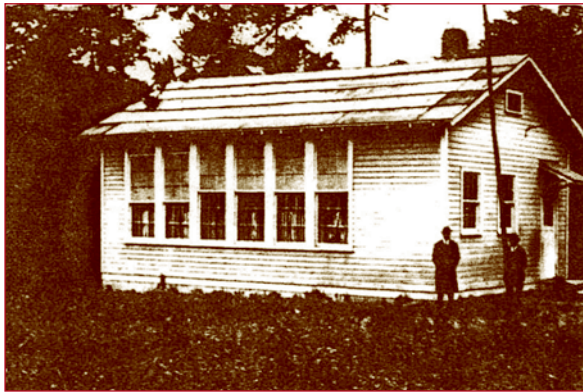
Trustees—John T. Porter, Henry O. Watson, John Dorsey.

We fear that we can say little but words of praise for this brand-new Rosenwald school with its neat cloak room, clean floor, tidy window curtains, enthusiastic children. However, the teacher needs a teacher's desk and chair and a bookcase. From the co-operation she seems to have from parents and patrons we are confident that she will soon have all her wants supplied. We wish that those teachers who feel discouraged in their work could drop into Ducketsville and some other such schools as we had the pleasure of briefly looking into. Bowie school, Ducketsville school and Fletcherstown school ought to be combined into one graded school in the town of Bowie, as none of them is more than one and a half miles distant from Bowie. So much better work is possible.

**ABOVE:** Praise for the Duckettsville School from the "Survey of Colored Public Schools."

**BELOW:** The Duckettsville Rosenwald School, soon after its construction in 1923.

This school is no longer extant.



The Rosenwald program required that communities petitioning for a school supply seed money. Localities could combine cash, material, and in-kind labor for their match. The fund provided a set of mandatory guidelines intended to serve as models for rural schools, publishing a book of standardized plans and specifications that was distributed free of charge. The Rosenwald Fund retained the philanthropic preference for industrial education, requiring that every school have an "industrial room." Schools often converted these rooms to other uses.<sup>3</sup>

Nine Rosenwald schools out of the original 28 survive (schools that survive are shown here in bold). The buildings were sometimes built on the site of earlier Freedmen's Bureau Schools. The **Lincoln School** illustrates how the Rosenwald pattern operated. Thomas J. Calloway, an activist attorney who developed the community of Lincoln, secured funding for a Rosenwald School for the town that opened in 1922. The "Community Club," formed for the purpose of securing the school, raised funds through entertainment events and subscriptions. With this funding and a

<sup>3</sup> Interviewed in 2008, Mary Hollomand, a retired crypt analyst for NSA, spoke about her attendance at the Lakeland Elementary Rosenwald School in 1937–1943. "There was a small room in the middle. I don't remember what that was for. I don't know whether that's where we ate lunch, or what. It was a small room there for something." At Ridgeley Rosenwald School, Mildred Ridgley Gray referred to the space as a "multipurpose room;" the room was eliminated when a third classroom was added in the 1940s.



**Mattie Ridgley and her class at the Ridgeley Rosenwald School in the 1940s.**

also a school in North Brentwood. Lakeland Elementary School (the John C. Johnson School) opened in 1926. Also in 1926, construction began on the **T.B. School** near Brandywine, designed by Raleigh, North Carolina, architects Linthicum and Linthicum, who also designed the Bowie School, **Community High School in Lakeland**, **Ridgeley School**, Westwood, Laurel, Capitol Heights and the **Highland Park School**, all completed in the period from 1926–1928. In **Collington**, Colored School 2 in Election District 7 opened in 1927 serving seven grades. The now much-altered **Clinton School** (Colored School 1, Election District 9) was typical of the larger, two-room schools and opened the same year. The Meadows School (Colored School 2 in Election District 9) was completed in 1929, and in 1930 Brandywine, Mitchellville, and Holly Grove built schools. The **Ridgeley School** is the most intact of the surviving Rosenwald Schools in Prince George’s County. Ridgeley followed the elementary school prototype of two large classrooms with a central passage, two cloakrooms and an industrial room. This school was the first purpose-built school for the community; previously, classes were held in a “benevolent hall” associated with the Ridgely Methodist Episcopal Church. Today the school has been restored to its appearance in the 1940s.

In more densely settled areas, African-Americans used Rosenwald funds to construct secondary schools. In 1928, both the Community High School in Lakeland and the Highland Park School opened, both partially constructed with Rosenwald funds. The school in Lakeland drew students from the northwestern part of the county; the Highland Park School served the north-central section. (South county was already served by Marlboro High School, which opened in 1921.)

Two schools survive from the post-Rosenwald period. The Woodville School, constructed in 1934, is a rare and outstanding example of a rural school house. Situated in Aquasco, the Woodville School was the largest elementary school in the county constructed for African-Americans during this period. Although the Rosenwald school program had ended two years earlier, the new Woodville School took advantage of outside assistance from the federal government. The Federal Emergency Relief Administration provided the labor to construct the school, using materials provided by the county Board of Education. The much smaller Poplar Hill School was built in 1936 in the rural community of Baden to replace the 1878 school building. The small size and idiosyncratic form of the school may indicate that African-Americans designed and built the school themselves.

lot they had purchased, the community was able to demonstrate the financial support required for a Rosenwald grant. The school, one of the largest and best-equipped of the early schools, opened in 1922 with Calloway as principal. In the same year, Chapel Hill, Fletchertown, Duckettsville, Dupont Heights, Glenarden, Upper Marlboro, Muirkirk, and Oxon Hill also constructed schools. A school in Forestville was built in 1923. In 1924, Colored School 2 in Election District 6 (**Camp Springs School**), designed by architect Russell Mitchell, opened, and



# ROSENWALD SCHOOLS

Prince George's County

★ Existing School Building

☆ School Site



0 1 2 4 Miles





The west classroom in the newly-restored Ridgeley Rosenwald School. The reproduction light fixtures are replicas of an original found in the crawl space during the restoration. See page 127.

## Prince George’s County Rosenwald Schools

Rosenwald schools listed by year of construction. The nine extant schools are shown in bold. Since the two Chapel Hill schools were constructed in different years, there are 28 schools shown here; 27 communities had Rosenwald schools.

Years of Construction	Number Constructed	Community/School Name
1921–1922	1	<b>Buena Vista (Lincoln)</b>
1922–1923	8	Chapel Hill (1), Duckettsville, Dupont Heights, Fletchertown, Glenarden, Upper Marlboro, <b>Muirkirk</b> , Oxon Hill
1923–1924	1	Forestville
1924–1925	2	Brentwood (North Brentwood), <b>Camp Springs</b>
1925–1926	7	Chapel Hill (2), Laurel, Lakeland, <b>T.B.</b> , Westwood, Capitol Heights
1926–1927	4	Bowie, <b>Clinton, Collington, Ridgeley</b>
1928–1929	3	<b>Community High School (Lakeland), Highland Park, Meadows</b>
1929–1930	3	Brandywine, Mitchellville, Holly Grove

Bowie State University grew out of the Baltimore Normal School for Colored Teachers, founded in 1865. Colored Normal Schools were especially important in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As the difficulty of maintaining Freedmen’s Bureau Schools illustrates, a cadre of well-trained African-American teachers was critical for the educational effort needed after emancipation. In the late-nineteenth century, only 35 of the 210 teachers employed in the Baltimore Colored School System were African-American. Teaching had practical applications that appealed to white philanthropy. Moreover, the aspirations embodied in a normal school devoted to teacher training were less threatening to the established order than those of a liberal-arts institution such as Howard University. In 1908, Maryland took over the assets of the Baltimore Colored Normal School, promising to support it. In June 1910, the state purchased land near Bowie, and by September, 1911, the Maryland Normal and Industrial School at Bowie had opened. In 1938, the institution became the Maryland State Teachers College at Bowie, offering a four-year degree. In 1963 the name again changed, this time to Bowie State College, recognizing the liberal arts as well as teaching curricula. In terms of the role Prince George’s County played for African-Americans in the twentieth century, Bowie State University holds particular significance as Maryland’s first African-American post-secondary school. Even though none of the school’s original buildings remain, the university reflects the evolution in the political and educational status of African-Americans throughout the state.





**ABOVE:** Early twentieth-century houses along Banner Street in North Brentwood today.

## *Suburban Settlement in the County: The African-American Experience 1896-1964*

One of the defining characteristics of Prince George's County in the twentieth century has been its development as a suburb of Washington, D.C. Beginning in the late-nineteenth century, African-Americans established nine communities along trolley routes and railroads running to the District of Columbia. These communities attracted an upwardly-mobile population with stable occupations. Affiliations such as kinship, professional, or school networks often directed settlement. Towns such as North Brentwood, Fairmount Heights, Glenarden, and Eagle Harbor all established municipal governments in the early twentieth century. Other communities such as Ardwick, Fletchertown, Lincoln, and Highland Park coalesced around schools and/or existing predominantly black settlements. Although the earliest suburbs in North Brentwood and Fairmount Heights were subdivided by whites, blacks quickly assumed responsibility for civic functions. By 1908, African-Americans were developing and subdividing land themselves in Lincoln; in the 1920s, William Bean developed a waterfront community, Eagle Harbor, as a resort community for his fellow African-Americans located along the Patuxent River.

*African-Americans  
in Prince George's  
County maintained  
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Washington, D.C.*

During the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century, African-Americans throughout the country viewed the District of Columbia as the cultural center of black America. Post-Civil War expansion of the federal government and black participation in Congress opened the city for individual advancement.<sup>1</sup> Much of the early suburban development in Prince George's County is inextricably linked to the continued growth of black middle-class employment in the District. As Howard University, the District of Columbia Colored Schools, and the federal government created new jobs for skilled and unskilled workers, teachers and professionals, the ranks of this new middle class swelled. African-Americans in Prince George's County maintained close ties with Washington, D.C.; the *Washington Bee* regularly covered events in Fairmount Heights, Bowie, Lakeland, and Lincoln.

Black settlement patterns in the District facilitated suburban settlement in nearby Prince George's County. Washington offered a powerful social and economic draw for African-Americans, however, chronic housing shortages plagued the city. The situation for blacks was particularly dire. Former slaves flooded the city during and after the Civil War, overwhelming the ability of the free black community to provide for them. At the turn of the twentieth century, as development moved north of Florida Avenue and across Rock Creek, much of the newly subdivided land was subject to racial covenants restricting ownership to white gentiles. Settlement patterns in the District drew African-Americans eastward across the Anacostia River and into the northeast quadrant of Washington. Small farms were subdivided and houses constructed.

The streetcars that promoted development outside the original boundaries of the District of Columbia intensified development in the eastern portions of the city and spurred suburban development in Prince George's County. By 1898, the City and Suburban Railway, which ran along Rhode Island Avenue, connected North Brentwood with the District. In 1908, the Washington, Baltimore and Annapolis (WB&A) Electric Railway opened its main line, which ran through Prince George's County near Seat Pleasant and then east of Bowie. That same year the town of Lincoln was platted and the Fairmount Heights Mutual Improvement Company formed.

North Brentwood, platted in 1896, was the first land subdivided for African-Americans in the county. In 1887 Captain Wallace A. Bartlett

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<sup>1</sup> In the years after the Civil War, federal government employment provided for a degree of professionalism and security found in few other cities. Certain high-level patronage posts (for example, Recorder of Deeds) have been traditionally held by African-Americans.

purchased land near the Northwest Branch of the Anacostia for subdivision. Bartlett, who had commanded Colored Troops during the Civil War, encouraged African-Americans to purchase some of the smaller, less desirable lots in the northern section of the subdivision where the Randall family were the first to buy lots. In 1898 the trolley line was extended to the community. By 1904 the community boasted 23 houses, a school, and a church congregation, which met in one of the member's homes.

The development of Fairmount Heights in 1900 proceeded in a similar fashion. Allen C. Clark and Robinson White, both white men, purchased existing farms and subdivided the land for housing. As with North Brentwood, Clark was particularly sympathetic to the plight of African-Americans. His father, Appleton Prentiss Clark, "took a great interest in the colored people of the District." Born in Boston, the senior Clark was an active Republican who promoted African-American voting rights.<sup>2</sup> A majority of the people who bought lots in Fairmount Heights worked for government agencies. In 1908, the *Washington Bee* noted that "most of the residents of Fairmount Heights are employees and business men of some sort in the city of Washington, and it is easy to see from the appearance of their beautiful homes just the class of people they are." Residents included a cross-section of the black middle class: architects, a carpenter, a brick mason, a Pullman porter, Supervisors of Colored Schools, a White House steward, messengers at the Government Printing Office and the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. Another common factor early settlers shared was a connection with Tuskegee Institute. William Sidney Pittman, who married Booker T. Washington's daughter Portia, was a Tuskegee graduate, as was James F. Armstrong.

Later towns such as Lincoln and Eagle Harbor were subdivided and developed by African-Americans. In 1908, Thomas Junius Calloway, a Washington attorney and businessman, platted Lincoln as a semi-rural retreat for blacks living in the District, Annapolis, and Baltimore. Located along the newly opened WB&A Railroad, Lincoln was centered on a small, crescent-shaped park opposite the railroad station. The rural town lay within a wooded setting a short distance from a school. Calloway credited the black architect Isaiah Hatton with establishing high architectural standards for the community. He also said the community had placed "practically all our business of designing into his hands."



Looking north on 59th Avenue, Fairmount Heights, 1990. The street looks much the same today.

In 1910, William R. Smith began assembling land for Glenarden, a town along the WB&A. The 1913 plat for Glenarden displays a plan similar to Lincoln, with lots radiating from a semi-circular park. By 1920, 25 families had settled in Glenarden. Most of the residents were

railroad employees, working for either the Pennsylvania Railroad or the WB&A. In 1922, St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church opened and the community constructed a Rosenwald school. Both were situated in the section of Glenarden known as Ardwick Park.

<sup>2</sup> Founded in 1854 by anti-slavery expansion advocates, the Republican Party was traditionally the favored political party of African-Americans. It was not until the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt that black voters would move en masse to the Democratic Party as part of the New Deal Coalition.

In 1903, William Stanton Wormley, scion of the Wormley family of Washington, D.C., one of the most prominent African-American families in the country, purchased an existing house near the road to Bladensburg. The house was situated near Ardwick Station, a stop along the Pennsylvania Railroad line between Washington and Baltimore. Wormley, a wealthy artist, taught in the D.C. Colored School system. His Ardwick house functioned as a country retreat where Wormley and other black professionals could enjoy recreational pursuits such as tennis and trapshooting on the weekends. Several of Wormley's friends purchased or constructed nearby houses, establishing a small community.

**T**he now-vanished 28-acre subdivision of North Kenilworth was platted in 1911 by Washington, D.C., real estate developer Alfred Shaw for African-Americans. A white man, Shaw sold parcels to 54 African-American buyers. Very few structures were ever built, and only seven remained by 1940. Little information about these houses is available; in 1919 an advertisement in the *Washington Post* described some as “small bungalows.”<sup>3</sup> Now part of the Town of Cheverly, by the late 1960s all of the acreage had come to be owned by The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. This early subdivision is now the location of the Euclid Street Park at the southwest quadrant of Greenleaf Road and Crest Avenue.

The larger communities shared some common characteristics. The subdivisions (North Brentwood, Fairmount Heights, Lincoln, Glenarden) consisted of small, affordable lots that could be combined to yield larger house sites. Unlike contemporary white subdivisions in which streets of houses were constructed on a speculative basis, development in these subdivisions proceeded piecemeal. African-Americans in the early twentieth century did not have the access to capital for development of speculative streets of houses. There are only two known instances where groups of multiple houses were constructed: the “Rosita” bungalows in Fairmount Heights and the three Owings houses in North Brentwood. In both instances, the developer possessed sufficient capital to construct multiple dwellings and carry them as rental property. Comparison of original plats of these towns with Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps shows that early houses were scattered throughout subdivisions rather than clustered. North Brentwood had a particularly unprepossessing appearance. In a 1947 recollection, an early inhabitant described his impression of the town in 1905 as “one of the most pitiful-looking villages he had ever seen, with a population of 65 and no churches or grocery stores. There was one coal, wood and ice dealer, one 16 x 12 frame public school, 16 dwellings scattered over 25 acres of the eastern part of 100 building lots, and surrounded by a dense, wide grove.”

The desire for a quieter existence and fresh air, the exclusivity of neighbors of similar income levels and values, and the same middle-class aspirations that drew whites to streetcar suburbs, also attracted blacks. In 1908 William Sidney Pittman incorporated the Fairmount Heights Mutual Improvement Association “to develop Fairmount Heights as a viable alternative to inner-city ghetto living.” Advertisements for lots marketed to African-Americans stressed values dear to the middle class: “The first opportunity offered colored people to secure Homes

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<sup>3</sup> Detailed information about the ownership of the parcels can be found in an independent study paper produced for Dr. Donald W. Linebaugh, University of Maryland, “North Kenilworth: Rediscovering an Early Twentieth Century African-American Subdivision,” by Kristie Kendall, Fall 2008.

Rock-faced concrete block employed in the column bases at the 1925 Lancaster House (Historic Resource 80-018-05) on Old Fort Road in Chapel Hill.



on Weekly payments of 50 cents a week....Stores, churches and schools already built; the most healthful spot in the State of Maryland.” In 1912, the *Washington Bee* noted that the Cornelius Fonville House in Fairmount Heights had a “cellar, furnace and all modern improvements.” Segregation helped create self-sustaining communities. Thomas J. Calloway wrote that “Lincoln, Maryland has a plan to establish without restriction to race, but primarily by, for, and of colored persons, a community with its own municipal government, schools, churches, commercial and industrial life.” The philosophy of racial solidarity and self-help became one of the few strategies available in this era. As Calloway stated, “If the future of Lincoln can be prophesied from its brief past, it is destined to meet a situation forced upon the colored people. If we have learned voluntarily to unite in communities of our choosing, then, and not until then, will we, as a race, learn to feed, clothe, and house ourselves.”

Given these aspirations, it is not surprising that housing typologies and architectural styles in black suburban neighborhoods closely track those found in white neighborhoods. For example, the ubiquitous four-square and suburban bungalow are among the most common house forms in the African-American suburbs such as North Brentwood and Fairmount Heights. Even Isaiah Hatton, a highly skilled black architect who designed the elegant Whitelaw Hotel and the Southern Aid Society/Dunbar Theatre, built an unpretentious four-square for himself at 5502 Center Avenue in Lincoln. The characteristic front or wrap-around porches are a particularly poignant reminder of the attraction of African-American suburbs such as Fairmount Heights. Not only do they take advantage of the fresh air and sunshine associated with suburban life, they also signal the freedom to create a communal life within these communities.

**A**s with houses built by and for the white middle class in the early twentieth century, houses constructed by and for the black middle class during the same period often employed the use of pattern book and catalogue plans. Molded concrete block was a favorite construction material. Both relate to the way in which construction technology was adapted to a mass market in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Sears, Roebuck and Co. kit houses, whose lumber was numbered for assembly, were particularly well-adapted to cooperative, do-it-yourself construction in railroad-accessible towns. The 19 small bungalows constructed by developer Robinson White in 1920s Fairmount Heights closely resembled the Sears, Roebuck “Rosita” model. Individuals also built single houses from Sears’ designs. Between 1922 and 1924, Prince Albert Washington and his friends constructed Washington’s House (Sears, Roebuck Model 3085), an attractive bungalow known as the “Westly,” from plans and materials the company supplied. Similarly, rock-faced concrete block was a material ideal for self-help endeavors. Using a commonly available machine, builders could produce block in their backyards. Cheaper to lay than brick, rockfaced block simulated the solidity and appearance of stone at a much lower cost. Although inventors secured various patents for methods of manufacturing concrete blocks, the use of concrete block did not become widespread until Harmon Palmer started the Hollow Building Block Company in 1902, selling a machine that spawned numerous imitators. By 1917, the Sears’ catalogue offered machines for \$42.50, considerably less than their original \$200 cost. Ease of operation combined with low cost led to countless backyard operations. Sears offered designs for concrete block houses in addition to their more well-known designs for prefabricated frame houses. Men employed in the building trades were often among the first to accept the new technology, using it in their own houses and houses constructed for friends. The manufacture of concrete block was particularly appealing to African-Americans because it lent itself to self-help and because of their experience in masonry-related building trades. African-Americans boasted a long tradition of working as masons and dominated the trade of cement-finishing even after construction unions forced them out of other skilled work in the building trades. In the county’s black neighborhoods, molded concrete block appears in the foundations of numerous houses, such as Louis Brown’s Fairmount Heights house. St. Mark’s Methodist Episcopal Church in Laurel is constructed almost entirely of rockfaced concrete block. Accounts credit George Levi, described as “a laborer experienced in masonry,” with molding the block.

Local African-American construction workers and laborers built many of the houses in the early suburbs. For example, workers cut lumber and made bricks on site for the D.S.S. Goodloe House in Bowie, constructed for the first principal of the Maryland Normal and Industrial School (now Bowie State University). Samuel Hargrove, a mason, likely built his own house in Fairmount Heights. Displaying a variety of pressed-brick motifs commonly found in urban row houses, Hargrove’s house probably incorporates a number of his signature brick patterns. Carpenters Frank and Benjamin Holland, who worked with Isaiah Hatton, constructed many of the houses in Lincoln. Louis Brown, a carpenter, constructed several houses in Fairmount Heights, including his own house at 701 58th Avenue. Another individual associated with building and construction is interior designer George W. McKenzie in North Brentwood.

Using organizational models developed from founding churches and building Freedmen's Bureau Schools, African-Americans in these towns proceeded to assume the functions of municipal self-control. Civic associations and clubs provided the organizational structure for their efforts. Even after the towns of North Brentwood, Fairmount Heights, and Glenarden were incorporated, civic organizations continued to play an important role in the community. Because African-Americans continued to struggle for state educational money, clubs and citizens associations held fundraisers that provided money for new schools and capital improvements. This model was also used to construct civic buildings, such as Glenarden's town hall.

North Brentwood, one of the earliest communities, exhibits a pattern typical of these towns. Building upon organizational efforts required to petition for a school house, in 1906, citizens formed a civic association. Jeremiah Hawkins became president of the association. Hawkins then spearheaded the effort that resulted in North Brentwood's incorporation in 1924. North Brentwood was the first African-American municipality in Prince George's County to be incorporated; Hawkins became its first mayor. In Fairmount Heights, William Sidney Pittman formed the Fairmount Heights Citizen's Association shortly after he and his wife moved to the community. By 1912 the community constructed the Fairmount Heights Elementary School and formed a volunteer fire company in 1917. The movement to incorporate the town began in the 1920s and Fairmount Heights incorporated in 1935.

In 1922, the town of Glenarden constructed a Rosenwald School. Resident W. H. Swann led the community organization, the Glenarden Civic Association. In 1939, Glenarden became the third African-American community in Prince George's County to incorporate. Glenarden, which housed about 60 families at this time, elected Swann as their first mayor. During his two year term, Swann established a police force, utility service, and road improvements. Citizens formed the Town Hall Club to raise money for the first Town Hall, demonstrating the continued vitality of club organization for municipal fund-raising.

When the Board of Education rebuffed the efforts of Lincoln and Buena Vista to obtain a new school, the "Community Club" launched a fund-raising drive that extended into the pages of the *Washington Bee*, soon meeting the requirements for a Rosenwald school. Although Lincoln never incorporated, its citizens association acted as a *de facto* government, functioning as a city council, public works department, and parks commission.

The growth of the African-American middle class in the region spurred the development of resort communities. By the second quarter of the twentieth century, blacks in Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Annapolis, and Prince George's County had sufficient wealth and leisure time that the demand for recreation increased. Segregation extended to parks, beaches, hotels, and amusement venues, creating a demand for places that catered to African-Americans. In 1925, inspired by the success of the black leisure community at Highland Beach in Anne Arundel County, Walter L. Bean began buying land adjacent to Trueman Point, a steamboat landing on the Patuxent River near Aquasco. Bean platted the land for a resort serving African-Americans in Washington, D.C. While wealthy individuals like

William Wormley and some of the early residents in Lincoln could always purchase rural retreats, little was available for the urban middle class. Opening a sales office in the heart of Washington's African-American community in Shaw, Bean offered lots for no more than \$50. Advertisements for the resort boasted 4,000 feet of sandy beach and the forthcoming construction of a \$50,000 hotel. Recreational activities included boating, fishing, camping, bathing, and sports. Scores of people began constructing small summer cottages and the town was incorporated in 1929. Eagle Harbor continues as a popular summer community.

Looking towards the Patuxent in Eagle Harbor.





# Archeology

JENNIFER A. STABLER, Ph.D.

Prince George's County's preservation ordinance, enacted in 1981, protects hundreds of landmark buildings. In order to identify and protect below-ground historic resources, the county Planning Board in 2004 began requiring archeological investigations prior to development. In November 2005 the County Council approved legislation<sup>1</sup> "to protect archeological sites that are significant to understanding of the history of human settlement in Prince George's County."<sup>2</sup> "Significant archeological sites identified in accordance with the Planning Board's Guidelines for Archeological Review should be preserved in place, to the extent practicable and should be interpreted as appropriate." The program has identified the remains of enslaved persons, a standing slave cabin, and has gathered important information about the lives of African-Americans throughout the county's history. Since almost no standing structures built and occupied by African-Americans survive from the pre-Civil War period, archeology is one of the few means available to reconstruct early lifeways. Archeology can provide insight into the material existence of African-Americans, as well as their religious beliefs, resistance strategies, and diet.

*Archeology is one of the few means available to reconstruct early lifeways.*

From its earliest days, the county's economy was based on agriculture and particularly on the cultivation of tobacco, which remained its staple crop through the late twentieth century. During the 1600s, white indentured servants imported from England supplied the labor force for tobacco plantations. As economic conditions improved in England by the late 1600s, these servants were gradually being replaced by enslaved laborers imported from Africa and the West Indies. The plantation became the most common type of settlement in the county. Towns formed along the Patuxent and Potomac Rivers at landings established for the shipment of tobacco to foreign markets. It is within this context that African-Americans established social and community ties across the landscape of Prince George's County.

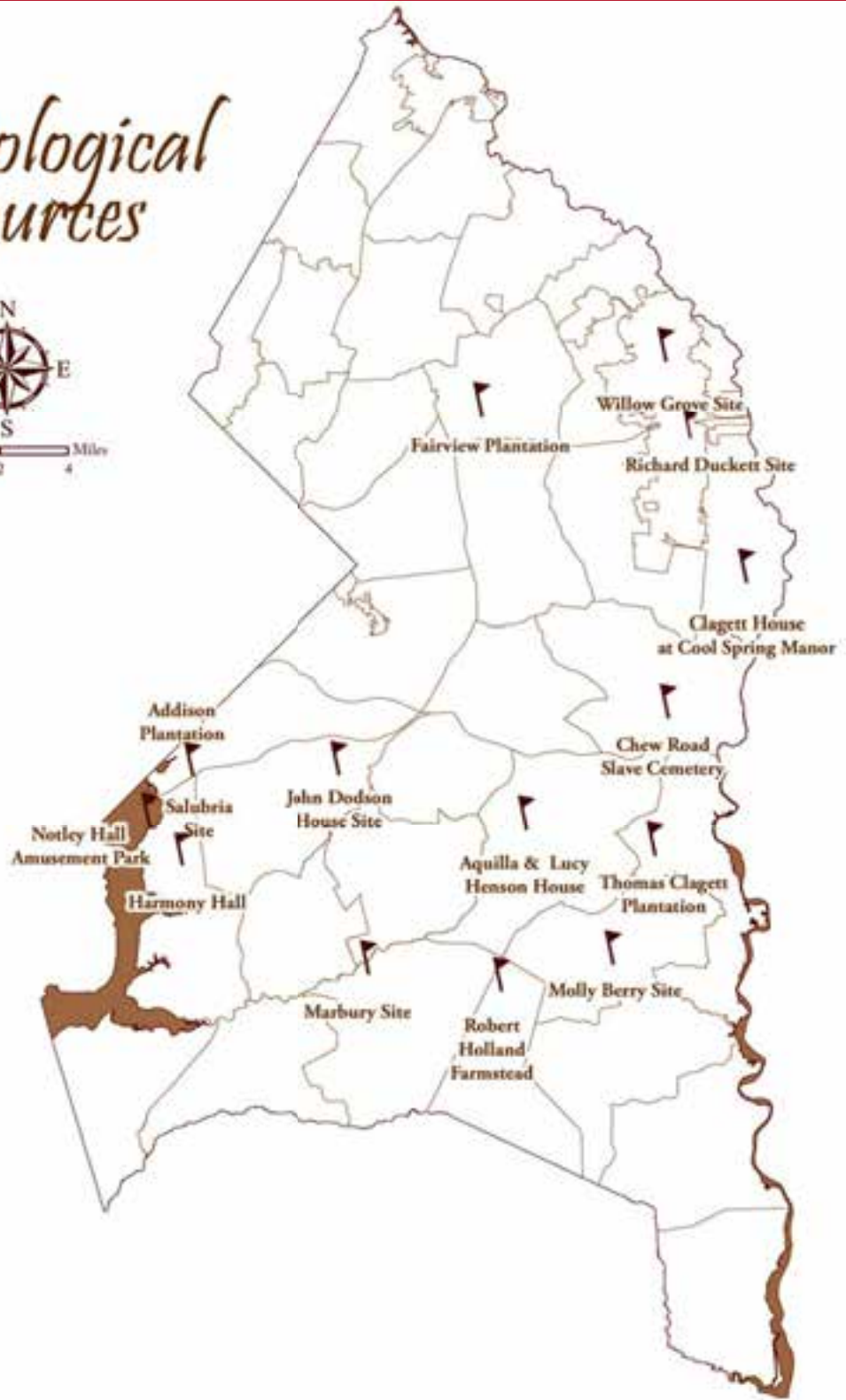
Large plantations were located close to the major waterways in the county. Small planters tended to be located in areas without a direct access to navigable waterways and sold their crops to the larger planters for export. Throughout the colonial period, a majority of the African-American inhabitants of the county resided on plantations, although there was always a small free black population. Because many of the structures housing enslaved laborers were constructed of temporary materials and were abandoned after emancipation in 1865, few of these buildings survive today.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> (CB-92-2005) to add provisions to the Subdivision Regulations: 24-104 (12).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*; 24-121(18).

<sup>3</sup> *Antebellum Plantations in Prince George's County, Maryland: A Historic Context and Research Guide* (2009) outlines the development of plantations throughout the county from its establishment in 1696 to emancipation in 1865. The study is divided into three temporal periods, the Early Period (1696–1730), the Colonial Period (1731–1790), and the National Period (1791–1864). Large (20 or more enslaved laborers), medium (10–19 enslaved laborers), and small (1–9 enslaved laborers) plantations are discussed, along with their spatial organization. The least-documented plantations are those from

# Archeological Resources



## *Harmony Hall*

**Historic Site 80-024-11, 18PR305** Archeological investigations at Harmony Hall revealed the remains of an earthfast structure dating to the 1690s to the east of the extant brick Georgian building. The original frame house on the property was built around 1692 by Thomas Lewis on the Battersea land grant. After his death circa 1696, the property passed to Lewis' son, Richard Lewis. No indentured servants or slaves are noted in his inventory. William Tyler acquired the property in 1709 and resided there until his death in 1721. Tyler's inventory lists "one Negro man, one Negro woman, and two white man servants, the one having 12 and the other 13 months to serve." These inventories, recorded within a span of 20 years, reflect the changing labor patterns in early Prince George's County. In the early 1700s, planters were utilizing indentured servants, along with enslaved Africans to fill their labor needs. Outbuildings associated with the earlier earthfast structure may have been destroyed by construction of the brick house in the 1760s or are located in areas not yet investigated. However, it would not be unusual in this period for the indentured servants and enslaved Africans to inhabit the same dwelling as the property owner.

## *Addison Plantation*

**18PR175** The Addison Plantation or Oxon Hill Manor was a large establishment located on the Potomac River on land that today lies within the National Harbor development. Remains of an earthfast house built by Colonel John Addison as early as 1687 were found in archeological investigations on the property. Addison's son Thomas inherited Oxon Hill Manor at the death of his father in 1705. Thomas Addison resided on the property until his death in 1727 and presumably began construction of a two-story brick manor house around 1711. Listed in Thomas Addison's 1727 inventory were 75 enslaved laborers, including one "Indian man," and three white indentured servants. Twenty-three of the enslaved laborers were lodged near the mansion house and others were dispersed among seven quarters or outlying plantations. Colonel Thomas Addison's inventory also mentions a "Negroe's room" located in a shed attached to the main house.

Charms and rituals were often employed in traditional West African religions to serve as protection or to influence events and people. These rituals are rarely discussed in written texts, but can be identified through archeological investigations. Two finds around the manor house may be related to the religious and spiritual beliefs of the African-American enslaved laborers on the Plantation. In the southeastern room of the cellar, a straight-sided redware crock dating to the early 1800s was found buried beneath the

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the Early Period. Several plantation houses from that era survive, but no separate slave quarters are known to be extant. Small slaveholding plantations in the Early Period typically consisted of the plantation owner, his family, several white indentured servants, and possibly some African enslaved laborers. Servants and enslaved laborers were likely lodged in the main house or in the various outbuildings. Archeological investigations have provided valuable information on plantation layout during the Early and Colonial periods, and the relationship between the plantation owner and the enslaved laborers.



**ABOVE:** Three wine bottles at the Addison Plantation site. (Courtesy Maryland Archaeological Conservation Laboratory.) **BELOW:** Iron hoe blades at the Marbury Site. (Courtesy Greenhorne & O'Mara, Inc.)



floor. The crock was likely used to hide an object of special value or may have held a charm to protect certain individuals or the house.<sup>4</sup> A second deposit was found within the earthfast house at the top of the passageway leading from the cellar. Three wine bottles were turned upside down; possibly they were used as bowls for a ritual purpose.

### *Marbury Site*

**18PR833** The Marbury site represents a small plantation that was occupied from about 1714 to the 1750s that is located near the crossroad village of T.B. in southern Prince George's County. It comprises the remains of a middling plantation with a domestic residence, a detached kitchen, and a work area that contained two earthfast structures separated from the main house by a fence or screen. The residence was built for Francis Marbury on the Apple Hill land patent around the time of his second marriage in 1714. At the time of his death in 1734, Francis Marbury had 11 children by two wives and held nine enslaved laborers. Francis Marbury's son, Luke, occupied the dwelling until about 1750, when he began construction of Wyoming (Historic Site 81B-004) a few miles to the north.

Francis Marbury possibly employed the use of indentured servants when he first established his plantation, but by 1734 was relying solely on African slave labor to work his land and serve his household. Enslaved laborers worked in the detached kitchen and in the surrounding fields and likely lived in a segregated area within the main house, as well as in an outbuilding separated by a fence. A circular pit feature located within one of the buildings in the work area contained four iron hoe blades oriented towards the cardinal directions (north, east, south, west). These blades and their placement may be associated with African religious practices.

### *Richard Duckett Site*

**18PR705:** The Richard Duckett site provides insight into the layout of a large plantation during the 1700s and the relationship between the owner of the plantation and the enslaved laborers. The site is located to the north of Woodmore Road within the Waterford housing development. It comprises the remains of a plantation manor house, associated residential structures and slave quarters, domestic

<sup>4</sup> John P. McCarthy 2010. *Oxon Hill Manor: The Archaeology and History of "A World They Made Together."* Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum and Maryland Historical Trust: St. Leonard, MD. p. 20.

outbuildings, and farm outbuildings housing about 20 individuals and dating from the late 1720s to the 1790s. Duckett was a large slaveholder and aspiring planter. His plantation was larger than the Marbury site, contained more outbuildings, extended over a larger area, and was active for a longer period of time. Duckett held 17 slaves at the time of his death. The domestic core of the plantation contained the manor house, kitchen, meat house, wash house, and tenant or slave quarters. Quarters for the enslaved laborers were separated from the main house by the kitchen and a yard area. An area to the south of the domestic core contained supporting structures, such as animal pens, barns, and work sheds. It is possible that some of the enslaved laborers on the Richard Duckett plantation were also housed in these buildings. Separate quarters were established near the work areas and close to outlying fields.

### *Thomas Claggett Plantation*

**18PR398** The site of Thomas Claggett's plantation is located near the intersection of Croom Road and Croom Airport Road. Richard Claggett acquired the 1,100-acre Croome land grant in 1721 and combined it with adjoining land to form a tract encompassing 1535 acres by 1734. After his death in 1752, his land was eventually devised to his grandson, the Reverend Thomas John Claggett, the first Episcopal bishop ordained in the United States, who held 22 slaves in 1800 and 31 by 1810.

Bishop Claggett built a house on the Croom plantation in the 1780s and was living there at the time of his death in 1816. Archeological investigations have identified four sites representing the remains of slave cabins to the east of the plantation house, located on several ridges cut by a tributary of Southwest Branch. All of the sites contained artifacts dating from the late 1700s to the early 1800s. It appears that Claggett placed the housing for his enslaved laborers on ridges so that they would have been easily visible from the plantation house, close to a water source, and on land that was not cultivated, but was close to the fields. Land comprising the Croom plantation was eventually acquired by the Reverend John Hamilton Chew, who was married to Bishop Claggett's granddaughter, Sophia Claggett. The Croom plantation house was occupied by the heirs of Bishop Claggett until it burned in 1858. Abandonment of the slave cabins appears to have coincided with the destruction of the house, as no artifacts from the late 1800s were found on the sites. Additional investigations will be conducted on two of the slave cabin sites that contained intact cultural deposits and features.

### *Willow Grove Site*

**18PR510** An example of the transition between slavery and tenancy, the Willow Grove site is located south of Route 450 in the Westwood housing development. Willow Grove was the home of members of the John Bowie, Sr., family from the early 1700s until the land was sold for development in 1987. Willow Grove was a large plantation of the Early to National Periods. The Willow Grove manor house, remnants of which were identified in archeological investigations, was likely built for Walter Bowie after 1791. Remains of

Artifacts excavated from Structure 2 at the Willow Grove Archeological Site. (Photo courtesy of Greenhorne & O'Mara, Inc.).



a well, meat house, icehouse, blacksmith shop/slave cabin, other small outbuildings, a formal garden, and family cemetery were identified in the vicinity of the manor house. Three slave, overseer, or tenant houses were located further from the manor house. The Bowies held a large number of enslaved laborers who served in the main house, tended the gardens, and worked in the fields.

There is evidence that the main house was reoriented in the 1830s, possibly to face Holy Trinity Episcopal Church (Historic Site 71A-009), located to the northeast. The house had originally faced northwest and had a detached kitchen. Enslaved laborers who worked in the manor house likely had their quarters in the detached kitchen or in the attic or basement of the main house. Other enslaved laborers who worked in the immediate vicinity of the house resided in a structure, later converted into a blacksmith shop, that was located downslope from the main house. After the modification of the plantation house in the 1830s, additional outlying structures were built to house enslaved laborers who worked the surrounding fields. These quarters were placed close to the barns and could be accessed from the main house by a separate road. One of the outlying structures identified in the archeological investigations probably served as an overseer's house.

The organization of labor changed dramatically after the Civil War. Elizabeth L. Bowie, the wife of Richard Bowie, claimed 29 slaves in 1867. According to the 1870 census records, several of the former enslaved laborers on the Willow Grove plantation continued to live on and work the land as tenant farmers, but had moved to other farms by 1880. By 1900, Amelia Belt, the daughter of Richard and Elizabeth Bowie, had inherited the Willow Grove property. The Belts employed a white farm manager and hired African-American families to serve as tenant farmers. The Willow Grove farm continued to be worked by African-American tenants throughout the early twentieth century.

An outlying building known as Structure 2, which was likely a slave cabin in the antebellum period, was enlarged in the postbellum period. Structure 2 was located near a complex of barns and the occupants likely cared for the Bowie family's horses and cattle. A subterranean storage pit used to store food and other goods for the enslaved

occupants contained artifacts from the early to mid-1800s. The pit was no longer used after emancipation and the house was enlarged with a 12 by 18 foot addition. Artifacts from the late 1800s and early 1900s were also identified in Structure 2. Some of these artifacts include lamp glass, medicine bottles, ceramic doll parts, marbles, a writing slate and a graphite pencil.

A second structure (Structure 5), located to the south of the main house, probably represents a tenant house built prior to the 1890s. Artifacts such as lamp glass, ceramic doll parts, bottle glass, Mason jars, glass beads, coins, glass marbles, and a pocket watch were recovered. Most of the artifacts date to the period after the Civil War, indicating Structure 5 was a tenant house.

## *Salubria*

**Historic Site 80-002, 18PR692** Salubria was built about 1827 for Dr. John H. Bayne, a prominent physician in Prince George's County. Dr. Bayne was elected to the House of Delegates in 1841 and served as a surgeon in the Union Army during the Civil War. After the war he served as the first president of the Board of County School Commissioners and as Superintendent until 1869. Dr. Bayne was also active in agricultural pursuits and cultivated the modern-day strawberry. After two of Dr. Bayne's young sons died within days of each other in 1834, a 14-year-old slave girl named Judah confessed to poisoning them with arsenic. Judah also confessed to poisoning Bayne's infant daughter two years earlier and to attempting to burn the house down. Judah was tried in Upper Marlboro and was hanged for her crimes. Census records list two free blacks and four slaves occupying the Salubria plantation in 1840 and 15 slaves in 1850. By 1860, Dr. Bayne held 19 slaves who were housed in three slave quarters. Between 1840 and 1858, Dr. Bayne placed ads for three of his slaves who had run away from Salubria. Although he was a slave owner, Dr. Bayne supported the Union during the Civil War and worked to provide education to freed slaves after the war. Salubria and all but one of its outbuildings have been demolished. One structure that was later converted to a guest house may incorporate a former slave cabin in its construction. Future archeological investigations will be conducted on the property to attempt to identify the function of this structure prior to the Civil War and to further illuminate the African-American history of the site.

## *Fairview Plantation*

**Historic Site 71A-013, 18PR707** About one-and-one-half miles to the south of Willow Grove lies the Fairview plantation, now located within the Fairwood subdivision. A house built for Baruch Duckett is listed in the Federal Direct Tax of 1798 as a frame dwelling 30 feet square, along with two "Negro houses." (The existing house on the property was built around 1800.) Baruch Duckett died at Fairview in 1810 and devised the property to his son-in-law, William Bowie. Members of the William Bowie family retain ownership of the house to this day. Baruch Duckett and his Bowie heirs were large slave holders. Archeological investigations revealed the remains of two cabins situated behind

the plantation house. These were occupied by enslaved laborers prior to the Civil War and were used as tenant houses afterwards. The Fairview plantation also illustrates the transition from slavery to tenancy.

The first structure to the northwest of Fairview is known as the “cook’s cabin” and dates to the late 1700s. It was occupied by cooks and/or other domestic laborers for the plantation. The cabin was approximately 16 feet by 30 feet and consisted of two rooms separated by a wall containing a two-sided fireplace. This structure was larger and more substantial than typical slave cabins, an indication of the relatively higher status of the occupants. Children’s toys recovered during the investigation show that entire families lived in the cabin, and certain artifacts (e.g., blue beads) demonstrate the continuance and preservation of certain African and African-American traditions.

The investigation of the “cook’s cabin” yielded a large number of artifacts that contribute to a greater understanding of conditions in these quarters. Several artifacts with a military theme, including two tobacco pipe bowls—one embossed with crossed rifles and the other with an eagle, shield and sword—and a metal Civil War button from a Union artillery unit were found, along with a brick incised with the number “65.” Perhaps one of the former enslaved laborers on the Fairview plantation served in the Civil War and returned to the farm afterwards to work as a tenant farmer or laborer. Coins unearthed from this structure suggest it was occupied into the 1940s.

**The tenant house at Fairview.** Two additional buildings were identified to the north of the “cook’s cabin” and farther from the main house. Basil and Lizzie Wood were enslaved laborers at Fairview until they were emancipated in 1865 by Maryland’s new constitution. Census records show





they were married in 1865 and continued to reside in the northern building until their deaths in the 1920s. Both were buried in the Bowie family cemetery to the east of the main house. Lizzie worked in the Fairview mansion, while Basil served as a farm laborer. One of the buildings burned and a new cinder block tenant house was built on the same spot. Children's toys (e.g., marbles, dolls) found in the vicinity of the structure imply the presence of families. Most tenants raised their own gardens to feed their families; garden staples included white potatoes, sweet potatoes, turnips and greens. Much of the extra food was canned and remnants of canning jars were recovered in the excavations.

## *Molly Berry Site*

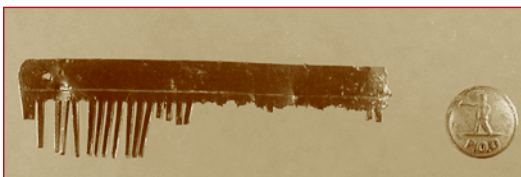
**18PR787** The Molly Berry Site represents another slave cabin later converted to a tenant house. The site is associated with a large plantation near the Patuxent River, Brookefield of the Berrys (Historic Site 86A-020). Construction of the house at Brookefield of the Berrys was begun in 1810 by John Duvall. Duvall fell into financial difficulty and the property was obtained by Robert W. Bowie of Mattaponi in 1828. An advertisement

placed by Bowie in the *Marlboro Gazette* and *National Intelligencer* newspapers in 1839 states that Bowie will “also offer...8 or 10 likely young Negroes and the stock and farming utensils on the place.” John Thomas Berry acquired the property in 1839 and completed the house in the 1840s. Berry owned a plantation consisting of at least 600 acres and was a large slaveholder. Tobacco was the main crop grown on Berry’s plantation. Census records show that Berry held 28 enslaved laborers in 1840, 29 in 1850, and 41 in 1860. According to the 1860 census there were also four slave houses on the plantation.



**ABOVE:** The Molly Berry Slave Cabin.

**BELOW:** A comb and a button recovered from the Molly Berry Site. (Photo courtesy of Greenhorn & O’Mara, Inc.).



The 1870 and 1880 census records show that many African-American tenant farmers resided next to and near John T. Berry. Many of those listed probably were working as tenants on the Brookefield of the Berrys farm and other former plantations. John T. Berry died in 1884 and his plantation passed to his sons, William P. Berry and Roger Bernard Berry. William Berry continued to farm the portion of the property to the east of Molly Berry Road containing the old plantation house. African-American tenant farmers are shown residing next to

William P. Berry in the 1900 census. William Berry died in 1904 and his estate was divided between his widow, Mary, and his son, William P. Berry, Jr. Mary Berry, known as Molly Berry, continued to live at Brookefield of the Berrys with her daughter, Caroline Berry. Molly Berry continued to operate the farm with African-American tenant farmers as indicated by the 1910, 1920, and 1930 census records. Caroline Berry remained at Brookefield of the Berrys until her death in 1976,

A ten-acre parcel containing the old plantation house and several outbuildings was sold in 1980, separating it from the larger Berry landholdings. What is now known as the Molly Berry slave cabin within the Caroline's Walk subdivision was located approximately 310 feet north of Brookefield. The cabin was one-and-one-half stories high, faced south towards the main house, and measured 20 x 16 feet. Remains of a brick chimney were found on the east end of the cabin and a brick walkway led from the southern entrance towards Brookefield of the Berrys. The cabin was located between the house and three outbuildings that are visible in 1938 aerial photographs. A yard midden was identified to the west of the house. The presence of artifacts such as creamware and hand-wrought nails indicates occupation of the site in the late 1700s or early 1800s. However, a majority of the artifacts suggest an occupation date from about the 1820s to the early twentieth century. The cabin has been dismantled and is stored in a container on the site. It is planned to be reassembled as part of the surrounding subdivision.

### *Clagett House at Cool Spring Manor*

**Historic Site 74B-015, 18PR651** Englishman Guy White acquired 420 acres of the Cool Spring Manor land grant circa 1700. Later patented as White's Adventure, the property was eventually devised to Joseph White Clagett, who held 26 enslaved laborers in 1790, 24 in 1800, 47 in 1810, and 42 in 1820. The 1798 Federal Direct Tax lists three "Negro houses" 20 by 16 feet and two "Negro houses" 14 by 12 feet on the property. Joseph Clagett died in 1831 and willed the Cool Spring Manor property to his son, William Digges Clagett, who built the existing house in 1830 (Historic Site 74B-015). William Clagett held 44 enslaved laborers in 1840, 35 in 1850, and 30 in 1860. There were four slave houses listed on his property in 1860. Tobacco and wheat were the main crops grown on the plantation in the 1800s. William Clagett lost the house and his plantation after the Civil War, and it was then acquired and operated by the Owens family until 1917. After 1917, the farm was operated by tenants.

In 2003 during the excavations for a planned subdivision on the property, an unmarked burial was encountered. Archeologists investigated the find and a remote sensing survey was conducted to determine whether other burials were present. Dr. Douglas Owsley of the Smithsonian Institution assigned a preliminary cultural affiliation of "African-American" to the human remains that were recovered. Additional archeological investigations were conducted to determine the extent of the burial ground and to identify any other archeological remains in the vicinity. One archeological site, 18PR651, was delineated that represents the location of a farmstead or tenant house that was occupied during the mid-to-late 1800s and a burial ground that includes at least

13 interments and two possible interments. Artifacts recovered from the disturbed burials and from surface collection around the burial ground indicate the site and cemetery were in use from the 1850s to the early 1900s. The house site was possibly the location of an earlier slave cabin that was converted into a tenant house after the Civil War. Numerous African-American families are found in the census records residing near the Clagett House in the Reconstruction period.

The burial ground identified on the property was likely originally for the enslaved laborers. It continued to be used by the tenants who worked the farm after the Civil War. The burials were left in place and the cemetery remains within the Environmental Setting of the Clagett House at Cool Spring Manor Historic Site. The Cool Spring Manor property was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2011.

### *Chew Road Slave Cemetery*

**82B-047, 18PR879** Several archeological sites, including a slave cemetery, have been identified at the end of Chew Road in Upper Marlboro. These sites are located on a tract of land known as Brook Hill, originally patented to Baker Brook in the late 1600s. Josiah Wilson acquired the 100-acre Brook Hill tract from the heirs of Baker Brook in 1713. Wilson eventually compiled a 513-acre plantation near the Patuxent River. The property was acquired by Leonard Piles in the 1750s. Piles most likely built a house on the property that is represented by archeological site 18PR878. According to census records, subsequent owners held 12 enslaved laborers in 1800 and eight in 1810. By 1828 several surrounding tracts of land had been acquired and the owner was assessed for 288 acres and 10 enslaved laborers.

During the course of the archeological investigations, local residents noted that they recalled a slave cemetery on the property. A ground-penetrating radar survey was performed in the area where the cemetery was identified. At least 35 interments were noted and the site was recorded as 18PR879. Under later owners, Piles' house was possibly used as a quarter for enslaved laborers who worked on the outlying portions of the nearby Ellerslie and Mount Calvert plantations. The slave burial ground was probably first used from 1790 to the 1830s. The Chew and Brookes families, later owners of the property, were large slave holders and likely continued to use the burial ground for their enslaved laborers until the 1860s. Although plans for the site have been put on hold, the slave cemetery will be protected from any future development.

### *John Dodson House Site*

**18PR890** After the Civil War, some emancipated African-Americans continued to work on the same plantations where they had previously been enslaved. In some cases, such as at Fairview, Willow Grove, and Brookefield of the Berrys, the slave quarters were converted into tenant houses and were occupied by one family. Additional tenant houses were built on the former plantations to accommodate the farm laborers needed to tend to

the tobacco fields. African-Americans began to establish small concentrated settlements with churches and schools, such as Chapel Hill, Collington, and Fletchertown. Very few structures survive from this early period and few archeological investigations have occurred in these areas.

Churches and schools were important institutions established in the newly-formed communities. In many cases, one building served both purposes. Residents of the surrounding area often served as trustees for the operation of the churches and schools. Archeological investigations were conducted on the proposed Northam Acres subdivision in 2007. A residential archeological site (18PR890) dating from the early-to-mid-twentieth century was identified on the property. John Dodson, a trustee of the nearby Mount Hope African Methodist Episcopal Church, and members of his family owned this property from 1914 to 1955. Mount Hope African Methodist Episcopal Church and cemetery (Historic Site 76B-016) was established about 1891 on a tract of land to the south along Allentown Road and became a community center for Camp Springs' African-American residents. A school for black children was established near the church in 1902. John Dodson was active in both the Mount Hope Church and school by serving as a trustee; he also provided housing for the school teachers. Although the archeological site had been damaged by the demolition of the house, important historical information on the development of the community near the Mount Hope church and school was obtained from the investigations. An interpretive sign will be placed in the development to commemorate the occupation of the site by the Dodson family.

### *Aquilla and Lucy Henson House*

**18PR936** In 2008, the dwelling of Aquilla and Lucy Henson was identified on the proposed Missouri Acres subdivision in Brandywine. The site contained the remains of an early-to-mid-twentieth century house with a well and scatter of surface debris. The dwelling was a frame structure set on eight poured concrete piers, with a brick stove chimney centered within the building and dividing it into two rooms. Several large galvanized tubs, probably used for laundering, were found nearby. The Hensons were likely living on this two-acre tract shortly after their marriage in 1909. However, a deed was not issued to Lucy Henson until 1926. Lucy Henson's occupation is listed as washing and ironing in the 1910 census, as a nurse in 1920, and as a midwife in 1930; Aquilla Henson was a laborer. The fact that Lucy Henson identified herself as a midwife in 1930 probably indicates that she received some formal training; state governments began to regulate the practice for the purpose of eliminating it in the early twentieth century. At that time, giving birth occurred mainly at home and midwives provided comfort and assistance to women in labor. Most midwives were taught the trade by older family members and lacked formal training. It has not been ascertained when Lucy and Aquilla Henson died, but the site was probably abandoned after their deaths and almost certainly by 1965. An interpretive sign will be placed in the development to commemorate the Henson family's occupation of the property and Lucy Henson's role in the community.

## *Robert Holland Farmstead*

**18PR928** Many former enslaved laborers eventually acquired their own farms after emancipation. In 2008, the remains of the Robert Holland farmstead were identified on the proposed Smith property development in Cheltenham. Robert Holland and Mary Ann Johnson were married in December 1880 and possibly built the house represented by site 18PR928 shortly afterwards. Robert Holland purchased 54 acres to the north of the House of Reformation property from Adam Diehl in 1887. Robert Holland's occupation is listed as farmer in the 1900, 1910, 1920, and 1930 census records. Robert Holland died before 1945, when his children asked the Circuit Court to divide his property. The 54-acre tract was sold by trustees appointed by the court to William C. Quade in 1945. Quade then sold the 54 acres to Calvin C. and Lillie May Walking. The property changed hands several more times in the late twentieth century. The Holland site provides insight into the establishment of African-American family farms in the late nineteenth century. An interpretive sign will be placed in the development to commemorate the occupation of the site by the Holland family.

## *Notley Hall Amusement Park/Washington Park*

**18PR311** Notley Hall Amusement park was established about 1894 and operated until 1924 on land that was once part of the Upper Notley Hall (Admirathoria) plantation. The Notley Hall Association, a black-owned-and-operated amusement park company formed about 1894, established a park on the Potomac waterfront in cooperation with the Independent Steamboat and Barge Company. Steamboat excursions were a popular form of entertainment in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Steamboats originating in Washington, D.C., made regular trips to the park, which offered a dancing pavilion, bowling alley, shooting gallery, and horse rides. Lewis Jefferson, an African-American businessman, general contractor, and real estate developer from Washington, D.C., assumed management of the Notley Hall Amusement Park in 1901. Jefferson renamed the resort Washington Park, added a roller coaster, carousel, penny arcade, and fortune-telling tent, built a new wharf and installed electric lighting. Archeological investigations at the site identified 12 features associated with the park, including the remains of some of the park rides, a wooden water tower, a generator building, the power plant and a pier. Several of these features were preserved in an open space area within the Waterside subdivision and an interpretive sign was installed in the development.