

HISTORIC RESOURCES STUDY AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES ALONG THE CHESAPEAKE & OHIO CANAL

Washington, D.C., and Lower Montgomery County, Maryland

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AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES
ALONG THE CHESAPEAKE & OHIO CANAL IN
WASHINGTON, DC, AND LOWER MONTGOMERY COUNTY,
MARYLAND

HISTORIC RESOURCES STUDY

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October 27, 2022

ABSTRACT

This Historic Resources Study (HRS) provides a context on African American communities and sites along the first 20 miles of the Chesapeake & Ohio (C&O) Canal, from Georgetown in Washington, DC, to Travilah, Maryland. The HRS provides an overview of the economic, cultural, and social ways in which African Americans interacted with the landscape feature through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Separate chapters are devoted to towns and places along the canal route that have a strong association with African American history in the area.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

B&O	Baltimore and Ohio [Railroad]
C&O	Chesapeake & Ohio [Canal], the historical name of the landscape feature
CCC	Civilian Conservation Corps
CHOH	Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park, the present name of the park
DC	District of Columbia
FHA	Federal Housing Administration
GUOOF	Grand United Order of Odd Fellows
HRS	Historic Resources Study
IOOF	Independent Order of Odd Fellows
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration
NCA	National Capital Area
NPS	National Park Service
USCT	United States Colored Troops

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Abstract.....	i
Acknowledgments.....	i
Abbreviations and Acronyms	i
List of Figures and Maps	v
List of Tables	vii
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	viii
I. INTRODUCTION	1
A. Purpose and Scope of the Document	1
1. Geographic Distribution.....	1
2. Temporal Scope	4
B. Document Framework and Organization.....	4
C. Methodology.....	5
D. Summary of Findings.....	7
II. AFRICAN AMERICAN SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND CULTURAL CONNECTIONS TO THE CHESAPEAKE & OHIO CANAL	10
A. Social Connections.....	10
1. African Americans in the Potomac River Valley.....	10
a. Slavery and Freedom on the Upper Potomac River	10
b. Self-liberation and Emancipation.....	21
c. Civil War	26
2. African American Community Formation.....	31
a. The C&O Canal: Displacement, Growth, and Gentrification	31
b. Pre-emancipation African American Communities	34
c. Post-emancipation African American Communities.....	35
d. Early Twentieth Century: The Carderock and Cabin John CCC Camps.....	58
3. Summary	61
B. Economic Connections	64
1. Canal and River: Landscapes of Labor	65
a. Canal Construction and Operation	67
b. Agriculture, Fisheries, and Mercantile Businesses	77
c. Industrial Enterprises: Quarries, Mills, Mines, and Manufacturing.....	81
2. Canal and River: Landscapes of Leisure.....	93
a. Tourism, Traveling, and Commuting on the C&O Canal	94
b. Leisure on the Canal.....	98
c. After Commercial Navigation Ended: The CCC and NPS Create a Public Park	107
3. Summary	110
C. Cultural Connections	113
1. Lifeways on Canal Boats	114
a. Chanteys and Songs	117
2. Foodways	119

3.	Religion on the Waterfront	121
4.	Landscapes of Danger and Vice.....	123
5.	Summary	125
D.	Recommendations.....	126
III.	GEORGETOWN	130
A.	Origins and Development	130
1.	Pre-Emancipation Period: Georgetown’s Sites of Enslavement.....	132
2.	Post-Emancipation Period: The Rise of African American Neighborhoods in Georgetown	136
3.	Twentieth Century: Gentrification and Displacement in Georgetown	139
B.	Historic Sites	144
1.	Mount Zion United Methodist Church, 1334 29th Street, NW	146
2.	Mount Zion and Female Union Band Society Cemeteries, 27th Street at Mill Road, NW.....	146
3.	Ebenezer A.M.E. Church, 2727 O Street, NW	147
4.	First Baptist Church, 2624 Dumbarton Street, NW	147
5.	Jerusalem Baptist Church, 2600 P Street, NW	147
6.	Holy Trinity Catholic Church, 1315 36th Street, NW	148
7.	Epiphany Catholic Church, 2712 Dumbarton Street, NW	149
8.	Grace Episcopal Church, 1401 Wisconsin Avenue, NW.....	149
9.	Rose Park Playground, 26th Street between O and P streets, NW	149
C.	Summary and Recommendations	150
IV.	ST. PHILLIPS HILL AND THE PALISADES	151
A.	Origins and Development	151
1.	Pre-Emancipation Period: Tobacco Plantations, Early Industry, and Enslaved Labor	151
2.	Post-Emancipation Period: Battery Kemble and the Emergence of St. Phillips Hill	153
3.	Twentieth Century: Potomac Heights and the Development of White, Exclusionary Residential Suburbs.....	156
B.	Historic Sites	159
1.	Abner Cloud House, CHOH	160
2.	Foxall Foundry, CHOH.....	160
3.	Union Burial Society of Georgetown Cemetery, 2616 Chain Bridge Road	161
4.	Chain Bridge Road School, 2800 Chain Bridge Road.....	161
C.	Summary and Recommendations	161
V.	GRAYSVILLE, ROCK SPRING, BROOKMONT, AND GLEN ECHO	162
A.	Origins and Development	162
1.	Post-Emancipation Period: Graysville	162
2.	Twentieth Century: Growth and Displacement	166
a.	The Rise of the White Leisure Resort	166
b.	Counterpoint: Places for African American Leisure in the Palisades, Brookmont, and Glen Echo	170
c.	Graysville	172
B.	Historic Sites	175

1.	Battery Bailey, 5315 Elliott Road (Westmoreland Hills Park).....	175
2.	Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Boulevard.....	176
3.	White’s Tabernacle, Order of Moses Cemetery, 5401 Westbard Avenue, Bethesda.....	176
4.	Macedonia Baptist Church, 5119 River Road, Bethesda.....	177
C.	Summary and Recommendations	177
VI.	GIBSON GROVE AND CABIN JOHN	179
A.	Origins and Development	179
1.	Pre-Emancipation Period: Cabin John’s Landscape of Enslavement	179
2.	Post-Emancipation Period: The No. 10-Seven Locks-Gibson Grove African American Community.....	182
3.	Twentieth Century: Growth and Displacement	186
B.	Historic Sites.....	190
1.	Cabin John Aqueduct Bridge, MacArthur Boulevard and Cabin John Parkway.....	190
2.	Clara Barton House National Historic Site, Glen Echo, Maryland.....	191
3.	Gibson Grove African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, 7700 Seven Locks Road	191
4.	Morningstar Tabernacle No. 88 of the Ancient United Order of Sons and Daughters, Brothers and Sisters of Moses Cemetery, 7550 Seven Locks Road	192
C.	Summary and Recommendations	192
VII.	BRICKYARD, CARDEROCK, GREAT FALLS, AND POTOMAC	194
A.	Origins and Development	194
1.	Pre-Emancipation Period: Landscape of Slavery.....	194
2.	Post-Emancipation Period: Great Falls, Potomac, Carderock, and the Establishment of Brickyard.....	196
3.	Twentieth Century: Growth and Displacement	199
B.	Historic Sites.....	201
1.	Great Falls Tavern, Falls Road, CHOH	202
2.	Maryland Gold Mine, Falls Road and MacArthur Boulevard, CHOH.....	203
3.	Washington Aqueduct Control Gatehouse (Water Supply Building), Falls Road, CHOH	204
4.	Mount Glory Baptist Church Site, Conduit Road, Carderock	204
C.	Summary and Recommendations	205
VIII.	TRAVILAH AND TOBYTOWN	206
A.	Origins and Development	206
1.	Pre-Emancipation Period: the Martins, One of the Oldest Free Black Families of Montgomery County	206
2.	Post-Emancipation Period: Coalescence of an African American Community in a Period of Racialized Terror.....	208
3.	Mid-Twentieth Century: Displacement and Urban Renewal.....	212
B.	Historic Sites.....	217
1.	The DuFief Mill Site, Muddy Branch Park near Turkey Foot Road	217
2.	Rock Run Gold Mines, Watt’s Branch Stream Valley Park, Travilah.....	218
3.	Pennyfield’s Lock House (Lock 22), Pennyfield Lock Road, CHOH.....	218

4. Tobytown Cemetery, 12649 Tobytown Drive, Potomac, Maryland.....	219
C. Summary and Recommendations	220
IX. CONCLUSION.....	222
X. APPENDIX A: A Brief History of the C&O Canal and National Park	228
XI. APPENDIX B: C&O Canal Infrastructure Built 1828-1838, First 20 Miles	232
XII. APPENDIX C: Sample of African American Canal Laborers, 1870-1920 US Censuses	237
XIII. APPENDIX D: Sample of African American Farmers, 1850-1940 US Censuses.....	240
XIV. APPENDIX E: Sample of African American Quarrymen, 1870-1930 US Censuses	244
XV. APPENDIX F: Sample of African American Mill Workers, 1850-1930 US Censuses	247
XVI. APPENDIX G: Sample of African American Coal Workers, 1870-1930 US Censuses	250
XVII. BIBLIOGRAPHY	253
A. Books, Dissertations, Manuscripts, and Reports	253
B. Journal Articles	261
C. Newspaper Articles.....	264
D. Websites, Databases, Ephemera, Interviews, and Videos	267
E. Maps.....	271
F. Photographs and Illustrations.....	272
XVIII. INDEX.....	276

LIST OF FIGURES AND MAPS

<i>Figure</i>	<i>Page</i>
1.1 Map Showing Geographic Distribution of Locks 0-22, Which Define the Study Area	2
1.2 Map Showing DC and Montgomery County Neighborhoods and their Respective Historic African American Communities	3
2.1 Chart Showing the Proportion of Free White, Free Black, and Enslaved Populations in Georgetown, Northwest DC, and District 4 of Montgomery County, Maryland, per 1800 US Census.....	12
2.2 Chart Showing the Proportion of Free to Enslaved African Americans in Georgetown, Northwest DC, and District 4 of Montgomery County, Maryland, per 1800 US Census.....	12
2.3 <i>Map of Montgomery County, Maryland, 1865</i> (Martenet et al.) Showing the Five Electoral Districts in the County in 1865.....	13
2.4 <i>Atlas of Fifteen Miles Around Washington, Including the County of Montgomery, Maryland, 1879</i> (Hopkins) Showing the Seven Electoral Districts in the County by 1879.....	14
2.5 Detail from <i>Map of Montgomery County, Maryland, 1863</i> (US Bureau of Topographical Engineers) Showing the Settlement of Rushville.....	32
2.6 Map of Selected Pre- and Post-Emancipation Historical African American Communities in Montgomery County, Maryland, and Western Washington, DC	40

2.7	Map of Selected Historical African American Churches and Cemeteries in Montgomery County, Maryland, and Western Washington, DC	46
2.8	Map of Selected Historical African American Schools in Montgomery County, Maryland, and Western Washington, DC	54
2.9	Map of Selected Historical African American Social Halls in Montgomery County, Maryland, and Georgetown, DC	58
2.10	An “Uninhabited Solitude”	69
2.11	Ca. 1909 Photograph Showing the Georgetown End of the Canal with Several Canal Boats and the Towpath with Mules	71
2.12	“C&O Canal Mules Along the Canal”	72
2.13	Map Showing Quarries and Kilns in the Study Area and Vicinity.....	85
2.14	Map Showing Selected Mills in the Study Area and Vicinity	88
2.15	Map Showing Mines and Foundries in the Study Area and Vicinity	92
2.16	Addison Scurlock, “Waterfront,” 1915.....	94
2.17	“Dining Pavilion at Great Falls of the Potomac,” ca. 1910	98
2.18	Willard R. Ross, “Chain Bridge Hike, June 24, 1916”	104
2.19	Willard R. Ross, “Receiving Reservoir Hike, January 16, 1916”	105
2.20	Advertisement for an Oyster Roast at Jones Park, Glen Echo, Maryland, in <i>The Colored American</i> , 8 September 1900.....	121
2.21	Willard R. Ross, “Church on towpath in Georgetown”	122
3.1	“View of Georgetown DC” 1855.....	130
3.2	“Canalboats at Georgetown”	136
3.3	Map of Georgetown Sites of Enslavement and African American Alley Neighborhoods.....	139
3.4	Willard R. Ross, <i>C&O Canal at Georgetown</i> , ca. 1910.....	140
3.5	FHA’s <i>Map of the District of Columbia: Percentage of dwelling units occupied by persons other than white</i> , 1934.....	143
4.1	Detail from <i>Atlas of Fifteen Miles Around Washington</i> , 1879 (Hopkins) Showing the St. Phillips Hill Community Around Battery Kemble.....	154
4.2	Detail from <i>Map of the District of Columbia from official records and actual surveys</i> , 1887 (Hopkins) Showing African American Landowners Along Chain Bridge Road.....	155
4.3	Calvin M. Miller, <i>Map of Potomac Heights, Washington, DC</i> , 1909	157
5.1	Detail from <i>Atlas of Fifteen Miles Around Washington</i> , 1879 (Hopkins) Showing African American Enclaves near the Dalecarlia Reservoir and on River Road	162
5.2	Detail from <i>The Vicinity of Washington, DC</i> , 1894 (Hopkins) Showing African American Landowners near the Dalecarlia Reservoir and on River Road.....	164
6.1	Detail from <i>Map of Montgomery County, Maryland</i> , 1865 (Martenet et al.) Showing Landowners Flanking Cabin John Creek.....	181
6.2	Detail from <i>Atlas of Fifteen Miles Around Washington</i> , 1879 (Hopkins) Showing the Origins of the Seven Locks-Gibson Grove African American Community.....	183
6.3	Detail from <i>The Vicinity of Washington, DC</i> , 1894 (Hopkins) Showing the Gibson Grove African American Community on Seven Locks Road	184
7.1	Detail from <i>Atlas of Fifteen Miles Around Washington</i> , 1879 (Hopkins) Showing the Area of Cropley, Maryland.....	197

7.2	Detail from <i>The Vicinity of Washington, DC, 1894</i> (Hopkins) Showing the Area of Cropley, Maryland	198
7.3	Detail from <i>A Real Estate Atlas of the Part of Montgomery County Adjacent to the District of Columbia, 1917</i> (Deets and Maddox, plate 10) Showing African American Landowners, Churches, and a School Associated with the African American Community of Brickyard in Cropley, Maryland.....	199
7.4	Willard R. Ross, “Canal Lock, Great Falls,” ca. 1910, Showing the Great Falls Tavern and Lock 20	203
8.1	Detail from <i>Atlas of Fifteen Miles Around Washington Showing the Area of Tobytown, Maryland</i>	209
8.2	A Typical House in Tobytown, Maryland, ca. 1965	214
B.1	First 20 Miles of Canal Infrastructure Construction from 1828-1838.....	234

LIST OF TABLES

<i>Table</i>	<i>Page</i>	
1.1	Geographic Distribution of Locks in the Study Area	4
2.1	Enslaved Men from the Rockville Distirct Who Served in the Civil War	28
3.1	Georgetown historic sites associated with the C&O Canal or African American History.....	145
4.1	Palisades historic sites associated with the C&O Canal or African American History.....	159
5.1	Brookmont, Glen Echo, Rock Spring, and Graysville historic sites associated with the C&O Canal or African American History	175
6.1	Cabin John and Gibson Grove historic sites associated with the C&O Canal or African American History and their public accessibility.....	190
7.1	Potomac, Great Falls, Carderock, and Brickyard historic sites associated with the C&O Canal or African American History and their public accessibility.....	202

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Constructed between 1828 and 1850, the Chesapeake & Ohio (C&O) Canal spanned 184.5 miles from Georgetown (within Washington, DC) to Cumberland, Maryland, when it was completed. Providing a navigable waterway parallel to the Potomac River, the canal hosted flat-bottomed boats that carried commercial freight (primarily coal, lumber, and agricultural products) until its closure to commercial operations in 1924. The first 22 miles of the canal and its towpath were acquired in 1938 by the Department of the Interior and put under the management of the National Park Service (NPS); by September 1940, the stretch from Georgetown to Seneca, Maryland, had opened to the public and was managed under three national park units: the George Washington Memorial Parkway, the Potomac Palisades Parkway, and as a reservation within the National Capital Parks system. The remaining 162.5 miles were opened as part of the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park (CHOH) in 1971.

During the canal's construction and its implementation as a commercial waterway and as a transportation route, myriads of individual African Americans living in the National Capital Area (NCA) were involved with or benefited from the canal's operation. In May 2020, the NPS released a scope of work for a Historic Resources Study (HRS) of historical African American communities along the C&O Canal, to address the economic, cultural, and social connections between historical African American individuals residing in Washington, DC, and Maryland adjacent to the first 20 miles of the C&O Canal during its period of construction and commercial operation, 1828 to 1924. The study was commissioned to broaden the understanding of the significant role that African American communities and individuals played in the development of canal towns along the C&O Canal and the contributions African Americans made to the canal's operation and development.

WSP USA Inc. (WSP) was contracted to undertake the research and production of this HRS. The staff architectural historian's first task was to conduct secondary source and primary source research into the histories of the canal's construction, its operation, myriad individuals affiliated with the canal, and the historical African American neighborhoods in Georgetown and the Palisades in DC as well as historical African American communities in lower Montgomery County, Maryland, adjacent to the canal. Primary source materials consulted included period maps, census records, oral histories, memoirs, and historical newspaper items. The most significant contribution is found in Appendices C-G, in which scores of names have been provided—gleaned through comprehensive searches of US census records from 1850 to 1930—of African Americans who were directly or indirectly employed by the canal or an industry related to the canal. Family historians and genealogists can use these data to research specific men, women, and families whose lives were shaped economically by the C&O Canal.

Next, a review of historical African American newspapers published in Washington, DC, provided insight into African American leisure destinations related to the canal and the Potomac River in the study area. To date, little scholarship has been devoted to African American leisure places on the upper Potomac River above Georgetown (specifically in the Palisades and Montgomery County), yet period newspaper items point to several places that deserve more investigation. These include the Jones Hotel in Glen Echo and Lake View and Fair View parks near the Dalecarlia reservoir, on the DC-Maryland boundary line. How African Americans carved leisure space for themselves when such space was growing increasingly exclusionary in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is a topic deserving more attention.

Finally, the report finds that, while the canal fostered some community growth, its construction actively displaced African Americans (such as George Pointer or the multi-racial community of Sugar Hill in lower Georgetown). The historical African American communities named in this report—neighborhoods such as Herring Hill in Georgetown, St. Phillips Hill in the Palisades, Graysville, Rock Spring, Gibson Grove, Brickyard, and Tobytown—all followed the same trajectory, regardless of whether they were established before the Civil War or after. Most began as a concentration of African American households associated with an antebellum plantation. They thrived in the late nineteenth century after emancipation. Typically, the communities were tight-knit and based on kinship. Generally, each community invested in three institutions: the church, the school, and the fraternal organization or benevolent society hall. By the second quarter of the twentieth century, economic hardships enticed generational residents to seek better opportunities elsewhere, typically in larger cities. As the populations of these communities dwindled, the state of their infrastructure deteriorated, fostered by intentional neglect on the part of municipal services. By the mid-twentieth century, suburbanization, gentrification, and urban renewal led to the complete loss of these communities' built environments. Some communities' institutions (like those of Brickyard) were obliterated completely from the landscape, while others retain only a vestige or two (Tobytown, Gibson Grove, St. Phillips Hill), typically cemeteries or one of the three institutional buildings mentioned throughout the report (i.e., a church, school, or social hall). The report's conclusion discusses the point that 1940 reoccurs as a vague end date to the cohesion of predominantly Black enclaves in DC (such as Reno City and St. Phillips Hill) and in Montgomery County, Maryland (such as Tobytown and Gibson Grove). Not coincidentally, 1940 was also the year that the NPS opened the C&O Canal as public parkland. The compound question was asked: *What role did the NPS play in the gentrification of the lands adjacent to the C&O Canal? Is the success of the NPS in creating a beloved public parkland and scenic amenity responsible for displacement that began in the 1940s?*

This HRS is organized into three primary sections. Section I begins with Chapter I, the Introduction, which provides an explanation of the purpose and scope of this study, the document's framework and organization, a synopsis of the methodology, and a summary of findings. Chapter II in this section addresses the three themes that underpin this study: the social, economic, and cultural connections that historical African Americans (and communities) had with the C&O Canal. The first sub-section addresses social connections; it looks at the history of enslavement in the upper Potomac River Valley of the NCA, self-liberation, and the onset of the Civil War and emancipation. It then addresses African American community formation in the pre-emancipation and post-emancipation periods and discusses the three institutional pillars found in every African American community within this study: the church, the school, and the benevolent society. The second sub-section addresses economic connections; it looks at how, historically, African Americans were employed in the canal's construction, on canal boats, and in adjacent industries that used the canal, such as agriculture, fishing, quarrying, mining, milling, and manufacturing. It also addresses how the canal and the Potomac River were used in the commercialization of leisure and tourism. The third sub-section addresses cultural connections African Americans had with the canal and river, including lifeways on canal boats, foodways, and religion. The final sub-section provides recommendation for future research.

Section II includes Chapters III through VIII. Each chapter is devoted to a specific study area and the historical African American community in that area. Each study area chapter is divided into three sub-sections: the origins and development of the communities and their African American neighborhoods, typically from the pre-emancipation period through the mid-twentieth century; a

list and description of a sample of historic sites in each area associated with the canal and/or African American history; and then a summary and recommendations for future research. The chapters include Georgetown; St. Phillips Hill and the Palisades; Graysville, Rock Spring, Brookmont, and Glen Echo; Gibson Grove and Cabin John; Brickyard, Carderock, Great Falls, and Potomac; and Travilah and Tobytown. Section III includes a Conclusion for the report, Appendices A-G, and back matter (including an index and bibliography).

SECTION I

I. INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE DOCUMENT

In May 2020, the National Park Service (NPS) released a scope of work for a Historic Resources Study (HRS) of African American communities along the Chesapeake & Ohio (C&O) Canal in Georgetown and the Palisades area of Washington, DC, and Maryland. The purpose is to prepare an HRS that addresses the social, economic, and cultural connections among historical African American communities and individuals in Washington, DC, and Maryland adjacent to the first 20 miles of the C&O Canal during its period of construction and commercial operation, 1828 to 1924. The study was commissioned to broaden the understanding of the significant role that African American communities played in the development of canal towns along the C&O Canal as well as the contributions African Americans made to the canal's operation and development.

The goal of the HRS is to enable the NPS staff at the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park (CHOH) and across the National Capital Area (NCA) to understand and fully incorporate the history and significance of African American communities to the canal, to identify contributing resources within the parks, to update and develop interpretive themes to enhance visitor experience, to assist in future planning efforts, and to meet NPS responsibilities under the Organic Act and the National Historic Preservation Act by providing baseline documentation on cultural resources in the park that can assist park managers with protecting resources and interpreting them for the public.

WSP USA Inc. (WSP) prepared this report under the terms of Contract No. P16PC00290, Order No. 140P3020F0132, PMIS Nos. 249555A and 249412A.

1. *Geographic Distribution*

The contract's geographic scope corresponds to that stretch of the canal from the Tide Lock (Lock 0) to Lock 21 that lies within the Palisades District in NPS management language (Figure 1.1; Table 1.1). (Note that this NPS management area originally corresponded to the first 22 miles of the historic canal, which had opened to navigation by 1831; that area was extended to mile marker 31, at Edward's Ferry, in 1976. This jargon is not to be confused with that neighborhood in northwest Washington, DC, that is also called the Palisades.) In terms of mileage, the contract desired to map the first 17 miles along the historic canal, from Georgetown's Tide Lock (Lock 0) northwest to Swain's Lock (Lock 21) in Maryland. However, the scope was enlarged to include the unincorporated area of Travilah in Montgomery County, Maryland, and its historical African American community, Tobytown. Muddy Branch acts as the present-day western boundary of Travilah, and so the scope has been expanded an additional 3 miles to end at Lock 22 (Pennyfield's Lock).

Within the geographic scope are 10 distinct modern-day neighborhoods, the first four of which lie within Washington, DC, and the other six lie in Montgomery County, Maryland: Georgetown, Foxhall Village, Berkley, the Palisades, Brookmont, Glen Echo, Cabin John, Carderock, Great Falls, and Travilah. Five of the Maryland neighborhoods have historical African American communities: Graysville, north of Brookmont; Rock Spring and Glen Echo Heights, southeast of Glen Echo; Gibson Grove, within the Cabin John area; Brickyard, within Carderock; and Tobytown, near Travilah. Georgetown had distinct African American neighborhoods, such as

Herring Hill, while an African American community known as St. Phillips Hill emerged around Battery Kemble, in the Palisades area of DC (Figure 1.2).¹

For the purposes of this report, the 20-mile area (between Locks 0 and 22) within Washington, DC, and Maryland will henceforth be called the *study area*. Historic River Road² has been established as the northern boundary of the study area, which stretches from the Potomac River to River Road, from Georgetown to the vicinity of Lock 22 and Muddy Branch. When areas outside the study area but associated with the canal along its entire length (184.5 miles) are discussed, the term *upper National Capital Area (NCA)* will be used as a shorthand.

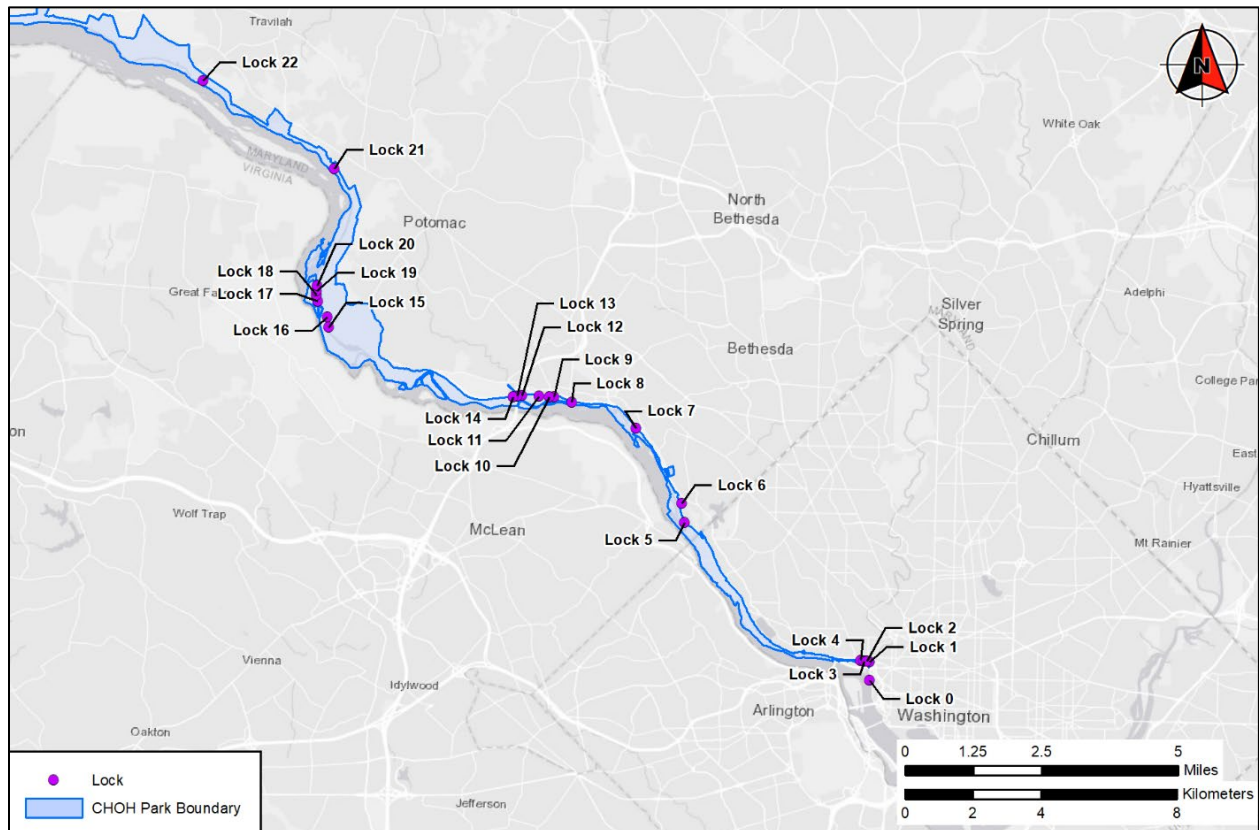


Figure 1.1: Map Showing Geographic Distribution of Locks 0-22, Which Define the Study Area

¹ “Historic African American Communities in the Washington Metropolitan Area,” *Prologue DC* [website] (accessed 15 October 2021, <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=5d16635c4fde41eca91c3e2a82c871e8>).

² River Road originated as a trail used by indigenous peoples in the region. In the Colonial era, with British settlement, it was expanded and became the primary route for upcountry plantation farmers to take their tobacco to market. Jacob Funk formalized the route from Watt’s Branch to Georgetown in 1781; it was extended to Conrad’s (later White’s) Ferry by 1808, thereby achieving its present-day route. Given its history, the road acts as a natural topographical border in the Potomac Valley between bottomlands and uplands and will serve that purpose in this report. See Clare Lise Kelly, “Places from the Past: The Tradition of Gardez Bien in Montgomery County, Maryland” 10th Anniversary Edition (Silver Spring, MD: Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, 2011), 16; and Sheila Cochran, “The Early History of River Road,” *The Montgomery County Story* [Published by the Montgomery County Historical Society] 28, no. 4 (November 1985):185-186.

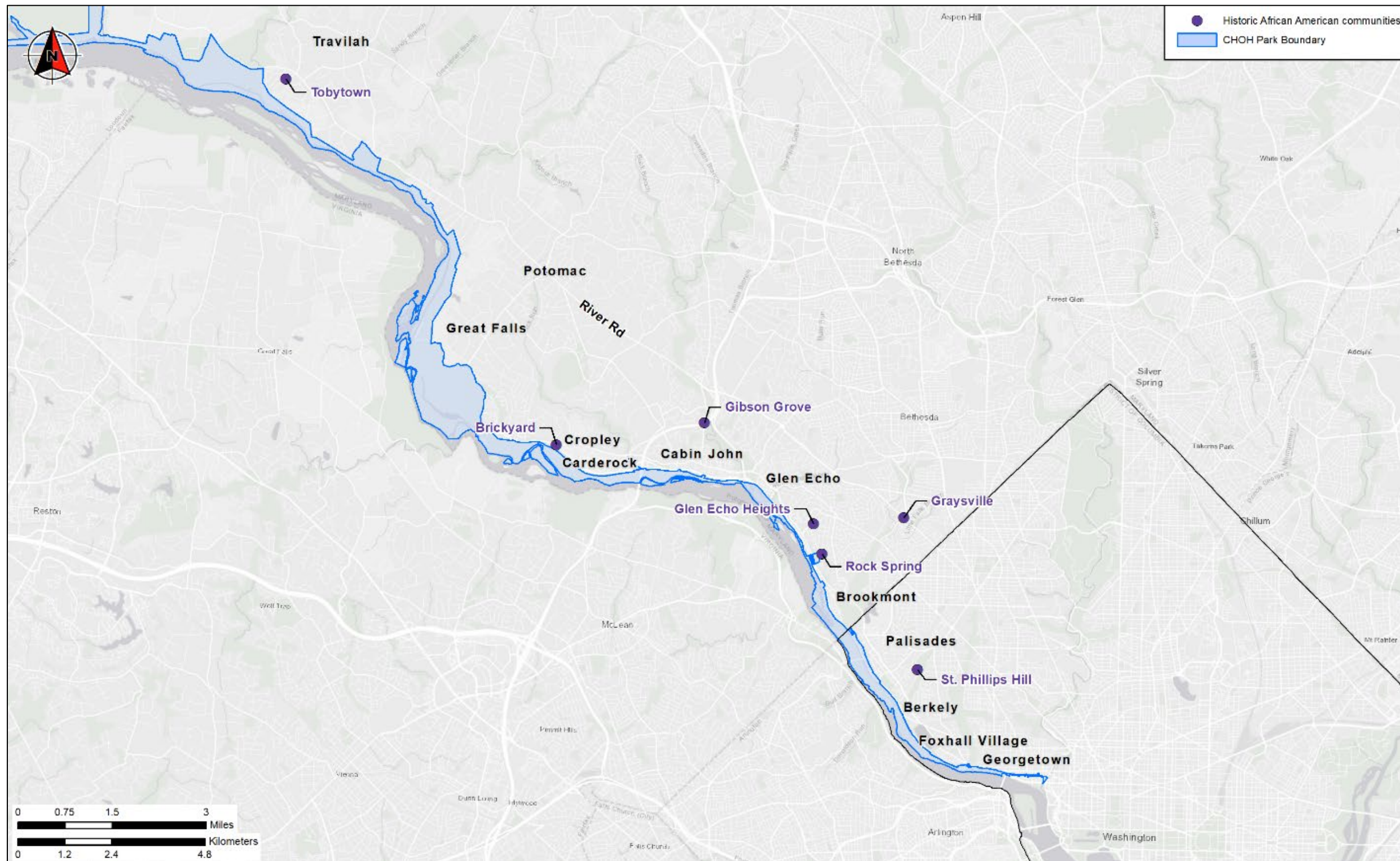


Figure 1.2: Map Showing DC and Montgomery County Neighborhoods and their Respective Historic African American Communities

TABLE 1.1: GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF LOCKS IN THE STUDY AREA

LOCALITY	LOCK NUMBERS	MODERN-DAY NEIGHBORHOOD NAMES
District of Columbia	Locks 0-4	Georgetown
Montgomery County, Maryland	Locks 5-6	Brookmont
Montgomery County, Maryland	Lock 7	Glen Echo
Montgomery County, Maryland	Locks 8-14 (known as the “Seven Locks”)	Cabin John and Carderock
Montgomery County, Maryland	Locks 15-20 (known as the “Six Locks”)	Great Falls
Montgomery County, Maryland	Locks 21-22	Travilah

2. *Temporal Scope*

The scope of work further named a temporal scope for the HRS, namely, from 1828 to 1924. This corresponds to the *period of construction and commercial navigation* on the C&O Canal. The research provided herein focuses on the African American experience vis-à-vis the canal during this century-long time frame while providing historical context that predates the time period. It also provides content on how African Americans used and related to the canal after the period of commercial navigation ended. Although the purpose of the HRS is to address the economic, cultural, and social connections between historical African American communities along the C&O Canal in Washington, DC, and lower Montgomery County, Maryland, during this specific time period, a complete picture of the African American experience with the canal is not possible without exploring issues beyond the period’s discrete temporal boundaries.

B. DOCUMENT FRAMEWORK AND ORGANIZATION

This document is organized thematically and geographically to best address the specific research question posed in the HRS—namely, how African Americans in the study area contributed to the development of the C&O Canal economically, culturally, and socially during its period of construction and commercial navigation (1828-1924), with a focus on specific historical African American communities along the canal in this 20-mile stretch. To address this research question, the document has been organized into three primary sections. After the front matter and Executive Summary, Section I begins with Chapter I, the Introduction. This explains the HRS’s scope of work, outlines the methodology, and provides a brief literature review. It ends with a summary and findings.

The second chapter addresses the three themes presented in the research question: the social connections, economic connections, and cultural connections historical African Americans and African American communities had with the C&O Canal. In the first sub-section, entitled “social connections,” the HRS explores how the canal was used by African Americans throughout its history and discusses the establishment of historical African American communities in those parts of Washington, DC, and Maryland adjacent to the canal. It does so in a chronological framework, looking first at the history of enslavement in the upper Potomac River Valley of the NCA, the acts of self-liberation that involved the canal and Potomac River, and the experience of African Americans in the NCA at the onset of the Civil War and emancipation. It then addresses African American community formation in the pre-emancipation and post-emancipation periods and discusses the three institutional pillars found in every African American community within this study: the church, the school, and the benevolent society.

In Chapter II's sub-section devoted to economic connections, the HRS discusses the forms of labor African Americans contributed to the development of the landscape feature during the period of commercial navigation and afterward. It looks at how, historically, African Americans were employed in the canal's construction, on canal boats, and in adjacent industries that used the canal, such as agriculture, fishing, quarrying, mining, milling, and manufacturing. It also addresses how the canal and the Potomac River were used in the commercialization of leisure and tourism. Chapter II's third sub-section addresses cultural connections historical African Americans had with the canal and river, including lifeways on canal boats, foodways, and religion. The final sub-section provides recommendation for future research.

Section II includes Chapters III through VIII. Each chapter is devoted to a specific study area and the historical African American community in that area. Each study-area chapter is divided into three sub-sections: the origins and development of the communities and their African American neighborhoods, typically from the pre-emancipation period through the mid-twentieth century; a brief list and description of historic sites in each area that typically are adjacent to CHOH and have strong associations with African American history or the C&O Canal; and then a summary and recommendations for future research. The chapters are divided into Georgetown; St. Phillips Hill and the Palisades; Graysville, Rock Spring, Brookmont, and Glen Echo; Gibson Grove and Cabin John; Brickyard, Carderock, Great Falls, and Potomac; and Travilah and Tobytown. Section III includes a Conclusion for the report, Appendices A-G, and back matter (including an index and bibliography).

Note that certain personal and place names are emphasized in small capitals, a different font, and are color coded. Names of individual African Americans appear in **BLUE**, names of historical African American communities in **RED**, and names of organizations or historic sites in **GREEN**. Graphic text boxes have been added to the document to further emphasize these specific people and places discussed in the narrative. They also have backgrounds in blue, red, and green that correspond to individuals, communities, and sites.

C. METHODOLOGY

Initial research and the first draft of this HRS were undertaken in the summer and autumn of 2021. To establish a baseline on the broad research question(s) posed by this HRS, reliance was placed on secondary source material. However, primary source materials were consulted through digital collections and at physical repositories in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area in the spring of 2022. Primary source materials consulted included period maps, census records, oral histories, memoirs, photographs, and historical newspaper items.

As the Bibliography (Chapter XVIII) details, many sources were consulted in the preparation of this HRS. Secondary sources reviewed included scholarly works, such as books, journal articles, reports (including other HRS and Cultural Landscape Reports prepared for the NPS), doctoral dissertations, and manuscripts. National Register of Historic Places Nomination Forms often provided detail on specific sites discussed in this report. Websites, databases, and ephemera also provided insight and detail into research questions or contexts.

This HRS required broad research into various historical contexts and a wide review of secondary source material. Abundant scholarship has been devoted to the history of the C&O Canal, and the two primary documents that informed this report were Barry Mackintosh's 1991 administrative history of CHOH, *C&O Canal: The Making of a Park*, and Harlan D. Unrau's 1976 *Historic*

Resource Study: Chesapeake & Ohio Canal. The C&O Canal Association has analyzed and compiled several primary sources relating to the historic canal, including canal boat mortgage records, C&O Canal Company registers and payrolls, and thousands of newspaper articles about the canal from 1830 to 1924. These primary source documents were fundamental in gaining a fuller picture of canallers' lives in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

To begin to understand the African American polity's relationship with the canal and the formation of African American communities in the canal's vicinity, a contextual understanding of the African American experience in Maryland and Washington, DC, from colonial times through the early twentieth century was necessary. The Maryland State Archive's two online databases—*Legacy of Slavery in Maryland* and *Archives of Maryland Online*—proved immeasurably helpful, especially in accessing runaway slave advertisements from the antebellum period, which helped ascertain the canal's role in enslaved African Americans' self-liberation. Nina Honemond Clarke wrote two books on the history of African American schools and churches in Montgomery County, Maryland, that were instrumental in contextualizing these two important institutions to rural African American communities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. She also contributed greatly, through her research, to the study of individual, pre-emancipation African American landowners in the county as well as draftees in the Civil War.

Ten different communities in Washington, DC, and Montgomery County, Maryland, are addressed in this report. For the history of Georgetown's African American community, Kathleen M. Lesko, Valerie Babb, and Carroll R. Gibbs's 1991 book, *Black Georgetown Remembered*, was indispensable. Similarly, Clare Lise Kelly's 2011 edition of *Places from the Past* provided the backbone for the content written on the communities in Montgomery County. American University's exhibition and collection, *Historic African River Road Connections*, provided a starting point for learning more about the formation of River Road's African American communities, particularly Tobytown and Scotland. Valuable and recent scholarship on the African American Gibson Grove community includes the dissertation of archaeologist Dr. Alexandra Jones, RPA, on the Gibson Grove A.M.E. Zion Church for the graduate program in Anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley, in 2010 and L. Paige Whitley's 2021 paper on the history of Gibson Grove for the Friends of Moses Hall, which provides excellent detail about the community's founding and its evolution as well as the personal histories of several individuals and families associated with Gibson Grove.

Repositories with digitized resources were integral to research. The Library of Congress map collection and the District of Columbia Public Library's [Peoples Archive](#) had digitized maps and photographs that were valuable historical references. The *Prologue DC* website and map collection were valuable resources for identifying African American communities in the metropolitan region, especially their map, [Historic African American Communities in the Washington Metropolitan Area](#). The [Montgomery County History Digital Repository](#) has digitized and made available a slew of archival materials housed at the Montgomery County Archives and Montgomery History's Jane C. Sween Research Library and Special Collections. The Jane C. Sween Research Library in Rockville, Maryland, was accessed in March 2022 and provided a wealth of materials that had not been digitized, including field notes on Montgomery County's historical African American communities and oral histories conducted in the twentieth century.

Washington, DC, is home to several universities with libraries and archives that were valuable repositories, including American University, Georgetown University ([Slavery Archive](#)), George Washington University (Albert H. Small [Washingtoniana](#) Collection), and Howard University's

[Moorland Spingarn Research Center](#). Historical societies, such as Heritage Montgomery and the DC History Center, provided a catalog of materials in their possession that were applicable to the many topics addressed herein. The Keplinger Research Library, home of the DC History Center, provided a wealth of material relating to the communities of Georgetown and the Palisades. Lastly, the District of Columbia Archives and the National Archives and Records Administration catalogs provided insight into their applicable holdings.

Most productive, perhaps, were the historical African American newspapers from Washington, such as *The Colored American* and *The Washington Bee*, which have been digitized and made available through the Library of Congress [Chronicling America](#) website. These newspapers provided rare access to the daily lives and issues of Black Washingtonians at the turn of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Review of US census records and military records through Ancestry.com added value to this HRS; names of African Americans associated with the canal or with industries adjacent to the canal were gleaned from the analysis of samples of census records from 1850 to 1930 to illustrate various ways in which African Americans interacted with the canal.

INTERNET RESOURCES

American Canal Society. www.americancanals.org

Ancestry. www.ancestry.com

Archives of Maryland Online. <http://aomol.msa.maryland.gov>

C&O Canal Association. www.candocanal.org

C & O Canal National Historical Park. www.nps.gov/choh

C & O Canal Trust. www.canaltrust.org/trust/

Legacy of Slavery in Maryland. <http://slavery.msa.maryland.gov>

Library of Congress. www.loc.gov

Maryland State Archives. www.msa.maryland.gov

National Park Service. www.nps.gov

WHILBR: Western Maryland's Historical Library. www.whilbr.org

D. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The most significant contribution distilled from the primary source research undertaken for this HRS is found in Appendices C-G. In these appendices, scores of names have been provided—gleaned through comprehensive searches of US census records from 1850 to 1930—of African Americans who were directly or indirectly employed by the canal or an industry related to the canal. Family historians and genealogists can use these data to research specific men, women, and families whose lives were shaped economically by the C&O Canal. NPS staff will be able to focus their research initiatives on average, everyday people who made a living off the canal or helped to build and operate it. Interpretation efforts could focus on a person or family named in this document. Besides the data provided in the appendices, the stories of particular African Americans have been included throughout this narrative, from which interpretive staff can draw information

or inspiration. Hundreds of names of individuals have been highlighted throughout this report that could provide more avenues of future research.

Next, a review of historical Washington newspapers with a predominantly African American readership provided insight into African American leisure destinations related to the canal and the Potomac River within the study area. To date, little scholarship has been devoted to African American leisure places on the upper Potomac River above Georgetown (specifically in the Palisades of DC and Montgomery County), yet period newspaper items point to several places that deserve more investigation. These include the Jones Hotel in Glen Echo and Lake View and Fair View parks near the Dalecarlia reservoir on the DC-Maryland border. How African Americans carved leisure space for themselves in an area that was growing increasingly exclusionary in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is a topic deserving more scholarly attention.

Finally, the report finds that, while the canal fostered some community growth, its construction actively displaced African Americans (such as George Pointer or the multi-racial community of Sugar Hill in lower Georgetown). The historical African American communities named in this report—neighborhoods such as Herring Hill in Georgetown, St. Phillips Hill in the Palisades, Graysville, Rock Spring, Gibson Grove, Brickyard, and Tobytown—all followed the same trajectory, regardless of whether they were established before the Civil War or after. Most began as a concentration of African American households associated with an antebellum plantation. They thrived in the late nineteenth century after emancipation. Typically, the communities were tight-knit and based on kinship. Generally, each community invested in three institutions: the church, the school, and the fraternal organization or benevolent society hall. By the second quarter of the twentieth century, economic hardships enticed generational residents to seek better opportunities elsewhere, typically in larger cities. As the populations of these communities dwindled, the state of their infrastructure deteriorated, fostered by intentional neglect on the part of municipal services. By the mid-twentieth century, suburbanization, gentrification, and urban renewal led to the complete loss of these communities' built environments. Some communities' institutions (like those of Brickyard) were obliterated completely from the landscape, while others retain only a vestige or two (Tobytown, Gibson Grove, St. Phillips Hill), typically cemeteries or one of three institutional buildings (church, school, or social hall).

Because these vestiges remain under threat, it is imperative that the NPS partner with community organizations that bring attention to these communities and their importance. A sample of a few community organizations and potential partners is presented in the following text box.

POTENTIAL PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

The Warren Historic Site, Martinsburg, Montgomery County, Maryland

The Sugarland Ethno-History Project, Poolesville, Montgomery County, Maryland

The Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society, Montgomery County, Maryland

Friends of Moses Hall, Cabin John, Montgomery County, Maryland

Heritage Montgomery, Montgomery County, Maryland

Montgomery Preservation, Historic Cemeteries Inventory, Montgomery County, Maryland

Georgetown African American Historic Landmark Project & Tour, Washington, DC

Mount Zion United Methodist Church, Washington, DC

Mount Zion-Female Union Band Historic Memorial Park, Inc., Washington, DC

II. AFRICAN AMERICAN SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND CULTURAL CONNECTIONS TO THE CHESAPEAKE & OHIO CANAL

A. SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

African Americans living in the NCA were connected socially, economically, and culturally to the Potomac River and thereby to the C&O Canal from its inception. African American laborers (both free and enslaved) helped construct the canal; quarried stone and felled timber for the canal; hauled materials on bateaux, boats, and barges that they also navigated on the canal; operated the canal's locks; worked in industries and services adjacent to the canal; and established communities along the canal. Labor and social activities collided on the waterfront. African Americans also used the canal for transportation, for leisure, and for sport. Both the river and canal functioned as a nexus, a public space in which people of various social classes, backgrounds, and ethnicities met, interacted, formed relationships, and formulated group identities.

The history of the canal is intertwined with the African American experience in the Potomac River Valley, for which a broader context must be provided.³ To better understand the historical social connections African Americans in the study area had vis-à-vis the river and canal, this section briefly addresses the histories of enslavement, self-liberation, and emancipation in the region. It then explores how the canal impacted and influenced historical African American community- and institution-building in the study area.

1. *African Americans in the Potomac River Valley*

a. *Slavery and Freedom on the Upper Potomac River*

“I pray you to read the memmorial [*sic*] and humble petition of an old and obscure citizen. I was born in the year A.D. 1773, 11th of October in Frederick County Maryland. I was born a slave and continued one for 19 years,” begins **GEORGE POINTER**'s 1829 letter to the president and board of directors of the C&O Canal Company.⁴ Although Pointer wrote the letter as an appeal to the canal company, it serves to provide glimpses into an enslaved man's life in the Potomac River valley in the late eighteenth century. Pointer's life story as recounted in the letter highlights the distinct ways in which commerce on the Potomac River and canal-building enterprises provided some African Americans opportunities for personal advancement and gaining freedom.

³ For a more in-depth review of the African American experience in the Chesapeake region from first arrival in 1619 through emancipation in 1865, see the complementary Historic Context Narrative compiled by WSP in 2021: John Bedell, Heather McMahon, Andrew Wilkins, and Kate Umlauf, *African American Experience before Emancipation* (Washington, DC: prepared for US Department of Interior, National Park Service, National Capital Area by WSP USA Inc. August 2021).

⁴ “Petition of Captain George Pointer to the President and Directors of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal,” 5 September 1829 (Washington, DC: Record Group 79, Entry 262, National Archives and Records Administration, accessed via *Historic Chevy Chase DC* [website], 12 January 2022, <https://www.historicchevychasedc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/George-Pointer-letter-Sept-5-1829.pdf-1-1.pdf>).

GEORGE POINTER
(1773-1832)

Born into slavery in the vicinity of Carderock in present-day Montgomery County, MD, Pointer worked for the Patowmack Company for over 40 years, rising in rank to a captain and then as the last Superintendent Engineer at Great Falls.

When Pointer was a boy of 12 or 13, his enslaver, William Wallace, hired him out to the Patowmack Company. George Washington, who envisioned connecting the Chesapeake Bay to the Ohio River valley by improving navigation on the Potomac River above the fall line, was instrumental in incorporating the enterprise in 1785. The Patowmack Company constructed a series of works and improvements over the course of 17 years, including a system of discontinuous locks built to skirt or bypass five falls above Georgetown.⁵ Pointer began by carrying water to the canal laborers and then hauling stone from the Seneca Quarry to Great Falls. By 1788, he was accompanying captains on expeditions up the river to map the terrain. Within five more years, Pointer had earned and saved \$300 to purchase his freedom from Wallace, and by 1802, Pointer owned his own boat, which he used to ferry goods and stone downriver to Washington. He worked for the Patowmack Company intermittently for over four decades, rising to a position of trust with the canal company's directors, who gave him a managerial role in which he handled finances and supervised five men who navigated cargo boats through the falls. Pointer was promoted to Superintendent Engineer at Great Falls in 1816, and it was in this capacity that Pointer oversaw the construction of the Wing Dam, still in existence.⁶

As a free Black man residing in the District of Columbia at the turn of the nineteenth century, Pointer's position in society was rare. When the second decennial census of the United States was carried out in 1800, Montgomery County's 4th electoral district (which included the entire study area)⁷ held 15,058 people, of which 40 percent were enslaved and a mere 2 percent were free persons of color⁸ (Figures 2.1 and 2.2). The northwest section of DC where Pointer was enumerated was populated by only 668 persons, of whom one quarter were enslaved and only 22 (or 3 percent) were free Blacks. Georgetown had a similar ratio, with one quarter of its 3,108-person population enslaved and a slightly larger population of free Blacks, at 6 percent. Among

⁵ National Park Service, "The Patowmack Canal," Great Falls Park, Virginia [website] (last updated 19 October 2020, accessed 16 September 2021, <https://www.nps.gov/grfa/learn/historyculture/canal.htm>).

⁶ National Park Service, "Captain George Pointer," Great Falls Park, Virginia (website) (accessed 18 October 2021, <https://www.nps.gov/grfa/learn/historyculture/captain-george-pointer.htm>); Barbara Boyle Torrey and Clara Myrick Green, *Between Freedom and Equality: The History of an African American Family in Washington, DC* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2021), 8-23.

⁷ From 1800 to 1878, Montgomery County was divided into five election districts: No. 1, Cracklin (north-central); No. 2, Clarksburg (northwest); No. 3, Medley (southwest); No. 4, Rockville (south); and No. 5, Berry (northeast). The Martenet and Bond (1865) map (Figure 2.3) shows the Rockville electoral district (District 4) roughly bounded by the northwestern boundary of DC and Rock Creek on the east, the Potomac River on the South, Seneca Creek on the west, and Gaithersburg to the north. The Hopkins (1879) atlas, however, shows that population increase had divided District 4 into three electoral districts: the Darnestown District (No. 6), from the east side of Seneca Creek to the west side of Piney Branch; the Rockville District (No. 4), from the east side of Piney Branch to the west side of Cabin John Creek; and Bethesda District (No. 7), from the east side of Cabin John Creek to the DC line (Figure 2.4). By the twentieth century, the Rockville District (No. 4) was subdivided again to form the Potomac District (No. 10), the former district's southern half. For simplification, this report will use the original electoral designation of Rockville District No. 4 when it refers to the study area unless otherwise specified.

⁸ The 1800 US census enumerated citizens in three broad categories: whites, enslaved Blacks, and "All other free persons except indians not tallied."

the African Americans in each locale, free Blacks comprised only 4 percent in Montgomery County’s fourth district, 11 percent in northwestern DC, and 21 percent in Georgetown.

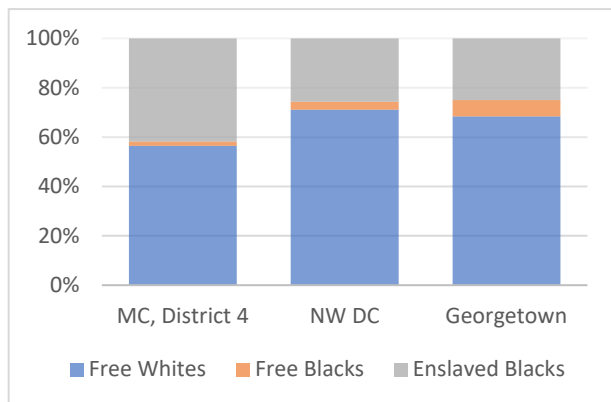


Figure 2.1: Chart Showing the Proportion of Free White, Free Black, and Enslaved Populations in Georgetown, Northwest DC, and District 4 of Montgomery County, Maryland, per 1800 US Census

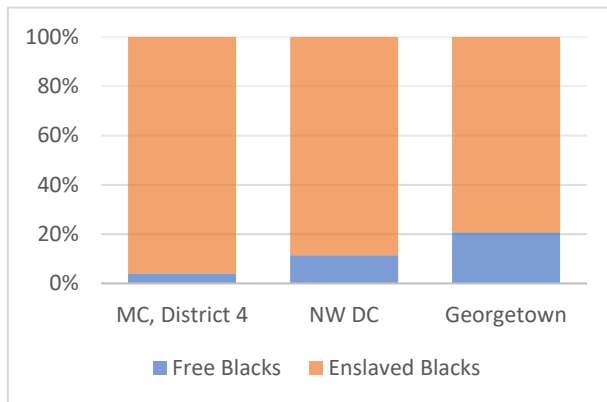


Figure 2.2: Chart Showing the Proportion of Free to Enslaved African Americans in Georgetown, Northwest DC, and District 4 of Montgomery County, Maryland, per 1800 US Census

NINA HONEMOND CLARKE, a Montgomery County resident and scholar of its African American history, compiled “Black Property Owners of Montgomery County, Maryland,”⁹ a list that gathers names gleaned through tax assessment records from 1793 to 1863. Her work provides insight into Montgomery County’s pre-emancipation, free African American property owners, and where they lived by electoral district. From her data, for instance, two men were listed as non-white property owners living in the Rockville District (electoral district 4) in 1793: **HENRY BOWEN**, whose personal property totaled \$11, and **JOHN FREEMAN**, worth \$25. In 1820, only **JAMES JONES** was listed as an African American property owner in the Rockville District, owning a 2-acre square in Rockville worth \$200. By 1831, the district’s Black property owners included **BENJAMIN** and **NANCY JOHNSON**, **CHARLES LANCASTER**, **SAMUEL MARTIN**, and **THOMAS PRICE**; within a decade, that number was nearly doubled, and to the ranks were added **NATHAN MARTIN**, **RICHARD BOWMAN**, **SARAH** and **HENRY BUTLER**, **HENRY HEBRON**, **SAMUEL ALLEN**, and **WILLIAM JOHNSON**. The aforementioned 1841 property owners owned tracts ranging from 19 to 100 acres, but all the parcels were worth \$1.00 per acre; this assessed value lasted through 1850, when **CHARLES BOWEN** was assessed for 100 acres worth \$100 and **GLASCO FOWMAN** was taxed for 60 acres worth \$60. But **TERRY BUTLER** owned 33 acres in Piney Grove in 1852 that were valued at \$4.00 per acre, suggesting higher-quality, arable land. In 1853, **SAMUEL BOWEN** was the district’s largest and wealthiest Black landowner, with 264 acres (a tract called “Valentine’s Garden Enlarged”) valued at \$6.00 per acre, with a net worth of \$1,584.

⁹ Nina Honemond Clarke, “Black Property Owners of Montgomery County, Maryland,” in *Black History in Montgomery County. Excerpts from The Flower of the Forest— Black Genealogical Journal* (Rockville, MD: Repository, Jane C. Sween Library, n.d.), 135-145.

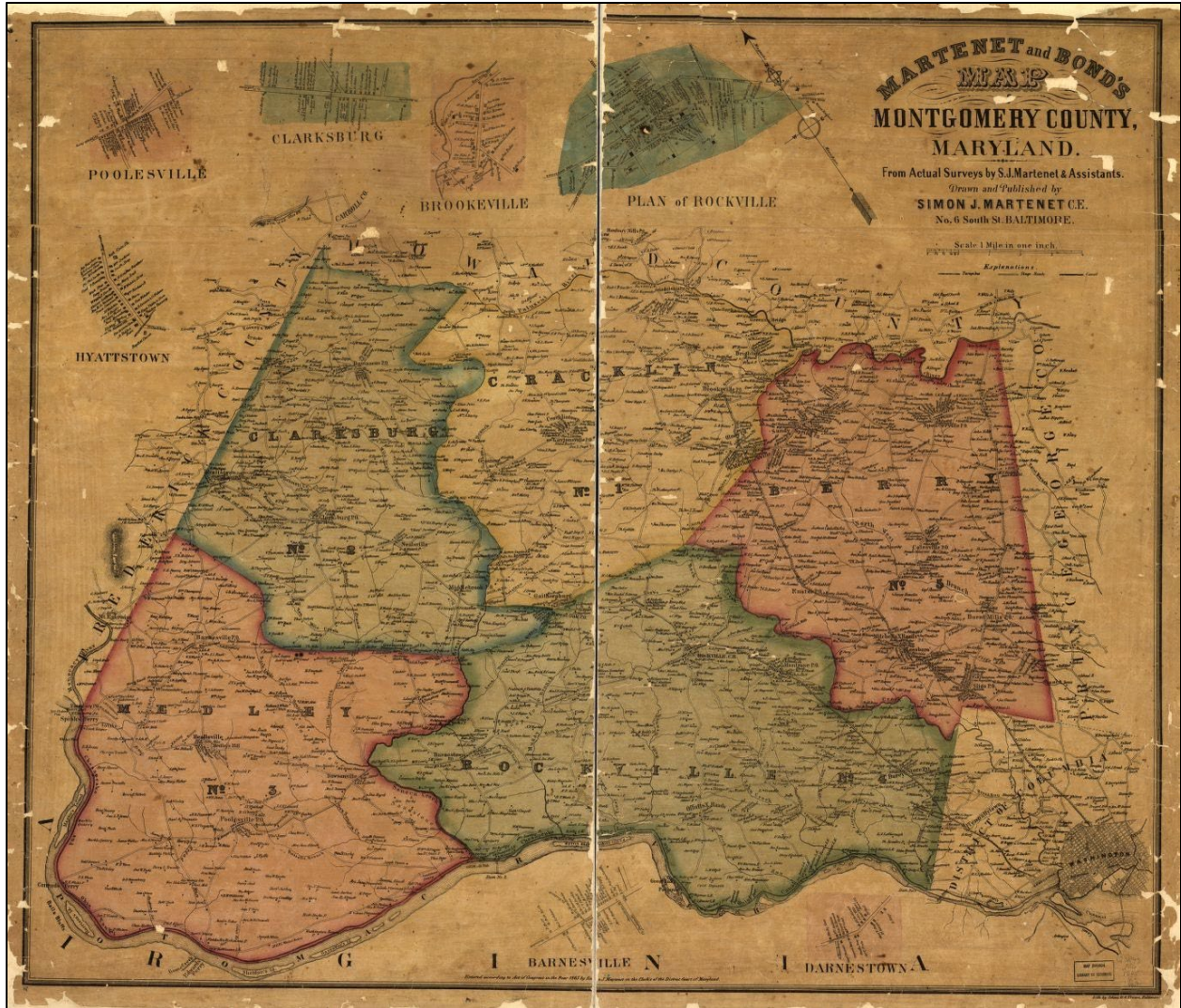


Figure 2.3: *Map of Montgomery County, Maryland, 1865* (Martenet et al.) Showing the Five Electoral Districts in the County in 1865

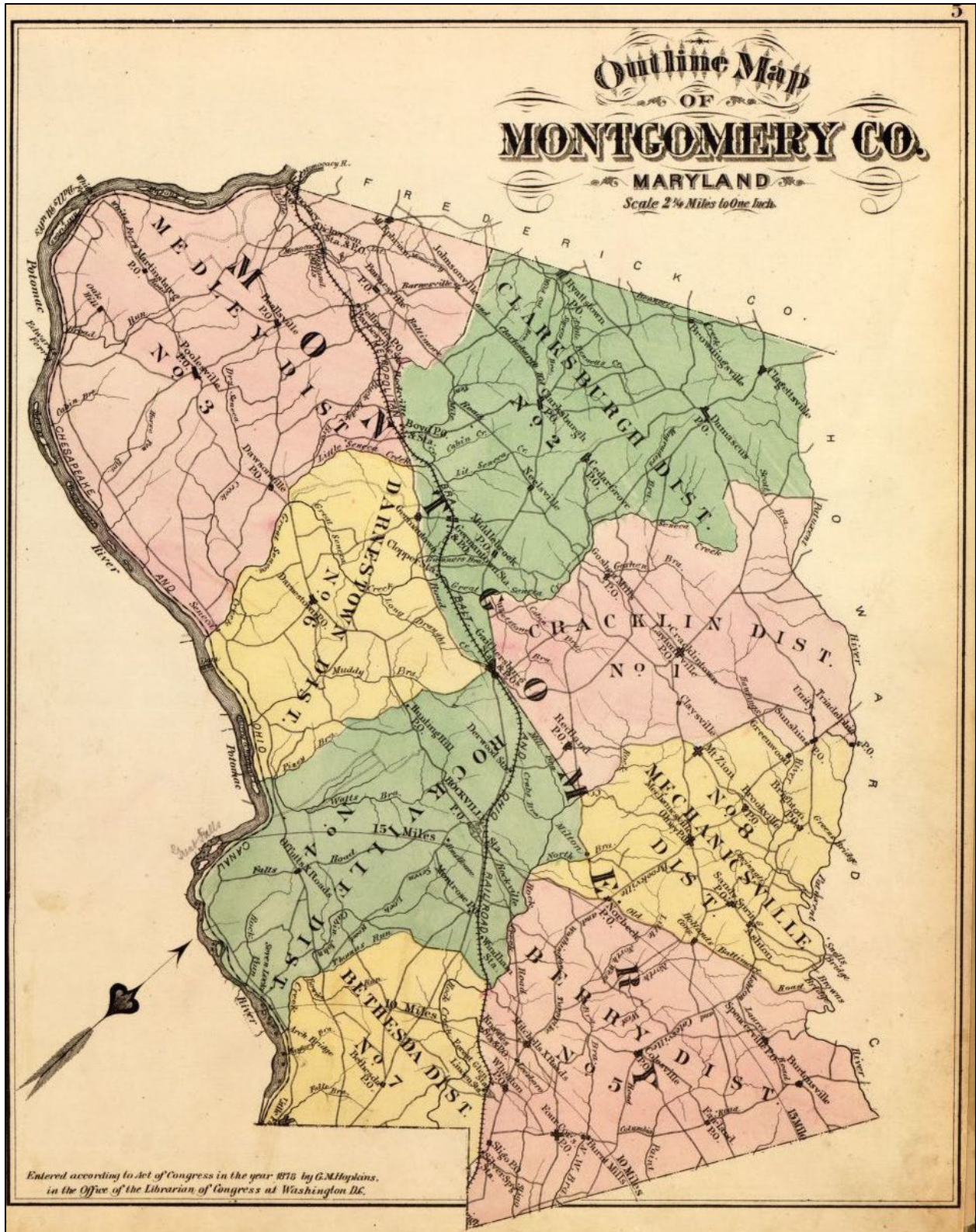


Figure 2.4: Atlas of Fifteen Miles Around Washington, Including the County of Montgomery, Maryland, 1879 (Hopkins) Showing the Seven Electoral Districts in the County by 1879

What Clarke’s research shows is not only the paucity of free African American landowners in Montgomery County in the 70 years preceding emancipation but also the slow growth of that number over time. Only two Black men were taxed for their property in the Rockville District in 1793, and the number had grown to nine by 1853—a modest increase, but an increase nonetheless. Her roster also illustrates that wealth was accumulated through generations by kinship: two family names, Bowen and Martin, persist through the records taken every decade, suggesting that sons benefited from their fathers’ toil and passed it to their sons or brothers. A few women were also property owners, such as **KITTY CARROLL** and **MARGARET WARREN**. Some of these property owners held valuable lots in Rockville, but most owned agricultural land valued at a dollar an acre, suggesting these farmers may not have had the pick of prime land available. Fundamentally, what the census and tax assessment data show is how rare it was to be a propertied, free Black person in Montgomery County prior to emancipation in 1864.

Enslavement had been the de facto state for the vast majority of African Americans in Maryland since European colonization began in 1634. Adopted from the Virginia Chesapeake, chattel slavery spread across the Maryland colony with the slow pace of westward migration. The easternmost, coastal areas (known as the Tidewater region) of Maryland were the first settled by British immigrants in the seventeenth century; they established vast tobacco plantations reliant on large groups of enslaved labor brought from Africa and the Caribbean. By the mid-eighteenth century, European settlers had imported slavery into the interior Piedmont region. The main tobacco-producing areas within Maryland’s Potomac River Valley were the lower parts of Montgomery and Frederick counties.¹⁰

i. Enslavement in a Rural Setting

By the onset of the nineteenth century, most African Americans (enslaved and free) in the upland Potomac River Valley lived an agrarian lifestyle on plantations and farms. Enslaved laborers tended the commodity crop as well as labored at all the other tasks essential to running a plantation: carting, building and repairing fences, tending animals, shoeing horses, dairying. While many worked in the crop fields, a few were house servants who labored in the “big house” at cooking, cleaning, and other domestic chores. Circumstances varied, but those who were enslaved typically inhabited either purpose-built quarters (such as small cabins or large dormitories) or dwelled in the houses of their enslaver (in basements, attics, garrets, and other spaces).¹¹ **JOSIAH HENSON**, an enslaved man who lived for three decades at Isaac Riley’s plantation on Old Georgetown Road, south of Rockville, described typical quarters for enslaved people in the early nineteenth century:

We lodged in log huts, and on the bare ground. Wooden floors were an unknown luxury. In a single room were huddled, like cattle, ten or a dozen persons, men, women, and children. All ideas of refinement and decency were, of course, out of the question. We had neither bedsteads, nor furniture of any description. Our beds were collections of straw and old rags, thrown down in the corners and boxed in with boards; a single blanket the only covering. The wind whistled and the rain and snow blew in through the cracks, and the damp earth soaked in the moisture till the floor was miry as a pigsty. Such were our houses.

¹⁰ Susan Soderberg, “African Americans in Montgomery County During the Civil War,” *The Montgomery County Story [Biannual Publication of the Montgomery County Historical Society]* 54, no. 1 (Summer 2011):12-17 (accessed 5 October 2021, https://mchdr.montgomeryhistory.org/xmlui/bitstream/handle/20.500.12366/227/mcs_v054_n1_2011_spiers_soderberg.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y).

¹¹ Soderberg, 12-17.

In these wretched hovels were we penned at night, and fed by day; here were the children born and the sick—neglected.¹²

Henson advocated for and received his manumission in 1829. He wrote an autobiography, *The Life of Josiah Henson, Formerly a Slave, Now an Inhabitant of Canada, as Narrated by Himself*, published in 1849, in which he recounted the cruelty he experienced at the hands of white landowners, particularly the time when he was assaulted by an overseer who broke his shoulder with a fence rail for the transgression of crossing his field without permission. Henson, through these first-person accounts, served as the basis for the character Uncle Tom in Harriet Beecher Stowe's 1852 novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.¹³

JOSIAH HENSON
(1789-1883)

Born into slavery in Charles County, MD, Henson escaped enslavement in Montgomery County, MD, and eventually settled in Ontario, Canada. His autobiography, published in 1849, inspired Harriet Beecher Stowe's title character in her 1852 novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

The intense cultivation of tobacco compounded by poor soil practices had devastated the land by the 1820s, and many Montgomery County farms were left abandoned through the 1840s. Riley, Henson's enslaver, told him that he was financially "ruined" in 1825 and sent him with other enslaved individuals to his brother, Amos Riley, in Kentucky; there, Henson observed that the land was more fertile and thus food was abundant. When Henson returned to Montgomery County in 1828, he called the Riley farm "poverty-stricken" and the earthen-floored kitchen he was forced to sleep in crowded, filthy, and noxious-smelling.¹⁴ A British woman, Frances Trollope, visited the Stonington estate near Great Falls, Maryland, in 1830 and observed fields left fallow, ramshackle wooden homes, and dwellings for enslaved workers, one of which she described in her 1832 book, *Domestic Manners of the Americans*, as "a shanty, a black hole without any window, which served as a kitchen and all other offices, and also as the lodging of the blacks."¹⁵ Both accounts paint an overall picture of mean hovels, privation, and penury for both white planters and enslaved Blacks in this period.

Those planters that remained switched to grain (wheat, barley, oats, and rye) and corn cultivation, which had shorter sowing and harvesting seasons.¹⁶ Grain cultivation required less intensive labor, with the result that enslavers manumitted large numbers of their enslaved workers in this period. Often, these manumitted African Americans settled in the area and sometimes remained with the

¹² Josiah Henson, *Truth Stranger than Fiction: Father Henson's Story of His Own Life* (Boston: John P. Jewett and Company, 1858), quoted in Clare Lise Kelly, *Places from the Past: The Tradition of Gardez Bien in Montgomery County* (Silver Spring, MD: Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, 1927), 15.

¹³ Michael Dwyer, "Magruder's Folly," *The Montgomery County Story [Biannual Publication of the Montgomery County Historical Society]* 52, no. 3 (Fall/Winter 2009):43 (accessed 17 November 2021, https://mchdr.montgomeryhistory.org/xmlui/bitstream/handle/20.500.12366/224/mcs_v052_n3_2009_twitty_dwyer.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y).

¹⁴ Josiah Henson, *An Autobiography of the Rev. Josiah Henson ("Uncle Tom"). From 1789 to 1881. With a Preface by Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Introductory Notes by George Sturge, S. Morley, Esq., M. P., Wendell Phillips, and John G. Whittier*, John Lobb, ed. (London: Schuyler, Smith & Co., 1881), 43-57 (accessed 27 January 2022, <https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/henson81/henson81.html>).

¹⁵ Frances Trollope, *Domestic Manners of the Americans, Volume II* (London, Whittaker, Treacher, & Co., 1832), 43.

¹⁶ Soderberg, 12-17.

landowning family as servants. This trend can be glimpsed in the 1820 US census data: that year, there were 1,587 African Americans living in the Rockville District of Montgomery County, 23 percent of whom were free. Approximately half of those free Blacks were enumerated within 43 white households, 67 percent of which were not enslavers. The other half composed 45 independent, free Black households with 34 different surnames, the most common being Adams, Bowen, Jones, Powel, Thomas, and Webster.

Starting in the 1830s, however, Montgomery County's free Black population began to dwindle. By 1840, the number of African Americans in the Rockville District had doubled to 3,081, yet only 16 percent of those African Americans were free. By 1850, the Rockville District's African American population had declined to 2,443, of which only 12 percent were free. While the overall population remained relatively stable over the course of 50 years (increasing only 2 percent) from 1810 to 1860, the Black population in the county decreased by 16 percent. Furthermore, on the eve of the Civil War, over three-quarters of the African Americans living in Montgomery County were enslaved. The area's proximity to Washington, DC, likely served as a beacon to free Blacks who sought improved circumstances; the steady decline in the proportion of free Blacks within the total African American population in this lower part of Montgomery County suggests an outward migration. This is perhaps alluded to in the 1896 memoir of a Cabin John resident, Dr. Samuel Clagett Busey, who described enslavement in the study area during the 1840s: "There were not many slaves in the neighborhood, but nearly every farm was cultivated in whole or in part by slaves."¹⁷

On the whole and for the greater part of the antebellum period, Montgomery County's enslaved men and women were isolated and scattered, their spheres reduced to their own and neighboring plantations. This resulted in enslaved persons having difficulty finding partners, starting families, or forming communities, and the vagaries of slavery often meant family members were separated from one another when enslavers sold individuals abroad. When the C&O Canal was first conceived in 1822, the rural landscape of Montgomery County and Washington, DC, was composed of large plantations and small crossroads communities connected by a few dirt roads. In 1825, the year the C&O Canal Company was chartered, Henson traveled with other enslaved African Americans from Riley's seat in Montgomery County to Kentucky via an overland route by wagon and by foot; curiously, he reported that the band of enslaved travelers took the National Road until they reached Wheeling and were able to travel by boat down the Ohio River. The terrestrial route was long, arduous, and tedious, but the river was "decidedly more agreeable than tramping along day after day at the rate we had kept up ever since leaving home. Very little labour at the oars was necessary. The tide floated us steadily along, and we had ample leisure to sleep and recruit our strength."¹⁸ Henson's route through Virginia suggests that roads leading west from Montgomery County were inadequate; the canal would have been crucial in increasing opportunities to connect people and goods in western Maryland.

In the early nineteenth century, before the proliferation of railroads and without reliable interior roads, waterways provided the fastest and securest means of transportation. The Potomac River, below the fall line, was a conduit for news, goods, and people. But above the fall line, navigation was difficult if not impossible, leaving the upcountry isolated. The C&O Canal had had an antecedent in the Patowmack Company, which built a series of works and improvements along the

¹⁷ Dr. Samuel C. Busey, *A Souvenir with an Autobiographical Sketch of Early Life and Selected Miscellaneous Addresses and Communications* (Washington, DC: 1896), 78-79.

¹⁸ Henson, 45-46.

Potomac River. But the system, while efficient for downstream traffic, proved difficult for poling upstream. The Patowmack Company was bankrupt by 1828, the same year the C&O Canal Company began constructing a contiguous canal system on the Maryland side of the Potomac River from Georgetown to Cumberland. The C&O Canal Company had acquired the rights to the Patowmack Company's infrastructure; they incorporated and improved upon the locks and the feeder at Little Falls built previously but constructed a separate, linear canal system running parallel to the river on the Maryland side. Completed in 1850, the C&O Canal eventually extended 184.5 miles, crossing four Maryland counties (Montgomery, Frederick, Washington, and Allegany) in addition to its eastern terminus within the District of Columbia. The canal, like the river below the falls, became a way of connecting peoples and widening horizons.

The C&O Canal provided a geophysical reference point in the recollections of PHILLIP JOHNSON, who was born into slavery just outside the study area in December 1847, "about four miles below Edward's Ferry, on the Eight Mile Level, between Edward's Ferry and Seneca."¹⁹ He was one of five children born to Willie Ann, his mother who died when he was a child, and to Sam, his father who lived to age 89. He was enslaved by Dr. Stephen Newton Chiswell White, whose plantation, Annington, stretched to the river between Locks 24 and 25, directly across from Selden Island. S.N.C. White was one of the largest enslavers in the county in 1840, with 43 enslaved persons enumerated in his household by the US census.

REV. PHILLIP JOHNSON
(1847-1938)

Born in Montgomery County, MD, Johnson was emancipated after the Civil War and settled in Sugarland. He married Rachel Beander in 1877 and the couple had 11 children. Johnson farmed his own property and became a Methodist preacher ca. 1897.

In an interview conducted in 1937 in Poolesville, Maryland, Johnson (aged nearly 90) recalled that they raised corn, oats, and wheat on White's lands, but not tobacco, although "[he] heard say that they used to raise it long before [he] was born." Harvesting was done with "cradles," or scythes, and Johnson recalled a time before mechanical reapers, when agricultural labor was all manual: "They had a lot 'o men and would slay a lot 'o wheat in a day. It was pretty work to see four or five cradlers in a field and others following them raking the wheat in bunches and others following binding them in bundles." Johnson described the food eaten by enslaved African Americans on White's plantation as plentiful but coarse, and their clothing was made by the women in the White household: wool clothes were given to men, linsey (a cotton-wool blend) to women. When he was still a child, Mrs. White removed Johnson to Poolesville to work in a house with a garden because their plantation overseer had been cruel to him as a boy.²⁰

¹⁹ Between 1936 and 1938, members of the Federal Writers' Project, A Works Progress Administration endeavor undertaken in collaboration with the Library of Congress, collected more than 2,000 first-hand, autobiographical accounts from formerly enslaved African Americans in 17 states. They published these oral histories in several volumes; the eighth volume is devoted to Maryland. Federal Writers' Project, Works Progress Administration, *Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 8, Maryland, Brooks – Williams* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1936, accessed 5 October 2021: www.loc.gov/item/mesn080/).

²⁰ Simon J. Martenet, *Martenet and Bond's Map of Montgomery County, Maryland* (Baltimore: Simon J. Martenet, 1865, accessed 5 October 2021, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3843m.la000299/?r=0.182.0.789.0.142.0.054.0>). Also see Christopher Owens, "Annington," Montgomery County, Maryland, National Register of Historic Places

ii. Enslavement in an Urban Setting

In the antebellum period, enslaved African Americans also labored in non-agricultural roles, including manufacturing and industry. They worked at iron furnaces, such as the Antietam Iron Works in Washington County, or worked on the water, fishing, oystering, operating ferries, transporting goods by boat. Milling and blacksmithing were occupations prevalent in both rural and urban settings. Enslaved people who lived in towns and cities worked in a variety of trades: domestic service, catering, barbering, factory labor, construction, and more. CHARLES BALL, for instance, became a cook for the US Navy on a frigate, the USS *Congress*; he was one of several enslaved persons hired out to labor in the new nation's capital ca. 1800. In his 1837 memoir, Ball recalled "one Saturday evening, when I came home from the corn field, my master told me that he had hired me out for a year at the city of Washington, and that I would have to live at the navy-yard."²¹ A fortnight later, on New Year's Day, he walked to Washington behind his enslaver, Cox, who rode on horseback; they traveled approximately 60 miles from a plantation on the Patuxent River near St. Leonard's Town to the Navy Yard in southeastern Washington, on the Eastern Branch (now Anacostia) River. Ball served the Navy for two years.²²

The District of Columbia had a particular system of hiring out in which an enslaver would lease their enslaved man or woman to peers for contract work, typically lasting one calendar year. The practice of hiring out enslaved people in DC was so common that its occurrences outnumbered the number of sales of enslaved persons. Many contracts lasted from January 1 to December 25, leading to the recognition of New Year's Day as "Hiring Day" by the enslaved population.²³ If not residing with their contracted enslaver, hired-out enslaved persons often resided with friends and relatives or in their own dwellings, which were often substandard and sited in areas that did not appeal to property owners, such as swampy bottoms. In this situation, the enslaved person lived apart from his or her white enslaver, affording additional autonomy.²⁴ In Ball's account, his separation from his enslaver provided material benefits: he received more food, secondhand clothing from the officers, and often pocket money as a tip. He found his "duties, though constant, were not burthensome, and [he] was permitted to spend Sunday afternoon in [his] own way" in which he frequently "went up into the city to see the new and splendid buildings."²⁵

Registration Form (Washington, DC: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, 1973) and Janice Artemel and Pamela James, "'Concord,' White Place," Montgomery County, Maryland, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (Washington, DC: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, 1977).

²¹ Charles Ball, *Slavery in the United States: A Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Charles Ball, a Black Man, Who Lived Forty Years in Maryland, South Carolina and Georgia as a Slave* (New York: John S. Taylor, 1837), 27.

²² Ball, 28.

²³ Callie Hopkins, "Slavery, Freedom, and the Struggle to Keep a Family Together," White House Historical Association [website], January 31, 2019, accessed 27 February 2021, <https://www.whitehousehistory.org/slavery-freedom-and-the-struggle-to-keep-a-family-together>).

²⁴ John Michael Vlach, "'Without Recourse to Owners:' The Architecture of Urban Slavery in the Antebellum South," *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture* 6 (1997):150-160, discussed in "Introduction: Studying the Landscapes of North American Urban Slavery," *Slavery in the City: Architecture and Landscapes of Urban Slavery in North America*, Clifton Ellis and Rebecca Ginsburg, eds. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2017); Soderberg, 12-17.

²⁵ Ball, 27-28.

CHARLES BALL
(ca. 1781 – after 1837)

Born into slavery in Calvert County, MD, Ball declared his freedom around the age of 30 and enlisted in the Navy during the War of 1812. He served as a seaman and cook and saw action at the Battle of Bladensburg. He wrote a memoir about his life, published in 1837.

Slavery in an urban setting was quite different from rural slavery in several ways. The landscape of slavery in a city could be considered a condensed, microcosm of plantation slavery: all the domestic activities that would be performed in a series of outbuildings and yards on a plantation would be reduced to an urban backyard. Those persons enslaved on plantations would often dwell in separate quarters from their enslaver, but the density of the urban built environment necessitated closer quarters, and many urban, domestic, enslaved people shared the same roof with their enslavers. Of course, urban slavery was not agricultural, and so villages of enslaved workers located close to the crop fields and far from the enslavers' homestead were not applicable in a city setting. Because many rural enslaved persons lived at quite a distance from their enslavers, it allowed them a level of privacy and autonomy in their housing that urban enslaved people did not share. In an urban setting, the proximity between an enslaved person and his or her enslaver created a restrictive, surveilled atmosphere that could be more limiting than that found on a rural plantation. There was also an element of the hidden to this arrangement, as all the activity undertaken by enslaved persons took place behind the façade of an urban townhouse or high garden walls, away from public eyes on the street. While plantations might be remote, anyone visiting a plantation would see the activity of enslaved workers in the open.

While the urban enslaved population may have suffered a higher degree of surveillance than their rural counterparts, they also had a higher degree of autonomy once removed from their enslavers' home. Urban enslaved people had access to a city, and were often permitted to conduct business in it, allowing them some degree of autonomy as well as a means of earning money for themselves. They often acquired skillsets and knowledge to which their rural counterparts did not have access and worked in trades not found in the countryside (albeit, as agricultural work lessened, some rural enslaved men were trained as craftsmen, masons, carpenters, or blacksmiths who could then be hired out to neighboring plantations). The urban enslaved person in a city also had more interaction with a diverse array of others, both white and Black, including merchants, artisans, professionals, factory workers, and seamen, so their outlook was more cosmopolitan than those isolated in rural settings. Their mobility provided them access to news and information, making them better informed than their rural counterparts.²⁶

Ball's presence in Washington city and his ability to explore it on his day off allowed him to encounter a range of people, including enslaved persons in Georgetown, among whom he "made many new acquaintances," and a free Black sailor from Philadelphia. The latter informed Ball about a community of free Blacks in that northern city, which "so charmed [Ball's] imagination that [Ball] determined to devise some plan of escaping from the Congress, and making [his] way north."²⁷ Ball's friend pledged to help him conceal himself in a schooner, but before the plan to self-liberate could be employed, Cox, Ball's enslaver, returned to DC to claim Ball and return him

²⁶ National Park Service, "Urban Life," African American Heritage & Ethnography, Park Ethnography Program [website] (accessed 16 August 2021: <https://www.nps.gov/ethnography/aah/aaheritage/ChesapeakeD.htm>); Soderberg, 12-17.

²⁷ Ball, 28-29.

to Calvert County. Although Washington, DC, provided enslaved persons a degree of autonomy and independence, as a slave-holding locality, it did not afford them any real freedom. That could be achieved only if an enslaved individual escaped to free states or other countries.

b. Self-liberation and Emancipation

Maryland's adjacency to Pennsylvania, a free commonwealth, made the state a liminal ground for self-liberating African Americans fleeing enslavement. The Potomac River and the abutting C&O Canal are intertwined with the region's long history of enslavement and freedom seeking. Both were used as paths to freedom throughout the antebellum period and contributed to the Underground Railroad, a network of free Blacks and whites who assisted enslaved persons to escape chattel bondage and flee to free states as well as other countries. To reach free states in the North, freedom seekers had to cross the Potomac River, and the Potomac River Valley's remoteness provided a means of escape. In 1840, JAMES CURRY recounted his experience crossing the river and traveling along the C&O Canal's towpath before ultimately fleeing into Pennsylvania:

At Alexandria, I crossed the Potomac river, and came to Washington, where I made friends with a colored family, with whom I rested eight days. I then took the Montgomery road, but, wishing to escape Baltimore, I turned off, and it being cloudy, I lost my course, and fell back again along the Potomac river, and travelled on the tow path of the canal from Friday night until Sunday morning....

I soon entered a colored person's house on the side of the canal, where they gave me breakfast and treated me very kindly. I travelled on through Williamsport and Hagerstown, in Maryland, and, on the 19th day of July, about two hours before day, I crossed the line into Pennsylvania, with a heart full of gratitude to God, believing that I was indeed a free man, and that now, under the protection of law, there was 'none who could molest me or make me afraid.'²⁸

JAMES CURRY

(ca. 1815- after 1870)

Enslaved by Moses Chambers near Milton, North Carolina, Curry (aka "Cary") self-liberated with his two brothers in 1837 and settled first in Canada and then New York. In 1840, an account of his travails and flight to freedom were published in the *Liberator*.

Crossing the Potomac River and canal were dangerous, often fatal, undertakings. The *Alexandria Gazette* reported in November 1847 that the drowned corpses of two Black men were found near Williamsport within one week of each other. The author suspected that they were likely two of a group of three or four enslaved persons who had fled Virginia four weeks prior and crossed the river in a skiff above Dam No. 6. The boat was pulled over the dam and capsized, its passengers all thought drowned.²⁹ Instead of a conduit to freedom, the river and canal were often a graveyard.

²⁸ James Curry, "Narrative of James Curry, A Fugitive Slave," *The Liberator* (January 10, 1840), Elizabeth S. Wright, trans. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, accessed 5 October 2021, <https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/curry/curry.html>).

²⁹ "News of the Day," *Alexandria [VA] Gazette*, 24 November 1847:2 (accessed 3 November 2021, <https://candocanal.org/histdocs/Newspapers-1847-48.pdf>).

The association between the Underground Railroad and the C&O Canal has been part of local lore for over a century, as evidenced by a travel brochure published by the Baltimore and Ohio (B&O) Railroad in 1923:

An interesting chapter in the history of the C. & O. Canal was in the slave days preceding the Civil War, when it was secretly utilized as a part of the famous “Underground Railway” system. Along its route were stations maintained by abolitionists and their friends, whose bribing of canal boatmen enabled many a slave to be smuggled into the free states.³⁰

Although the C&O lore is romantic, factual stories of escape using canal boats are few; one is recounted in a 7 September 1860 advertisement in the *Rockville Sentinel* for RUFUS JACKSON, in which his Montgomery County-based enslaver, William H. Benson, wrote that he believed Rufus was “making his way off on a canal boat.”³¹ Another item in the Hagerstown, Maryland, newspaper *The Herald of Freedom and Torchlight* published on 2 July 1856 describes an “abduction” under the title, “A Serious Charge”:

A man by the name of Wellman, the Captain of a Canal Boat from Cumberland, was arrested last week in the neighborhood of Williamsport, charged with having abducted a slave, the property of George W. Spate, of Poolesville, Montgomery County, Md., by inducing him to go upon his boat, and bringing him to Williamsport. A man by the name of Noland also became implicated in the charge, and both were committed to the Washington County Jail in default of bail, to answer to the charge. Wellman had a hearing before justice Cook on Saturday last, by whom he was released, but having been subsequently re-arrested and taken before Justice Powles, he was re-committed by that Magistrate. He resides in Cumberland, where he is considered a very respectable man, and has a number of friends who have promised to bail him out as soon as arrangements can be made for that purpose. He is a native of New York, but has been boating on the Canal for some years.³²

Rather than abducting the unnamed enslaved man against his will, Wellman and Nolan likely aided him in his flight from Poolesville and were arrested for “stealing” Spate’s chattel property.

Scholars have relied on nineteenth-century newspaper advertisements for runaway enslaved persons to connect actual men and women to the act of escaping enslavement via the canal. As early as 1829, one year after construction on the C&O Canal began, advertisements appeared in local newspapers for runaway enslaved persons, suggesting that the canal offered opportunities for flight. A sample of 31 advertisements found that the canal was associated with freedom-seeking persons between 1829 and 1860, and 27 of the ads were published in the first decade of the canal’s construction. At least 12 of the self-liberators described in the ads were engaged on the canal’s construction when they absconded. All the advertised enslaved persons were men, and the majority were under the age of 30. One such man was BEN ADDISON, whose enslaver, Levin J. Wilson, advertised in the *Frederick Town Herald* on 2 January 1830 that the 21-year-old “has been working

³⁰ *Along the Picturesque Potomac on the Baltimore & Ohio* (n.p., ca. 1923), 11-12, quoted in Timothy R. Snyder, “The Chesapeake & Ohio Canal and the Underground Railroad,” *Along the Towpath* 42, no. 1 (March 2010):13 (accessed 6 October 2021, <https://www.candocanal.org/atp/2010-03.pdf>).

³¹ Advertisement, *Rockville* [Montgomery County] *Sentinel* (7 September 1860), quoted in Snyder, 14 (accessed via website “Beneath the Underground: The Flight to Freedom and Communities in Antebellum Maryland,” www.mdslavery.net).

³² “A Serious Charge,” *The Herald of Freedom and Torch Light* [Hagerstown, MD] (2 July 1856) (accessed 20 October 2021, <http://www.whilbr.org/itemdetail.aspx?idEntry=8341&dtPointer=200>).

on the canal in Georgetown for the last three months” before slipping away into Washington City, presumably, where his emancipated brother Edward lived.³³ ROBERT SIMMES was working on the “Seventh Section of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal” when he ran away on 21 November 1829, prompting John Peerce and John D. Clarke to issue a notice with a \$100 reward for his return in the *Daily National Intelligencer* that same month.³⁴ In several of the advertisements, enslavers specifically expressed their concern that the enslaved man would use the waterway in his flight.

The C&O Canal Company used only hired-out enslaved laborers and were not overly concerned about the health, welfare, safety, or surveillance of the contracted enslaved men. They lodged the workers close to the river, the remoteness of which would have provided opportunities of escaping relatively undetected. Furthermore, free Blacks also worked on the canal’s construction, and an organic network of sympathetic persons likely existed upon which self-liberating enslaved persons could call for assistance. An interesting dynamic is that earning wages on the canal’s construction was itself a means to freedom, as a hired-out enslaved man could save money either to purchase his own freedom from his enslaver or to finance his flight. Two examples of enslaved persons using the canal work as a means to freedom are the 1830 and 1839 ads posted, respectively, by George Duvall of Prince George’s County, Maryland, for BILL, who “was making towards Washington city, where he may now be, but more likely attempt to get employment on the canal, and then make his way to Pennsylvania”; and by Sylvester H. Gardiner of Charles County, Maryland, whose enslaved man, HENRY, “may make for the Canal, as he has worked there, and has expressed a wish to work there again.”³⁵

White enslavers in counties adjacent to the canal in both Maryland and Virginia were wary of the canal enterprise, fearing that news of its construction would draw enslaved men from their plantations to seek work there and use the wages earned or the route itself as means to freedom. Once among the throngs of other laborers, an enslaved man might become lost in the shuffle and take the opportunity of lax oversight to disappear altogether. Or perhaps work on the canal could be used as an excuse by self-liberators headed north. The language of one runaway slave advertisement from 5 June 1830 in the Loudoun County, Virginia, publication, *Genius of Liberty*, suggests the author, Edward Hammett, did not believe 25-year-old ELIAS DOWLING, who “Says he belongs to Charles Dickinson, of Louisa county, Va. and has been hired to William Boxler, on the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal.” Perhaps the distance between Louisa County, in central Piedmont Virginia, and Loudoun County was too great for Hammett, Loudoun County’s jailer, to believe that Dowling had been sent by his enslaver for employment on the canal. Whatever his reasons,

³³ “Fifty Dollars Reward,” *Frederick Town Herald* (2 January 1830), quoted in Snyder, 14 (accessed via website “Beneath the Underground: The Flight to Freedom and Communities in Antebellum Maryland,” www.mdslavery.net); also see Maryland State Archives, “Ben Addison (b. circa 1808 – d. ?)” *Archives of Maryland (Biographical Series)* [website] (accessed 20 October 2021, <https://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc5400/sc5496/009300/009361/html/009361bio.html>).

³⁴ “One Hundred Dollars Reward,” *Daily National Intelligencer* [Washington, DC], 26 November 1829 (accessed via *Legacy of Slavery in Maryland* [website], 20 October 2021, https://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc5400/sc5496/runaway_advertisements/pdf/18291126dni1.pdf).

³⁵ “\$100 Reward,” *Daily National Intelligencer* [Washington, DC], 24 February 1830, and “Twenty Dollars Reward,” *Daily National Intelligencer* [Washington, DC], 2 October 1839, quoted in Snyder, 14 (accessed via website “Beneath the Underground: The Flight to Freedom and Communities in Antebellum Maryland,” www.mdslavery.net).

he jailed Dowling as a runaway and sought the “owner of said negro... to come forward, prove property, pay charges, and take him away.”³⁶

Laboring on the canal was not the only means of escaping slavery; the river and canal were themselves conduits to flight and freedom seeking. PAUL EDMONDSON was an enslaved man born in Montgomery County who was manumitted by 1832, following two attempts at self-liberation. By 1835, he had purchased his own 20-acre farmland in the community of Norbeck, south of Mechanicsville (present-day Olney), in the Berry electoral district (District 5) of northeastern Montgomery County. He married AMELIA, a woman enslaved by Rebecca Culver. Together, Paul and Amelia had 14 children born into slavery. While Amelia’s children were bound to Culver at birth, Culver hired out several of them to houses in Washington, DC, including Amelia’s younger daughters, Emily and Mary. Six of the Edmondson children (SAMUEL, RICHARD, JOHN, EPHRAIM, MARY, and EMILY) attempted to flee north to freedom using the Potomac River.³⁷

On the night of 15 April 1848, 77 self-liberating Blacks (including the six Edmondsons) boarded the schooner *Pearl*, docked at Washington’s 7th Street wharf. To reach free lands, the *Pearl* had to sail 225 miles: down the river to the Chesapeake Bay, up the bay, across the Chesapeake & Delaware Canal, and along the Delaware River to New Jersey. However, poor weather conspired to anchor the ship by the mouth of the river, and the escape plan was exposed by morning. Armed white enslavers aboard a steamer ship tracked the *Pearl*, boarded it, confiscated it, and towed it back to Washington. The white captains were arrested and taken from the ship with the enslaved freedom seekers; all were marched through the city to jail. The men were manacled while the women and children walked unfettered through angry mobs of whites. The four Edmondson sons were sold to plantations in Louisiana, and the girls languished in New Orleans until an outbreak of yellow fever in that city forced their slavers to transport them to a Baltimore jail.³⁸ Paul Edmondson sought assistance and financial support from abolitionists in New York, and he was able to free Richard, Emily, and Mary. John and Ephraim were eventually freed by the efforts of their father and eldest brother, HAMILTON.³⁹

MARY AND EMILY EDMONDSON

(ca. 1833 - ca. 1853) (ca. 1835 - 1895)

Born into slavery, these sisters self-liberated aboard the *Pearl* in 1848 but were captured, transported to New Orleans, then returned to Maryland and finally freed. They worked closely with Frederick Douglass for universal emancipation.

Although universal emancipation did not take effect until the conclusion of the Civil War, the enslaved population of Washington, DC, was emancipated with the passage of the District of Columbia Emancipation Act on 16 April 1862. Montgomery County’s 5,500 enslaved African

³⁶ “Committed,” *Genius of Liberty* [Loudoun County, VA], 5 June 1830 (accessed 20 October 2021, <http://www.whilbr.org/itemdetail.aspx?idEntry=7373&dtPointer=295>).

³⁷ Maryland State Archives, “Paul Edmondson (b. circa 1785 – d. 1863),” Archives of Maryland (Biographical Series) [website] (accessed 6 October 2021, <https://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc5400/sc5496/015200/015204/html/015204bio.html>); Soderberg, 12-17.

³⁸ Daniel Drayton, *Personal Memoir of Daniel Drayton: For Four Years and Four Months a Prisoner (For Charity's Sake) in Washington Jail* (Boston: B. Marsh; New York: American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, 1855, accessed at Project Gutenberg, <http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/10401>).

³⁹ Maryland State Archives.

Americans were not freed, however, until 1 November 1864, when the Maryland legislature narrowly passed its emancipation act. Many from this neighboring Maryland county “took advantage of the ease of walking to freedom in the District. Some had to go twenty miles, others less than a mile.”⁴⁰ The fluidity between Montgomery County and DC is illustrated in the account of ALICE ADDISON’s application for emancipation papers. On 6 October 1862, Addison appeared before a federally appointed board with her two adult daughters and three grandchildren to register their freedom. The Addisons had missed the original deadline of 15 July 1862 because they had “fled the city...on April 13, fearing that President Abraham Lincoln and the federal government planned to forcibly deport them – along with all other ex-slaves – to Africa. The... Addisons had fled to their father’s residence... who lived in Montgomery County, Maryland, and was a slave owned by a Harry Cook,” where they remained until late September.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Soderberg, 12-17.

⁴¹ Damani Davis, “Slavery and Emancipation in the Nation’s Capital: Using Federal Records to Explore the Lives of African American Ancestors,” *Prologue Magazine* 42, no. 1 (Spring 2010): Genealogy Notes (accessed via the National Archives [website], 7 October 2021, https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2010/spring/dcslavery.html?_ga=2.261271053.1423621419.1625170863-368708287.1624994558).

c. Civil War

“A double purpose induced me and most others to enlist, to assist in abolishing slavery and to save the country from ruin. Something in furtherance of both objects we have certainly done,”⁴² wrote **SERGEANT MAJOR CHRISTIAN A. FLEETWOOD** of the 4th United States Colored Troops (USCT) in 1865. From the spring of 1862, there had been a concerted effort to draft African Americans into the United States Army, and the 1st District of Columbia Colored Volunteers was formed. It was reorganized as the 1st USCT in May 1863, and many of its first volunteers enlisted on Analostan Island (also historically known as Mason’s, now known as Theodore Roosevelt Island) in the following months, such as **JOSEPH BELT**. Belt was a native of Georgetown, a free Black man, a butcher, and aged only 19 when he enlisted in the 1st USCT on 27 June 1863 at Analostan Island. **THEODORE ADDISON**, who joined the regiment’s Company H at the age of 17 when he enlisted on 6 July 1863, was from Montgomery County. Because of their proximity to DC, African American men from Montgomery County could travel to the city easily to enlist. Addison was a free man who gave his occupation as laborer.⁴³

CHRISTIAN ABRAHAM FLEETWOOD
(1840-1914)

At the age of 22, Fleetwood enlisted in the 4th USCT in Baltimore in the summer of 1863. His division was stationed in Yorktown, Virginia, and saw action in Petersburg and Richmond. He received the Congressional Medal of Honor for the Battle of Chapin’s Farm on 29 September 1864.

From mid-May to July 1863, the 1st USCT trained, drilled, and billeted on Analostan Island at Camp Greene.⁴⁴ As many as 10 companies were stationed there at one time. A contemporary photograph taken from Georgetown shows the camp as orderly rows of tents on the northwest side of the island. The tents were replaced by typical military barracks—narrow, balloon-frame buildings—whereas many of the officers were quartered in the abandoned manor house until Army operations ceased there in March 1864. The 1st USCT was deployed within two months of their mustering and served in battles on Chapin’s Farm and Fair Oaks in Virginia. Belt fell sick in the autumn of 1864 and deserted at Fair Oaks in late October. Addison served his three-year term and was discharged in September 1865, at which time the 1st USCT was disbanded.⁴⁵ It had lost 185 men in action during the war.

Seven infantry regiments of the USCT were formed in Maryland, in two locales: Baltimore and Camp Stanton in Charles County. By the end of the war, more than 8,700 African American from Maryland had enlisted in one of these regiments or in regiments formed in DC and Virginia. The

⁴² Christian A. Fleetwood, Letter to Dr. James Hall, 8 June 1865 (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Carter G. Woodson Collection), reproduced at National Park Service, “Fleetwood Letter,” *Richmond National Battlefield Park, Virginia* [website] (last updated 26 February 2015, accessed 13 January 2021, <https://www.nps.gov/rich/learn/historyculture/writings3.htm>).

⁴³ United States Adjutant-General’s Office, “Compiled military service records of Volunteer Union Troops who served with the United States Colored Troops: 1st United States Colored Infantry... Abrams, William – Berkely, George,” NARA Series M1819, Roll 1 (Atlanta, GA: National Archives Trust Fund, 1996, accessed via FamilySearch [website], 7 October 2021, <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/720725?availability=Family%20History%20Library>).

⁴⁴ Pliska, 18.

⁴⁵ United States Adjutant-General’s Office.

39th USCT was formed in Baltimore in March 1864 and recruited in Montgomery County.⁴⁶ Although the rosters are not complete, 15 known men from Montgomery County served in the 39th, which was attached to the Army of the Potomac and served in battles from Virginia to Wilmington, North Carolina. Of the 15, only two were free men at the time of their enlistment in 1864. They ranged in age from 18 to 35 years, and the majority came from the northeastern parts of the county, electoral districts 1 (Cracklin) and 5 (Berry).⁴⁷ Although no known enlistee came from District 4 and the study area, DANIEL PROCTOR enlisted from nearby District 3 (Medley). He had been enslaved by Thomas Sellman when he enlisted in the infantry, but the state's 1855 slave assessment records list him as one of Gassaway Sellman's seven enslaved servants. In 1867, Daniel's name was listed in a Sellman family claim for compensation for the emancipation, during the war, of eight of Gassaway's enslaved men and women. Proctor moved to Howard County, Maryland, after the war but returned to Montgomery County by 1880, where he lived with his wife and their three children and died before 1890.⁴⁸

The Provost Marshal General's Bureau kept lists of draftees in Maryland from four successive drafts between 1863 and 1865. The pages dedicated to Montgomery County list the draftees by electoral district and provide their name, age, race, marital status, profession, and birthplace.⁴⁹ Approximately 88 free African American men lived in the Rockville District (electoral district 4) who were eligible for the draft service, but whether any of these men fought in the conflict is unknown. In addition to these data, Montgomery County resident, teacher, and scholar Nina Honemond Clarke compiled a comprehensive list of enslaved men living in Montgomery County who were either drafted or enlisted of their own volition, or who served in the United States Army in some capacity during the war (Table 2.1). She compiled this information, which names the enslaved man and his enslaver, and determined that "The records of slave military service in Montgomery County shows 139 Blacks served by enlisting, being drafted, or running away to the army."⁵⁰ Although Clarke's list does not provide the electoral districts for the enslavers, cross-referencing the enslavers' names with the 1860 US census and that year's slave schedule provides some insight into some individual enslaved men from this southern portion of Montgomery County who were drafted or enlisted in the United States Army. As many as a dozen of the enslavers in Clarke's list lived in the Rockville District, either within or near the study area; from this, one can presume that 14 enslaved men from the Rockville District served in the Civil War:

⁴⁶ Soderberg, 12-17.

⁴⁷ Maryland State Archives, "United States Colored Troops (USCT): Montgomery County," Legacy of Slavery in Maryland [website] (accessed 7 October 2021, http://slavery.msa.maryland.gov/html/casestudies/usct_mocs.html).

⁴⁸ Maryland State Archives, "Daniel Proctor (b. circa 1844 – d. circa 1890)," Archives of Maryland (Biographical Series) [website] (accessed 7 October 2021, <https://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc5400/sc5496/050500/050579/html/050579bio.html>).

⁴⁹ *Consolidated Lists of Civil War Draft Registration Records (Provost Marshal General's Bureau; Consolidated Enrollment Lists, 1863-1865)* (Washington, DC: Record Group: 110, *Records of the Provost Marshal General's Bureau (Civil War)*); Collection Name: *Consolidated Enrollment Lists, 1863-1865 (Civil War Union Draft Records)* National Archives and Records Administration, NAI: 4213514; Archive Volume 5, accessed via Ancestry.com); *US, Civil War Draft Registrations Records, 1863-1865* [database on-line] (Provo, UT: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010).

⁵⁰ Nina Honemond Clarke, "1867-1868 Military Records of Montgomery County Slaves," *Black History in Montgomery County. Excerpts from The Flower of the Forest—Black Genealogical Journal*, n.d., (Rockville, MD: Repository, Montgomery History, Jane C. Sween Library), 129-135.

TABLE 2.1: ENSLAVED MEN FROM THE ROCKVILLE DISTRICT WHO SERVED IN THE CIVIL WAR

ENSLAVED MAN'S NAME AND AGE	DRAFTED/ ENLISTED	ENSLAVER [name or spelling per census, if different]	LOCATION ON 1865 MARTENET & BOND MAP
GEORGE JORDAN, 16	Enlisted, 1st Mass. Reg.	Mrs. E[lizabeth] L. Offutt	In study area; southwest of Offutt's Crossroads, west of Falls Road and near the canal
HENSON RHODES, 25	Drafted	Charles Counselman	Outside study area; north of River Road and B&O Railroad line, on DC line
THOMAS LYLES, 22	Drafted	William Counselman	In household of John Counselman; outside study area; north of River Road, on Naylor's Branch
HENRY PETER, 26	Drafted	Robert Peter[s]	Only Peters located were outside study area, south of Darnestown
WARREN SCOTLAND, 24	Enlisted in the Navy	Richard Magruder	Outside study area; south of Montrose P.O.
WILLIAM PRESTON, 30	Drafted, 28th Reg. USCT	[Charles] Chandler Keys*	Outside study area; north of Rockville
JAMES BARBER, 30	Enlisted	Oliva [C.] Woo[t]ton	Outside study area; southwest of Rockville, east of Watt's Branch
JOHN SCOTT, 22	Enlisted	Samuel Anderson	Outside study area; on DC line, northeast of Darcy's Store P.O.
FRANK WALKER, 22	Enlisted	Sam Anderson	Outside study area; on DC line, northeast of Darcy's Store P.O.
BENEDICT SPRIGGS, 28	Drafted 1 st Reg. USCT	Sam Anderson	Outside study area; on DC line, northeast of Darcy's Store P.O.
JAMES WHITE, 28	Enlisted	John Jones*	Outside study area; northeast of Offutt's Crossroads
LEWIS BROOKE, 20	Left with military	John Jones*	Outside study area; northeast of Offutt's Crossroads
REUBEN HILL, 35	Drafted - \$50	Sam Stonestreet	Outside study area; southwest of Rockville, west of Watt's Branch
JAMES WARREN, 38	Left with military	John C. Jones	Outside study area; north of Darcy's Store P.O. on Rock Creek

*Enslaver(s) of same name also found in other electoral districts.

From Nina Honemond Clarke, "1867-1868 Military Records of Montgomery County Slaves," *Black History in Montgomery County. Excerpts from The Flower of the Forest— Black Genealogical Journal*, n.d., 129-135.

After serving as an Army encampment, Analostan Island served as a contraband camp for self-liberating and freedom-seeking African Americans. Following the passage of the First Confiscation Act of Congress in August 1861, enslaved persons fleeing Confederate states that made it behind Federal lines were considered property, called "contraband," that could be seized from the enemy. By 1865, some 40,000 African American self-liberators had crossed the Potomac River to reach Washington, DC, and the safety it promised. Federal commanders, lacking guidance, often independently decided how to house and employ the self-liberated Blacks in their districts. Able-bodied men were set to laboring on fortifications while women undertook general chores around the camp, such as laundry or cooking. Some were set to menial labor, especially repair work, along the canal. Other freedom seekers could continue deeper into Federal territory to look for their own work and housing. For a time in 1862, the freedom seekers were housed at

Washington's municipal prison (in "the old 'Brick Capitol', on the site of the present Supreme Court Building") and then in Duff Green's Row, tenements east of the Capitol.⁵¹

What was then considered a refugee crisis intensified as the war waged and did not end with the cessation of hostilities in 1865. Groups of self-liberated moved into military camps and occupied the areas around forts, such as Battery Kemble (discussed further in Chapter IV). The Freedmen's Bureau was established as an arm of the War Department to resettle African American freedom seekers and find them employment. The Freedman's Village at Arlington, Virginia, was the largest and best-known settlement created by the Freedmen's Bureau, but a closer one to the study area, on Analostan Island, directly south of Georgetown's waterfront, was established in May 1864.⁵² The camp quickly became overcrowded, with nearly 1,200 people by July, and degraded to a state of squalor leading to multiple deaths by malnutrition and disease.⁵³ By August, conditions improved under new management, which focused on resettling families in cities throughout the North, but the mistreatment of self-liberated men, women, and children at the freedmen's camp on Analostan Island was evocative of the slavery that had reigned there over the previous half-century.⁵⁴ By the early summer of 1865, some 500 self-liberated Blacks remained on the island, but preparations were made to remove them as all settlement camps were being dismantled. By the end of June 1865, the island was returned to its prewar owner.⁵⁵

Although the war was atrocious, it also offered opportunity. Maryland's African Americans, both free and enslaved, avoided encountering Confederate soldiers, if possible, for fear of being pressed into service. Federal soldiers, on the other hand, offered a chance of freedom to the enslaved people. The chaos of war provided enslaved African Americans in the Chesapeake region an opportunity to escape, and Federal encampments provided safe, if temporary, havens. Because Maryland had not seceded from the United States, the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act was enforced to appease enslavers during the first years of the war; early self-liberators were returned to their enslavers by Federal soldiers if their enslavers claimed them.⁵⁶ Such was the case of **THERESA DUFFIES**, whose enslaver, George Williams of Frederick, Maryland, "beat and braised her severely" so that, in 1863, she sought protection from Federal soldiers. But the

⁵¹ Sabrina Romain, "Difficulty on the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal": *The Struggles and Successes of Black Laborers and Freedom Seekers along the Canal* [draft report] (Washington, DC: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, June 2021), 31, 34; see James J. Broomall, "This Debatable Land:" *The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal's Civil War* (Shepherdstown, WV: prepared for the National Park Service, Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park, by Shepherd University / George Tyler Moore Center for the Study of Civil War, 2017), 123, and Barbara Fields, *Slavery and Freedom on the Middle Ground: Maryland during the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987), 101; Federal Writers' Project, Works Progress Administration, *Washington, City and Capital: American Guide Series* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1937), 75; Sarah Fling, "Washington, D.C.'s 'Contraband' Camps," White House Historical Association [website] (accessed 12 December 2020, <https://www.whitehousehistory.org/washington-d-c-s-contraband-camps>).

⁵² Jonathan Pliska, HALS No. DC-12, Theodore Roosevelt Island (Analostan Island, Mason's Island) Washington, DC, Written Historical and Descriptive Data (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, Historic American Landscapes Survey, US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2008), 21-23.

⁵³ John Bedell, Tiffany Raszick, and Gregory Katz, *Analostan: The Archeology of Theodore Roosevelt Island* (Washington, DC: prepared for the National Park Service-National Capital Area, Washington, DC, by WSP USA Inc., 2020).

⁵⁴ Pliska, 26, 33.

⁵⁵ Nan Netherton, *Delicate Beauty and Burly Majesty: The Story of Theodore Roosevelt Island*, revised draft (McLean, VA: on file, George Washington Memorial Parkway Headquarters, 1908).

⁵⁶ Soderberg, 12-17.

Provost Marshal to whom she applied for protection told her to go back to her master. She then went to the Major who committed her to jail. Her former master came and released her and told her if she wanted to go back she could, otherwise she must leave Maryland. So she came to Georgetown, and a year ago [i.e. ca. September 1864] she went back for her children who were given her but her former master kept all her clothes and household goods worth about \$120.⁵⁷

As the war progressed, however, Federal soldiers became less anxious to return runaway enslaved adults and children to the degradations of enslavement, and self-liberators from Maryland could find sanctuary in Federal forts and encampments.

As historian Walter S. Sanderlin surmised, “The failure of Maryland to secede made the Potomac River (and hence the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal that paralleled it) the frontier between the opposing sides.”⁵⁸ During the Civil War, the C&O Canal was a strategic and sought-after prize for both Confederate and Federal forces and it figured in several local campaigns. Because Confederate forces desired to interrupt trade on the canal, Federal soldiers were stationed at points along the canal’s length to guard against enemy incursions and to protect their shipments of troops, coal, and other supplies along the route. The canal became an object of sabotage, vandalism, and raids by Confederate forces. At the outset, “the heavier, more expensive masonry works – walls, locks, culverts, aqueducts, and dams – were relatively untouched;”⁵⁹ minor acts of sabotage were staged, including the confiscation of towpath mules by soldiers on both sides, appropriated for war use. As the war progressed, however, the acts became more destructive, including the explosion of an aqueduct and the burning of boats. Even canal company employees were suspected of sabotage, their loyalties in question.⁶⁰

The canal also played a role in large troop movements. Federal troops retreated over the canal after the First and Second Battles of Manassas in 1862, and Confederate troops retreated over the canal and river following their defeat at the battles of Gettysburg and Antietam in 1863. Closer to the study area, Confederate forces led by General J.E.B. Stuart crossed the river and canal at Riley’s Lock (Lock 24) and marched through Offutt’s Crossroads (now the town of Potomac), on River Road above Great Falls, in late June 1863. Skirmishes occurred at Seneca, Poolesville, Muddy Branch, and Great Falls throughout the month.⁶¹ Phillip Johnson was living in Poolesville when the Civil War commenced, and he witnessed and retold accounts of the fighting in the area, which was frequently overrun by both Confederate and Federal forces. Johnson saw Confederate soldiers raid and pillage, threaten the town’s preacher, and hold the congregation hostage one Sunday while they stole congregants’ horses and wagons. He was pressed into the service of his enslaver’s son, Capt. Samuel Chiswell White, who joined the Confederate cause, but was released at the last minute when approaching Federal troops forced White to flee quickly, without Johnson. After the

⁵⁷ Theresa Duffies, complaint made 2 September 1865. “Assaults: Miscellaneous Reports and Lists,” Records of the Assistant Commissioner for the District of Columbia, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands, 1865-1869 (Washington, DC: National Archives Microfilm Publication M1055 Roll 21, accessed via The Freedmen’s Bureau Online [website], 7 October 2021, <http://freedmensbureau.com/washingtondc/outrages2.htm>).

⁵⁸ Walter S. Sanderlin, “A House Divided – The Conflict of Loyalties on the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, 1861-1865,” *Maryland Historical Magazine* 42, no. 3 (September 1947):209.

⁵⁹ Sanderlin, 210.

⁶⁰ Sanderlin, 210-212.

⁶¹ Judith Welles, *Potomac* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2019), 27.

war's end, Johnson moved to Sugarland (an African American community south of Poolesville), married and had 11 children, and was ordained a minister in 1897.⁶²

2. African American Community Formation

a. The C&O Canal: Displacement, Growth, and Gentrification

The construction of the C&O Canal greatly changed the landscape, not only through the vast scale of earth-moving but through its effect on extant communities and personal property. The first documented case of the canal's negative effects on the property of an African American is in 1829, when George Pointer wrote an 11-page letter to the C&O Canal's president and board of directors. According to his letter of 5 September 1829, Pointer and his family dwelled in a "little humble cottage" that had been given to him by the Patowmack Company in 1787. Historians Barbara Boyle Torrey and Clara Myrick Green have analyzed antebellum C&O Canal Company maps and documents that mentioned Pointer's cottage and have inferred the cottage's location was in Brookmont, Maryland, near Lock 6. (This assessment, however, conflicts with the fact that Pointer was enumerated in the 1800, 1820, and 1830 US censuses as a resident of Washington, DC.)⁶³ Pointer's letter suggests that he likely lived in the vicinity of Little Falls: he related that, over the span of eight years (between ca. 1818 and 1826), he erected "fish pots" and a dam at the unnavigable "spout of the Little Falls" and that "the cost of building them was at least 400\$ and the fish that was taken in them was carried to markets of George Town"; but as the fish pots had only been in use for three years, he had, by 1829, only recouped half his investment. He expressly narrated this because "Mr. McCord's workmen," who were contractors constructing the C&O Canal locks 1 through 4 in 1829, had disassembled his fish traps and appropriated the stones from his dam to construct a wall. The letter was a request for compensation for the destruction of his structures and his livelihood.⁶⁴

The destruction of Pointer's fishery was not his only grievance. A wall erected "opposite Mr. D. Bussard's Section"⁶⁵ prevented access to Shap Spring Island on which Pointer raised corn, having previously produced an average of 13 barrels per year to take to market. In addition, "the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal [was] drawing near [his] Little Cottage that [he had] occupied for 43 years, unmolested with an aged wife and some offspring but alas none left to assist [him]."⁶⁶ He expressed fear that the C&O Canal Company would dispossess him of the home he had occupied since he was 13 years old and shared with his family, and if they did, he entreated them to provide him with another. The company's answer is not known, but by the 1830 US census, Pointer (with his wife, Elizabeth, and 10-year-old granddaughter, Mary Ann Plummer) lived in the Tenley township of Washington, DC.⁶⁷ Tenleytown is approximately 2 miles inland from the river, north

⁶² Federal Writers' Project, *Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 8*.

⁶³ Torrey and Green, 12, 15. Clara Myrick Green and Barbara Boyle Torrey, "An Old and Obscure Citizen: Captain George Pointer and the Potomac Company," *The Maryland Historical Magazine* 107, no. 3 (Fall 2012):305-319 (accessed 12 January 2022, <http://docplayer.net/198845339-Friends-of-the-press-of-the-maryland-historical-society.html>).

⁶⁴ "Petition of Captain George Pointer to the President and Directors of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal."

⁶⁵ Daniel Bussard was contracted by the C&O Canal Company to oversee construction on Sections 2, 3, 5, and 9-11 in August 1828.

⁶⁶ "Petition of Captain George Pointer to the President and Directors of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal."

⁶⁷ "Mary Ann Plummer Harris, Granddaughter of George Pointer, Bought Land on Broad Branch Road," *Historic Chevy Chase DC* [website] (accessed 12 January 2022, <https://www.historicchevychasedc.org/lafayette-pointer-project/story-of-mary-ann-plummer-harris-great-granddaughter-of-george-pointer/>).

of Georgetown and near the DC boundary; his family’s relocation there one year after his petition suggests that he was forced to vacate his riverside cottage soon afterward.

The C&O Canal was not only an agent of displacement but of growth. Several small, multi-racial communities emerged along the canal as it was under construction between 1828 and 1850. For example, a village emerged around Edward’s Ferry and Lockhouse 25 that boasted a general store, granary, workshops, and domiciles. “Shantytowns” were temporary clusters of housing, offices, and workshops that were built under the aegis of the C&O Canal Company and composed of simple, wooden, ephemeral buildings and structures; when the canal infrastructure was in place, the workers picked up stakes and moved upriver to continue the construction. In these shantytowns, white Americans and indentured European canal workers dwelled next to free and enslaved African Americans also contracted to the canal company.

The 1863 US Bureau of Topographical Engineers’ *Map of Montgomery County, Maryland* shows a cluster of houses just east of Seneca Creek, abutting the river, with the label “Rushville” (Figure 2.5); this area equates to the known African American neighborhood now called **BERRYVILLE**.⁶⁸

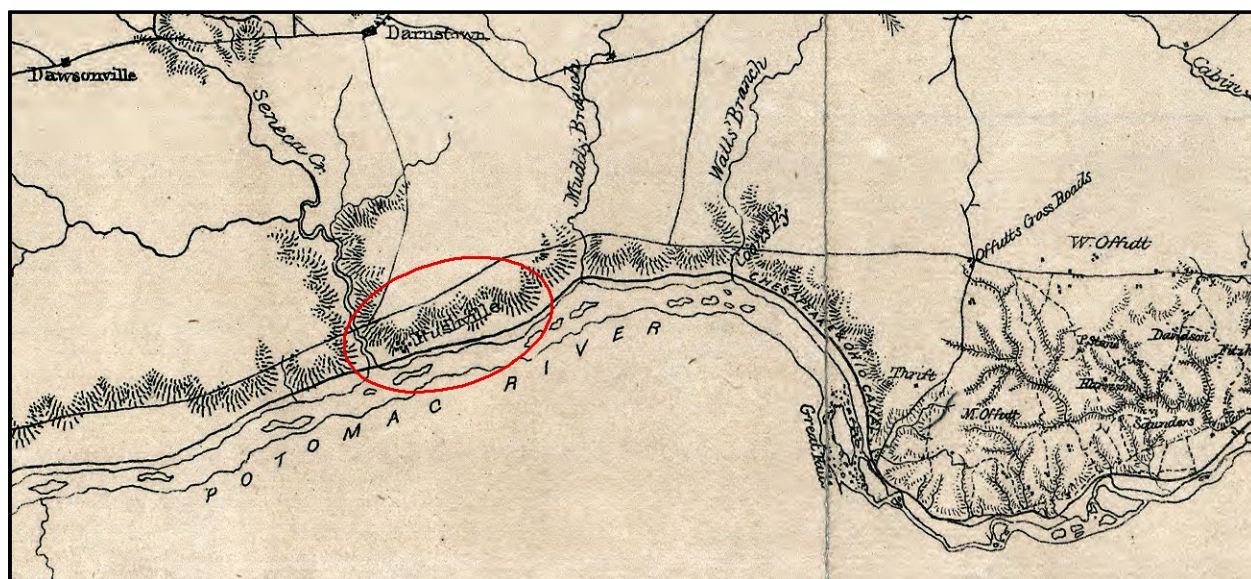


Figure 2.5: Detail from *Map of Montgomery County, Maryland, 1863* (US Bureau of Topographical Engineers) Showing the Settlement of Rushville

Rushville was a company town created by the C&O Canal Company directors in 1831 because they believed this location would develop with the growth of trade on the canal. Its adjacency to both the canal and a wide creek made it optimal for establishing hydraulic mills, plus a stone quarry had been in existence there for over 50 years. It also lay between productive agricultural lands and ample timber resources in Virginia and Maryland, making it a potential nexus for the shipment of goods on the canal.⁶⁹ The presence of the C&O Canal Company’s employees in Rushville were manifest in the Martenet & Bond (1865) map of the area, which ascribed names to the domiciles,

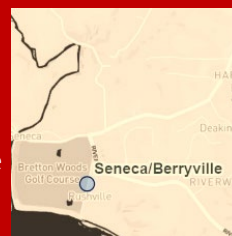
⁶⁸ “Historic African American Communities in the Washington Metropolitan Area,” *Prologue DC* [website] (accessed 15 October 2021, <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=5d16635c4fde41eca91c3e2a82c871e8>).

⁶⁹ Harlan D. Unrau, *Historic Resource Study: Chesapeake & Ohio Canal*. Prepared for the National Park Service, Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park (Hagerstown, MD: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, 2007), 666.

including that of G.W. Pennyfield. The 1850 US census described George Pennyfield as a 23-year-old laborer from Maryland sharing a residence with five other male laborers, all from England and Ireland. The house next door was the lockkeeper's residence, occupied at the time by John M. Wiles, his wife, and two laborers. The other neighboring house was also a lockkeeper's home, the residence of Edward L. Ward, his family, a Black laborer named **THOMAS MARTIN**, and three African American children. The prevalence of the occupational title "laborer" on the page plus the dominance of Ireland as the enumerated person's place of origin suggests that these individuals were canal workers who had settled in the area while building the canal through this section in the 1830s and then stayed on. By 1865, Pennyfield had risen in the company ranks to become a lockkeeper himself and, eventually, Lock 22 was named for him. But in the 1860 US census, he was listed as a farmhand living with his wife, daughter, and a 12-year-old Black girl named **SUSAN HOLMES** who was likely a domestic servant. Notably, Pennyfield's neighbors in 1860 included the African American **JONES FAMILY** two doors down, whose head, **WILLIAM**, was a blacksmith. Between them resided the family of an African American farm hand, **JOHN CLAGGETT**. The rest of Pennyfield's neighbors in 1860 were white and had occupations ranging from carpenter and wheelwright to merchant and schoolteacher, suggesting that "Rushville" (Seneca) had become quite established. By the 1870 US census, half of Pennyfield's neighbors were African American and the two dominant occupations were farming and laboring in the Seneca quarry.

SENECA/BERRYVILLE

African American residents of Seneca worked on the C&O Canal, as stonecutters in the **SENECA MILL** and **QUARRY**, and farmed. A CME church on Violettes Lock Road was moved to Berryville Road, a mile distant, in 1941 and was renamed the **Berryville Community Church**, lending the community its name.



The construction of the canal fostered some multi-racial communities, but it also had the reverse effect: the C&O Canal was a tool of gentrification in **SUGAR HILL**, a multi-racial neighborhood south of the canal and west of Wisconsin Avenue in Georgetown. As illustrated in this 21 August 1857 article (with overtly racist overtones) in the Washington publication, *States*,

The competition which now begins to manifest itself between the eastern and western wharves of the town, in regard to the shipping at each, makes our town have the appearance it once had in days gone by, when the Peters, Lingams, Stoddards and Bowies were the owners of the ships that loaded at our wharves, and whitened every sea with their canvass. In those days, the boldest water was to be found at the western wharves of the town, and many a sea-craft sailed down the western channel with a cargo from Georgetown to the Atlantic sea. In course of time, the eastern wharves became the busy mart; the western wharves and warehouses fell into a state of decay and dilapidation, and that portion of the town lying between the canal and the river, west of Duck Lane, was called "Sugar Hill." Its inhabitants were composed of negroes, mulattoes and low white persons of the most abandoned character; but, since the completion of the canal to Cumberland, the revival of commerce, the purchase of coal wharves, the construction of coal depots, and the destruction of the negro huts and driving away of their worthless inhabitants, this end of the town has revived. Property has more than quadrupled in value; extensive mills now supply the place of dilapidated buildings; the genius of commerce once more shakes her white wings over that end of the town; and, wishing prosperity to our ancient city, we conclude in the words of the grave father and sage of the law, that our town may be blest

with “the gladsome light of jurisprudence, the loveliness of temperance, the stability of fortitude, and the solidity of justice.”⁷⁰

In 1931, Artemas C. Harmon published the Historical Map of the City of Washington, District of Columbia, View of the City & Location of the Houses in the Year 1801-1802: The Beginning of Washington.⁷¹ Harmon’s map depicts a number of buildings between Falls and Water streets and west of Duck Lane, in the vicinity of Sugar Hill as it was described in 1857. James Keily’s 1851 Map of the City of Washington, DC, however, shows only three buildings between the Aqueduct Bridge and High Street south of the C&O Canal.⁷² Likely, whatever housing existed in 1851 in the vicinity of Sugar Hill was not deemed worthy of mapping. Today, the area that was once Sugar Hill (between the Francis Scott Key Bridge and 33rd Street, south of the canal) is dominated by the elevated Whitehurst Freeway, which is lined on the north with large condominium and office buildings and on the south by the Georgetown Waterfront Park.

SUGAR HILL

This Georgetown neighborhood was described in an 1857 article as “lying between the canal and river, west of Duck Lane.” Its bi-racial residents were displaced by the “revival of commerce” on the western wharves attributed to the success of the C&O Canal. See “Georgetown Shipping,” *States*.



b. Pre-emancipation African American Communities

Predominantly African American communities arose in the first half of the nineteenth century, typically as neighborhoods within urban centers, such as DC, but also in rural areas. By the 1790s, tobacco constituted less than half of Maryland’s export for the first time. The economic shift from tobacco cultivation to grain cultivation required far less labor, and many enslavers manumitted their enslaved workers. The free Black population of Montgomery County rose slowly but steadily in the first seven decades of the nineteenth century, from 262 in 1800 to 1,552 in 1860, while the numbers of enslaved African Americans in the county marginally decreased (from 6,288 in 1800 to 5,421 in 1860).⁷³ Although many manumitted enslaved persons migrated to cities to find better opportunities, some newly freed African Americans remained where they had been living, working for the same planters or their neighbors, and forming small communities in rural areas. As Nina Honemond Clarke, a native of Montgomery County, described in a 2003 interview,

Sometimes the master would give them a piece of land, or sell them a piece of land, and the next thing you know all the people who were slaves on this farm had a little community there. That is why you see a lot of small black communities all over this county. There is

⁷⁰ “Georgetown Shipping,” *States* [Washington, DC], 21 August 1857:3 (accessed 2 November 2021, <https://candocanal.org/histdocs/Newspapers-1857.pdf>).

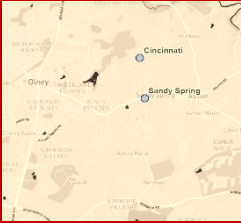
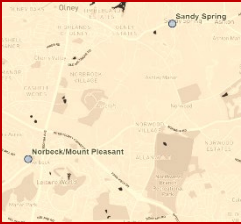
⁷¹ A.C. Harmon, *Historical map of the city of Washington, District of Columbia: view of the city & location of the houses in the year 1801-02: the beginning of Washington* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1931, <https://www.loc.gov/item/94683751/>).

⁷² James Keily and Lloyd Van Derveer, *Map of the city of Washington D.C.: established as the permanent seat of government of the U.S. of Am.* (Camden, NJ: Lloyd Van Derveer, 1851, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/88694049>).

⁷³ Maryland State Archives, “Black Marylanders 1790: African American Population by County, Status & Gender,” *Legacy of Slavery in Maryland* [website] (accessed 19 October 2021, <http://slavery.msa.maryland.gov/html/research/census1790.html>).

no one place where all black people lived in Montgomery County. We are spread all over because it was from that plantation time when we built our little community on the edge of the master's farm.⁷⁴

SANDY SPRING in Montgomery County (located some 20 miles northeast of Travilah) was a large free Black community founded as early as 1822, when Thomas and Sophia Brooke conveyed a parcel to their manumitted workers for the erection of a church, the Sharp Street Church.⁷⁵ **NORBECK** was founded before the Civil War north of Aspen Hill and south of Olney. Paul Edmondson purchased 20 acres in the area in 1835 and another 20 in 1847 that formed the nucleus of a growing free Black community. Typically, African American families built their own dwellings, which were primarily of log before 1880 and wood-frame after. These vernacular structures were one or two stories, with one to three rooms on each level; the most common pattern was the two-story, two-over-two-room house. The houses typically had glazed windows and were heated by wood-burning stoves.⁷⁶ Because of their materials and age, very few survive.

<h3>SANDY SPRING</h3> <p>Abolitionist Quakers in Sandy Spring had manumitted most of their enslaved laborers by 1815 and provided them land for a church in 1822. Sandy Spring is Montgomery County's first free African American community and one of the oldest in the state of Maryland.</p>	
<h3>NORBECK</h3> <p>PAUL EDMONDSON purchased a 20-acre farm south of Olney in 1835, then doubled his holdings by 1847. The Edmondson farm was the nucleus of the pre-Civil War Black community of Norbeck, also called Mount Pleasant for the Methodist Episcopal church founded in 1895.</p>	

c. Post-emancipation African American Communities

Several free Black communities had been established in Montgomery County prior to the Civil War; however, African American community-building surged in the decades following the war (particularly 1870 to 1890) (Figure 2.6, end of this section). “By the early 1900s, over 40 self-sufficient rural African American settlements had been founded in [Montgomery] county.”⁷⁷

PRATHERTOWN emerged during the Reconstruction era southwest of Goshen and east of Great Seneca Creek. In 1870, **REZIN PRATHER**, **WESLEY PRATHER**, **LEVI PRATHER**, **JAMES ROSS**, and

⁷⁴ Paul Van Nevel, Montgomery County Historical Society, interview with Nina Honemond Clarke, 14 July 2003 (accessed 25 October 2021, https://mchdr.montgomeryhistory.org/xmlui/bitstream/handle/20.500.12366/404/OH_nina-clarke_7-14-2003.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y).

⁷⁵ “Early African American Communities,” Heritage Montgomery [website] (accessed 1 October 2021, <https://www.heritagemontgomery.org/moco-history/historic-african-american-communities/early-history-local-african-american-communities/>); Cheryl Janifer LaRoche and Patsy M. Fletcher, *Historic Resources Study: Reconstruction and the Early Civil Rights Movement in the National Capital Area* (Washington, DC: Department of Interior, National Park Service National Capital Area, 2021), 268.

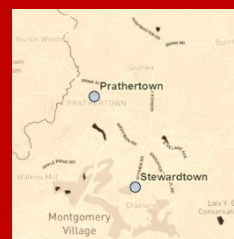
⁷⁶ Kelly, 22-23, 62.

⁷⁷ Heritage Montgomery, “African American Heritage Self-Guided Tour” (n.p., February 2021, accessed 7 October 2021, <https://www.heritagemontgomery.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/AfAm-Tour-final-Feb-2021.pdf>).

WESLEY RANDOLPH incorporated the Brooke Grove United Methodist Episcopal Church and purchased 2 acres from **VACHEL DUFFIE**, a Black landowner. Within six years, another 2 acres were purchased and the church built, which became the heart of the African American community of Prathertown. Over the next two decades, the Prathers purchased an additional 16 acres of Dorsey's Meadows, and the village included the households of several members of the Prather and Duffie families as well as families with the surnames Boyd, Carter, Copeland, Crawford, Davis, Riggs, and Mackabee. The Mackabees were related to the Prathers by marriage, and this sort of kinship community, in which intertwined families and friends clustered together and parcels were bequeathed to or subdivided for kin over several generations, was the typical pattern of nineteenth-century, rural, African American community formation.⁷⁸

PRATHERTOWN

Founded in 1870 by **REZIN PRATHER**, **WESLEY PRATHER**, **LEVI PRATHER**, **JAMES ROSS**, and **WESLEY RANDOLPH**, freedmen who purchased 2 acres from a Black landowner, **VACHEL DUFFIE**, and built the Brooke Grove United Methodist Church. The Sarah Posey house (1910) is extant.



Four African American communities in lower Montgomery County arose near Poolesville during the era of Reconstruction: **JERUSALEM**, **BOYDS**, **SUGARLAND**, and **MARTINSBURG**. Listed among the largest and oldest Black communities in the county, Jerusalem was founded in 1868 when several free Black men purchased a 1-acre parcel of the former plantation, Chiswell's Inheritance, to erect a church. Tradition maintains that a camp for freedom seekers from Virginia was established on the outskirts of Poolesville during the winter of 1861-1862, and that these self-liberators remained in the area and founded Jerusalem.⁷⁹ The community had a school by 1868, a benevolent society (the Loving Charity Hall) by 1870, and the Elijah Methodist Episcopal Church by 1871.⁸⁰ Boyds, northeast of Poolesville, was a small village that emerged as early as 1753 on a tobacco plantation called the "Resurvey of Gum Spring." The enslaved African Americans who worked the tobacco fields purchased land adjacent to the plantation after emancipation in 1864. The core of the Boyds Black community lay at the south end of White Ground Road and included several houses as well as community buildings. Named for Colonel James Boyd, who had speculated on land when the B&O Railroad announced its route through the area, Boyds became a railroad boomtown after 1873, expanding to include mills, retail stores, and several other businesses. The increased traffic through Boyds brought more employment opportunities, especially to the Black community that was largely employed by the railroad.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Maryland State Archives, "Rezin Prather (b. circa 1800 – d. 1872)," Archives of Maryland (Biographical Series) [website] (accessed 7 October 2021, <https://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc5400/sc5496/047800/047817/html/047817bio.html>).

⁷⁹ Kelly, 175.

⁸⁰ LaRoche and Fletcher, 269.

⁸¹ Kelly, 132, 153-154; Heritage Montgomery.

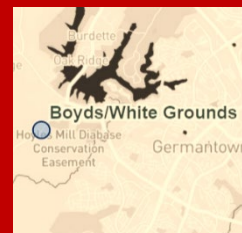
JERUSALEM

Originally an 1861 contraband camp for self-liberating enslaved persons fleeing Virginia, Jerusalem dates to 1868. The community had a school (1868), a benevolent society (1870), and the ELIJAH REST ME CHURCH (1871), which was replaced in 1909 and again after a fire in 1950. Jonesville (1866) was another freedmen village near Poolesville.



BOYDS/WHITE GROUNDS

With roots as a mid-eighteenth-century enslaved population, the African American community of Boyds, concentrated at the southern end of White Ground Road, was a farming settlement that boomed with the coming of the railroad in 1873. The St. Marks ME congregation in Boyds dates to 1879 and is still active.



Sugarland, south of Poolesville and west of Seneca Creek, was founded in 1871 when recently emancipated African Americans purchased small, adjacent parcels from white landowners (their former enslavers) who included members of the Pleasants, Allnut, Poole, Brewer, and Dawson families. Scholars have noted that the Pleasants family's Quaker religion, noted for its tolerance and fairness, may explain why such fertile farmland was sold to Blacks at a time when most African Americans were pushed onto marginal, less-desired scrublands.⁸² The free Blacks of Sugarland bought parcels with little capital and made monthly payments to the landowners, and when the original cost had been paid in full, the deed transfer was recorded. By 1900, over 40 families resided on nearly 200 arable acres in Sugarland, an area that took its name from Col. Washington Bowie's Sugarlands plantation (named for Sugar Land Hundred, a land division dating from Montgomery County's formation in 1776) although local lore says it was named for its bountiful Sugar Maple trees. The rural community was characterized by modest dwellings built close together with gardens, orchards, and livestock pens in the rear.⁸³ The African American community in Sugarland was concentrated on Sugarland Road and Sugarland Lane. By 1900, it was an autonomous township with a post office, general store, a community hall, church and cemetery, and school. The Sugarland residents worked "on nearby farms, the Seneca Quarry, and the C&O Canal [and were] instrumental in the development of the region."⁸⁴

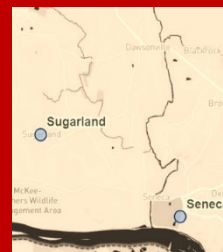
⁸² Kelly, 179.

⁸³ Heritage Montgomery, "Sugar Land Hundred," *The Montgomery County Story* [Published by the Montgomery County Historical Society] 6, no. 3 (May 1963):2, and Sumner Wood, Sr., "Sugar Land Hundred, in the 'Horseshoe' of the Potomac," *The Montgomery County Story* [Published by the Montgomery County Historical Society] 6, no. 3 (May 1963):3 (both accessed 18 October 2021, https://mchdr.montgomeryhistory.org/xmlui/bitstream/handle/20.500.12366/25/mcs_v006_n3_1963_wood.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y); Gwen Reese and Suzanne Johnson, "Sugarland's Story," *The Montgomery County Story* [Biannual Publication of the Montgomery County Historical Society] 53, no. 1 (Spring 2010):1-15 (accessed 18 October 2021, https://mchdr.montgomeryhistory.org/xmlui/bitstream/handle/20.500.12366/225/mcs_v053_n1_2010_reese_johnson_diggs_fletcher.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y).

⁸⁴ Sugarland Ethno-History Project, Inc. "About Sugarland" and "History," *Sugarland Ethno History Project* [website] (accessed 15 October 2021, <https://sugarlandproject.org/>).

SUGARLAND

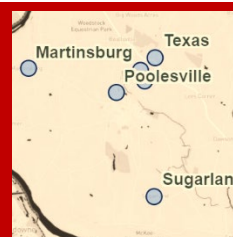
South of Poolesville, Sugarland was founded in 1871 by freedpeople who purchased small, adjacent parcels from white landowners. More than 40 families farmed and dwelled on 200 acres in Sugarland by 1900. PHILLIP JOHNSON was a resident. The 1893 ST. PAUL COMMUNITY CHURCH is still extant.



The crossroads town of Martinsburg, situated at the junction of White's Ferry Road with Martinsburg Road, was a rare racially integrated community west of Poolesville. It was established in 1866 when **NATHAN NAYLOR** purchased 97 acres; other emancipated African Americans followed, creating a vibrant settlement that centered on a church, school, and a benevolent society hall as well as a post office and two stores. By 1879, it counted 75 inhabitants.⁸⁵ Its 20-plus homes were spread farther apart than those in nearby Sugarland, which were concentrated together; but like Sugarland, the rural homesteads featured kitchen gardens, orchards, and animal pens. The original church was relocated (pulled by teams of oxen) to its present location and was rebuilt in 1903. The one-room elementary school, serving grades one through seven, was built in 1886 and served some 50 pupils per year until it was closed in 1939. The lodge of the Loving Charity Society, a benevolent society, was built in 1914. Together, these three buildings comprise the Warren Historic Site, remaining testaments to Martinsburg's historical African American community.⁸⁶

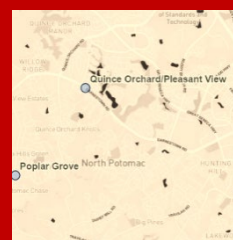
MARTINSBURG

A rare example of a bi-racial, post-Civil War, rural community, Martinsburg dates to 1866, when **NATHAN NAYLOR** bought 97 acres of farmland. Other freedpeople settled here, and a church was built in 1866 followed by a school in 1869. A county public school operated here from 1880 to 1939.



PLEASANT VIEW

Pleasant View emerged after the Civil War when Allen Bowie Davis divested parcels of his plantation, Greenwood, to his emancipated laborers. An A.M.E. congregation and school were formed in 1868, the **QUINCE ORCHARD COLORED SCHOOL** established in 1874, and the **PLEASANT VIEW ME CHURCH** built in 1888.



Closer to the study area, several free Black communities were founded after emancipation. **PLEASANT VIEW** is an area northeast of Darnestown and due north of Travilah; it emerged as a post-Civil War estate carved from Greenwood, the vast, antebellum plantation owned by Allen Bowie Davis, one of the largest enslavers in the county (he enslaved over 100 people in the 1850s). Following the war, Davis divested parcels from Greenwood to his former enslaved workers. An African Methodist Episcopal congregation was formed as early as 1868; the congregants met in one another's homes until the first Pleasant View Methodist Episcopal Church was constructed in 1888. In 1874, the Quince Orchard school for Black children was established nearby.⁸⁷ **POPLAR**

⁸⁵ LaRoche and Fletcher, 271.

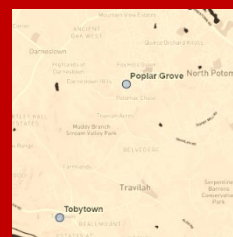
⁸⁶ Heritage Montgomery.

⁸⁷ Kelly, 16, 122, 227.

GROVE was a rural farming community founded halfway between Travilah and Pleasant View. It was anchored by the Poplar Grove Baptist Church, originally built as a log structure ca. 1863 and rebuilt in 1893 by two brothers and African American builders, **JOSEPH** and **HENRY MOBLEY**.⁸⁸ Named for the area's Scottish settlers, **SCOTLAND** was an African American community founded east of Offutt's Crossroads (now the town of Potomac), in an area called "Snake's Den," in the 1880s by freedpeople who had been enslaved by members of the Dove, Mason, Crawford, and Simms families. The community consisted of small houses, ranging in size from one to four rooms, and the Scotland School, founded in 1879. Scotland, like **TOBYTOWN**, was slated for urban renewal in the late 1960s; new townhouse units, a sewer system, and public water services improved the quality of life for Scotland residents but altered drastically the historical built fabric.⁸⁹

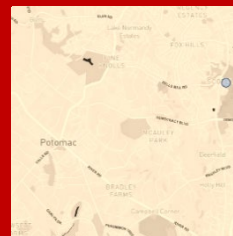
POPLAR GROVE

This rural farming community north of Travilah was anchored by the **POPLAR GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH**, first built in 1863 and rebuilt by **JOSEPH** and **HENRY MOBLEY**, brothers and African American builders, in 1893. Poplar Grove lay southwest of **PLEASANT VIEW** and northeast of **TOBYTOWN**, two post-emancipation African American communities.



SCOTLAND

Located east of the town of Potomac, Scotland was established in the 1880s by emancipated African Americans. It centered around a county public school established in 1879. The historical fabric was greatly altered by urban renewal in the 1960s, but the **SCOTLAND A.M.E. ZION CHURCH** remains.



What all these post-emancipation Black communities have in common with one another is a nucleus centered on three institutions: a church, a school, and a benevolent organization. The importance of these three typologies to specific communities will be explored in subsequent sections of this report. Furthermore, although a causal relationship is not argued here, it is interesting to note that the establishment of rural African American communities in lower Montgomery County in the 1870s and 1880s coincides with the "golden years" of the C&O Canal Company, from 1870 through 1889. As people from Sugarland are known to have worked for the C&O Canal and related industries that depended in some way upon the canal, it can be said the relationship between the canal's economic health and the welfare of the communities it supported was symbiotic. While the canal thrived, so did the communities—white, interracial, or African American—that depended upon it. And vibrant, growing communities, in turn, supplied ready workers for those canal-based industries.

The storms that brought on the Johnstown Flood of 1889 also affected Maryland, and in the aftermath many businesses, such as hydraulic mills and lime kilns, went out of business, resulting in widespread unemployment and economic depression. Rural communities relied on the economic opportunities brought to the area by the canal more than urban centers did, with their diversified economies. The gradual decline of many of these African American communities in lower Montgomery County also corresponds to the decades in which the canal was in receivership and then became defunct commercially. Although these "close knit Black communities provided

⁸⁸ Kelly, 224-225.

⁸⁹ Kelly, 229.

a sanctuary from the racist rules and policies found in the outside world” during the segregationist, Jim Crow-era of the late nineteenth through early twentieth centuries, their populations nonetheless declined. “Over time, the young people of most African American communities moved away to better jobs and more modern homes” or the communities were subject to urban renewal policies that literally erased their institutions from the landscape, save for individual buildings or monuments remaining as vestiges.⁹⁰ This fate befell three African American communities in the study area—Tobytown, Brickyard, and Gibson Grove—which are explored in subsequent chapters.

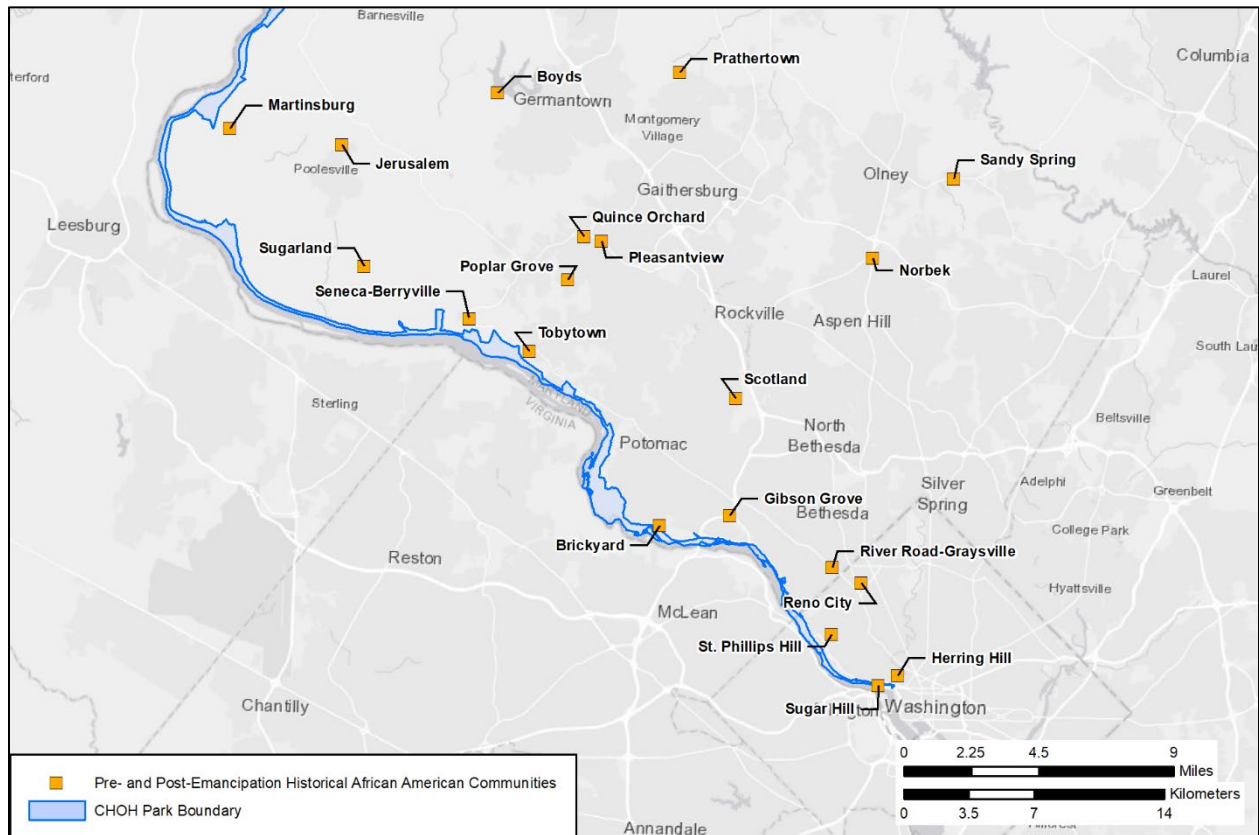


Figure 2.6: Map of Selected Pre- and Post-Emancipation Historical African American Communities in Montgomery County, Maryland, and Western Washington, DC

i. Churches

“When we didn’t have anything, the church was our everything... When there was nothing and no place to go, [the church] was the one place to go.”

Rev. Robert Slade, Mount Zion United Methodist Church, Georgetown⁹¹

⁹⁰ Heritage Montgomery.

⁹¹ Andrew Stephen, “Georgetown’s Hidden History: First, it was a slave port. Later, it was a thriving center of black life. Today, it’s a virtually all-white enclave. Why?” *The Washington Post*, 16 July 2006 (accessed 3 February 2022,

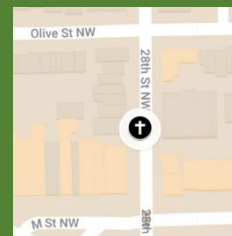
Nineteenth-century African American communities were bolstered by three interrelated pillars: churches, schools, and benevolent (or mutual aid) societies. As Cheryl Janifer LaRoche and Patsy M. Fletcher asserted in the 2021 HRS prepared for the NPS, *Reconstruction and the Early Civil Rights Movement in the National Capital Area*, “Although numerous independent and affiliated Black churches existed before the Civil War, the establishment and growth of independent Black churches stand as seminal developments of the Reconstruction period. Such churches were highly significant, both as religious and educational institutions and as centers of Black political and community mobilization.”⁹²

Churches were often the first community buildings erected in a post-emancipation African American community, as Christianity was and continues to be seminal to the Black American experience. (Figure 2.7, end of this section, shows selected historical African American churches in the study area vicinity.) The Second Great Awakening that emerged in the late eighteenth century set the scene for the development of African American Christianity in the antebellum period. Heightened Christian evangelism throughout the country propelled many enslavers to introduce religion into the lives of enslaved people, to whom religion became a source of succor and freedom. The Methodist and Baptist faiths preached a democratic form of Christian doctrine that denounced the institution of slavery; both faiths were adopted widely by free and enslaved African Americans as well as working-class whites. Several integrated churches were founded as a result of this religious fervor, such as the MONTGOMERY STREET METHODIST CHURCH in Georgetown in 1801. Both whites and Blacks attended such churches, but there were segregated spaces of worship.⁹³ Often, the nave’s windows opened so that Black worshippers assembled outside could hear the gospel. More often, mezzanine galleries were reserved for Blacks whereas whites sat in the nave. A close examination of Philip Johnson’s recollections, recorded in 1937, suggest that the church he attended in Poolesville was segregated in that fashion, with a second-floor gallery accessed by outside stairs.⁹⁴ For many religious African Americans, physical segregation in an integrated church grew intolerable.

MONTGOMERY STREET METHODIST CHURCH

28th Street between M and Olive Streets, NW

Founded in 1772, this integrated church was parent to MOUNT ZION ME CHURCH, established in 1814. The original building is lost. Today, it is the Dumbarton United Methodist Church at 3133 Dumbarton Street.



Although evangelical denominations had attracted African American members by advocating an opposition to slavery, records indicate that the practice of segregation in Methodist churches developed early, resulting in schisms and the establishment of separate places of worship.⁹⁵ Methodist congregations were among the first to form all-Black churches in the upper NCA. Such

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/2006/07/16/georgetown-hidden-history-span-classbankheadfirst-it-was-a-slave-port-later-it-was-a-thriving-center-of-black-life-today-its-a-virtually-all-white-enclave-why-span/ced28de6-3513-4fca-ae1e-df3ab89c8641/>.

⁹² LaRoche and Fletcher, 236-237.

⁹³ Walter H. Brooks, “The Evolution of the Negro Baptist Church,” *The Journal of Negro History* 7, no. 1 (1922):14 (accessed 15 February 2021, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2713578>).

⁹⁴ Federal Writers’ Project, *Slave Narrative Project*, Vol. 8.

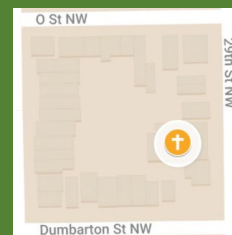
⁹⁵ John W. Cromwell, “The First Negro Churches in the District of Columbia,” *The Journal of Negro History* 7, no.1 (1922):65 (accessed 15 February 2021, www.jstor.org/stable/2713580).

was the case with the congregants of the Montgomery Street Methodist Church. Founded in 1772, the congregants first met in a cooper's shop on Montgomery (now 28th) Street between M and Olive streets. Enslaved African Americans attended services there from its inception. By 1801, 37 of its 95 congregants were African Americans, and between 1803 and 1816, as many as half the congregants were emancipated Blacks.⁹⁶ Within 13 years, the number of Black congregants had increased so that as many as 125 split from the church on 3 June 1814. These former enslaved and free Blacks purchased a lot at 27th and P streets in Georgetown and built the "Meeting House" or "The Ark" in 1816. Renamed the Mount Zion Methodist Episcopal Church in 1844, the present-day MOUNT ZION UNITED METHODIST CHURCH is the oldest African American church in DC.⁹⁷

MOUNT ZION UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

1334 29th Street, NW, Georgetown, DC

Built 1876-1884, this sanctuary replaced the original Meeting House at 27th and P streets (built 1816; razed ca. 1880). The oldest African American ME congregation in DC, it broke from the MONTGOMERY STREET Methodist CHURCH.



Prior to the Civil War, all Methodist churches in the region were placed under the authority of the Baltimore Conference, which did not permit African American ministers; hence, white ministers were assigned to the newly formed African American congregations.⁹⁸ Although the Black members of Mount Zion had established their own church as early as 1814, they remained under the supervision of white ministers from their parent church for another 50 years.⁹⁹ This was largely because of legislation in both Maryland and DC enacted in 1831, following Nat Turner's rebellion in Virginia; afraid of an enslaved revolt, white legislators in these localities prohibited the assembly of African Americans for religious purposes without the supervision of a white clergyman.¹⁰⁰ Regardless of this white hegemony, attendance at Mount Zion rose from 125 congregants to 549 by 1844.¹⁰¹ Conversely, the restrictions on Black preachers drove some Black Methodists to establish new parishes "for Negroes and by Negroes."¹⁰² Some members left Mount Zion in 1849 to form the new A.M.E. Church of Washington, and several other DC congregations trace their origins to that schism, including Union Wesley A.M.E. Zion Church, John Wesley A.M.E. Zion Church (ca. 1850), and Ebenezer A.M.E. Church (1856).¹⁰³

⁹⁶ Pauline Gaskins Mitchell, "The History of Mt. Zion United Methodist Church and Mt. Zion Cemetery," *Records of the Columbia Historical Society, Washington, DC* 51 (1984):104 (accessed 17 February 2021, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40067847>).

⁹⁷ Kathleen M. Lesko, Valerie Babb, and Carroll R. Gibbs, *Black Georgetown Remembered: A History of Its Black Community from the Founding of "The Town of George" in 1751 to the Present Day* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1991), 7-8, 149-154.

⁹⁸ "Asbury United Methodist Church (Washington, DC) records, 1836-1986," Collection Overview and Biographical/Historical Information (New York: New York Public Library Archives & Manuscripts, accessed 17 February 2021, <http://archives.nypl.org/scm/20849>).

⁹⁹ Pauline Gaskins Mitchell, 104-106.

¹⁰⁰ Rev. George F. Bragg, Jr. *Men of Maryland* (Baltimore: Church Advocate Press, 1925), 17.

¹⁰¹ Suzanne Ganschinitz, "Mount Zion United Methodist Church," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1975), Section 8.

¹⁰² Cromwell, 67.

¹⁰³ Velma Ruth, "Mount Zion United Methodist Church (1816-)," Black Past [website] (September 12, 2020, accessed 17 February 2021, <https://Blackpast.org/african-american-history/mount-zion-united-methodist-church-1816/>); Pauline Gaskins Mitchell, 105-106.

<p style="text-align: center;">FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH 2624 Dumbarton Street, NW, Georgetown, DC</p> <p>Georgetown’s first church for Baptists was founded by the REV. SANDY ALEXANDER, a freedman, on 5 October 1862. The congregants met in The Ark, a building at 29th and O streets, before building this church in 1882. The congregation is active.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">JERUSALEM BAPTIST CHURCH 2600 P Street, NW, Georgetown, DC</p> <p>Founded in 1870 by the REVS. SANDY ALEXANDER and WILLIAM GIBBON as the Seventh Baptist Church, the flock built this church and renamed themselves the Jerusalem Church by 1906. The church is active.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">ALEXANDER MEMORIAL BAPTIST CHURCH 2709 N Street, NW, Georgetown, DC</p> <p>This congregation broke away from the FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH and built their own in 1909. Although the congregation is still active, it left Georgetown for Upper Marlboro, MD, in 2014. The building is now a private residence.</p>	

Unlike the Methodists, the Baptist faith allowed Black churches to have African American preachers and independent parishes much earlier. The Rev. Walter Henderson Brooks attributed this integration to the ideas of freedom and democracy espoused by Baptist leadership. Despite this comparative liberalism, however, Black Methodist churches were organized earlier than Baptist congregations in the NCA.¹⁰⁴ Georgetown’s **FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH** was established by Rev. **SANDY ALEXANDER** in 1862. The congregation met initially in “The Ark,” located at 29th and O streets on land donated by Collin Williams. The First Baptist’s parishioners relocated to the present site at 27th and Dumbarton streets by 1882. The Rev. Alexander also formed the **JERUSALEM BAPTIST CHURCH** with the Rev. **WILLIAM GIBBON** in 1870. Originally called the Seventh Baptist Church, the congregation met first in the Old Quaker Building on 17th and N streets, then relocated several times before purchasing the church’s present site on the corner of 26th and P streets in 1906. A schism within the First Baptist Church in 1908 resulted in the formation of the **ALEXANDER MEMORIAL BAPTIST CHURCH**, named for Rev. Alexander. The members met at 1002 26th Street and then at the Odd Fellows Hall at 28th and Dumbarton streets before erecting a church at 2709 N Street in 1909.¹⁰⁵

The **EPIPHANY CATHOLIC CHURCH** broke from Georgetown’s historic (formed 1790) Holy Trinity Catholic Church. Organized in 1923, the congregants first met in Holy Trinity’s hall or in private homes in Georgetown; their first service conducted by a priest was held in a former mortician’s parlor on 28th Street in 1924. That year, Father Lawrence Schaefer purchased vacant lots at 2712 Dumbarton Street, and a new church building was constructed within the next two years. In 1952,


¹⁰⁴ Brooks, 12-17.

¹⁰⁵ Lesko, et al., 156-165.

Father **CHESTER BALL** became the first Black priest of a Catholic parish in DC. Once numbering nearly 400 African American congregants, the flock is predominantly white today.¹⁰⁶

EPIPHANY CATHOLIC CHURCH
2712 Dumbarton Street, NW, Georgetown, DC

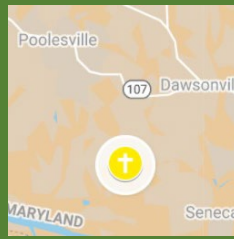
This African American Catholic congregation broke from the segregated HOLY TRINITY CHURCH in 1923 and completed their sanctuary by 1926. The church is active, but demographics have shifted to a majority-white congregation.



Churches also formed the backbones of rural African American communities in lower Montgomery County. The first building raised in Sugarland was the church, built in late 1871. **WILLIAM TAYLOR**, **PATRICK HEBRON, JR.**, and **JOHN H. DIGGS** purchased a parcel costing \$25 from George W. Dawson, a former enslaver. The Sugarland Forest Methodist Episcopal Church served as the heart of the community and as a school until a purpose-built schoolhouse was raised ca. 1884. Originally a log building erected in 1871, the first church was destroyed by fire. It was rebuilt in 1893 by Scott Bell, a carpenter, in a vernacular Classical style, at the cost of \$1,000. Today, it is known as the **ST. PAUL'S COMMUNITY CHURCH** and is, with the cemetery, the last vestige of the Sugarland community. The cemetery is the final resting place of many of Sugarland's founders and residents, including Phillip Johnson and Patrick Hebron. In 1967, St. Paul's Church officiated the first interracial marriage in Maryland. It is now used to host occasional events.¹⁰⁷

SAINT PAUL'S COMMUNITY CHURCH
14730 Sugarland Lane, Poolesville, MD

Previously called the Sugarland Forest ME Church, this church dates to 1871. The original log cabin burned and was replaced in 1893. The church and its cemetery (dating to 1884) are the last vestiges of the Sugarland community.



The **WARREN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH** in Martinsburg reflects the community's desire to worship independently. The first sanctuary dated to 1866, and its original location on Martinsburg Road, 1 mile from the present site, is marked with a historic burial ground. The church building was moved in 1876 and replaced in 1903 with a Carpenter Gothic-style edifice built by Scott Bell. The church was named for **ISAAC WARREN**, a Black landowner and church trustee.¹⁰⁸ The congregation merged with the Mount Zion United Methodist Church of Dickerson, Maryland, in 1993, and the Warren Church is used only occasionally for special events.

WARREN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
22625 Whites Ferry Road, Dickerson, MD

Established in 1866, Martinsburg's church was moved 1 mile to the present site in 1876 and then replaced in 1903. The congregation merged with a Dickerson church in 1993. The historic Warren Church is used for occasional community events and weddings.



¹⁰⁶ Lesko, et al., 165-167.

¹⁰⁷ Sugarland Ethno-History Project; Heritage Montgomery; Reese and Johnson, 4; Kelly, 179.

¹⁰⁸ Kelly, 180.

The PLEASANT VIEW METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH “is representative of the post-Civil War era growth of the Methodist Church in general, and the Washington Negro Conference in particular.”¹⁰⁹ Methodism had such a foothold in the region that as many as two thirds of all new churches built in Montgomery County between 1870 and 1900 were Methodist. The original structure, built by the HOWARD BROTHERS in 1888, was razed in 1914 and replaced with a Gothic Revival-style edifice. Conversely, the wood-frame POPLAR GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH (1893) is the last surviving example of a nineteenth-century African American Baptist church in Montgomery County. Located near Muddy Branch, the congregants would immerse themselves in the tributary for baptismal rites.¹¹⁰ The congregation built a brick sanctuary on an abutting parcel in the mid-twentieth century and discontinued frequent use of the historical edifice. The SCOTLAND A.M.E. ZION CHURCH on Seven Locks Road still stands as an anchor for the River Road African American community. Although the frame church was built between 1915 and 1924, the congregation dates to 1906. The building has been in use, uninterrupted, as a place of worship for over a century, although a storm in July 2019 severely damaged the building and it requires restoration.¹¹¹

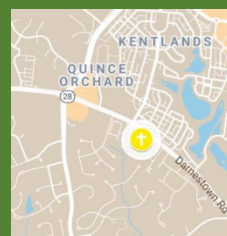
Burial grounds typically are associated with historical churches and often survive them. The 1909 ELIJAH REST METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH in Jerusalem was destroyed by a fire and replaced in 1950, but the cemetery (dating to 1870) remains intact. With approximately 200 graves (the oldest dating to 1871), the Elijah Church Cemetery is one of the largest African American burial grounds in the county. Cemeteries can be the last remaining testaments to the presence of historical African American communities that have been altered or displaced by development and urban renewal.

PLEASANT VIEW METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

11900 Darnestown Road, Gaithersburg, MD

The original structure, built by the HOWARD BROTHERS in 1888, was razed and replaced in 1914 with the present sanctuary. The church, currently not in use, and cemetery constitute the Pleasant View Historic Site with the QUINCE

ORCHARD COLORED SCHOOL.



¹⁰⁹ Kelly, 227.

¹¹⁰ Kelly, 224.

¹¹¹ Kelly, 229.

POPLAR GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH

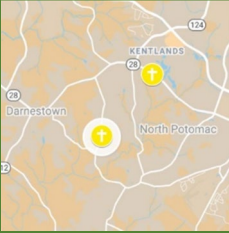
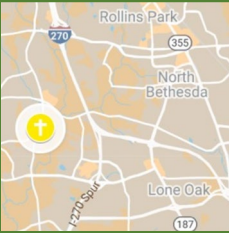
14621 Jones Lane, North Potomac, MD

Founded in 1883 by 18 members, the Poplar Grove Baptist convened in a log cabin until this wood-frame sanctuary was built in 1893. It is the last nineteenth-century Black Baptist church in Montgomery County but is no longer the main sanctuary for the congregation.

SCOTLAND AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL ZION CHURCH

10902 Seven Locks Road, Rockville, MD

Organized by 1906, this wood-frame church was built between 1915 and 1924. An addition that doubled its size was built in 1967. Although the congregation remains active, a 2019 storm damaged the oldest core and is currently being

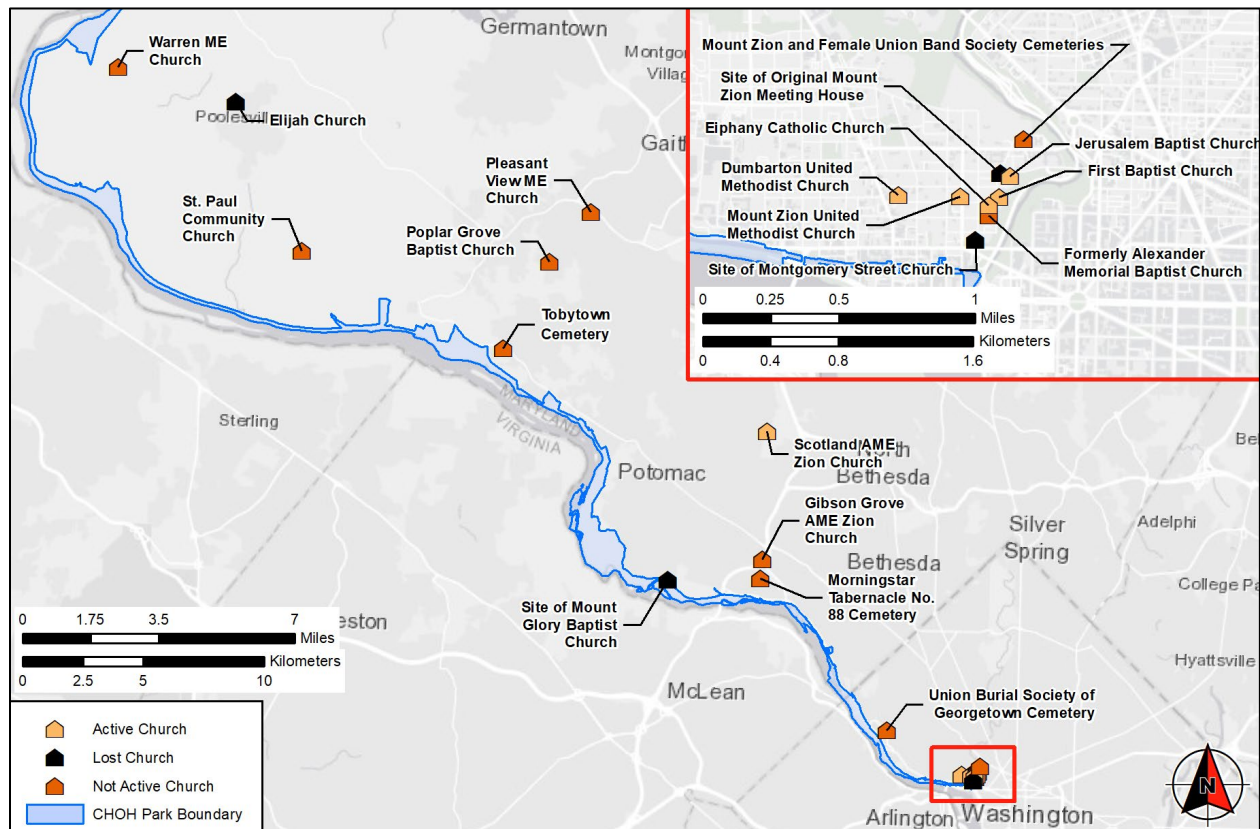


Figure 2.7: Map of Selected Historical African American Churches and Cemeteries in Montgomery County, Maryland, and Western Washington, DC

ii. Schools

“It was surprising how much we learned. When she was teaching one class, you had to be quiet, but you could listen as she taught the upper classes, and you'd be way ahead. We didn't have books, we only got what the white children didn't want. Some had pages.”

*Pearl Green, who attended the Quince Orchard School in the 1920s.*¹¹²

African Americans valued the education that had been denied them by white society, which viewed educated Blacks as a threat to the power structure. Reading and writing skills provided means to freedom for some enslaved individuals who attained them, and so access to an education held paramount importance. For Black Americans raised in slavery as well as those born free, educating the next generation was deemed necessary to overcome entrenched poverty. Therefore, schools were often the first or second (after the church) purpose-built building in post-emancipation African American communities. (Figure 2.8, end of this section, shows selected historical schools in the study area vicinity.)

Religion and education were intertwined in the nineteenth-century African American experience; the Bible was often the only book African Americans had access to and the first from which many learned to read. The first schools for Black children were opened in private homes or churches, and early educational instruction focused on literacy. Like many Black churches in DC, Mount Zion contributed to the education of both adults and children with the opening of a Sabbath school in 1823, supervised by a white superintendent from the Montgomery Street Church and three African American leaders. In 1840 a Black principal, **JOSEPH T. MASON**, expertly ran the school, known for a high standard for scholarship and high attendance through 1860.¹¹³ Sunday schools were attended by Blacks “not merely for their spiritual guidance but as a source of training and educational advancement also.”¹¹⁴

Non-parochial schools also emerged in the antebellum period. When access to white public schools was denied to them, Black Washingtonians founded small private schools that were funded by both Black and white supporters. Mary Billings, a British woman, had operated a small, racially integrated school until complaints led her to establish a small all-Black school in Georgetown in 1810. The Billings school at 3100 Dumbarton Street was relocated to Washington, into the private home of Daniel Jones on H Street, in 1821, because of funding issues as well as community hostility in Georgetown. Her pupil, **HENRY SMOTHERS**, opened a school on Washington Street in Georgetown in 1820 but it also moved into Washington by 1823.¹¹⁵ Another of Billings’s former students, **MARIA BECRAFT**, operated a girls’ Catholic seminary on Dumbarton Street from 1820 until 1827, then moved her school to Fayette Street, where she taught 30 to 35 pupils per year until

¹¹² Brigid Schulte, “On Tours, Uncovering Forgotten Footprints,” *The Washington Post*, 14 December 2000 (accessed 3 February 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/2000/12/14/on-tours-uncovering-forgotten-footprints/2429bd17-4aa9-4192-ab56-430a7a6e5611/>).

¹¹³ Pauline Gaskins Mitchell, 109.

¹¹⁴ Emmett D. Preston, Jr. “The Development of Negro Education in the District of Columbia, 1800-1860,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 12, no. 2 (Spring 1943):189-198 (accessed via *JSTOR* 1 September 2021, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2292971>).

¹¹⁵ Lesko, et al., 9-10.

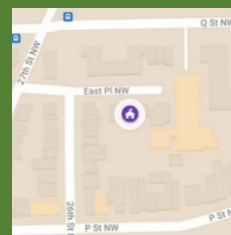
1831. **JAMES H. FLEET** opened a school in Georgetown, at 1208 30th Street, in 1836 but it burned soon after; he opened a second school and was listed in the 1871 Washington city directory as a teacher living at 109 Washington Street in Georgetown. A white woman, Emma V. Brown, opened a school for Black children in her Georgetown home at 3044 P Street in 1861, which moved to Capitol Hill by 1864.¹¹⁶ The short tenure of these schools reflects white Georgetown's hostility toward the education of Blacks as well as the schools' constant difficulties in maintaining adequate funding.

In 1850, a white city official running for mayor of DC, Jesse E. Dow, advocated for the establishment of all-Black public schools in the district. His plan was to open five schools for Black children and five for white children, yet this idea was attacked by several detractors and gained no traction. Public institutions for African American children would not be established in the District of Columbia until 1862, with the emancipation of the district's enslaved population.¹¹⁷ The education of Black youths was overseen by the Freedmen's Bureau through the war, after which it was transferred to state-funded schools. In the Palisades area of DC, a one-room schoolhouse near the **CHAIN BRIDGE** and Battery Kemble was opened for Black children in 1865. In 1866, the **CHAMBERLAIN SCHOOL** for African American children was opened in the Herring Hill neighborhood of Georgetown, on East Place, east of 26th Street and south of Q Street. It was named for Eliza A. Chamberlain, who had arrived in Georgetown in 1864 and taught African Americans at the Mount Zion Freedman's School. By 1867, nearly 900 school-aged Black children were living in Georgetown, and the Chamberlain School building was overcrowded immediately, with over 400 pupils in its second year of operation. The Chamberlain School remained the only schoolhouse for Black youth in the District of Columbia's public school system, as listed in an annual report published in 1877. The building was abandoned by 1894 and DC's commissioners granted permission to the Sisters of Mary, a local mutual aid society for Black women, to use it as a dwelling for aged and indigent Black residents of Georgetown.¹¹⁸

CHAMBERLAIN SCHOOL

2512 East Place, NW, Georgetown, DC

Founded in 1866, the Chamberlain School was DC's first public school for Black children. It was overcrowded from the start, with over 400 pupils in 1867. By 1894, it was converted to a home for indigent and elderly African Americans.



By 1885, the **WORMLEY SCHOOL** stood at 3331 Prospect Street, built to alleviate the overcrowding at the Chamberlain School. It was named for a freeborn African American, **JAMES WORMLEY** (1819-1884), who was a Georgetown resident, restaurateur, and (from 1871) the owner of the popular Wormley House hotel at the corner of 15th and H streets, NW. Wormley had been instrumental in urging Congress to fund public education initiatives for DC's Black youth and in attaining a new school for Georgetown in 1871, but the school was sited in a predominantly white

¹¹⁶ David Freedman, "African-American Schooling in the South Prior to 1861," *The Journal of Negro History* 84, no. 1 (Winter 1999):34-37; Chris Myers Asch and George Derek Musgrove, *Chocolate City: A History of Race and Democracy in the Nation's Capital* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 44-45; "Site List and Narratives," *Georgetown African American Historic Landmark Project & Tour* [website] (Humanities DC, accessed 3 January 2022, <http://www.gaahlp.org/sites/site-list-and-narratives/>).

¹¹⁷ Preston.

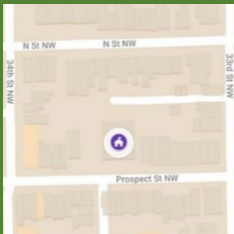
¹¹⁸ "Sites: 2512 East Place," *Georgetown African American Historic Landmark Project & Tour* [website] (Humanities DC, accessed 3 January 2022, <http://www.gaahlp.org/sites/2512-east-place/>).

part of town and local politics delayed its opening for another 14 years. Four years after Wormley opened, the School Board discussed moving the entire student body into a new school in Herring Hill.¹¹⁹ The Chamberlain School continued to operate through 1887 but was made redundant by the construction of the **PHILLIPS SCHOOL** at 2735 Olive Street in 1890. The latter, named after the abolitionist Wendell Phillips, served residents east of Wisconsin Avenue. Enrollment eventually declined; Phillips was closed in 1930 and the student body consolidated with Wormley.¹²⁰

WORMLEY SCHOOL

3329 Prospect Street, NW, Georgetown, DC

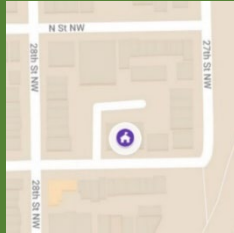
Named for Georgetown resident **JAMES WORMLEY**, an African American hotelier, this school opened in 1885 to alleviate crowding at the Chamberlain School. It was segregated until its closure in 1952. The building is now condominiums.



PHILLIPS SCHOOL

2735 Olive Street, NW, Georgetown, DC

Founded in 1890, this school for Black children was named for the abolitionist Wendell Phillips. It was closed in 1930. From 1970 to 1998, it housed the Washington International School. In 2002, it was converted into condominiums.

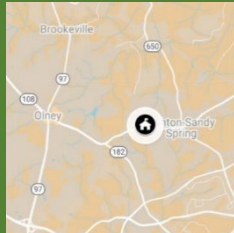


Generally, urban African Americans had access to formalized educational opportunities much earlier than those living in rural areas. Pre-emancipation African Americans in rural Maryland were taught privately, in homes, by family, friends, or tutors if they were taught at all. As early as 1821, Mary Coffin Brooke provided private tutelage in reading and writing to the Black servants at the **FAIR HILL SEMINARY** (a female boarding school) in Sandy Spring, Maryland, a predominantly Quaker area and the oldest free African American community in Montgomery County. However, in Maryland—“one of the last states in the Union to establish a public school system,” in 1860—public education was denied African Americans until after the Civil War.¹²¹ By 1867, however, as many as 30 schoolhouses had been built in Montgomery County for the education of Black children, who were instructed by white teachers.¹²²

FAIR HILL SEMINARY

Sandy Spring, MD

The Quakers of Sandy Spring believed in universal access to education. As early as 1821, Mary Coffin Brooke tutored the Black servants at the Fair Hill Seminary, which closed in 1865. The building was lost to fire in the 1970s.



¹¹⁹ “Sites: 3331 Prospect Street,” *Georgetown African American Historic Landmark Project & Tour* [website] (Humanities DC, accessed 4 January 2022, <http://www.gaahlp.org/sites/3331-prospect-street/>); “Survey of Historic School Buildings in Georgetown: the Wormley School,” *The Georgetown Metropolitan* (8 October 2009, accessed 4 January 2022, <https://georgetownmetropolitan.com/2009/10/08/survey-of-historic-school-buildings-in-georgetown-the-wormley-school/>).

¹²⁰ Lesko, et al., 26.

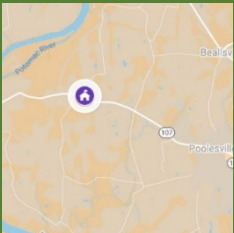
¹²¹ Kelly, 23.

¹²² Nina Honemond Clarke, *History of the Black Public Schools of Montgomery County, Maryland 1872-1961* (New York: Vantage Press, 1978), 1.

For several years after emancipation, Black landowners in predominantly white areas of the county were taxed for schools their children could not attend. In isolated, rural hamlets, Black children attended classes in community churches or meeting halls, and it fell to the African American community members to raise the resources required to attain the space for instruction as well as teachers.¹²³ In 1872, Montgomery County passed an ordinance that “one school of free admission should be opened in each election district for all colored youth between six and twenty years of age.”¹²⁴ If the schools could draw 15 or more pupils, they would be funded the same as the white public schools in the county; if fewer than 15 pupils, the funds for maintaining a schoolhouse and teacher salary would fall to the community. This separate-but-equal system of education proposed to segregate the schools by race but provide oversight by the same board of commissioners, the same rules and regulations, and the same curriculum across the public school system. Yet, within a decade of the ordinance’s enactment, Montgomery County’s African American communities found that these schools were not only separate but consistently unequal. Many communities had trouble getting the school board to provide schoolhouses in their locales, and when they were successful, they had to sell the land to the county for less than its worth. Teachers in Black schools were paid with remaining available funds, the school terms were shorter than those in white schools, examinations were held on differing dates than those for whites, and other discrepancies abounded.¹²⁵ Hence, many African American communities maintained their own schools separate from the county school system. The community of Martinsburg, west of Poolesville in Montgomery County, had a purpose-built schoolhouse by 1886, although instruction had taken place in the church as early as 1880.¹²⁶ The **MARTINSBURG NEGRO SCHOOL** was a one-room school that served elementary grades one through five, with as many as 50 students per year. It was merged with the Montgomery County public school system in 1899 and served as an elementary school until 1939. Today, it is considered the oldest surviving African American schoolhouse in the county.

MARTINSBURG NEGRO SCHOOL
22625 Whites Ferry Road, Dickerson, MD

The oldest surviving African American school in Montgomery County, this one-room schoolhouse operated from 1886 to 1939. Since 1997, it has been part of the Warren Historic Site with the **WARREN ME CHURCH** and the **LOVING CHARITY HALL**.



Near the study area, Sugarland had a school from 1871 until 1925 (that was replaced by a one-room Rosenwald school that operated until 1939).¹²⁷ It was one of the first buildings erected in that community, on land acquired by the county’s Board of Education in 1870 from Augustus and Catherine Webb. The one-story schoolhouse had a small cupola with a bell that was rung to announce the start of the school day.¹²⁸ The **QUINCE ORCHARD SCHOOL** was founded in the Pleasant View community in 1874. A fire destroyed the schoolhouse in 1901 (arson was suspected

¹²³ Kelly, 24.

¹²⁴ Clarke, 2.

¹²⁵ Clarke, 2, 16.

¹²⁶ Kelly, 180.

¹²⁷ Julius Rosenwald, the founder of the mail-order and retail business, Sears, Roebuck and Company, philanthropically established a program to fund the construction of schoolhouses throughout the American South for Black children; more than 5,000 Rosenwald schools, as they are called, were established by 1940.

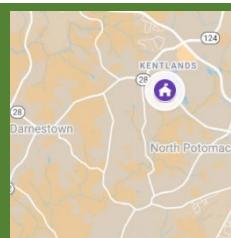
¹²⁸ Reese and Johnson, 7; LaRoche and Fletcher, 271.

but not proven), and the community moved into the vacant, one-room schoolhouse built in 1875 for the area's white children on the opposite side of Darnestown Road. This school served 122 children in seven grades until 1940. As the fifth largest Black elementary school in the county, it was woefully overcrowded and inadequate even after it was expanded into three rooms in 1941. The situation worsened when it consolidated with the Tobytown and Seneca schools for Black children soon thereafter.¹²⁹ **BOYDS NEGRO SCHOOL** was built in 1895 by members of the African American community with materials supplied by the county's school board. The 30x22-foot wood building was the first purpose-built schoolhouse in a large rural area that served the Black communities of Boyds, Black Town, Turner Town, and White Ground. Previously, Black children in the area had been taught in St. Mark's Church. The one-room schoolhouse heated by a wood stove held students in grades one through eight, all of which were taught by one teacher. The building had no plumbing—the facilities were two outdoor lavatories. The Boyds Negro School was closed in 1936 when its students were transferred to the Clarksburg Negro School.¹³⁰

QUINCE ORCHARD COLORED SCHOOL

11900 Darnestown Road, Gaithersburg, MD

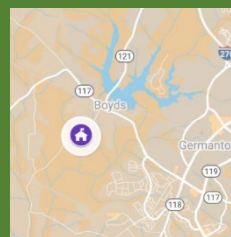
Established in 1874, the first schoolhouse burnt in 1901, and the school moved into the vacant, one-room schoolhouse built for white children ca. 1875. Overcrowded, this schoolhouse was expanded into three rooms in 1941. Today, it forms part of the Pleasant View Historic Site with the PLEASANT VIEW ME CHURCH.



BOYDS NEGRO SCHOOL

19510 White Ground Road, Boyds, MD

This 30x22-foot, wood-frame, one-room schoolhouse was built in 1895 and served grades 1-8 until it was closed in 1936. It was purchased by the Boyds Historical Society in 1980 and currently operates as a museum.



By 1899, the county had 114 schools, 32 of which were dedicated to Black youth.¹³¹ Within the study area, the Seven Locks-Gibson Grove community opened a school in 1882 that operated for nearly 50 years, until it closed in February 1931. The building was erected on land purchased from John D.W. Moore for \$32.83. A county-wide report on the state of schools described the **SEVEN LOCKS SCHOOL** as “a lot and house needing \$400 worth improvements.” Other schools for African American children founded in the study area included Tobytown (1887) and Brickyard (1884). The schoolhouses in Gibson Grove, Tobytown, and Brickyard are no longer extant.

¹²⁹ Kelly, 227-228.

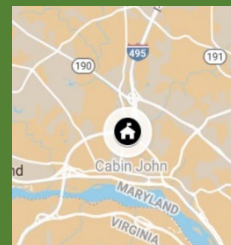
¹³⁰ Kelly, 155; Heritage Montgomery, “African American Heritage Self-Guided Tour” (n.p., February 2021, accessed 7 October 2021, <https://www.heritagemontgomery.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/AfAm-Tour-final-Feb-2021.pdf>).

¹³¹ Clarke, 5, 7, 27, 189.

SEVEN LOCKS SCHOOL

Seven Locks Road between Conduit and River Roads.

The GIBSON GROVE community built a one-room, 16x24-foot, log schoolhouse that doubled as a church in 1882. Successively called Moore's School, No. 10, and Seven Locks, it was named the Cabin John School in 1911. Closed in 1928, it was lost to highway expansion in the 1960s.



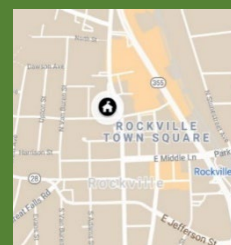
Both white and Black children in Montgomery County were taught in similar one-room schoolhouses until 1900, but schools built for white students after 1900 were larger, two-room buildings with more natural light and air circulation provided by vents, flues, and large windows. Two-room schoolhouses were not built for Black students until the 1920s, when 15 schools were built through the Rosenwald school-building program. The new schools for white children were often constructed of enduring masonry (brick), whereas the schools for Black children were wood-frame structures that reflected the consistently inferior treatment Blacks received under the “separate but equal” rule upheld by segregationist policies during the Jim Crow era.¹³²

Although Montgomery County had five high schools in 1920 and was the first Maryland locality to provide a full 12-year curriculum in 1926, there were no schools for Black youths that taught classes above the eighth-grade level until 1927 and no Black high school until 1936. Prior to that year, high-school-aged Black pupils in Montgomery County commuted to DC schools. The county's first secondary school for African Americans was also its first Rosenwald school, a two-room building on North Washington Street in Rockville. Rosenwald schools were erected in other locales in Montgomery County: Cloppers, Ken Gar, Laytonsville, Norbeck, Sugarland, Poolesville, Rockville, Sandy Spring, Scotland, Smithville, Spencerville, Takoma Park, Stewarttown, and Washington Grove. No Rosenwald schools were built in the African American communities in the study area, however, which continued to maintain schools in other community buildings. In Tobytown, the community church doubled as a schoolhouse until their school was consolidated with the Quince Orchard School in the 1940s. Through the 1920s until it was closed in 1931, the Gibson Grove/Cabin John school rented the Morningstar Tabernacle social hall to serve its students. A new schoolhouse for Brickyard was deferred in 1927 and likely never built.¹³³

ROCKVILLE COLORED HIGH SCHOOL

246 N. Washington Street, Rockville, MD

Montgomery County's first Black high school, this Rosenwald school opened in 1927, six years after the Black primary school opened next door. The two-room building was replaced by Lincoln High School in 1935. The lost building is commemorated with an interpretive marker.



In Georgetown in the late 1920s, Black youths attended the FRANCIS JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL at 24th and N streets, in the West End neighborhood east of Rock Creek, or commuted across downtown to DUNBAR HIGH SCHOOL at First and O streets, NW. The ARMSTRONG VOCATIONAL SCHOOL was nearby, at the eastern edge of Foggy Bottom, at First and P streets. At Loughboro and Conduit roads in the Palisades, on 18 acres of land that had been occupied by Battery Vermont, an integrated and secular reform school for girls was established in 1893 that was renamed the

¹³² Kelly, 24-25.

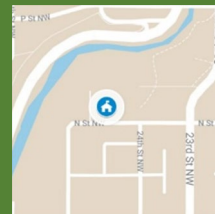
¹³³ Kelly, 25; Van Nevel; Clarke, 17, 44-47.

NATIONAL TRAINING SCHOOL FOR GIRLS by 1912. Between 1941 and its closure in 1953, it served only Black girls and was operated by an all-African American staff; it was razed in 1961 for the Sibley Memorial Hospital. After the Supreme Court decision of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* was made in 1954, a local case, *Boiling v. Sharpe*, challenged segregation in DC schools. Maryland and DC schools were desegregated gradually in the 1960s, and in Georgetown, most Black children continued to enroll in the Phillips-Wormley consolidated schools.¹³⁴ In Montgomery County, integration began in the primary schools in 1955, but segregated schools were gradually phased out and not closed until 1961.¹³⁵

Francis Junior High School

2425 N Street, NW, Washington, DC

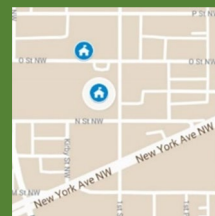
After primary school, Georgetown's Black youths had to commute to the Francis Junior High School in the West End, east of Rock Creek. Built in 1927, the school operates today as an elementary school in the DC public school system, the Francis-Stevens Education Campus.



Dunbar High School

101 N Street, NW, Washington, DC

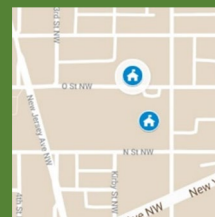
The first public secondary school for African Americans in the nation, Dunbar HS began as the Preparatory High School for Colored Youth in 1870. From 1891 to 1916, it was the M Street High School, then it was named for poet Paul Laurence Dunbar. Georgetown's Black teens commuted across downtown to attend.



Armstrong Vocational School

1400 First Street, NW, Washington, DC

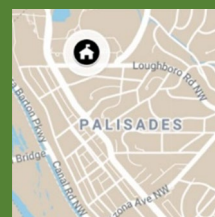
Opened in 1902, the manual training school was named for Brig. Gen. Samuel C. Armstrong. A high school curriculum was added in 1927. The school served as an alternative to Dunbar HS, across the street. Closed in 1996, it serves now as a public charter primary school.



National Training School for Girls

Loughboro and Conduit Roads, Washington, DC

Set in the Palisades, DC's first Reform School for Girls opened as an integrated institution in 1893. Its renaming in 1912 to the National Training School for Girls did not ameliorate the incidents of arson, riot, and running away. From 1941 until it closed in 1953, it was segregated. In 1961, it was razed for the Sibley Hospital.



¹³⁴ Lesko et al., 81, 106.

¹³⁵ Van Nevel.

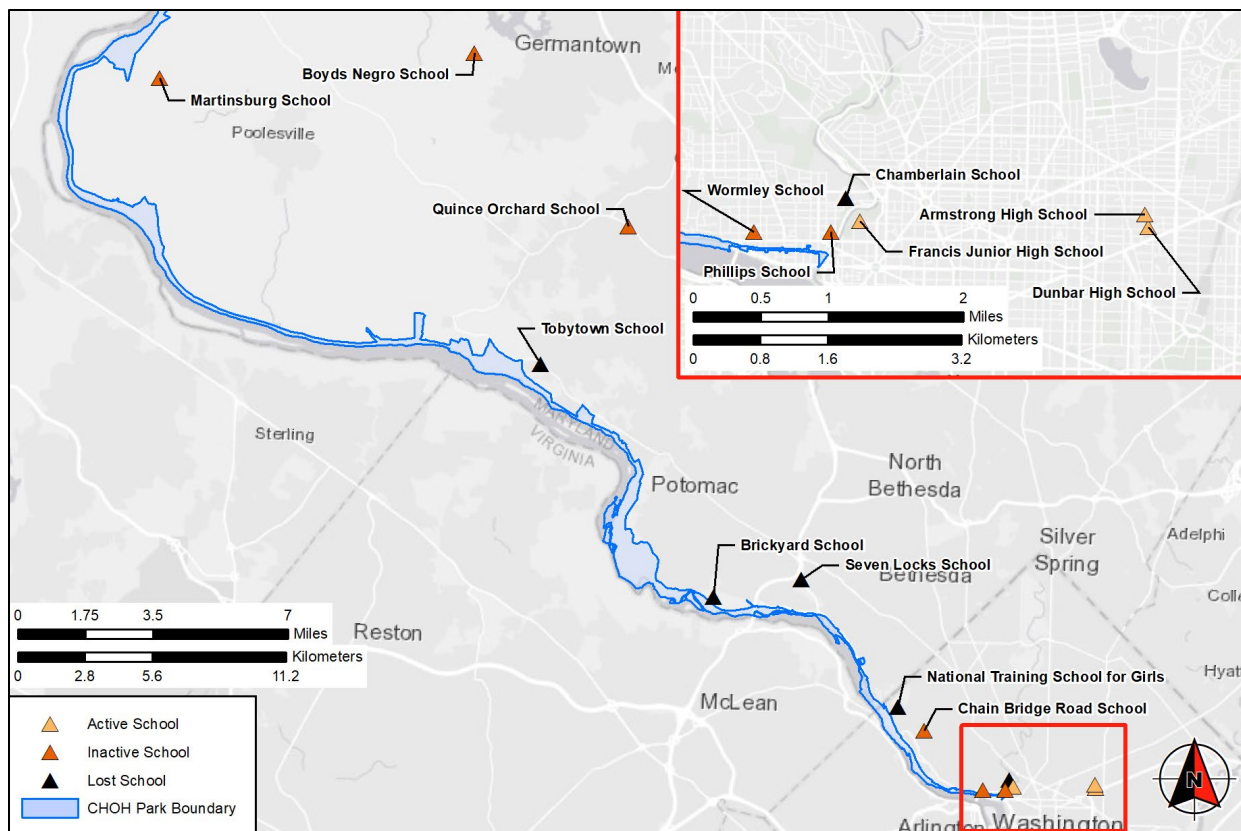


Figure 2.8: Map of Selected Historical African American Schools in Montgomery County, Maryland, and Western Washington, DC

iii. Benevolent Societies

“...a moral obligation to care for one another. So as I understand it, as the older people have told, if you pay a dollar to join the club, then if a member of your family died, you could have them buried in Moses Hall Cemetery and the community would take care of the family graves.”

Judi Bankhead, Cabin John resident, on Moses Hall Lodge.¹³⁶

Benevolent societies, or mutual aid organizations, completed the triumvirate of institutions that supported historical Black communities. African American mutual aid associations existed from the eighteenth century, and the “formation of fraternal orders and benevolent societies accelerated at the end of the nineteenth century.”¹³⁷ In Maryland, this increase in the establishment of such organizations *after emancipation* is likely the result of an 1842 law that forbade such societies among its African American population, legislating that “any free colored person convicted of

¹³⁶ Alexandra Jones, “Interviews with the African American Members of the Cabin John Community about Gibson Grove A.M.E. Zion Church and Moses Hall” (2009, accessed 3 February 2022, https://mchdr.montgomeryhistory.org/xmlui/bitstream/handle/20.500.12366/383/Gibson-grove_Jones-interviews_2008.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y).

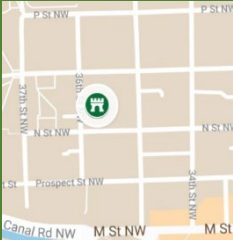
¹³⁷ LaRoche and Fletcher, 99.

becoming or continuing to be a member of any secret society whatever, whether it held its meetings in Maryland, or without, should be deemed a felon, and be fined not less than fifty dollars.” If the “convicted felon” was unable to pay the sum, he or she was sold into slavery. By 1845, “colored camp meetings and similar outdoor gatherings were strictly and rigidly forbidden” in Maryland.¹³⁸ Thus, being able to organize socially and erecting lodge buildings for such a purpose would have been of utmost importance to emancipated African Americans in the state and region. (Figure 2.9, end of this section, shows selected African American social halls in the study area vicinity.)

HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC CHURCH

1315 36th Street, NW, Georgetown, DC

From its founding in 1790 until 1923, when the African American members split to organize the Epiphany Catholic Church in east Georgetown, this church was integrated. A Black mutual aid society, the Knights of St. Augustine’s Blessed Peter Claver Burial Association, met here.

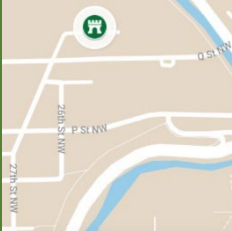


As a counterpoint to parochial charities, benevolent associations were predominantly secular institutions that pooled resources through membership dues and subscriptions that were then used to assist members throughout the community in times of strife, such as during an illness, or with burial costs. In many ways, benevolent societies acted like insurance plans for marginalized communities that were discriminated against and not offered similar vehicles by white society. Founded in 1818 by **GEORGE BELL** and other formerly enslaved Black men, Washington’s Resolute Beneficial Society provided medical insurance and burial costs but also opened a school for free Black children.¹³⁹ Georgetown hosted the Blessed Peter Claver Burial Association for the Knights of St. Augustine, who met at the **HOLY TRINITY CHURCH**. In 1842, a group of freed women formed the Female Union Band Society in DC to support one another. When a member was ill, she was paid \$2 per week from the treasury, supplied by membership dues, and \$20 was provided for a grave and burial costs. In addition, the Female Union Band Society, through an intermediary, purchased a 3-acre plot of land in the northeastern extreme of Georgetown abutting the Old Methodist Burying Ground for the **FEMALE UNION BAND SOCIETY CEMETERY** for its members.¹⁴⁰

MOUNT ZION - FEMALE UNION BAND SOCIETY CEMETERY

2501 Mill Road, NW, Georgetown, DC

The Female Union Band Society cemetery dates to 1842, and the Mount Zion A.M.E. Church leased the Old Methodist Burying Grounds in 1879. In 1975, the African American cemeteries were designated a National Historic Landmark.



One of the most significant fraternal organizations to offer mutual benefits to Black Americans was the England-based Grand United Order of Odd Fellows (GUOOF). In 1843, the first GUOOF Lodge was established in New York; by 1852, the fraternal order counted 1,470 people among 25

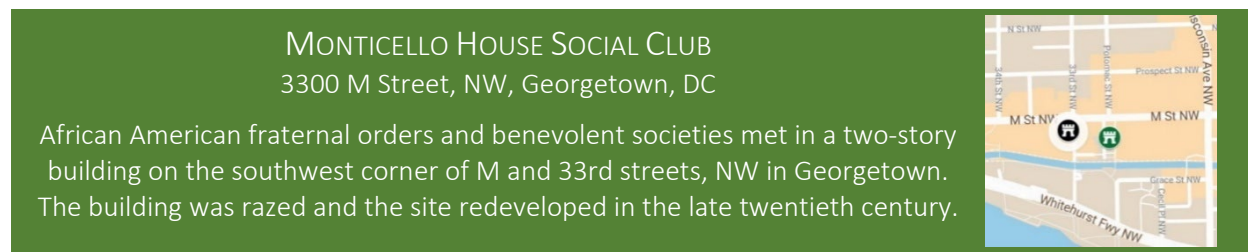
¹³⁸ Bragg, 17.

¹³⁹ Asch and Musgrove, 60.

¹⁴⁰ Richard O’Connor, Paul D. Dolinsky, Carter Bowman, Jr., Maurita Coley, and Darwina Neal, HALS No. DC-15, Mount Zion Cemetery/ Female Union Band Society Cemetery (Old Methodist Burying Ground), Washington, DC, Written Historical and Descriptive Data (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, Historic American Landscapes Survey, US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2008,) (accessed 6 January 2022, <https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/master/png/habshaer/dc/dc1000/dc1064/data/dc1064data.pdf>), 3-6.

lodges across the East Coast. After 1858, women were allowed to join through the auxiliary House of Ruth. Besides providing mutual benefits, the GUOOF promoted “moral and social outreach,” exemplified when members visited the infirm within their communities. In DC, the Potomac Union Lodge, No. 892, of GUOOF was founded in 1865 and convened in Georgetown at the hall on Washington Street. In 1873, several GUOOF lodges paraded through DC, culminating at the Georgetown Market House.¹⁴¹ The 1900 Washington city directory indicated that four GUOOF chapters met at 1409 28th Street: the Potomac Union Lodge, No. 892; the Georgetown Patriarchs Lodge, No. 42; the Columbia Lodge, No. 1376; and the Western Star Lodge, No. 1380.

With the influx of freedom seekers into DC during the Civil War, Washington was faced with a large population of indigent African Americans whose sole safety net was the mutual aid societies they established among themselves. One DC newspaper with an African American readership “estimated that, as early as 1880, there were over one thousand different black societies in the city.”¹⁴² These civic groups met in purpose-built and rented halls, in churches, and in grassy, vacant lots at 26th and P streets and 32nd and Q streets. The **MONTICELLO HOUSE SOCIAL CLUB** building at 3300 M street in Georgetown also provided a space for fraternal orders to meet and socialize.



Other African American fraternal orders in Georgetown included the Order of Samaritans, the Hawthorne Social Club, and the Heliotrope Circle. Georgetown’s African American women also were active in church-sponsored and civic organizations. These included the Embury Chapter of the Epworth League; Ladies of Olive; Ancient Daughters of Tabitha; the Mite Missionary Society; and auxiliary organizations to fraternal orders, such as the GUOOF’s House of Ruth, which met at the **GRAND UNITED ORDER OF ODD FELLOWS (GUOOF) HALL** at 28th and Dumbarton streets. The Sisters of Mary, for example, established a home for indigent and elderly African Americans in the old Chamberlain School in 1894, after it had been vacated by the DC public school system.¹⁴³ Besides sponsoring philanthropic causes, these social clubs hosted social events for their members.

¹⁴¹ Michael Barga, “Grand United Order of Odd Fellows in America,” *VCU Libraries Social Welfare History Project* [website] (accessed 6 January 2022, <https://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/eras/grand-united-order-of-odd-fellows-in-america/>).

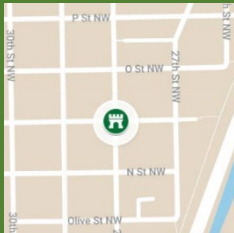
¹⁴² Andrew W. Kahrl, “‘The Slightest Semblance of Unruliness’: Steamboat Excursions, Pleasure Resorts, and the Emergence of Segregation Culture on the Potomac River,” *The Journal of American History* 94, no. 4 (2008):1113, <https://doi.org/10.2307/25095322>.

¹⁴³ Lesko, et al., 35-36, 65.

GRAND UNITED ORDER OF ODD FELLOWS (GUOOF) HALL

2732 Dumbarton Street, NW, Georgetown, DC

The African American GUOOF had a hall in Georgetown on 28th and Dumbarton streets. The exact location is unknown. By 1900, four chapters of the GUOOF were meeting in a building at 1409 28th Street NW in Georgetown.

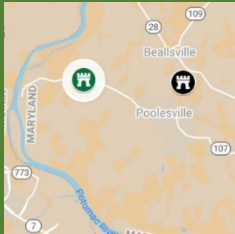


Often, members of social clubs met in private homes. Nina Honemond Clarke was born in Montgomery County in 1917 and served as a teacher in its public school system. In an interview conducted in 2003, she recalled that the local Merry Makers Club was “a community group that helped the sick and the poor and somebody got burned out and somebody who needs a scholarship—that’s the kind of work our club did.... We met at each other’s home. Each month we went to a different home.”¹⁴⁴ Although a mutual aid society is an intangible cultural association not always tied to one physical space, many rural Black communities had dedicated halls built for particular benevolent societies. Often these halls served multiple functions, such as the **MORNINGSTAR TABERNACLE NO. 88** hall in Gibson Grove, within Cabin John, which served as a school in the twentieth century in lieu of a purpose-built schoolhouse. In terms of the built environment, the lines between church, school, and fraternal society were hazy, as many of these functions were held in the same building. Regardless, all three institutions were found in and were fundamental civic staples of nineteenth-century African American communities in both in urban and rural settings.

LOVING CHARITY HALL

22625 Whites Ferry Road, Dickerson, MD

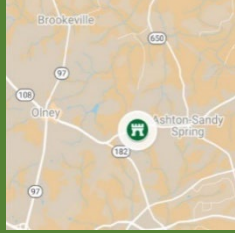
Built in 1914, this social hall is the third building in the Warren Historic Site, with the WARREN ME CHURCH and the MARTINSBURG NEGRO SCHOOL. It served as a community center, hosting dances, plays, and lectures. Another Loving Charity Hall existed in JERUSALEM but was razed in the 1930s.



INDEPENDENT ORDER OF ODD FELLOWS (IOOF) HALL

1308 Olney-Sandy Spring Road, Sandy Spring, MD

The IOOF Hall in Sandy Spring served the African American community as a mutual benefits organization. The building, erected in the 1920s, served as a social club until 1975 and is now associated with the Sharp Street UM Church.



Martinsburg’s **LOVING CHARITY HALL** is one of only two remaining examples in Montgomery County of a purpose-built social hall. Built in 1914 by local carpenter Scott Bell, it was the lodge for the local chapter of the General Grand and Accepted Order of Brothers and Sisters of Love and Charity. The benefits society offered medical and burial insurance to its members. In Martinsburg, the hall completed the triumvirate of civic institutions with the Warren Church and the Martinsburg Negro School. The two-story building functioned as a community center, in which movie screenings, dances, dinners, plays, and other social events were held.¹⁴⁵ Another Loving Charity Hall was founded in the nearby Black community of Jerusalem in the late nineteenth century but

¹⁴⁴ Van Nevel.

¹⁴⁵ Heritage Montgomery; Kelly, 180.

was demolished in the 1930s. The **INDEPENDENT ORDER OF ODD FELLOWS (IOOF) HALL** in Sandy Spring served the area’s African American members with health and life insurance from the 1920s until it closed in 1975.¹⁴⁶

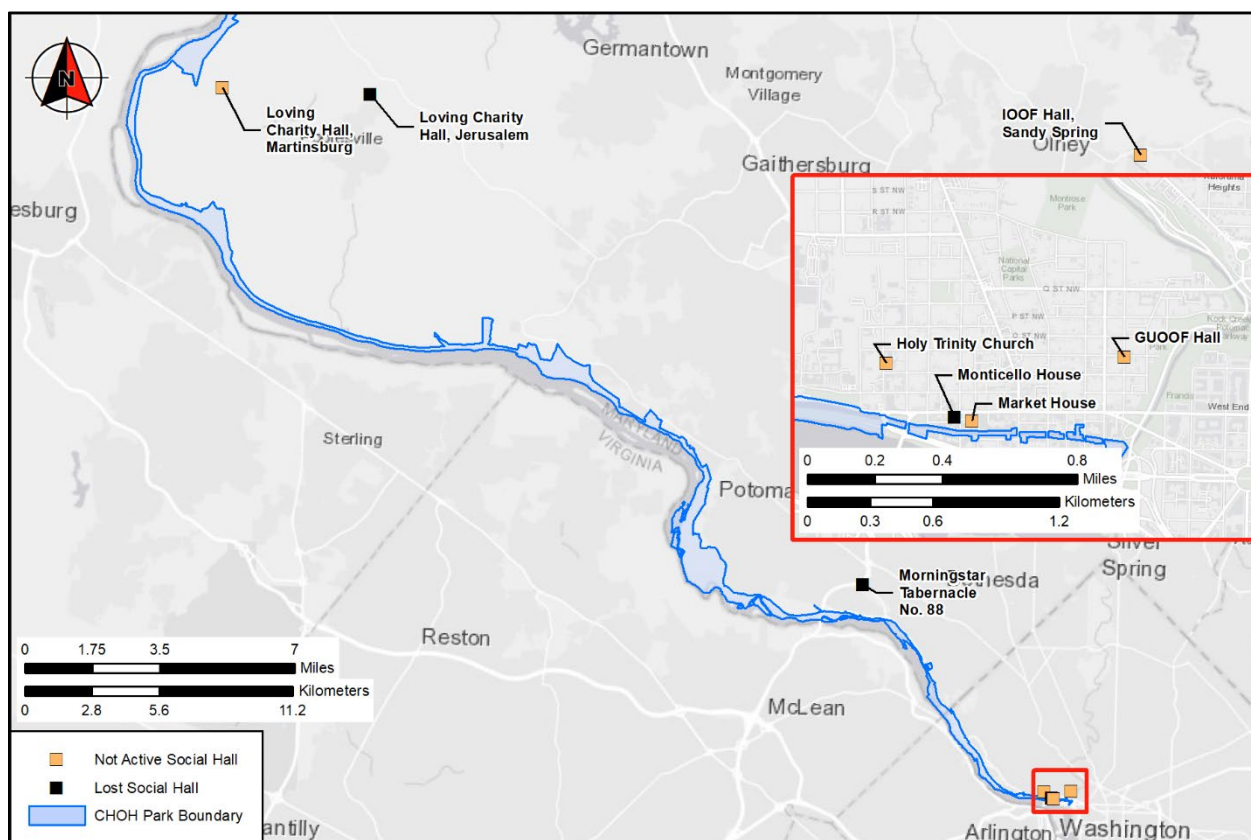


Figure 2.9: Map of Selected Historical African American Social Halls in Montgomery County, Maryland, and Georgetown, DC

d. *Early Twentieth Century: The Carderock and Cabin John CCC Camps*¹⁴⁷

When I enrolled in Company 333, Cabin John, Maryland, there was much to be desired, in so far as beautifying camp was concerned. However, there was an excuse for this, inasmuch as the camp was in its infancy. But with time the camp is growing from infancy and has almost attained manhood. In comparison with the growth of a child so has the beauty of the camp grown. Where we once had bare patches of clay we now have grassy lawns. The barracks once rough and unfinished now are painted with attractive colors. The roads around camp were overcrowded with tall grass and baby trees, but now there is no more wilderness around the camp roads. The roads have been leveled and gravel has been spread in the place of the weeds that once grew there. Slowly but surely improvements are taking

¹⁴⁶ Kelly, 128, 175.

¹⁴⁷ For a more detailed analysis of the historical development of the sites of the two CCC camps at Cabin John and Carderock, see John Bedell, Erin Cagney, and Tiffany Raszick, *Archeological Identification and Evaluation Study of Two African American CCC Camps, Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park*. Washington, DC: Prepared for the US Department of Interior, National Park Service, National Capital Area, by WSP USA Inc., June 2022.

place... The officials and the boys are doing everything in their power to make this one of the most improved CCC camps in the vicinity.¹⁴⁸

So wrote JAMES CAREY about the Maryland Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp in which he enrolled in his article for the *Tow-Path Journal*, the camp's newsletter. The Cabin John camp was one of two early twentieth-century African American communities that emerged, temporarily, in the study area in direct association with the C&O Canal.

After commercial navigation ceased in 1924, the canal lay dormant for over a decade. Plans to turn the canal into a public park had been percolating since the turn of the twentieth century but did not come to fruition until the late 1930s, at the height of the Great Depression. As Barry Mackintosh stated in his administrative history of CHOH, "President Franklin D. Roosevelt had approved the purchase of the C&O Canal with public work funds as an unemployment relief measure."¹⁴⁹ In 1935, African Americans comprised only 27 percent of DC's population yet comprised 70 percent of the relief cases filed there.¹⁵⁰ The catastrophic economic recession had impacted marginalized minorities inordinately. Three CCC camps for African American enrollees were established in Maryland as a means of work relief: one in Indian Head and two in Montgomery County.

In 1938, a unit consisting of two CCC divisions were deployed to make repairs to the abandoned landscape feature and convert it into a public park. CCC Camp 325 operated from mid-June 1938 until 1 April 1942, and CCC Camp 333 operated from 5 October 1938 until 15 November 1941. The two divisions held an average of 150 to 180 men each, and enrolled young men aged 18 to 25 from Virginia, Washington, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. Although the CCC's founding charter had explicit language stating that the program would not discriminate based on race, the program nonetheless formed segregated divisions based on skin color, in keeping with the societal practices of the day and to appease the white populations in the areas to which the CCC divisions were deployed.¹⁵¹ Segregated camps did not appease the Montgomery County Board of Commissioners, however, which lodged formal complaints upon learning that two African American CCC camps would be built in its jurisdiction.

CCC camps 325 and 333 were established on two temporary camp sites—NP-1-MD in Carderock and NP-2-MD in Cabin John, built 1 mile apart from each other—on land between the canal and the Potomac River that had been acquired by the federal government for the George Washington Memorial Parkway. The two camps were built like military encampments with barracks, a mess hall, officers' quarters, and latrines. The enrollees were issued uniform work clothes and life was regulated as it would be in the military, with 6 a.m. wake-up calls by bugle, three square meals provided at set times in the communal mess hall, and lights out by 9 p.m. Leisure time was

¹⁴⁸ James Carey, "Camp Improvement," *Tow-Path Journal* [333rd Co., Camp NP-2, Cabin John, Maryland] (30 June 1939), 18; Library of Virginia, *Virginia Chronicle* [website] (accessed 1 February 2022, <https://viriniachronicle.com/?a=d&d=TP19390630.1.1&e=-----en-20--1--txt-txIN----->).

¹⁴⁹ Mackintosh, 31.

¹⁵⁰ Federal Writers' Project, Works Progress Administration, *Washington, City and Capital*, 83.

¹⁵¹ National Park Service, "The Civilian Conservation Corps," *Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park* [website] (last updated 29 October 2017, accessed 3 November 2021, <https://www.nps.gov/choh/learn/historyculture/civilianconservationcorpsccc.htm>); Mackintosh, 31; Josh Howard, "Our Only Alma Mater": *The Civilian Conservation Corps and the C&O Canal* [report] (16 December 2017, accessed 3 November 2021, <http://jhowardhistory.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Howard-Josh-CCC-Canal-Final-photos-inline.pdf>), 54, 64.

provided only on weekends and included activities like basketball, billiards, boxing, swimming, and ping pong. Religious services were offered by visiting chaplains each Sunday.¹⁵²

Besides a steady income of \$30 per month, the enrollees in the CCC program had access to educational opportunities and vocational training. At CCC Camp 333, stationed at NP-2-MD, classes were taught every weekday evening from 6 until 9 p.m. and ranged from an academic curriculum (such as English and history) to vocational training (such as truck driving and cooking). The educational programming was overseen by an African American Educational Advisor, CHARLES RUSHTON LONG, who was also the only Black administrator in the Cabin John camp. Long not only oversaw the coursework but became a social leader in the camp, organizing sporting events for the young men, connecting them with members of DC's Black communities, mentoring them, and helping them seek jobs after their time with the CCC ended. Born in 1907 in Philadelphia, Long was the child of an educator, Charles Long, who had attended the Hampton Institute (now University) and was a veteran of World War I. The younger Long attended Bates College in Maine and graduated with honors in 1932. When he arrived at the CCC camps, he found too many dejected, illiterate youth into whom he injected a "wholesome perspective and attitude on life," while the CCC program empowered the young men by providing them skilled trades. PANSY L. WILLIAMS was an instructor at Camp 333 under the direction of Long. A graduate of Howard University, Williams lectured in an array of subjects, from African American history to practical mathematics to reading and writing. MARION A. THORPE was an African American male enumerated at the Carderock Camp NP-1-MD in the 1940 US census. He was, at the time, a 28-year-old who served as the Educational Advisor to Camp 325. Like his cohort at Camp 333, Long, he was the lone Black administrator at the camp.¹⁵³

Because turn-over rates were high and records poorly maintained, the exact number and names of enrollees in Camp 325 are unknown. Although a CCC Camp 325 had existed previously in Indian Head, Maryland, it was disbanded on 31 May 1938; as no transfer orders were made, it is presumed that the CCC Camp 325 in Carderock was entirely new and composed of local men. Nearly half of the enrollees in CCC Camp 333, however, were veterans of the CCC program, having worked at the Fredericksburg-Spotsylvania National Military Park in Wilderness, Virginia, in 1937. Some had been stationed in Wolf Gap, Virginia, in 1934 to work on a United States Forest Service project. Most of these transferred men were from Virginia, such as AMOS CUSTIS from West Point, in King William County, and SIDNEY HALSEY of Covington, a city in Alleghany County.¹⁵⁴

Some information about individual enrollees can be gleaned from CCC records, the camps' newsletters, and census records.¹⁵⁵ World War II draft registration cards provide the names of a few Black men working at the Carderock-Cabin John camps in the early 1940s. CHARLES AUGUSTUS WHITE, for example, listed his place of employment as "CCC Company 325 NP-1-MD, Cabin John, Montgomery, MD" when he filed his draft registration card in October 1940. White was then a 22-year-old from Adamstown, Frederick County, Maryland. When AUGUSTUS BUSTER JOHNSON registered in December 1941, he gave his occupation as a "night guard" at a

¹⁵² Howard, 51, 65, 73-75; Angela Sirna, *From Canal Boats to Canoes: The Transformation of the C&O Canal, 1938-1942* (Morgantown, WV: graduate thesis submitted to Department of History, Eberly College of Arts and Sciences, West Virginia University, 2011, accessed 3 November 2021, <https://researchrepository.wvu.edu/etd/808>), 33.

¹⁵³ Howard, 5, 83-84, 89, 124.

¹⁵⁴ Howard, 1, 5, 32.

¹⁵⁵ See Howard, appendices.

CCC camp in Cabin John, Maryland. **BERCHER SCOTT HAYMAN** was 21 years old and from Pennsylvania when he registered in February 1942 and listed his address as NP-1-MD in Cabin John. Washington-born **SYLVESTER NEAL LEWIS** and Virginians **NELSON RICHARD PAIGE**, **CHARLES WALTER WILSON**, and **EDWARD GORDON** all specified that they lived in Camp 325 in February 1942. **ALLEN CONRAD QUISENBURY**'s registration card, filed in February 1942, is the only one in the sample set that lists the residence as "CCC Camp Carderock, Montgomery, MD."¹⁵⁶

The enrollees worked eight hours a day at intensive, unskilled, manual labor. The CCC work entailed dredging the canal bed, clearing 200 acres of vegetation, extensive tree removal, repairing or replacing stone and timber structures at the first 23 locks, and repairing 22 miles of the towpath. To mitigate the damage caused by the river's frequent freshets, the CCC laborers constructed flood-control measures at the Foundry Branch Spillway, laid stone riprap on the banks, and constructed concrete bypass flumes at Locks 15 and 16. In addition, the laborers had to build a completely new infrastructure so that the canal lands could serve as a national park. This included installing water and sewage systems, grading and surfacing parking areas, laying macadam road, clearing land for picnic areas at Carderock and Great Falls, and building concession stands at Great Falls. The repointing and restoration of masonry structures were tasks relegated to Public Works Administration masons with specialized skills, but the CCC men assisted in the restoration of Lockhouses 5, 7, and 10. When the waterway was reopened to visitors, some of the CCC enrollees became historical interpreters, leading the horses (not mules) that pulled the recreated canal barge, opening the locks, manning the boat, and interacting with the public.¹⁵⁷

Nationwide, the CCC's work was interrupted with America's entry into World War II in December 1941. By June 1942, the CCC was shut down. The Cabin John Camp 333 at NP-2-MD, however, closed as early as October 1941, before war had been declared. The Carderock Camp 325 at NP-1-MD persisted through the spring of 1942, continuing the repair and maintenance work on the first 22 miles of the canal and towpath. Yet attrition rates were high as enrollees "deserted" to join the military. As seen in the World War II draft registration cards, many of the youths stationed at the Carderock-Cabin John CCC camps enlisted or were drafted into the war effort.¹⁵⁸

3. Summary

Section A of this chapter addressed the ways in which African Americans living in the Potomac River Valley in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries created social connections with the river and the C&O Canal. The first part of the section opened with an overview of the history of enslavement in the region and provided a few personal (and partial) histories of enslaved individuals who lived in the study area, including **GEORGE POINTER**, **JOSIAH HENSON**, **PHILLIP JOHNSON**, and **CHARLES BALL**. It further explored how enslaved African Americans used the canal and the river in attempts at self-liberation during the antebellum period. A portion of **JAMES CURRY**'s testament of his flight to freedom along the C&O Canal was quoted, as were advertisements for runaway enslaved men that specified the canal, including notices for **RUFUS JACKSON**, **BEN ADDISON**, **ROBERT SIMMES**, two enslaved men named only **BILL** and **HENRY**, and **ELIAS DOWLING**. Examples of self-liberation on the Potomac River culminated in the story of **PAUL**

¹⁵⁶ "US, World War II Draft Cards Young Men, 1940-1947," *WWII Draft Registration Cards for Maryland, 10/16/1940-03/31/1947* (St. Louis, MO: Record Group: *Records of the Selective Service System, 147*; Box: 562, National Archives and Records Administration, accessed 3 November 2021 via Ancestry.com).

¹⁵⁷ Mackintosh, 31, 34; Sirna, 46, 62-63, 71.

¹⁵⁸ Howard, 104-105.

and [AMELIA EDMONDSON](#)'s children's attempted escape on the *Pearl*. [ALICE ADDISON](#)'s application for emancipation papers in DC illustrates the fluidity of the border between Montgomery County and Washington and the mobility of enslaved persons during the Civil War as they sought freedom as well as safety from the conflict. Lastly, the first part of this section explored how the river and canal were employed in or affected by the onslaught of civil war, narrated through the few experiences of African Americans living in the study area during that time. The subsection opened with a quotation from [CHRISTIAN A. FLEETWOOD](#) and listed just a few enlistees from the study area, including [JOSEPH BELT](#), [THEODORE ADDISON](#), and [DANIEL PROCTOR](#). [THERESA DUFFIES](#) was an enslaved woman who sought refuge behind Federal lines, as did many freedom seekers during the war.

The second part of Section A dealt with African American community formation. It commenced with exploring how building the C&O Canal both displaced private property owners (like George Pointer) and entire communities (like [SUGAR HILL](#), a multi-racial community along Georgetown's waterfront) and fostered the growth of new canal towns (like Rushville, which roughly equates to the present-day [BERRYVILLE](#) community adjoining [SENECA](#)). US census information provides insight into the few African American inhabitants of this community prior to the Civil War: [THOMAS MARTIN](#) and [JOHN CLAGGETT](#) were laborers and farm hands who lived in Seneca in the 1850s and 1860s, and [WILLIAM JONES](#) was a blacksmith and [SUSAN HOLMES](#) was a young domestic servant in the Pennyfield household. Although pre-emancipation African American communities emerged in Montgomery County, such as [SANDY SPRING](#) and [NORBECK](#), African American community building accelerated after emancipation. [PRATHERTOWN](#) was a community founded by members of the Prather family, including [REZIN PRATHER](#), [WESLEY PRATHER](#), and [LEVI PRATHER](#), with other recently emancipated African Americans [JAMES ROSS](#) and [WESLEY RANDOLPH](#). Notably, these men purchased land for their new settlement from [VACHEL DUFFIE](#), a free Black farmer and landowner. [JERUSALEM](#), [BOYDS](#), [SUGARLAND](#), and [MARTINSBURG](#) were four post-emancipation African American communities that emerged around Poolesville in Montgomery County. Martinsburg began in 1866, when [NATHAN NAYLOR](#) purchased 97 acres west of Poolesville and other recently emancipated African Americans came to settle on his property. Reconstruction-era communities such as [PLEASANT VIEW/QUINCE ORCHARD](#), [POPLAR GROVE](#), and [SCOTLAND](#) emerged around purpose-built churches and schoolhouses that served Black residents. These communities were largely self-sufficient and relied on pooling labor and resources.

Post-emancipation African American communities revolved around three institutions that served the community and acted as pillars. These three typologies are found in every historical Black community: the church, the school, and the benevolent society. In Georgetown, the oldest African American congregation, the [MOUNT ZION UNITED METHODIST CHURCH](#), broke from the older, segregated [MONTGOMERY STREET METHODIST CHURCH](#) in 1814. Mount Zion's [REV. ROBERT SLADE](#) was quoted at the beginning of the section highlighting churches, stating (in a 2006 *Washington Post* article) how significant a place of worship was to a marginalized community with no collective property. This importance can be seen in the prevalence of historical African American congregations in Georgetown, including the [FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH](#) founded by an emancipated man, Rev. [SANDY ALEXANDER](#); the [JERUSALEM BAPTIST CHURCH](#), founded by Alexander with Rev. [WILLIAM GIBBON](#); the [ALEXANDER MEMORIAL CHURCH](#), named for Alexander; and the [EPIPHANY CATHOLIC CHURCH](#), where, in 1952, [CHESTER BALL](#) became the first Black priest of a Catholic parish in DC. Historical Black churches mark the hearts of several

historical African American communities in Montgomery County, such as Sugarland's **ST. PAUL COMMUNITY CHURCH**, founded by **WILLIAM TAYLOR**, **PATRICK HEBRON, JR.**, and **JOHN H. DIGGS**; the **WARREN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH** in Martinsburg, named for a trustee, **ISAAC WARREN**; the **PLEASANT VIEW METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH**, built by African American builders, the **HOWARD BROTHERS**; the **POPLAR GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH**, built by two African American builders (and brothers), **JOSEPH** and **HENRY MOBLEY**; the **SCOTLAND A.M.E. ZION CHURCH**; and the **ELIJAH CHURCH**. Unfortunately, many of the historical church buildings have been replaced and lost over the years, and often cemeteries, like those at the Elijah Church and in **TOBYTOWN**, are the last vestiges of the African American community's central gathering place.

Schools were typically the second institutional building constructed in post-emancipation Black communities. African American youths had access to private education in Georgetown as early as the 1820s, in the form of Sabbath schools associated with churches. Non-parochial schools for Black children also emerged in the antebellum period, operated by headmasters like **JOSEPH T. MASON**, **HENRY SMOTHERS**, **MARIA BECRAFT**, and **JAMES H. FLEET**. Publicly funded education for Black youths did not arrive in DC until after the end of the Civil War, however, with the opening of the **CHAIN BRIDGE ROAD SCHOOL** in 1865 near the Black community that arose around Battery Kemble and the **CHAMBERLAIN SCHOOL** in Georgetown in 1866. The **WORMLEY SCHOOL** in Georgetown, named for a resident, **JAMES WORMLEY**, was opened in 1885 to relieve the overcrowding at the Chamberlain School while the **PHILLIPS SCHOOL** replaced the Chamberlain School in 1890. In Montgomery County, some members of the pre-emancipation, free Black community in Sandy Spring were taught privately at the **FAIR HILL SEMINARY**. Purpose-built African American schoolhouses, however, were not built until the Reconstruction era, and include the **MARTINSBURG NEGRO SCHOOL**, **BOYDS NEGRO SCHOOL**, and the **SEVEN LOCKS SCHOOL**, to name a few. These were wood-frame, one-room schoolhouses lacking any facilities, in which as many as 50 students in multiple grades were taught by a single teacher at the same time. **PEARL GREEN** recalled attending the **QUINCE ORCHARD SCHOOL** as a child in the 1920s in an interview conducted in 2000; although the students lacked even books, they still received a proper education, she stated. But in Montgomery County, that education only extended to the eighth grade (the pinnacle of primary school) until the **ROCKVILLE COLORED HIGH SCHOOL** opened in 1927 as part of the Rosenwald schools program. Before that year, teenaged Black youths in Montgomery County had to commute to high schools in DC. So did Georgetown residents; they attended secondary school at the **FRANCIS JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**, the **DUNBAR HIGH SCHOOL**, or the **ARMSTRONG VOCATIONAL SCHOOL** in downtown DC until segregation was discontinued in the DC public school system after 1954. The **NATIONAL TRAINING SCHOOL FOR GIRLS** in the Palisades neighborhood northwest of Georgetown began as an integrated reform school for white and Black girls in 1893 but was segregated in 1941 and until its closure in 1953.

Benevolent associations or mutual aid societies were the third pillar in historical African American communities. Often, they acted as insurance plans for burial or medical costs to a marginalized community unable to receive such benefits from mainstream, white society. **GEORGE BELL**, for instance, co-founded the Washington's Resolute Beneficial Society in 1818 with other emancipated Black men, which provided medical insurance and burial costs to its subscribers but also opened a school for Black children. The Blessed Peter Claver Burial Association for the Knights of St. Augustine met at Georgetown's **HOLY TRINITY CHURCH**. In 1842, a group of freed women formed the Female Union Band Society in DC to support one another and purchased a 3-acre plot of land in the northeastern extreme of Georgetown abutting the Old Methodist Burying

Ground for the **FEMALE UNION BAND SOCIETY CEMETERY**. In addition to mutual aid societies, African American fraternal orders were a mainstay of Black culture prior to the Civil War and proliferated by the end of the nineteenth century. In Georgetown, members of these social organizations met at the **MONTICELLO HOUSE SOCIAL CLUB** or the **GRAND UNITED ORDER OF ODD FELLOWS (GUOOF) HALL**. Rural communities also built lodges, or halls, for their benevolent associations, such as the **MORNINGSTAR TABERNACLE NO. 88** (also known as the Moses Hall Lodge) in **GIBSON GROVE**, of which **JUDI BANKHEAD** said that there was a sentiment among its members, who were the residents of the Gibson Grove community, “a moral obligation to care for one another.” Although the Gibson Grove Moses Hall Lodge has been lost, the **LOVING CHARITY HALL** in Martinsburg and the **INDEPENDENT ORDER OF ODD FELLOWS (IOOF) HALL** in Sandy Spring remain as physical examples of this typology.

One last African American community was discussed at the end of Section A. After the C&O Canal closed to commercial navigation in 1924, it languished for 14 years before the NPS acquired it and began its conversion into a public park. As with many New Deal-era park projects, the CCC was engaged to build the new parkland’s facilities. Two CCC camps were established temporarily (from 1938 until 1942) in Carderock and Cabin John to house the young male African American workers hired to reclaim the first 22 miles of the canal. Although the camps were administrated by white managers, three African Americans were hired to oversee the educational aspect of the program: **CHARLES RUSHTON LONG**, **PANSY L. WILLIAMS**, and **MARION A. THORPE**. Enrollees were myriad but included **JAMES CAREY**, who wrote articles for the Cabin John camp’s newsletter, **AMOS CUSTIS**, **SIDNEY HALSEY**, **CHARLES AUGUSTUS WHITE**, **AUGUSTUS BUSTER JOHNSON**, **BERCHER SCOTT HAYMAN**, **SYLVESTER NEAL LEWIS**, **NELSON RICHARD PAIGE**, **EDWARD GORDON**, and **ALLEN CONRAD QUISENBURY**. These young men came from Virginia, Maryland, DC, and Pennsylvania and were enrolled in the CCC until America’s entry into World War II put an end to the New Deal relief program. The C&O Canal has, from its inception, fostered connections with African Americans, especially in the means of labor production, which is further explored in the next section.

B. ECONOMIC CONNECTIONS

By 1831, the C&O Canal was complete from Georgetown to Little Falls (Lock 5) and the period of commercial navigation had begun. Boats laden with shipments of flour, grain, masonry, and whiskey floated to the markets in Georgetown.¹⁵⁹ Within two years, the terminus in Georgetown was continued 1.5 miles eastward to meet the Washington City Canal (1815-1855), which connected the Eastern Branch (now Anacostia River) and the Potomac River via Tiber Creek. Meant as a conduit for the freight of goods, the canal served to transport “coal, agricultural products, lumber, and building stone” downriver to eastern seaports, while “lesser westward cargoes included fish, salt, fertilizer, and iron ore.”¹⁶⁰ The canal also carried mail, passengers, and tourists from the 1830s on. Except for a few years, however, the C&O Canal Company operated at a loss.

The “golden years” of the C&O Canal Company followed the Civil War and a period of neglect. The peak year for the company’s finances was 1875, when nearly one million tons of goods were transported on the canal. Coal was the king, keeping both the canal company’s and Georgetown

¹⁵⁹ Romigh and Mackintosh, Section 8.

¹⁶⁰ Mackintosh, 2.

businesses' fortunes high. Fortunes faded quickly, however, after the B&O Railroad poached the canal's lucrative coal-hauling business. With the rise of the railroad, the C&O Canal Company began its gradual decline, hastened in 1889 with the regional storms that caused the catastrophic Johnstown Flood and affected the Potomac's flow and greatly damaged the canal's infrastructure. The following year, unable to meet the costs of repair, the C&O Canal Company went into receivership. Its competitor, the B&O Railroad, had acquired the majority shares in its stock options by 1878 and played a dominant role in the company's future. The B&O Railroad, while not the owners of the C&O Canal Company, were appointed trustees of the C&O Canal Company by the district courts and financed the restoration of the damaged locks. The canal was reopened to commercial freight in September 1891. But an expanding network of railroads in the region had been siphoning business off the canal for decades, and the golden days of transporting freight by water were past.

Although commercial navigation on the canal did not end until 1924, the rise of leisure in the late nineteenth century shifted the focus of both the canal and the Potomac River. Historically they had both been conduits of goods and landscapes of labor, but their commerce became leisure and tourism. In his article, "'The Slightest Semblance of Unruliness': Steamboat Excursions, Pleasure Resorts, and the Emergence of Segregation Culture on the Potomac River," Andrew W. Kahrl examines how the proliferation of river excursions on the Potomac River (south and east of Georgetown) "facilitated the river's gradual transformation from a place of work to a place of play."¹⁶¹ By 1891, there were 25 steamboats gliding on the Potomac's waters. By the turn of the twentieth century, "tourism and recreation became the engines driving river commerce."¹⁶²

This section explores how African Americans commercially exploited the river and canal, first through labor and commerce and second as a site of leisure, the counterpoint to manual labor. African Americans not only built the canal and operated boats on the canal but worked in adjacent industries that relied on the transportation feature: agriculture, quarrying, milling, and mining—a landscape of labor. African Americans also took cruises on the canal and river, visited resorts and parks in the study area, and worked in occupations related to the tourism industry that emerged in lower Montgomery County at the fin-de-siècle—a landscape of leisure.

1. *Canal and River: Landscapes of Labor*

During the height of slavery in the Chesapeake region, in the eighteenth through mid-nineteenth centuries, occupations for both enslaved and free African Americans were limited. Most were laborers, if not in agricultural landscapes than in industrial ones: as millers, iron-furnace workers, or factory hands. The DC area's tradition of hiring out enslaved individuals provided more varied opportunities to those enslaved laborers than in other slave-holding regions and states, yet entrenched racism, the lack of access to an education, and poverty kept most from professional or advanced opportunities even after the Civil War. A look at occupations in Georgetown in 1872, from Boyd's *Georgetown Business Directory*, illustrates the point: that year, 239 Blacks were listed as laborers while approximately 138 had occupations that could be categorized broadly as (domestic) service, ranging from cooks and drivers to waiters, laundresses, and housekeepers. Approximately 72 Black persons were in trades, such as cooper, barber, miller, plasterer, blacksmith, cobbler, dressmaker, seamstress, carpenter, soap-maker, feed dealer, grocer, or

¹⁶¹ Kahrl, 1114.

¹⁶² Kahrl, 1123.

butcher. There were two Black policemen and one Black fireman, and the professional class included seven ministers, five clerks, three nurses, three teachers, and an engineer.¹⁶³

The C&O Canal offered African Americans in the Washington area an opportunity for advancement that was not available in other industries. Boating offered autonomy as well as a level of respect for the skills required. In the summer of 1859, an unknown passenger from New England took a trip down the canal, boarding the *Caroline of Williamsport* in that city. Thirty years later, the unnamed man wrote and published his recollections of that journey. The canal boat was one of two owned and captained by a white man called only “Captain Coss,” but “the second in rank on the boat... [was] a stalwart free colored man full six feet tall named HENRY BUTLER who was generally called Pic.”¹⁶⁴ From the gentleman’s account, Butler’s “bows man” duties included steering the boat by its rudder and hauling the boat to shore each night during travel. At one point in the narrative, the author praised Butler’s “wonderful presence of mind” when his fast-thinking action avoided devastating collision with a passing boat:

Coming up the canal was an old lugger standing high out of the water drawn by a poor old white horse on which Pic. was making a mental calculation on how many more trips it could make. The only person in sight was a mulatto woman at the tiller. She gave us a wide berth and everything seemed all right until we were within a few feet of each other when the boat took a tack and came direct for our port side where a collision with a sharp corner of her boat would have stove a hole in ours and have sunk us, but Pic. with wonderful presence of mind threw his helm hard over and the stern of ours struck square on the corner of theirs giving a shock that brought us nearly to stand still and fairly raised the boat up out of the water....As it was, it did not harm but was a narrow escape for us.¹⁶⁵

This passage provides insight into the leadership roles some African Americans played on the C&O Canal. Not only does it portray Butler as a bowsman whose experience, skill, and quick decision-making spared the *Caroline of Williamsport* from disaster, but it secondarily alerts its readers to the fact that African American women were also capable of captaining canal boats and did so. Too few women, white or Black, are noted in the historical record in association with the canal, but entire families worked on the canal, and for generations. Butler’s eldest son, JOHN W. BUTLER, called “Little Pic” in the traveler’s narrative, cared for and drove the mules on the *Caroline of Williamsport* at the approximate age of 10. Myriad African Americans, of varying ages and gender, worked on and contributed to the success of the C&O Canal; for many, working on the canal was a vocation or way of life passed down from parent to child. The history of African Americans’ relationships with the canal in terms of labor production stems from the canal’s very inception.

HENRY BUTLER
(ca. 1828 – ca. 1870)

Little is known of Butler, nicknamed “Picayune” or “Pic” for short. A resident of Williamsport, MD, he was bowsman on the *Caroline of Williamsport* canal boat. The 1850 US census enumerated him as a mixed-race laborer with his wife, Julia, and one-year-old son, JOHN W. BUTLER.

¹⁶³ Lesko et al., 40.

¹⁶⁴ Ella E. Clark and Thomas F. Hahn, eds., *Life on the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal 1859* (York, PA: American Canal and Transportation Center, 1975); Clark, ed., “Life on the C&O Canal: 1859,” 89-90.

¹⁶⁵ Clark, ed., “Life on the C&O Canal: 1859,” 97.

a. Canal Construction and Operation

i. Jobs and People on the Canal

The C&O Canal Company employed indentured European (mostly Irish) and contractual enslaved laborers to construct the canal its full length over the course of 22 years, between 1828 and 1850. Spanning 184.5 miles, the canal-building work was difficult in that it traversed rugged terrain that presented physical obstacles to overcome, but the endeavor also was plagued perpetually with problems from the onset. Rapid inflation starting in the late 1820s made the cost of labor, supply, and transportation increasingly exorbitant. There were frequent material shortages, labor conflicts, and land disputes that forced stoppages and protracted the construction schedule. Several indentured and enslaved workers broke their contracts by running away. Accidents, injuries, illness, diseases, and death plagued the fluctuating workforce. Even nature conspired against the construction; seasonal freshets, or small floods, damaged much of the work in progress while inclement weather stymied progress. The first winter, of 1828 to 1829, was so severe that construction was halted until spring. The first 134 miles to Hancock were finished by 1839, 11 years after construction began; the remaining 50 miles, however, took an additional 11 years.¹⁶⁶

The C&O Canal Company relied on hired-out enslaved labor for the first year and a half; they sought to import European indentured workers starting in the summer of 1829.¹⁶⁷ The company's stockholders rejected the idea of owning its own enslaved workforce from the start, not wishing to be liable for the enslaved men's welfare, and so the labor demographic was neither predominantly enslaved nor Black, which was unusual for large public projects in the region at that time. Nonetheless, free and hired-out enslaved African Americans did work on the canal's construction.

Names of workers on the canal can be gleaned from runaway slave advertisements in period newspapers. From the ad "Thirty Dollars Reward," published in the 7 October 1830 issue of the Washington, DC, *Daily National Intelligencer*, it is clear that a free Black man named **GEORGE SOLOMAN** worked on the canal. In the same ad, **JOHN GODFREY** is mentioned as "working on the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal"; although Godfrey's race and status are not disclosed, as the stepfather of a self-liberating enslaved man, **WILLIAM SOLOMAN** (whose return Soloman's enslaver, Elizabeth Wilson, sought by placing the ad), one may presume Godfrey was a Black man.¹⁶⁸ **JOSEPH VOWELL** was a self-liberating enslaved man who "was on the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, where he probably worked a short time" before running off, prompting his enslaver, Henry Swann, to place an ad in the *Daily National Intelligencer* in 1832.¹⁶⁹

As mostly unskilled, manual laborers, African Americans typically undertook the hardest work, from digging out the canals to quarrying and hauling the stone necessary for the canal's infrastructure. The C&O Canal Company's payroll records from 1839 to 1850 list the company employees but do not specify their skin color; one entry for "**WILLIAM**" was recorded, however,

¹⁶⁶ Mackintosh, 1; Unrau, 57-59; Broomall, 8-9.

¹⁶⁷ Constance McLaughlin Green, *Washington: A History of the Capital, 1800-1950* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), 127.

¹⁶⁸ "Thirty Dollars Reward," *Daily National Intelligencer* [Washington, DC], 7 October 1830 (accessed 22 October 2021, https://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc5400/sc5496/runaway_advertisements/pdf/18301007dni2.pdf).

¹⁶⁹ "Twenty Dollars Reward," *Daily National Intelligencer* [Washington, DC], 31 March 1832 (accessed 22 October 2021, https://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc5400/sc5496/runaway_advertisements/pdf/18320331dni1.pdf).

for a man without a surname but the parenthetical remark “negro” instead. William’s job is unclear, but he was listed within a group of axemen in the July 1839 records.¹⁷⁰ The first arduous task was clearing the natural landscape of vegetation, and “axemen” felled trees, pulled stumps, and burned brush.¹⁷¹ A note dated 26 July 1830 from the C&O Canal Company to Charles Wallace, an enslaver in the Rockville area, illustrates that Wallace had hired out an enslaved laborer named **REGIN** as an “axeman in the Employ of the Corps of Engineers at 87 ½ cts per day including board between the 1st and 20th July,” and that for six days of Regin’s labor, Wallace was owed \$5.25, payment enclosed therein.¹⁷² **ROBERT** was another “negro man” who labored for seven days as an axeman for the Corps of Engineers in August of 1829. An invoice to the Knox Hale & Co. director, dated 17 November 1829 and describing Robert’s work and the wages earned, suggests that Robert was a hired-out enslaved man contracted to the C&O Company by Knox Hale.¹⁷³

After the vegetation had been cleared, the canal had to be excavated and the dirt and debris hauled away in carts. The stretch from Rushville, just east of Seneca Creek, to Georgetown was dug with hand tools “through an ‘uninhabited solitude’” and filled with water by 1841 (Figure 2.10).¹⁷⁴ A typical cross section of that stretch of canal within the study area from the Tide Lock (Lock 0) to Pennyfield’s Lock (Lock 22) would show a depth of 6 to 7 feet, a 42-foot-wide bottom, sloping side walls that extended 2 feet above the water level (so that the canal measured 60 feet across at the top), and a 12-foot-wide towpath. The towpath was a compacted dirt trail surfaced with crushed rock. The canal had earthen sides and was lined in clay. Dry-stacked stone walls were used at curves or to reinforce the sides in areas prone to flooding. All this strenuous labor was undertaken without the aid of modern machinery or equipment. The scale of the enterprise is seen in the data; by May 1829, over 450,000 cubic yards of soil, gravel, and clay had been excavated and removed

¹⁷⁰ William Bauman, trans., “Payroll Records from Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company, 1839, 1840, 1841, 1842, 1845 (2), 1846, 1847, 1848 & 1850” (November 2019), compiled from Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company Annual Reports records, Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park Headquarters, Hagerstown, MD (College Park, MD: see RG 79, National Archives and Records Administration) (accessed 20 October 2021, <https://candocanal.org/histdocs/Payroll-Records-1839-1850.pdf>).

¹⁷¹ Romain, 9, 12.

¹⁷² Daniel Van Slyke, “Payment for services of negro, 1830,” From Receipts. Miscellaneous Accounts, 1828-1889 (College Park, MD: C&O Canal Co. Box 2, Entry P 386, RG 79, National Archives and Records Administration, accessed 20 October 2021, <http://www.whilbr.org/itemdetail.aspx?idEntry=5955&dtPointer=130>). The 1810 US Census lists Charles Wallace in Montgomery County as a white male aged 26-44, dwelling with another white male aged 16-25 and three enslaved persons. The 1840 US Census enumerated Wallace as a white male aged 60-69 living in Rockville with four enslaved individuals, three of whom were female and the fourth a boy under 10 years old. No Charles Wallace was found as the head of a household in Montgomery or neighboring counties in Maryland in the 1820 or 1830 censuses.

¹⁷³ Daniel Van Slyke, “Payment for services of negro, 1829,” From Receipts. Miscellaneous Accounts, 1828 -1889 (College Park, MD: C&O Canal Co. Box 2, Entry P 386, RG 79, National Archives and Records Administration, accessed 20 October 2021, <http://www.whilbr.org/itemdetail.aspx?idEntry=5954&dtPointer=0>).

¹⁷⁴ Wood, 5. The quotation is found in Ella E. Clark, ed., “Life on the C&O Canal: 1859,” *Maryland Historical Magazine* 55 no. 2 (June 1960):86. Wood’s use of the phrase *uninhabited solitude* comes from the recollection of an unknown man from New England who had taken a roundtrip journey on the canal in 1859 on the canal boat, *Caroline of Williamsport*. The area was largely undeveloped, rural land in the mid-nineteenth century; even the agricultural fields likely had a dilapidated, abandoned aura about them, as the region experienced a depression from the 1820s through the 1840s. Depleted soils caused by poor farming practice led to wide-scale abandonment in first quarter of the nineteenth century: “By 1840, worn-out farms and run-down houses surrounded by broken fences was a common sight.” See Montgomery County, Maryland and the Montgomery County Historical Society publication, “Montgomery County, Maryland: Our History and Government” (Rockville, MD: Montgomery County Government Office of Public Information, 1999), 6-7.

by wheelbarrow and horse-drawn cart, over 14,000 cubic yards of rock quarried, and nearly 44,000 cubic yards of rock blasted.¹⁷⁵

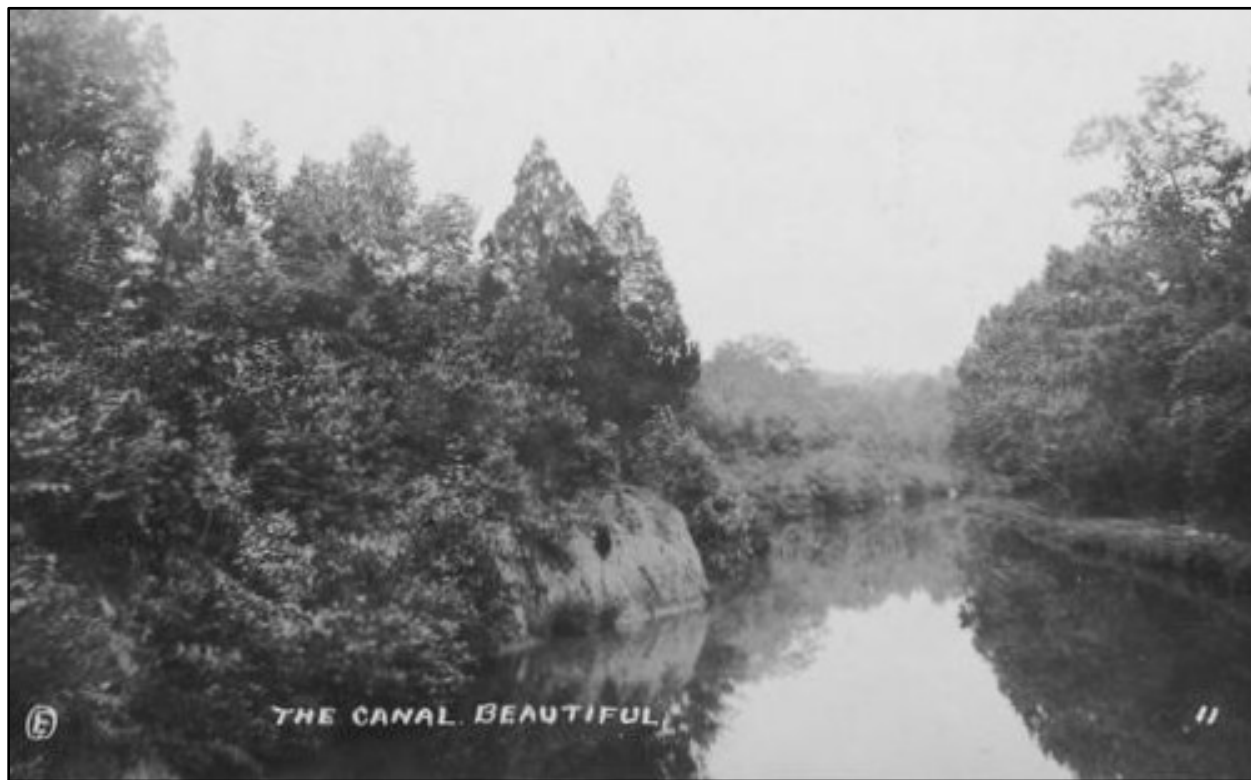


Figure 2.10: An “Uninhabited Solitude” (Willard R. Ross, “The Canal Beautiful,” DC Public Library)

Besides massive amounts of earth-moving, the white and Black indentured, enslaved, and free laborers frequently blasted through rock and removed native stone. This meant handling and using dangerous gunpowder explosives as well as pickaxes. JOHN STUBBLEFIELD was a free African American contracted on the C&O Canal whose left arm was severed while using explosives in December 1828. As compensation, the company provided him a \$2-per-month stipend for one year.¹⁷⁶ Injuries were rife on the water as well as in the work gangs. An unidentified Black man had his foot “torn from his leg” while working on a canal boat near Williamsport, Maryland, in 1853. His foot had become entangled in a rope, which tightened and twisted the extremity, shearing it from its limb.¹⁷⁷ Work on the canal, both in its construction and operation, could be deadly.

Building stone was quarried, hauled, and transported up or down river. The two main quarries used at that time were on Aquia Creek, in Stafford County, Virginia, and Seneca Creek in Montgomery County, Maryland. Unskilled laborers under the direction of trained masons and building contractors did the quarrying, hauling, transporting, stonecutting, dressing, and assembly. A masonry inspector, W. Robert Leckie, decried the workers’ lack of skill in the spring of 1829 when he wrote that “contractors and masons seem totally ignorant of what they should know, have neither skills nor tools to work with, everything done carelessly, and no attention paid to the mixing of the mortar” and “the small number are laborers [are] totally ignorant of masonry, and... ought

¹⁷⁵ Unrau, 58.

¹⁷⁶ Unrau, 121; Romain, 13.

¹⁷⁷ “A Painful Injury,” *The Herald of Freedom and Torch Light* [Hagerstown, MD], 17 August 1853 (accessed 22 October 2021, <http://www.whilbr.org/itemdetail.aspx?idEntry=7724&dtPointer=226>).

never be permitted to spoil such an important work.”¹⁷⁸ Nevertheless, these laborers constructed myriad masonry and timber structures and buildings along the canal, including weirs, culverts, flumes, aqueducts, dams, bridges, locks, and lockkeepers’ housing. Because the canal would obstruct the flow of minor and major tributaries into the Potomac River, culverts and aqueducts were required to carry the water beneath the berm bank, canal, and riverside towpath to the riverbank. These structures necessitated massive amounts of stone and timber, as well as careful engineering. Retaining and wing walls also had to be constructed to secure the infrastructure and bolster the landscape feature. [Appendix B](#) provides a cursory look at the magnitude of the endeavor, listing the approximately 75 structures and buildings built within the first decade of the canal’s construction along its first 20 miles.

Of course, not all African American laborers working on the canal were unskilled. The C&O Canal Company’s *Twenty-first Annual Report*, reporting on the year 1849, noted the skilled trades of masons (73 in employment that year), stonecutters (59), carpenters (54), brickmakers (50), blacksmiths (39), bricklayers (16), and brick molders (six).¹⁷⁹ ADAM KOOTS was an enslaved blacksmith who had been working on the eighth section of the canal when he absconded on 20 October 1829. His enslaver, James Knox, had likely hired him out to the C&O Canal Company and was seeking his return in an advertisement posted in the 17 February 1830 issue of the *Daily National Intelligencer*.¹⁸⁰ Blacksmiths would have been responsible for maintaining the laborers’ tools, shodding the mules and horses, repairing any broken iron parts of harnesses, wagons, and carts, and sundry metalworking as needed.

Once the canal had been dug and water introduced into the “grand old ditch,” boats transporting freight of coal, ice, lumber, building stone, and agricultural products could be seen on its completed length (Figure 2.11). Commercial navigation began on the lower 22 miles of the canal as early as 1831. Canal boats were elongated-yet-narrow, shallow-draft, flat-bottomed boats measuring 90 to 95 feet long and approximately 14.5 feet wide, mere inches narrower than the canal locks, which permitted one boat’s passage at a time. Most of the boats were not powered by steam or sail but drawn by mules that were harnessed to the boat and driven along the adjacent towpath. A mule driver would walk the harnessed team (usually of two or three mules, but sometimes a single mule or even a horse) approximately 25 feet to tauten the lead, and then the beasts bore the weight of pulling the boat and its freight along the canal.¹⁸¹ One commentator described mule drivers “poking along a dirty towpath and hooked by a long rope to a crude little flat canal barge.”¹⁸²

¹⁷⁸ W. Robert Leckie, *Diary and Account Book, 1828–1829* (April 11 and May 12, 1829), and W. Robert Leckie, Letter to Chief Engineer Benjamin Wright, 21 August 1829 (Durham, NC: W. Robert Leckie Papers, Duke University Library), quoted in Unrau, 111.

¹⁷⁹ Unrau, 139, footnote 148.

¹⁸⁰ “200 Dollars Reward,” *Daily National Intelligencer* [Washington, DC], 17 February 1830, accessed 22 October 2021, https://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc5400/sc5496/runaway_advertisements/pdf/18300217dni1.pdf.

¹⁸¹ Sarah Hedlund, “Lewis Reed Photography: Canal,” *Montgomery History* [website] (last updated October 2021, accessed 20 October 2021, <https://sites.google.com/view/lewis-reed-photography/transportation/canal>).

¹⁸² Wood, 5.



Figure 2.11: Ca. 1909 Photograph Showing the Georgetown End of the Canal with Several Canal Boats and the Towpath with Mules (Willard R. Ross, “Chesapeake & Ohio Canal, Washington, DC,” DC Public Library)

Many mule drivers were African American (Figure 2.12). Often, they were youths, like the “tow boy on the Canal... killed” in a skirmish in which Confederate soldiers at Shepherdstown, (now West) Virginia, fired across the Potomac River in September 1861.¹⁸³ Period newspaper accounts provide the names of a few African American mule drivers, such as **JAMES JOHNSON**, “aged about 19,” and **HENRY JOHNSON**, 15 years old, who drove a team of four mules that pulled Peter Noose’s boat in 1869.¹⁸⁴ Drivers were the second most plentiful jobs on the canal after laborers; the 1849 annual report noted 760 laborers, 233 drivers, 112 masons’ assistants, and 107 quarrymen.¹⁸⁵ Mule driving was a fairly dangerous enterprise, as the beasts frequently kicked their drivers and caretakers. **WILLIAM FLETCHER** was a 14-year-old Black youth “residing in Washington, DC, and employed on the boat of Captain Tony Singer, of Williamsport” who “was badly kicked by a mule near the wharf of the Consolidation Coal Company in this city... The bones of the nose were broken, the lower portion of the forehead was severely cut, and one of the eyelids frightfully torn, though the eye itself escaped fatal injury.”¹⁸⁶ **FRANK TURNER** was another Black youth “kicked by a mule in the face and breast” while he was “driving on the tow-path, above Georgetown.” He was

¹⁸³ “A Brisk Skirmish,” *The Herald of Freedom and Torch Light* [Hagerstown, MD], 18 September 1861 (accessed 20 October 2021, <http://www.whilbr.org/itemdetail.aspx?idEntry=7555&dtPointer=293>).

¹⁸⁴ “Trial of James Johnson, Colored, for the Murder of H. Clay Reed,” *The Alleganian* [Cumberland, MD], 25 August 1869:3 (accessed 2 November 2021, <https://candocanal.org/histdocs/Newspapers-1869.pdf>).

¹⁸⁵ Unrau, 139, footnote 148.

¹⁸⁶ “Kicked by a Mule,” *Cumberland Alleganian* [Cumberland, MD], 1 July 1874:3 (accessed 2 November 2021, <https://candocanal.org/histdocs/Newspapers-1874.pdf>).

carried unconscious to his Washington home on Q Street between 11th and 12th streets, where a surgeon, Dr. B.M. Beall, was called on to treat him.¹⁸⁷



Figure 2.12: “C&O Canal Mules Along the Canal” (Courtesy of Montgomery History, Jane E. Sween Research Library)

From the outset, free and enslaved Blacks worked on boats, typically as deck hands or boatmen, for private boat owners or companies using the canal system. John Blackford owned a plantation in Washington County, Maryland, that abutted the Potomac River and had a ferry landing—hence its name, **FERRY HILL PLANTATION**. Blackford relied on two enslaved individuals at Ferry Hill, **NED** and **JUPE**, to operate his ferry boat across the Potomac River. Ferry Hill’s principal products were wheat and timber, and Blackford sold timber to the C&O Canal Company, a business in which he invested because its development would increase traffic past his farm. Furthermore, he used the canal to transport his products to markets in Maryland and Virginia.¹⁸⁸

Black captains, however, were another matter. The question of whether African Americans could become boat captains and owners in a racist, slave-holding state came to the fore in 1856, “when

¹⁸⁷ “Kicked by a Mule,” *The Critic* [Washington, DC], 13 August 1881:4 (accessed 2 November 2021, <https://candocanal.org/histdocs/Newspapers-1881.pdf>).

¹⁸⁸ Fletcher M. Green, ed., *Ferry Hill Plantation Journal, January 4, 1838-January 15, 1839* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961, accessed 8 March 2021, <https://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/blackford/blackford.html>), xvi; Max L. Grivno, *Historic Resource Study: Ferry Hill Plantation* (Hagerstown, MD: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park, August 2007), x, 18.

several blacks either attempted to purchase boats or were hired by the owners of large fleets of vessels to be captains of several barges in that year.”¹⁸⁹ Complaints from white land-owning residents adjacent to the canal and from white canallers to the idea that Blacks could own and steward boats resulted in a decision by the C&O Canal Company’s board of directors “to limit or prohibit employment of free Negroes or slaves upon the canal as masters of boats”; furthermore, they declared that, starting at the first of the year 1857, no boats would be permitted on the canal that were not helmed by a white “master” above the age of 18.¹⁹⁰ This prohibition was relaxed after the Civil War; JOHN THOMAS was a Black man described as the “driver of the Canal boat ‘Dove’” in an 1866 newspaper article that announced his death.¹⁹¹ Although “driver” is not the same title as “captain,” it does suggest a level of responsibility and agency over the vessel.

Entrenched racism precluded many African Americans from achieving a captaincy after the Civil War, yet Black boat captains did exist. The first recordation of Black boat captains in the company’s registers appeared in the logs dated 1 January 1878. On that date, LOUIS ROBERSON, WILSON MIDDLETON, KIRK FIELDS, and J.M. JOHNSON were listed as the captains of boats and employed by the New Central Coal and Hampshire Coal companies. The boats were owned by four other individuals, white men named John T. Dixon, T.H. Davis, Frank Darkey, and Michael Quigley.¹⁹² Born in Loudoun County, Virginia, in 1824, Wilson Middleton was a veteran of the Civil War, having enlisted in April 1865 in the 115 USCT infantry regiment, Company F, in Richmond and serving for over a year. By 1866, he had settled in Sharpsburg, Washington County, Maryland, and the 1870 US census enumerated him there as a Black day laborer living with his wife, Mariah, two young daughters, and a toddler son. Although he was listed in the 1878 C&O Canal Company boat register as a boat captain of the *Dr. F.M. Davis* owned by T.H. Davis, Middleton again gave his occupation as “laborer” in the 1880 US census. In that census, he also included in his expanded household his two adult sons and one adult daughter who had not been enumerated 10 years prior, plus his younger children, one grandchild, and his mother-in-law. Middleton died in 1891, aged 67, in Sharpsburg. He was one of the first trustees of Sharpsburg’s TOLSON CHAPEL, in October 1867, as well as “a highly respectable [man] in the community.”¹⁹³

By 1882, CAPT. HENRY ARNOLD commanded the boat *Weyand Doerner* for the American Coal Company. Arnold was a resident of Alexandria, Virginia, and was described in the *Alexandria Gazette* as “a very light mulatto and is frequently taken for a white man. He is a member of several colored societies of this city and has been employed by the American Coal Co. for some time.”¹⁹⁴ This description is very telling; it may be that Arnold’s ability to “pass” as a white man allowed him to reach the rank of boat captain in a racist setting. In the 1920 US census, only one man,

¹⁸⁹ Unrau, 838.

¹⁹⁰ *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, vol. I, 303, 319, quoted in Unrau, 838.

¹⁹¹ “Drowned,” *Cumberland Allegonian* [Cumberland, MD], 5 December 1866:3 (accessed 2 November 2021, <https://candocanal.org/histdocs/Newspapers-1866.pdf>).

¹⁹² Unrau, 838.

¹⁹³ “The People of Tolson’s Chapel,” *Tolson’s Chapel, Sharpsburg, Maryland* [website] (accessed 22 October 2021, <https://tolsonschapel.org/history/people-tolsons-chapel/>).

¹⁹⁴ “The Canal Shooting Affair,” *Alexandria Gazette* [Alexandria, VA], 1 December 1882:4 (accessed 2 November 2021, <https://candocanal.org/histdocs/Newspapers-1882.pdf>).

HENRY WILLIAMS, was listed as the captain of a boat; however, other records conclude that **ANDREW JENKINS** was also a captain during the period from 1910 to 1923.¹⁹⁵

African Americans continued to be employed along with white Americans and Europeans on maintaining and repairing the canal system throughout its lifespan. After the storms of the Johnstown Flood of 1889 inflicted catastrophic damage to the canal system, “about 800 laborers, consisting of negroes, Irishmen and Italians, [were] employed” in making “repairs and improvements on the Chesapeake and Ohio canal... toward the opening of this waterway, which means so much to Georgetown.”¹⁹⁶ The work entailed entirely rebuilding the dam at the mouth of Rock Creek and dredging the debris-filled outlet lock adjacent to the dam, among other construction efforts. But construction was by no means the only avenue of employment open to African Americans on the canal. As might be expected, African Americans’ opportunities to find employment on the canal expanded following the Civil War—either that, or better record-keeping provides increased insight into individual Black laborers associated with the canal than in previous decades. A sample of households in the western portion of Washington, DC, as well as Virginia and Maryland counties adjacent to the canal, from the 1870, 1880, 1900, 1910, and 1920 US censuses shows that several Black men worked on the canal in various capacities ([Appendix C](#)).

Analysis of the data in Appendix C provides several generalizations about African American canal workers in the last third of the nineteenth and first third of the twentieth centuries, yet these need to be cross-referenced with other sources. No census data suggest that Black females worked on the canals, although white women were frequently listed as cooks on boats or as lockkeepers. Yet newspaper accounts suggest that Black women did serve as cooks on canal boats, such as the case of **GERTIE GREEN**, a 30-year-old Black woman who was “employed as a cook on a canal boat of the Chesapeake and Ohio canal” in 1903.¹⁹⁷ Although women did work on the canal, the sphere was largely dominated by men, and according to the census sample data, it was a young man’s field; out of the 56 names listed above whose ages were provided in the censuses, 42 (75 percent) were under the age of 30 years at the time of recordation and half of those were teenagers or children under 20. Members of the same family often worked together in the industry, such as the two young **GUSTUS BROTHERS** from Alexandria, Virginia, or the three **CANADA BROTHERS** living in Berlin (renamed Brunswick in 1890), Frederick County, Maryland.

None of these individuals still occupied the same roles 10 years later (or 10 years earlier), suggesting that the work was not a career for most, but temporary occupation. That is likely because the work available on the canal for Black youths and men was generally menial; the three primary positions listed in the sample data constituted unspecified labor or work, consisting of deck hand, crew member on a boat, and driving mules. The transience may also be explained by the level of danger inherent to the job, notably drowning. **FRANK COOPER** was a Black man navigating a canal boat for Captain Hetzer when he “was drowned in slack water, at dam No. 4” in August 1854.¹⁹⁸ Those working at docks were equally prone to fatal accidents, such as

¹⁹⁵ National Park Service, “Canal Workers,” *Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historic Park* [website] (last updated 29 October 2017, accessed 22 October 2021, <https://www.nps.gov/choh/learn/historyculture/canalworkers.htm>).

¹⁹⁶ “Georgetown,” *Evening Star* [Washington, DC], 22 April 1891:2 (accessed 2, November 2021, <https://candocanal.org/histdocs/Newspapers-1891.pdf>).

¹⁹⁷ “Georgetown Affairs,” *Evening Star* [Washington, DC], 6 November 1903:17, accessed 2 November 2021, <https://candocanal.org/histdocs/Newspapers-1903.pdf>).

¹⁹⁸ “Drowned,” *Alexandria Gazette* [Alexandria, VA], 12 August 1854:4, accessed 3 November 2021, <https://candocanal.org/histdocs/Newspapers-1854.pdf>).

“**GEORGE H. GARNER**, the colored man who had his leg torn off in the machinery at Ray’s docks yesterday [and] died last night.” Garner, the newspaper item stated, “was about 50 years of age, and before the war he was a slave and belonging to a gentleman in Leesburg, Virginia. Garner left his house, and with his family, came to the District to enjoy freedom, where he met with the above sad fate.”¹⁹⁹ Working on the canal in whatever capacity could be life-threatening, dangerous labor.

The census data indicate no Black men in positions of authority, supervision, or as lockkeepers for the canal company. Those roles were reserved, typically, for white Americans and Europeans. Yet newspaper accounts once again fill in the holes left by the census data. A news item from an August 1874 issue of the *Cumberland Daily Times*, announcing “Homicide at the Seven Locks,” states that **BEN** (last name not provided) was a Black man who “had been for some time employed as lock tender at the first lock.”²⁰⁰ Although the number of Black boat captains and lockkeepers may have been few in comparison to white cohorts, African Americans did fill these roles.

Although it is impossible to conclude exactly what vestiges of the C&O Canal infrastructure remaining today in the cultural landscape are associated with African Americans, it has been shown that the entire canal system was built with the sweat and toil of free and enslaved African American men. The locks, channels, weirs, dams, bridges, culverts—every structure and building—likely had laborers assisting in its construction who were African American. When the canal opened, African Americans were present, driving the mules, navigating the boats, working on the docks, and undertaking general labor associated with its day-to-day workings. A few served as boat captains and lockkeepers. The entire canal system is a historic site with direct connection to the nineteenth- and twentieth-century African American experience in the NCA.

ii. Labor Conditions and Relations on the Canal

Contemporary accounts of the lives of C&O Canal construction workers and canallers in the nineteenth century suggest that those lives were impoverished, hard, and mean. C&O canal workers’ labor conditions were grueling and their living conditions (in shanties) crude. Single workers bunked together, 15 to 20 men in a small domicile, while families were housed in ephemeral wood structures tantamount to shacks. The men worked more than eight hours a day from sunrise to sunset, but the work was seasonal, as very little occurred in the winter months. The digging was strenuous and noxious (if dusty) or slogging (if muddy). Injuries and disease were rife, such as the cholera epidemic that decimated the workforce in 1832. Add to this stress the fact that the C&O Canal was funded publicly but precariously: the company’s finances were always fluctuating, which resulted in variable wages, layoffs, tardy remittances, or non-payment. Labor and material shortages continued to exacerbate the general, pervasive worry that the enterprise was doomed. The immigrant, indentured workers had brought themselves and their families across an ocean to labor on a public work that could fold at any moment and leave them in a veritable lurch.

In the two decades of the canal’s construction, this anxiety manifested in violence. Drunkenness and fighting pervade the newspaper and anecdotal accounts of the relations between canal workers. In “Evil Humors and Ardent Spirits: the Rough Culture of Canal Construction Laborers,” Peter Way surmises that this fractiousness was due to the workers’ transience and their ethnic identities

¹⁹⁹ “Georgetown Items. Died of his Wounds,” *Evening Union* [Washington, DC], 25 August 1866:3 (accessed 3 November 2021, <https://candocanal.org/histdocs/Newspapers-1866.pdf>).

²⁰⁰ “Homicide at the Seven Locks. - A Negro Shot Dead,” *Cumberland Daily Times* [Cumberland, MD], 10 August 1874:4 (accessed 2 November 2021, <https://candocanal.org/histdocs/Newspapers-1874.pdf>).

and allegiances that pitted them against others.²⁰¹ But closer investigations shows that labor riots between C&O employees were frequent throughout the 1830s. Way counted “at least 10 significant disturbances and virtually continuous unrest between 1834 and 1840, necessitating the state militia to be called out five times and Federal troops once.”²⁰² A complex class struggle—between skilled and unskilled workers, between laborers and management—preoccupied with wages was the root cause of the laborers’ resentment. Their concern over providing for themselves and their families typically manifested in violence upon their fellow workers rather than in strikes.

Racism undoubtedly played a role in the Irish laborers’ violence against African American workers on the canal, although the constant worry about others “taking their jobs” would have been another factor. Reportage of canal worker violence in period newspapers shows a trend: first it was Irishman pitted against Irishman in the early 1830s, then white-on-white violence (Irishmen against English, Dutch, and German immigrants) in the latter part of the decade. By the 1850s, a demographic shift in labor occurred in which Black men were employed in greater numbers on the canal or in adjacent industries. Starting in February 1850, newspapers published several accounts of white (typically Irish) laborers’ assaults on Black workers. The first was a “general melee” at Edward’s Ferry between “four Irishmen employed on the repairs now being done on the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, and several negroes belonging to the neighboring farms.”²⁰³ In June 1853, a Hagerstown, Maryland, newspaper reported that “a fight occurred between some of the hands employed on [docked canal] boats” in Williamsport, during “which knives were freely used, and which resulted in the death of a colored man who was stabbed by a white man, the latter making his escape before he could be arrested. Another colored man was also severely stabbed.”²⁰⁴ In April 1864, the canal boat *Waldo Hutchins*, manned by African Americans, was passing through Washington County, Maryland, when

she was attacked by a number of rioters armed with guns and clubs, and the colored crew driven off and a woman, wife of the master, was beaten severely. The assailants were not satisfied with driving off the crew, but went to work and tore the boat to pieces. ... Two other boats were following the Hutchins, the crews of which were colored. The crews getting the information of the riot, deserted their boats and fled. There is a disposition to drive the colored crews from the canal above and though no actual violence has been attempted, a like disposition is manifested by some of the white boatmen at Georgetown.²⁰⁵

Other newspapers (such as the *Baltimore Sun*) publishing news about the riot used language that suggested that white canal boatmen frequently attacked Black boatmen, and that the incident on the *Waldo Hutchins* was not singular.²⁰⁶ Another instance was reported in which BENJAMIN

²⁰¹ Peter Way, “Evil Humors and Ardent Spirits: the Rough Culture of Canal Construction Laborers,” *The Journal of American History* 79, no. 4 (March 1993):1403, 1421; W. David Baird, “Violence along the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal: 1839,” *Maryland Historical Magazine* 66, no. 2 (Summer 1971):121 (accessed 3 November 2021, https://archive.org/stream/msa_sc_5881_1_262/msa_sc_5881_1_262_djvu.txt).

²⁰² Peter Way, “Shovel and Shamrock: Irish Workers and Labor Violence in the Digging of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal,” *Labor History* 30 (1989):490-491.

²⁰³ “Messrs. A. S. Abell & Co.” [Letter to the Editors], *Georgetown Advocate* [Washington, DC], 6 February 1850:4 (accessed 3 November 2021, <https://candocanal.org/histdocs/Newspapers-1849-50.pdf>).

²⁰⁴ “A Fatal Affray at Williamsport,” *Herald of Freedom & Torch Light* [Hagerstown, MD], 22 June 1853:1 (accessed 3 November 2021, <https://candocanal.org/histdocs/Newspapers-1853.pdf>).

²⁰⁵ “Riotous Boatmen on the Canal,” *Evening Star* [Washington, DC], 27 April 1864:2 (accessed 3 November 2021, <https://candocanal.org/histdocs/Newspapers-1864.pdf>).

²⁰⁶ Romain, 35.

WHITING, a Black boatman on the *Andrew Johnson*, was attacked by four canal men who beat him, threw him overboard, and then refused to assist him when he started drowning.²⁰⁷

Following the Civil War, most of the violence between canal laborers occurred under the umbrella of unionized strikes. In March 1871, Black coal workers on the Alexandria wharves began a strike for increased wages, a battle that ended victoriously for management but that precipitated several more strikes among coal workers throughout the decade.²⁰⁸ At one point, Black coal workers on strike in Georgetown went down to the Alexandria wharves to intimidate the coal heavers there from accepting depressed wages. A canal boatmen's union was formed in 1874 but dissolved in 1875. Nevertheless, C&O Canal boatmen went on strike in 1877 when they scuttled their vessels and suspended all trade on the waterway through intimidation.²⁰⁹ Fluctuating pay resulting from the fluctuation in cargo tariffs resulted in uneasy relations between workers, and brawls broke out continuously between laborers of all skin color. Black laborers turned on each other at the Consolidation Coal Company's wharf in Georgetown in June 1872 when "gangs of colored laborers employed there loading and unloading the coal cars [engaged] in a general knock down, in which several of the participants were badly injured."²¹⁰

b. Agriculture, Fisheries, and Mercantile Businesses

During the first two decades of commercial navigation, before the full extent of the canal was opened in 1850, most goods transported on the C&O Canal were agricultural in nature. Taxed goods in that period included distilled alcohol, tobacco, wheat, corn, flour, garden vegetables, beef, pork, hemp, and flax in addition to smaller quantities of iron, copper, lead, iron ore, stone, lime, coal, and timber. The transport of coal and minerals came to dominate the canal trade in the second half of the nineteenth century; however, during the antebellum period, the canal accessed the fertile farmlands of Montgomery and Frederick counties and brought produce down to markets in Georgetown and Alexandria. Between 1851 and 1860, the primary goods that went down the canal were flour, wheat, corn, offal, lumber, pig iron, and coke. The goods that went upriver to towns in the upper NCA included fish, groceries, salt, lumber, plaster, ore, and manures. Fish was so plentiful a commodity that between 1845 and 1856, over two million pounds of barreled shad and herring was sent upriver. Simply put, raw materials went downriver to the cities and finished goods returned upriver to the rural townships.²¹¹

i. Farming

Farming was the primary industry of Montgomery County and the western portion of DC, surrounding Georgetown, well into the twentieth century. Many African Americans worked as farmhands on white-owned farms or established their own farmsteads in free Black communities after the Civil War. For example, Patrick Hebron, one of the founders of Sugarland, purchased a 4-acre parcel in 1871 and raised corn and wheat. He sold part of his harvest to markets in

²⁰⁷ "Georgetown News – Severe Assault," *The National Republican* [Washington, DC], 11 December 1867 (accessed 3 November 2021, <https://candocanal.org/histdocs/Newspapers-1867.pdf>).

²⁰⁸ "A Strike," *Alexandria Gazette* [Alexandria, VA], March 1871:3 (accessed 3 November 2021, <https://candocanal.org/histdocs/Newspapers-1871.pdf>).

²⁰⁹ Fields, 196.

²¹⁰ "Georgetown Affairs, Riot on the Coal Wharf," *Daily National Republican* [Washington, DC], 12 June 1872:4 (accessed 3 November 2021, <https://candocanal.org/histdocs/Newspapers-1872.pdf>).

²¹¹ Unrau, 431, 465.

Washington and used the C&O Canal to transport his cargo.²¹² JOHN CLAGGETT, JOHN NORRIS, and CARVILLE GREEN were all enumerated in the 1860 US census of Montgomery County's Rockville Election District No. 4 as "farm hands" yet they were the heads of their own households. By the 1870 and 1880 censuses, scores of Black farmers lived and worked in the county's fourth district as well as that rural, western portion of DC. [Appendix D](#) tabulates a cross section of African American farmers in the study area in the late nineteenth century.

Farming is a sedentary business, and what is striking about the data in Appendix D is how stable and multi-generational the occupation was compared to jobs on the canal (see Appendix C) or in industrial fields (see Section c, below, for further elaboration). For instance, JAMES RICKS was a farmer in the Darnestown District Election District No. 6 of lower Montgomery County, enumerated in the 1870 and 1880 censuses with his family, which included his son, JAMES W. RICKS. The younger Ricks probably inherited the family farm or purchased another; either way, he was listed as a farmer in US censuses from 1900 to 1940. Another aspect of farming that differed from industrial occupations is the preponderance of female farmers and heads of households. The 1860 US census enumerated MARGARET WOOD as a free Black woman, the head of her household and a farmer, aged 38. In the multi-racial farming community in the Rockville District (Election District No. 4), she was near neighbors with HENRY HEBRON, another free Black farmer. Farming was not necessarily a lucrative business, but it was self-sufficient and allowed an individual autonomy. Most emancipated African Americans practiced agriculture in some capacity during enslavement; the prospect of being the master of one's own plot of land would have resonated with people who theretofore had not experienced much ownership or independence. It was therefore a logical step for African Americans after emancipation to remain in the areas they had known and resort to farming as a means of nascent independence.

Farmers like Wood and Hebron may have used the canal to transport their produce to markets in Georgetown, Washington, or Alexandria. By 1859, an average of 83 barges per week were traversing the canal, with many of the agricultural shipments originating in Seneca. Warehouses to store wheat and flour were built along the canal, testifying to the region's continued reliance on agriculture. Several warehouses were concentrated near Seneca, such as John L. DuFief's warehouse, barrel house, and wharf adjacent to the Pennyfield Lock (Lock 22), established after 1850. DuFief built a road to connect his canal wharf to his gristmill farther north, up Muddy Branch, so he could transport the milled flour to his warehouse for storage and then have the containers loaded onto canal boats bound for urban markets.²¹³ In 1890, the C&O Canal Company listed three warehouses at Lock 22, rented to George Pennyfield, Upton Darby, and W.L. Thrasher.²¹⁴

ii. Fishing

The fishing industry provided a large basis for Georgetown's economy, as the fish caught in the Potomac's waters and processed at the waterfront were sold as far afield as Philadelphia, New York, and the Caribbean. Whereas the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries are well known for their crabs and oysters, upper Potomac fishermen caught sturgeon, shad, herring, and white and yellow perch in the river. Bass, carp, eels, and alewives were present in the canal and at Great Falls. Bountiful schools of eel, shad, and herring would come up the Potomac River to spawn seasonally.

²¹² Reese and Johnson, 10.

²¹³ Kelly, 12, 18.

²¹⁴ Unrau, 694.

Indeed, the abundance of fish in the Potomac below Great Falls was remarked upon by Capt. John Smith in 1607 and other European explorers through the seventeenth century. As late as the 1830s, “it was not uncommon for fisherman to pull 4,000 shad or 300,000 herring in one seine haul,” while “one documented haul had 450 rockfish with an average weight of 60 lbs. each.”²¹⁵

An 1836 item in the Georgetown newspaper *The Metropolitan* described how

...every night the long length of Bridge street and High street... is crowded with heavy four and six horse wagons from the most remote parts of Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia, even to the confines of Ohio, which exchange the produce they bring down, for the delicious fish which this noble stream affords in an exhaustless abundance, and return with a year's supply of these grateful delicacies to the far-off homestead of the inland farmer. Activity and enterprise are only wanting to make the fish trade a source of immense and permanent wealth to the town.²¹⁶

By 1795, Georgetown's fishing industry had expanded to include fertilizer production from fish remains.²¹⁷ Georgetown's economy was so reliant upon fishing that in the late eighteenth century, the town boasted a fish market (south of the Georgetown Market House), a wharf, and a street called “Fishing Lane” (present-day 31st Street, NW). The name of an historical African American neighborhood in Georgetown, “Herring Hill,” reflects the importance of the local delicacy to the local Black community. Fishing in the canal, creeks, and rivers was not merely recreational, a “popular and important pastime”²¹⁸ for African Americans in the study area, but an integral means for sustenance and as income. In 1917, William A. Gordon published *Recollections of a Boyhood in Georgetown*, in which he recalled that on the waterfront

...was the Corporation Fish Wharf, where thousands of shad and hundreds of thousands of herring were bought by the small river vessels and sold. Here the fish were cleaned for salting and packing by Negro fishwomen, rough and profane of speech, but generally kind to the boys of their acquaintance. In front of the wharf, which was a vile-smelling place, the boys would fish, supplied with bait by the fish-women, and as great numbers of small fish were attracted by the offal swept into the river, as many as desired could easily be caught.²¹⁹

Although Gordon's language is indicative of his biased perspective, his anecdote nonetheless conveys the centrality of fishing, selling fish, salting fish, and consuming fish to the African American lifeways on the Potomac River. CHARLES CLAIBURNE was enumerated in the 1870 US census of Washington's Ward 1 (i.e., that area in the northwest quadrant west of Georgetown) as a fisherman, aged 19. He was enumerated in a neighborhood of Black households in which the vast majority of residents originated in Virginia, suggesting they may have been enslaved before the Civil War and had come to DC as freedom seekers. JAMES COX, also born in Virginia, lived

²¹⁵ Jim Cummins, *A Compilation of Historical Perspectives on the Natural History and Abundance of American Shad and Other Herring in the Potomac River* (self-published, 2012, accessed 24 January 2022, <https://www.potomacriver.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/PotomacShadHistory201203.pdf>), 5.

²¹⁶ Cummins, 6-7.

²¹⁷ Shirley J. Fiske and Don Callaway, *Ethnographic Resource Study: Subsistence Fishing on the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers* (College Park, MD: University of Maryland, 2020, accessed 24 January 2022, <http://npshistory.com/publications/nace/subsistence-fishing.pdf>), 26.

²¹⁸ Twitty, 32.

²¹⁹ William A. Gordon, “Recollections of a Boyhood in Georgetown,” *Records of the Columbia Historical Society*, vol. 20 (1917), quoted in Werner, 41.

in Georgetown (Ward 4), and worked as a fishmonger with a “stand in fish market,” according to the 1870 US census.

iii. Merchants

African Americans in Georgetown, Washington, and Alexandria were merchants and shopkeepers within their own Black communities. **JOSEPH MOOR**, for instance, ran a grocery in Georgetown in the early nineteenth century. **LEE FEED & GRAIN** was a feed store located on 29th and M streets in Georgetown dating from the early nineteenth century; it was owned by a Black businessman, **ALFRED LEE**, who passed the retail store on to his sons, **JOHN** and **WILLIAM**, when he died in 1868. At that time, his real property was valued as more than \$17,000. The Lees operated the feed store in the same location until the 1940s. **ROBERT J. HOLMES** migrated to Georgetown from Farmville, Virginia, at the start of the Civil War. He established a wholesale oyster business at 30th and O streets before venturing into an oil and gas enterprise headquartered at 2703 Dumbarton Street. Prominent Georgetown resident **ALFRED POPE** owned his own coal yard at 29th and O streets.²²⁰

A recollection of a trip taken up the canal on the *Caroline of Williamsport* in 1859 provides a nuanced meaning to the word “merchant.” The author, an unknown man from New England, was advised by the boat captain to “be on the lookout for Montgomery County merchants.” This tongue-in-cheek moniker was applied to African Americans, either free or enslaved, who would call (often by whistling) to a passing canal boat to conduct an informal trade. The African Americans would sell “a bag of corn or oats a few dozen of eggs or a ham or even a pig” for cash.²²¹ The author suggests that much of this trade may have been illicit (i.e., the African Americans were selling stolen goods); regardless, the occurrences suggest that the canal provided an informal marketplace along its length that allowed isolated, rural farmers to sell produce for cash without having to travel to a city. This would have been important to enslaved African Americans in isolated parts of Montgomery County, firstly because they may not have had the freedom to travel without being considered runaways, and secondly because amassed cash could allow them to purchase their own freedom or the freedom of family members and friends. Trade on the canal fostered an informal micro-economy in addition to the regional macro-economy.

A review of US census data also provides insight into Black merchants in Georgetown. **ALFRED FELTON HARRIS** was first enumerated in the 1910 US census of Georgetown as a 30-year-old North Carolinian, living at 1672 32nd Street in a rented house. At the time, he was working as a driver for a coke factory. Within a decade, however, Harris had his own business as a coal and wood merchant. **SWEETIE WILLIAMS** was an entrepreneur and “general merchant” residing on Bell Mill Road in the Scotland community near Potomac, Maryland, in 1930. **FRANCIS D. DOVER** was a Black man who owned and operated a grocery store in Scotland by 1910. Born ca. 1850, **JOHN T. RICKS** started out as a farm hand for the Beall household in the Rockville District in 1870 before being appointed the postmaster of the Quince Orchard Post Office in 1899. At the age of 60 in 1910, he was the owner of a mercantile store in the Darnestown District of lower Montgomery County.²²²

Other businesses that used the canal included ice companies, such as the **GREAT FALLS ICE COMPANY** in Montgomery County and the **INDEPENDENT ICE COMPANY** adjacent to the Foxall

²²⁰ Lesko et al., 14, 19, 34.

²²¹ Clark, ed., “Life on the C&O Canal: 1859,” 117.

²²² US Censuses, 1870-1930 (Suitland, MD: US Bureau of the Census, US Department of Commerce, accessed via Ancestry.com).

Foundry in DC.²²³ Ice was an important commodity prior to the invention of electric refrigeration; nearly every rural home had an icehouse, and urban establishments had ice boxes to aid in preserving perishable foods—primarily dairy products and meats, but even oysters—in hot weather. The Great Falls area was prime for ice production. Isabelle Redden, whose parents operated the Great Falls Tavern in the early twentieth century, reminisced about the small-scale harvesting of ice on the C&O Canal: “The ice was cut from the canal. I watched them dozens of times doing it. You hired men by the day for this, and they’d cut pieces a foot and a half to two feet thick—and they could be thicker, depending on the winter.” Once cut, the ice blocks, intended for the following summer’s use, were stored at an icehouse on the tavern’s property.²²⁴

Ice companies likely used seasonal, day labor to the same purpose, hacking large blocks of ice from the natural accumulation on the canal or even river edges. They shipped blocks of ice down to depots in Georgetown, and in 1843 alone, 2,240 pounds of ice was shipped by canal. Ice became such a profitable business that icehouses were built on the canal’s berm side between Locks 14 and 15 in 1861. The C&O Canal Company let a contract to Baylis Kidder the following year to harvest ice from the icehouses in the Widewater area for a \$50 annual fee.²²⁵ HILLARD GUTHRIE was an African American who made a business from marketing ice; in 1930, he lived at 3246 Prospect Street, NW, in Washington and worked on his “own account” in ice and coal. HARRY J. WISE was a competitor or partner, as he dwelled on 3275 Prospect Street in 1930 and told the census taker that he was the manager of a coal and ice business. GEORGE CAREY, according to the 1920 census, was a Black foreman in an ice factory, living at 3145 Dumbarton Street in Georgetown.

c. Industrial Enterprises: Quarries, Mills, Mines, and Manufacturing

As an alternative to agricultural work, enslaved and free African Americans in slave-holding states were employed widely in industrial pursuits like quarrying, milling, and mining. Black men who were not employed by the C&O Canal Company directly labored in industries that either fed the construction of the canal system or benefited from and used the canal system after commercial navigation commenced. In general, raw materials—such as mineral ores, timber, and fuels—went down the canal to foundries and factories in the District of Columbia, and finished goods traveled up the canal. Stone, timber, coal, and iron were the primary shipments down the canal after 1850.

i. Quarrying

Labor at the building-stone quarries of the region included stone-cutting and hauling. The C&O Canal Company was so invested in stone quarrying that, in 1830, it “constructed a railroad four or five miles in length, to facilitate the transportation of stone from the great ‘WHITE QUARRY,’ at the foot of Sugar Loaf Mountain, for the building of an Aqueduct over the river Monocacy at its junction with the Potomac.”²²⁶ Stone was the backbone of the canal system. Besides limestone mined in place, two main freestones (or sandstone) were used in the building of the first 20 miles

²²³ Madison Davis, “The Old Cannon Foundry above Georgetown, D. C., and Its First Owner, Henry Foxall,” *Records of the Columbia Historical Society* [Washington, DC] 11(1908):27 (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/40066972>).

²²⁴ Elizabeth Kytle, *Time Was: A Cabin John Memory Book: Interviews with 18 Old-Timers* (Cabin John, MD: Cabin John Citizens’ Association, 1976), 29, quoted in Kelly, 84.

²²⁵ Unrau, 436, 694.

²²⁶ T.H.S. Boyd, *The History of Montgomery County, Maryland, from its Earliest Settlement in 1650 to 1879* (Baltimore: W.K. Boyle & Son, Printers, 1879), 79.

of the canal: a brown sandstone quarried from **AQUIA CREEK**, in Stafford County, Virginia, and a red variety from Seneca, Montgomery County, Maryland. The Aquia quarry, approximately 40 miles south of Washington, was established in 1694 on Wigginton's Island by George Brent. Nearly a century later, the Aquia sandstone was selected by George Washington as the primary building material for the federal buildings in the new nation's capital, and Brent's quarry was acquired by the federal government.

Most of the workers constructing the federal city were hired-out enslaved individuals. Similarly, those employed in the quarries that fed public works were typically enslaved men from surrounding plantations who were trained to cut out the stone and shape it into blocks:

Robert Brent, a quarrier from Stafford County, was hired in 1792 to work the public quarry. In the fall of that year, just as operations at the quarry would have slowed down, he was authorized to hire forty "stout-armed" Negro men at £12 [\$32] a year, pay their taxes, and feed and clothe them. It is likely that the commissioners wanted the slaves hired quickly in order to keep the quarry in operation throughout the winter months. It is also likely that Brent already had a crew of slaves at work.²²⁷

In the 22 December 1794 issue of the Fredericksburg *Virginia Herald*, a notice appeared for "Sixty strong, active NEGRO MEN, for whom good wages will be given" to "work on the FREE-STONE QUARRIES lately occupied by the Public, on Aquia Creek." The notice's wording suggests that the Black men hired would not be paid wages directly, but that they would be hired-out enslaved individuals whose enslavers would receive their pay. This is underscored by the last line in the ad, where the author asserts the laborers "shall be well used and well fed."²²⁸

As the Aquia sandstone was quarried through 1825 to finish the Capitol, the labor force was likely composed predominantly of enslaved African Americans through that period and even afterward. The Aquia Creek freestone was used in constructing the Capitol, the White House, the Treasury building, and the first five locks (Locks 0 to 4) and other early structures in the C&O Canal system. Most of the locks and structures in the first 22 miles, however, were built either of granite quarried from a spot 1 mile above Little Falls or of Seneca freestone, derived from a quarry adjacent to Seneca Creek. Operating from ca. 1775 until 1900, the **SENECA QUARRY** was "located on the high bluffs on the berm side of the canal turning basin just west of the mouth of Seneca Creek."²²⁹ Its signature red sandstone had been used in the construction of the Patowmack Company, in the first federal buildings, and for the original building of the Smithsonian Institution (1847).

Alice Darby Nourse, born in 1845 in Fayetteville, Pennsylvania, moved to Montgomery County as a child when her father, Upton Darby, became the owner of the Seneca (grist) mill. She was interviewed several times throughout her long life (she died in Dawsonville, Maryland, in 1942), and recollected that the Seneca quarry "worked about 100 men" in the last half of the nineteenth century, and "at the quarry there was constant blasting, set off by powder, which resulted in many accidents." Her husband, Dr. Charles Howard Nourse, whom she married in 1871, treated the quarrymen at Seneca when they were ill or injured, receiving \$100 per month from the Seneca

²²⁷ William C. Allen, "History of Slave Laborers in the Construction of the United States Capitol" (Washington, DC: The Office of the Architect of the Capitol, 1 June 2005), 5, in *The Construction of the United States Capitol: Recognizing the Contributions of Slave Labor: Hearing Before the Committee on House Administration, House of Representatives, One Hundred Tenth Congress, First Session, Held in Washington, DC, November 7, 2007* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 2008), 66-94.

²²⁸ Allen, 6.

²²⁹ Unrau, 164.

Sandstone Company that bought the quarry in 1866; the laborers “were taxed \$1.00 per month, whether sick or well, for his services.”²³⁰

The labor required in stone quarries during the early industrial era was demanding and exhausting, especially as the laborers had only manual tools. A quarryman would use a pickax to chip off the weathered outer layer of stone from the face of an outcropping until reaching virgin rock and continue with the same tool to carve “small cavities about twenty inches wide, five or six feet deep, and spaced about ten to twenty feet apart,” just large enough for a man to squeeze himself in to hack away further. The quarrymen created giant, rough-hewn blocks into which horizontal grooves were carved and iron wedges inserted for leverage. The wedges acted like chisels that would split the stone when hammered directly. Each stone was measured for an individual purpose to specific dimensions, then marked appropriately. Primitive cranes lifted heavy, large blocks onto wooden sleds, which were dragged to boats for transport.²³¹ Every facet of the job was grueling.

Several other quarries, small and large, in Montgomery County used the canal system for transportation. **POTOMAC MARBLE** from a quarry north of White’s Ferry and about 1 mile south of Lock 26 was used for the columns in the House and Senate chambers.²³² **CEDAR POINT QUARRY** near Violette’s Lock (Lock 23) and a small quarry 4 miles south of Great Falls were used in the construction of the canal.²³³ The **POTOMAC BLUESTONE** quarries that furnished building material for Georgetown University were “on the Potomac River, located above Georgetown.”²³⁴ The **STONEHURST QUARRY** in Cabin John was located on Joshua Offutt’s estate, once part of the Samuel Brewer Magruder holding, on the south side of River Road between Cabin John Creek and Seven Locks Road. Founded ca. 1913, the enterprise was managed by Lilly Moore Stone following her husband’s sudden death in 1921 and was in operation, under her son’s direction, as late as 1977. It produced gneiss and mica schist that was used in local public works, such as the bridges on the Mount Vernon Memorial Parkway and signature buildings in the DC region, including the National Zoo’s birdhouse.²³⁵ Stone’s grandfather, John Moore, had quarried stone in Cabin John that was used in the construction of the C&O Canal in the 1830s, and her father, John D.W. Moore, a landowner above Seven Locks, had quarried stone on his property in the mid-nineteenth century, striking a deal with the canal company:²³⁶

The Moores were granted permission to construct and operate a railroad through the farm of Gustavus White to the C&O canal for the transportation of stone, wood, and other produce. The agreement contained a provision for termination by the Moores “in the event of their quarry being exhausted.” Under this agreement the Moores built a tramway to the canal. Mules pulled the tram cars loaded with stone to the canal where it was loaded onto canal boats destined for Georgetown. Stone quarried at that time was used for walls and steps in Oak Hill Cemetery in Georgetown and Congressional Cemetery in the District of

²³⁰ Eleanor N. Darby, “Reminiscences of Alice Darby Nourse,” *The Montgomery County Story* 47, no. 4 (November 2004):37-48 (accessed 25 October 2021, https://mchdr.montgomeryhistory.org/xmlui/bitstream/handle/20.500.12366/206/mcs_v047_n4_2004_darby.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y).

²³¹ Allen, 6.

²³² Allen, 14.

²³³ Unrau, 158.

²³⁴ Boyd, 151.

²³⁵ Kelly, 33.

²³⁶ Kelly, 66.

Columbia. While the quarry was never completely abandoned, the business proved to be unprofitable, and John D.W. Moore turned to farming for his livelihood.²³⁷

These several quarry locations, so close to the canal route (Figure 2.13), enabled closer and quicker access to the sources of primary construction materials (for the canal as well as public and private buildings in the region), which in turn provided more opportunity for inspectors' oversight and lower transportation costs. The quarries produced stone that fed the canal construction and, in turn, commercial navigation on the canals facilitated the transport of quarried stone.

Limestone quarries, lime kilns, and cement mills were also important in the canal construction process. The most significant limestone deposits were found in the mountainous regions northwest of the study area, between Cumberland and Hancock, in Washington and Allegany counties. This is where the majority of mills and kilns were established to process the limestone into cement and mortar. Until **SHAFER'S CEMENT** was established at Round Top Hill in Washington County, Maryland, in 1838, most of the cement created for use on the canal was processed at the **POTOMAC MILL** in Shepherdstown, (now West) Virginia.²³⁸ Limestone was found south of Hancock and down to Georgetown; however, the production of cement and mortar from limestone was not as prevalent an industry in the study area compared with the upper NCA. Nonetheless, the **CASTLEMAN LIME KILN** existed on Rock Creek in 1866 as did the **GODEY LIME KILNS**, which William H. Godey began in 1858; by 1864, Godey had moved his operation to 27th and L streets, on the east banks of Rock Creek, where he erected four brick ovens and a series of wood sheds. Godey's business of manufacturing and selling lime operated until ca. 1907.²³⁹ The 1870 US census listed two Black men living in Georgetown (Ward 3 of Washington) who gave their occupations as "work in lime kiln": **ROBERT SMITH**, aged 30, and **BENJAMIN SHIELDS**, aged 52. In 1880, **JAMES C. DENT**, an African American aged 24 years and living on Half Street, SW, in Washington, gave his occupation as "works in lime kiln," possibly at Castleman's or Godey's.

²³⁷ Mary Charlotte Crook, "Lilly Moore Stone, Founder of the Montgomery County Historical Society," *The Montgomery County Story* 20, no. 4 (November 1977):6.

²³⁸ Unrau, 172.

²³⁹ Helen Dillon, "Godey Lime Kilns," Washington, DC. National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1972, accessed 20 January 2022, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/117692192>).

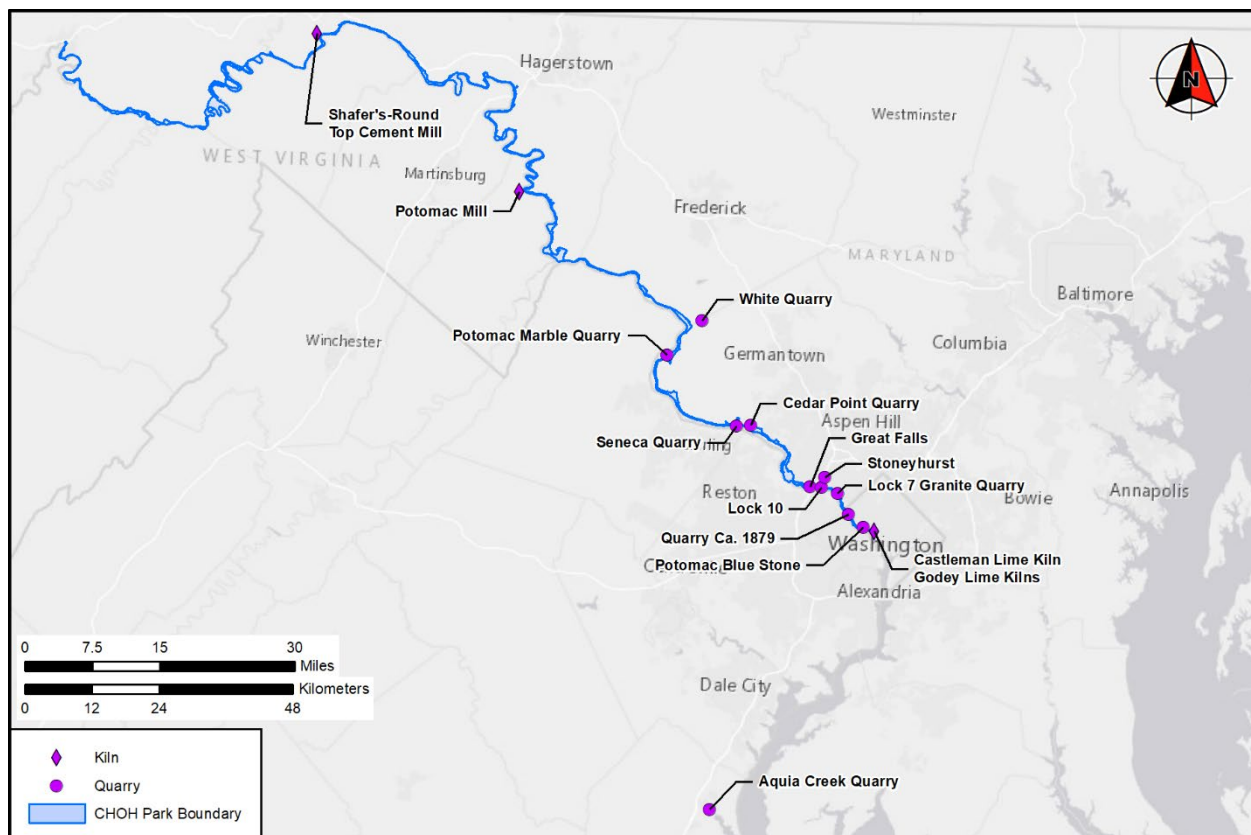


Figure 2.13: Map Showing Quarries and Kilns in the Study Area and Vicinity

Finding employment records (if they exist) for the several quarries, mining companies, and kiln works in the study area is an undertaking greater than the scope of this document, yet some knowledge of those employed in quarries can be attained through historical records such as censuses. Several African American men living in Montgomery County, Maryland, and Washington, DC, worked in quarries in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (see [Appendix E](#)). Unlike the data compiled on African American canal laborers (see [Appendix C](#)), the wage-earning, laboring men listed in [Appendix E](#) tended to be middle-aged. With the exception of one engineer ([JAMES H. BROWN](#)) and one “blaster” ([CHARLEY THOMPSON](#)), the majority of workers provided the census taker with an unspecified role of “laborer,” which should not preclude a level of skill yet does suggest a lower position in the industry hierarchy. Like general labor on the canal, quarrying appears to have been a transitory position that a worker did not keep for long; all but [CHARLES PLUMMER](#) (listed in the 1920 and 1930 censuses) were not found in the rolls 10 years after their first inclusion.

ii. Milling

Milling was another industrial occupation that provided employment to African American men in the upper NCA (Figure 2.14, end of this section). The [SENECA STONE CUTTING MILL](#), constructed ca. 1837, processed the rough-hewn stone blocks cut from the Seneca sandstone quarries.

Saws and polishers were powered by a water turbine fed by canal water diverted into a mill race. Gondolas pulled by mules and pushed by men carried the large stone blocks along narrow gauge rails to the mill. The large blocks were shaped by hammer and stone chisels before they were cut by tempered steel saws, six feet long, eight inches wide and 3/8 inch

thick. An overhead pipe dripped water on the saws to keep the toothless blades cool. Progress was considered good if a saw cut one inch in a three-foot square block one foot thick per hour. For stone polishing, the cut stone was placed on a circular disk, which revolved from a belt attached to the water-driven shaft. Barriers around the disk kept the stone from being ejected by centrifugal force.²⁴⁰

By 1833, with the canal completed through Seneca, the quarry and mill leased water rights from the canal company—1,250 inches of water at 50 cents per inch, per year—to power the mill.²⁴¹ The ruins of the Seneca Stone Cutting Mill at the end of Tschiffely Mill Road still attest to the industry there, which was most active in the 1830s, when the canal construction was underway. Several locals worked at the Seneca Stone Cutting Mill in the latter part of the nineteenth century, including Alfred Violette, who later became a lockkeeper and for whom Lock 23 is named.²⁴² HENRY THOMASON was a 26-year-old Black man living in Poolesville in 1910 when the US census taker listed his occupation as milling and the industry as “quarry.” Given Poolesville’s vicinity to Seneca, Thomason may have worked in the Seneca Stone Mill as a sawyer or polisher.

Stone cutting was not the only type of milling in the study area. Men from Black communities in Montgomery County, Maryland, often supplemented their income from farming with seasonal work at lumber mills, flour mills, and gristmills, where the labor entailed “unloading raw materials, operating milling equipment, and packing products for shipment.”²⁴³ Period maps show the area adjacent to the canal and river dotted with gristmills and sawmills from Georgetown to Travilah. The Martenet and Bond (1865) map calls out BELL’S OLD MILL on the east side of Watt’s Branch, south of River Road; GAMBRILL’S GRIST AND SAW MILL farther up Watt’s Branch, north of River Road; and the OLD PAPER MILL just north of River Road and east of Offutts’ Crossroads. The Hopkins (1879) atlas, which is more detailed, depicts the aforementioned Bell’s Old Mill, Gambrill’s gristmill, and the Old Paper Mill in addition to a gristmill (likely the COLUMBIA FLOURING mill) south of the canal and just west of Georgetown College (now University) and a sawmill at the foot of Washington Street, just west of Rock Creek and below the canal in Georgetown. Other documentary sources mention mills in the study area, including a powder mill that was present on Little Falls Branch in 1832 and a mill on Maddox Branch.²⁴⁴ The EDES MILL (also Eads) was an early water-powered mill at Fletcher’s Cove, founded in 1821 as the Canal Mills by Leonard H. Johns. William H. Edes operated the mill through the Civil War, after which it was acquired by David L. Shoemaker. It produced Evermay flour until the mill burned in 1897. In 1914, the mill site was known colloquially as the “Ruin of Eads’ Mill,” and foundations stones as well as a mill race are still extant on the landscape.²⁴⁵

Flour and grist milling were common industries in the area, as farms in the Chesapeake region predominantly raised wheat and corn during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The canal spurred Georgetown’s industrial development in the 1840s, when several businesses contracted with the C&O Canal Company for use of canal water to power flour mills, which were built along

²⁴⁰ Unrau, 164.

²⁴¹ Nancy Miller and Michael Bourne, “Seneca Quarry,” Montgomery County, Maryland. National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1972, accessed 20 January 2022, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/106777872>).

²⁴² Kelly, 214.

²⁴³ Heritage Montgomery.

²⁴⁴ Unrau, 278.

²⁴⁵ Catherine N. Ball, “Identification of Edes Mill Tract and Potomac Company Locks at Fletcher’s Cove,” Draft Report for the Colonial Dames, Chapter III (December 2021).

the canal.²⁴⁶ These included **THOMAS BROWN'S BAKERY** with flour and grist mill (ca. 1840) on the northeast corner of Water and Lingan streets, **THOMAS J. DAVIS' FLOUR MILL** (1841) near the northwest corner of Water and Fayette streets, and **R.E. DUVALL'S MILL** (ca. 1843) on Water Street between Lingan and Fayette, to name a few.²⁴⁷ The **BOMFORD MILL** in Georgetown began using canal water as early as 1835.²⁴⁸ George Buford used the Bomford Mill as a flour mill (known for producing the Washington Flour brand) in 1843, but it produced cotton from 1845 until 1861; it then reverted to flour and was renamed **PIONEER MILL**.²⁴⁹ Flour milling began to decline in the 1870s, and the mills that used the canal were severely affected by the storms of 1889, which devastated the area and damaged the canal works.²⁵⁰ But even as late as 1916, the **WILKINS-ROGERS MILLING COMPANY** was founded in Georgetown (in the old Bomford Mill building), where it remained until moving to Ellicott City, Maryland, in 1974. The Bomford-Wilkins-Rogers and several other canal mills' diversion of surplus canal water to power their hydraulic wheels provided rent (measured by the inch) that became a reliable source of revenue to the C&O Canal Company (and then the NPS) well into the twentieth century. Wilkins-Rogers Mill and the concrete intake, built ca. 1916, remain on the landscape as a vestige of this industry.

Several African Americans labored in mills. The majority were men, but a few women also did mill work, such as **CLARA RICKS**, an 18-year-old female "laborer in mill" who lived in the household of Upton Darby in Seneca in 1870. **ANNA BRUCE** and **MARY ELLIOT** were neighbors on Cherry Hill in Georgetown in 1920, and both were "mill hands" at undisclosed mills, although Elliot reported she worked at a paper mill. [Appendix F](#) provides a sample of Black mill workers in or adjacent to the study area from 1850 to 1930. Unlike the canal workers and quarrymen, the ages of the African American mill workers and the roles they had within the milling milieu were varied. Most were laborers, packers, and drivers, but several men listed their occupation as "fireman" in the 1930 census. More specialized occupations included a "filterer" in a paper mill (**EDWARD MOORMAN** in 1920) and an engineer in a flour mill (**BERTON HOWARD** in 1910). The most uncommon role was perhaps that occupied by **ABBY JOHNSON**, who was a chef for a DC paper mill in 1920.

²⁴⁶ Constance McLaughlin Green, 157.

²⁴⁷ Unrau, 685-686.

²⁴⁸ Unrau, 656, footnote 102.

²⁴⁹ Unrau, 683.

²⁵⁰ Constance McLaughlin Green, 10.

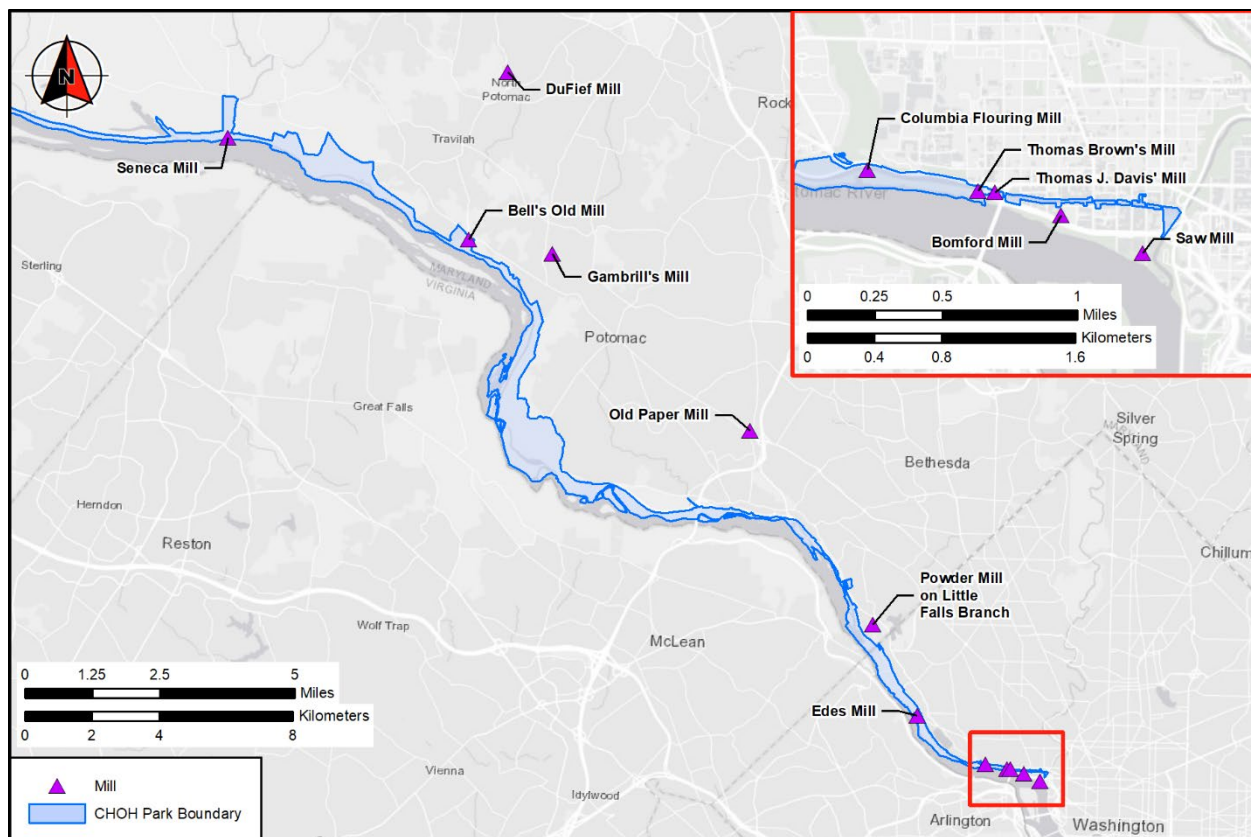


Figure 2.14: Map Showing Selected Mills in the Study Area and Vicinity

iii. Mining and Foundries

Another industry that employed African Americans in the upper NCA during the C&O Canal's period of commercial navigation was the mineral trade (Figure 2.15, end of this section). Mining coal was the primary industry in the mountainous regions of Garrett and Allegany counties, and the shipment of coal, coke, and charcoal was the canal company's biggest business. By the end of the canal's first full season in 1851, 205 boats had navigated the waterway, 140 of which were involved in the coal trade. The number of boats dedicated to the shipment of coal increased steadily over the years, so that by 1870, 395 boats on the canal hauled the fuel, often referred to as "black diamonds" in contemporary periodicals. The industry's dominance of the canal also stretched to boat ownership: "While almost all the boats registered in 1851 had been owned by individual owners, nearly one-fourth of the boats on the 1873-74 list were owned by the coal companies," including the American Coal Company, Borden Mining Company, and Consolidated Mining Company. At the height of the coal trade in 1875, 973,805 tons were shipped down the canal.²⁵¹

African Americans not only mined the coal but loaded it onto canal boats for shipment downriver, transported it, then unloaded and sorted the cargo. The four Black boat captains listed in the canal company's 1878 register were employed by the New Central Coal and Hampshire Coal companies. Captains and boatmen floated coal-laden barges down the waterway while laborers at wharves and warehouses in Williamsport, Georgetown, and Alexandria unloaded the cargo. Several coal companies had wharves and warehouses where African American laborers likely worked,

²⁵¹ Unrau. 350-354.

including the **SWANTON COAL AND ICE COMPANY**'s wharf east of the Potomac Aqueduct, on the southeast corner of Water and Lingan streets in Georgetown, and the **CUMBERLAND COAL AND IRON COMPANY** wharf near the same aqueduct, between Lingan and Fayette streets.²⁵² So many African Americans relied on the coal industry, in fact, that an 1866 newspaper article in the Washington newspaper, the *Evening Union*, surmised that “the suspension of the coal trade, in our city, will throw about five hundred colored laborers out of employment.”²⁵³

Several African Americans in the study area were employed in coal yards as generic laborers (see [Appendix G](#)). The data also illustrate that the coal industry was one in which African Americans could rise to positions of supervision and authority, such as **PERRY BARNES**, who lived in Georgetown in 1900 and told the census taker his occupation was a foreman in a coal company, or **JOSEPH PERRY**, also of Georgetown, who described his job as a “boss of coal heavers” in 1900. Many of the African Americans dwelling in the study area who worked for coal companies were drivers or teamsters. At least two women gave “coal” as their occupation in the 1900 US census: **HENRIETTA DOVE**, a 23-year-old widow in Rockville, Maryland, and **JENNIE MATTHEW**, a 36-year-old transplant from Virginia living on Q Street in Georgetown at that time.

Newspaper accounts also provide insight into how African Americans labored in the coal industry. In a 1904 article published in *The Washington Times*, the author described that “Heretofore the boats have been unloaded by colored laborers, it requiring eight men to unload the cargoes in the specified time.”²⁵⁴ Working on wharves could be dangerous, and period newspapers published several notices of accidents and serious injuries to coal loaders. **JONATHAN TAYLOR** was a Black man working at the Borden Company wharf in 1863 when he “was severely injured... by the falling of a coal tub, which dislocated his knee cap and bruised his leg and arm.”²⁵⁵ **HILLARY POWELL** was “a deaf-mute coal heaver” at the Borden company’s coal wharf who drowned, having fallen into the river “from a gang plank while wheeling coal from the wharf to a schooner.” The middle-aged Black man lived at 2445 M Street, just east of Rock Creek.²⁵⁶

Montgomery County did not have coal mines, but 22 gold deposits were discovered there in the mid- to late nineteenth century, more than half of which lay in the study area: some 12 stakes in the area south of Offutt’s Crossroads (now Potomac) and three in Cabin John. The largest of these was the **MARYLAND GOLD MINE**, which operated intermittently until 1951.²⁵⁷ During the Civil War, the 71st Pennsylvania Infantry Regiment, also called the “First California Regiment,” was stationed in the Potomac Valley during the autumn of 1861, engaging in picket duty from Great Falls to Seneca Creek. It is during this time that Pvt. Alexander McCleary found samples of gold on the farm of Camillus Kidder near the falls. After the war ended, four members of the regiment collectively purchased Kidder’s property and formed the Maryland Mining Company. They began surface prospecting for gold and sank the first mine in 1867 south of the intersection of Falls Road with present-day MacArthur Boulevard (on land now within CHOH). Three mines were

²⁵² Unrau, 699-700.

²⁵³ “Georgetown Items, Out of Employment,” *Evening Union* [Washington, DC], 18 December 1866:3 (accessed 2 November 2021, <https://candocanal.org/histdocs/Newspapers-1866.pdf>).

²⁵⁴ “News of Georgetown, Traffic on Canal,” *The Washington Times*, 12 March 1904:4 (accessed 2 November 2021, <https://candocanal.org/histdocs/Newspapers-1904.pdf>).

²⁵⁵ “Accident,” *Daily National Republican* [Washington, DC], 28 April 1863:2 (accessed 3 November 2021, <https://candocanal.org/histdocs/Newspapers-1863.pdf>).

²⁵⁶ “West Washington, nee Georgetown – Drowned,” *The Evening Star* [Washington, DC], 15 June 1881:4 (accessed 2 November 2021, <https://candocanal.org/histdocs/Newspapers-1881.pdf>).

²⁵⁷ Kelly, 20.

established eventually on a 2,000-acre tract: the Maryland Gold Mine (1867-1951), the **FORD MINE** (ca. 1890-1940), and the **WATSON MINE** (ca. 1900-1909). The first two mines were the largest undertakings, extending approximately 200 feet below grade. The Maryland Gold Mine was purchased by the Empress Gold Mining Company in 1912. The Ford Mine was explored by the Atlantic Development Company's subsidiary, the Great Falls Mining Company, after 1915. At the height of production in the late 1930s, the two mines produced 2,500 ounces of gold valued at \$90,000.²⁵⁸

A review of US census records showed that a few African American men were employed at local gold mines. In 1900, **ERNEST SMALLWOOD** was a 23-year-old Washingtonian living at 706 Madison Street in DC. He listed his occupation with the census taker as a "teamster [at] Gold Yards," presumably those at Great Falls. In the 1920 US census, two African American laborers listed their industry as "Gold Mine." **HENRY SHIELDS** was 29 years old and **ROBERT WARREN** was 53 years old; both dwelled on Falls Road in Potomac, Maryland.

Other than agricultural work and coal mining, the industry of iron production used African American labor (enslaved and free) the most from the colonial era forward. "For a half century prior to the American Revolution, Maryland and Virginia dominated the colonial exports market" in iron products and "the Chesapeake region... remained the most important single center for the production of iron."²⁵⁹ Iron ore, like coal, was mined and processed in foundries predominantly sited in the mountainous regions west of the study area, such as the **ANTIETAM IRON WORKS** in Washington County and the **CATOCTIN IRON FURNACE** in Frederick County, Maryland. A diary entry of a German, John Frederick Schlegel, who visited the Catoctin Iron Furnace in 1799 described "poor Negroes whose inward and outward conditions are troubled" in part because "they were bound to work so hard during the week as well as on Sunday in the iron smelter and thus were seldom able to hear the Word of God."²⁶⁰ By the nineteenth century, as many as 80 ironworks dotted the landscape of Maryland and Virginia, worked by an enslaved workforce counting in the several thousands.²⁶¹

Iron ore, rolled (hammered) iron, pig iron, and cast iron were shipped down the canal to Georgetown and Alexandria, where the raw materials were processed in foundries and smelters and the finished products sold in markets. Although its establishment predated the C&O Canal's construction, the **COLUMBIAN FOUNDRY** used the canal water to power its millworks (starting in 1836) and provided a destination for the iron mined upriver and shipped down the canal.²⁶² Founded in 1801 by Henry Foxall, the cannon-manufacturing complex occupied some 7 acres of land between the canal and the river, approximately 0.5 mile above the Potomac Aqueduct. Foxall

²⁵⁸ Unrau, 777-778; Karen R. Kuff, "Gold in Maryland" [pamphlet], 1987 (accessed via Maryland Department of Natural Resources, *Maryland Geological Survey* [website], 28 October 2021, http://www.mgs.md.gov/geology/minerals_energy_resources/gold.html); Walter A. Goetz, "Maryland Mine," Montgomery County, Maryland, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1980).

²⁵⁹ James Oliver Horton, "Urban Alliances: the Emergence of Race-based Populism in the Age of Jackson," in *The African American Urban Experience: Perspectives from the Colonial Period to the Present*, Joe W. Trotter, ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 38.

²⁶⁰ Elizabeth Y. Anderson, *Faith in the Furnace: A History of Harriet Chapel, Catoctin Furnace, Maryland* (Catoctin Furnace, MD: E.Y. Anderson, 1984), quoted in National Park Service, "African Americans" Catoctin Mountain Park, Maryland (website) (last updated April 17, 2021, accessed 5 August 2021, <https://www.nps.gov/cato/learn/historyculture/africanamericans.htm>).

²⁶¹ Horton, 38.

²⁶² Unrau, 656, footnote 102.

had been a partner to Robert Morris in Philadelphia's Eagle Iron Works, which made cannons for the federal government. When the seat of government left Philadelphia for Washington, DC, in 1800, Foxall moved his heavy-ordnance business to the new national capital. In December 1800, he purchased land on the Potomac River just outside Georgetown and established the foundry, considered the first south of Philadelphia. Foxall's foundry cast most of the cannons used by the Americans in the War of 1812. In 1815, Foxall sold his business to John Mason of Annapolis Island, whose surname was attached to the armaments works, although Mason had renamed it the Columbian Foundry. During Mason's ownership, the Columbian Foundry produced the heavy armaments used in the Mexican-American War of the late 1840s.²⁶³

The Columbian Foundry was sold after Mason's death in 1849 to several men, including two of Mason's former employees, Kirkland and Duvall, who managed it through the 1860s and 1870s. At its height, the foundry included "two stone buildings formerly used as molding and casting shops, two other stone houses, where mills for boring and finishing cannon were in use, and which contained also carpenter and pattern shops, other necessary branches of the cannon works, and a frame dwelling."²⁶⁴ It ceased functioning as a cannon foundry in the late nineteenth century and was used for several purposes, including as a distillery (Welsh's Distillery) and a mill (Tenney's Mill), before returning to foundry use in the early twentieth century.²⁶⁵ Other iron foundries in Georgetown included the sawmill founded by R.E. Duvall on the southwest corner of Water and Fayette streets, which became an iron foundry under the ownership of John Rynax ca. 1846. William A. Bradley established a competing foundry on the northeast corner of the same intersection.²⁶⁶

Review of census records revealed a few African Americans living in upper Montgomery County (outside the study area) and in Georgetown who worked with iron in some capacity. **HENRY MASON**, a 53-year-old African American originally from Virginia, was living in DC's Ward 3 in 1870 when he reported that he worked at an iron foundry. Ward 3 corresponded to the western half of Georgetown and included the locations of the Rynax and Bradley foundries mentioned, and it was near the Columbian Foundry, so Mason could have worked at any of these. **JACK HARRIS** was a mixed-race man aged 50 when the 1850 US census was taken. At the time, he was living in Georgetown's northwest ward and his occupation was listed as a "moulder at foundry" within the industry of "other primary iron and steel industries." Harris also could have worked at any of the iron factories in the Georgetown vicinity.

²⁶³ John Clagett Proctor, ed., *Washington Past and Present: A History*, Volume I (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc., 1930), 693-694.

²⁶⁴ Madison Davis, 27.

²⁶⁵ Madison Davis, 26-29.

²⁶⁶ Unrau, 686.

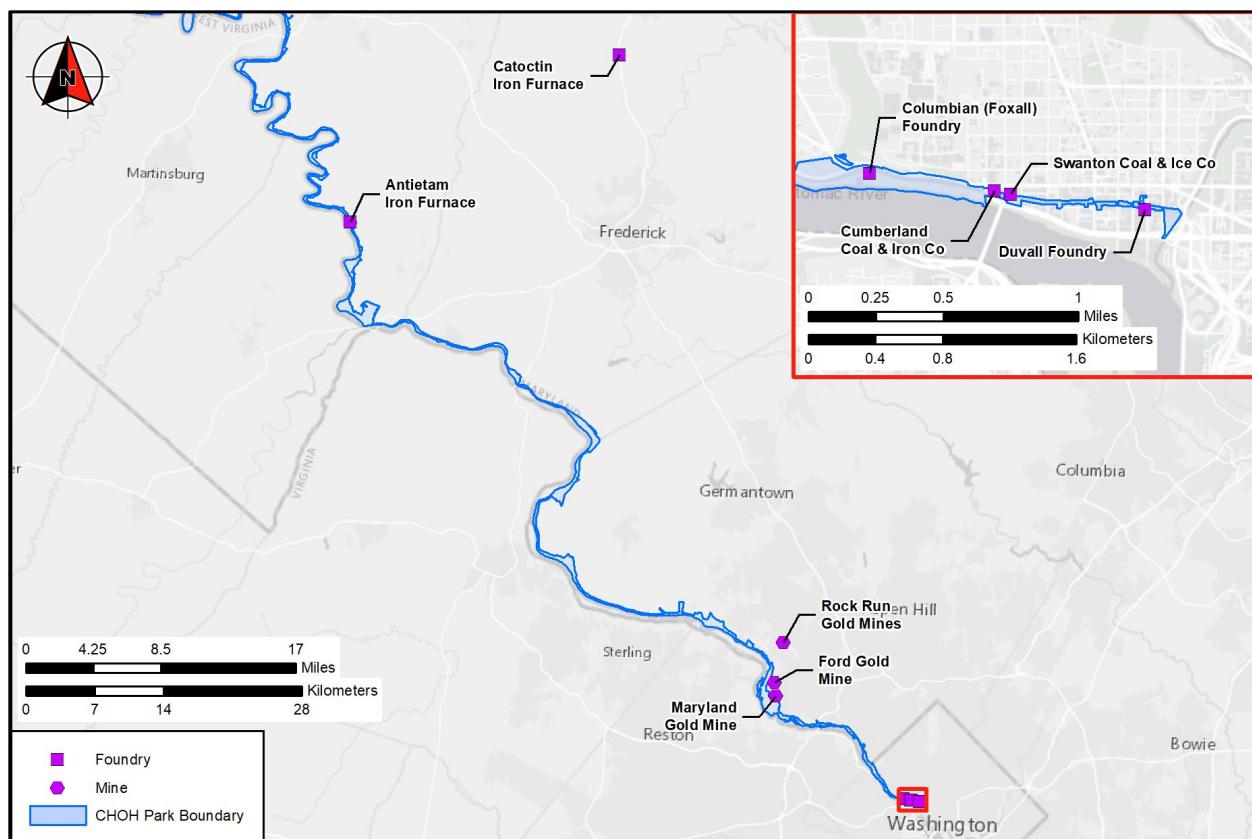


Figure 2.15: Map Showing Mines and Foundries in the Study Area and Vicinity

iv. Manufacturing

Washington, DC, had several factories in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that employed African Americans. The **POTOMAC COTTON FOUNDRY** was a textile factory built along the canal in Georgetown in 1845.²⁶⁷ **HELLEN TUPPER** was a 26-year-old Black woman living on 27th Street in DC in 1920, when the US census enumerated her as a servant working in a “P Foundry.” The “P” could stand for “Potomac,” suggesting that perhaps she worked at the textile factory. Georgetown resident **REBECCA BOOTHE**, a 51-year-old woman, was similarly described as a servant in a foundry in the same census record. Lastly, **LYDIA SMITHERS**, also dwelling in Washington, was a 47-year-old cook at a foundry in 1920. These three women are the only persons in the study area who used the word “foundry” to describe their industry of occupation; however, their occupations are distinctly domestic within the foundry context.

In the 1870s, four African Americans worked in a soap factory either near or in Georgetown. **JAMES WEBSTER** (40 years old) and **ROBERT MASON** (43) both worked at the soap factory and lived in Georgetown west of Wisconsin Avenue (Ward 3). **HENRY SCOTT** was a Black man who also lived in the western half of Georgetown; in the 1870 census, he reported that he worked in a “sash factory,” which likely made wood window frames. Six African American men living in Georgetown reported their occupations as factory laborers in the 1920 census, while **ISAAC DAVIS**, aged 45 and living at 2806 N Street, NW, reported he was a factory fireman. In the 1930 census,

²⁶⁷ Unrau, 471, 658.

only two Georgetown residents reported that they worked in a factory setting, including 48-year-old CAJETAN HEDGMAN, who specified that he worked at “Hides factory.”

2. Canal and River: Landscapes of Leisure

Humans always have played, relaxed, and participated in forms of recreation in those moments between productive activity. Play and recreation, often conducted in public spaces and socially, are means of transmitting traditions and culture as well as community-building. The term “leisure” was known to be used as early as the fourteenth century and referred to that time between work and duties when freedom of choice arose at the cessation of productive labor.²⁶⁸ When Thorstein Veblen, a Norwegian-American economist, published *The Theory of the Leisure Class* in 1899, industrialization had been entrenched firmly in America, which had made the progression from an agrarian, rural society to an industrialized, urban one. With industrialization came greater wealth and time not occupied in laborious pursuits for some; that excess time was spent on Veblen’s concept of *conspicuous leisure*, which are non-productive activities pursued merely to emphasize one’s social status. Although leisure activities had been the domain of the elite historically, they were appropriated by the middle classes and the working classes by the turn of the twentieth century. In Washington, DC, at that time, African Americans adopted forms of leisure to solidify their social stratification while also asserting their place in society. As Kahrl surmised, “Many [Black Washingtonians] envisioned partaking in recreational pursuits as the just reward for their rising status in American society, and emblem of their arrival in the mainstream.”²⁶⁹

The early photographs of ADDISON SCURLOCK are testaments to the significant role of leisure and recreation among Washington’s Black society. In 1900, at the age of 17, Scurlock arrived in DC with his family, which had moved from Fayetteville, North Carolina, because his father, GEORGE CLAY SCURLOCK, had accepted a position with the Treasury Department. Between 1900 and 1904, Scurlock apprenticed with Moses Rice, whose photography studio was located on Pennsylvania Avenue. He then established his own business, first in his parents’ home in LeDroit Park and then in his own home at 1202 T Street, NW.²⁷⁰ Before he set up a studio at 900 U Street and established himself as the premiere portrait photographer for DC’s elite African American community, Scurlock took candid photos of African Americans at play or casual portraiture in a scenic, pictorial setting. Two of his earliest photographs include a self-portrait with his wife, MAMIE FEARING SCURLOCK, at Great Falls, ca. 1910, and three unknown African Americans at the waterfront, about to take a small skiff out on the river for what appears to be a pleasure excursion, in 1915 (Figure 2.16).²⁷¹ What these two photographs attest to is how DC’s African Americans interacted with the countryside and the Potomac River in moments of leisure and recreation at the turn of the twentieth century.

²⁶⁸ “Leisure.” Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/leisure>. Accessed 26 July 2022.

²⁶⁹ Kahrl, 1134.

²⁷⁰ W. Brian Piper, “‘To Develop Our Business’: Addison Scurlock, Photography, and the National Negro Business League, 1900–1920,” *The Journal of African American History* 101, no. 4 (2016):438-440 (accessed 21 January 2022, <https://doi.org/10.5323/jafriamerhist.101.4.0436>); Peter Perl, “The Scurlock Look,” *Washington Post*, 2 December 1990.

²⁷¹ National Museum of African American History and Culture, *The Scurlock Studio and Black Washington: Picturing the Promise* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 2009), 60.

ADDISON SCURLOCK
(1883-1964)

Scurlock moved to Washington, DC, at the age of 17 and soon became an accomplished portrait photographer for DC's elite African American community. His son, Robert S. Scurlock, continued in the business and founded the Capital School of Photography in 1948.



Figure 2.16: Addison Scurlock, “Waterfront,” 1915. Scurlock Studio Records, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution.

Other than laboring on the canal, leisure was the predominant mode by which African Americans interacted with the waterway. African American men and women worked in the leisure industry as waiters, hoteliers, and groundskeepers at resorts, capitalizing on a rising tourism industry. But they also were patrons of that tourism, spending their free time on the river and canal or in the countryside engaging in various pleasurable pursuits.

a. Tourism, Traveling, and Commuting on the C&O Canal

Tourism, as an industry, capitalized on the C&O Canal from its inception. Pleasure excursions for city-dwellers up to Great Falls started in the early 1830s and extended up to Harpers Ferry a decade later. When the canal was completed to Cumberland in 1850, leisure seekers could take sight-

seeing trips along the canal's full length. An early news item published on 8 July 1830 in the Hagerstown, Maryland, newspaper, *The Torch Light and Public Advertiser*, described how the canal could be used for leisure and entertainment:

We recommend to all persons, whose leisure enable them, to visit the [canal]. An enterprising contractor has now in progress a handsome Packet-boat, designed to ply regularly, as soon as the line is opened for navigation, and, as there are no bridges to pass under, passengers will be able to take their seats on the roof of the Boat, and enjoy uninterrupted the romantic nature of the scenery they will pass. We cannot conceive a more tempting seductive recreation than such an excursion will offer.²⁷²

Musical bands were known to accompany passengers on their pleasure cruises. Some boats offered refreshments, and moonlight dance cruises became popular at the turn of the twentieth century. Urban dwellers from as far as Baltimore would reserve entire packet boats for day-long or multi-day excursions.

The account by the unnamed New England man in 1859 aboard the *Caroline of Williamsport* with Captain Coss, Henry and John W. Butler, and a white boy named Tommy illustrates that the canal was used as a means of transportation but also of scenic travel for out-of-towners. Conversely, the personal account of Alice Darby Nourse, a nineteenth-century resident of Seneca, suggests that locals used the canal for day trips into the big city for shopping and entertainment opportunities not available to them in their small, rural towns:

One thing we looked forward to for weeks was a trip to Washington or Georgetown to buy new dresses and to see our friends. There were two ways we could make the trip; drive all the way with a horse and buggy, or go on the Packet, a little boat which made the round trip from Georgetown to Point of Rocks, frequently, on the Canal. It took nearly all day to go from Seneca to Georgetown, but the Packet might vary its schedule to the extent of several hours, which would prove quite annoying to the passengers at Seneca impatiently pacing the canal bank or waiting inside the old stone lock house at Seneca, where Johnny Riley lived for so many years, and which is still standing.²⁷³

Nourse described the packet as a boat that could hold approximately 50 passengers “though it was very seldom that so many as fifty took passage,” and that it was slow-moving to forestall producing waves, running a maximum speed of 8 miles per hour.²⁷⁴

Because the boats moved so slowly, travel along the full length of the canal took several days. Hence, hotels emerged along the canal route to accommodate travelers. As Great Falls was an early destination heavily promoted by the C&O Canal Company, Lockhouse 12 was enlarged and converted into a tavern almost immediately after it was built. Opened in 1832, it was named the **CROMMELIN HOUSE** in honor of a Dutch investor and was operated originally by the first lockkeeper, W.W. Fenlon.²⁷⁵ It did not succeed commercially, and the C&O Canal Company closed the hotel portion in 1849, reverting the building to a lockkeeper's private house. In 1858, Henry Busey (then the lockkeeper of Locks 19 and 20) was granted permission by the canal company to reopen Crommelin House to paying guests. Busey's successor, George W. Case,

²⁷² “The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal,” *The Torch Light and Public Advertiser* [Hagerstown, MD], 8 July 1830:2 (accessed 30 October 2021, <https://candocanal.org/histdocs/Newspapers-1830-40.pdf>, pp. 7-9).

²⁷³ Darby, 38.

²⁷⁴ Darby, 38, 40.

²⁷⁵ Kelly, 213.

operated the hotel until 1872.²⁷⁶ Howard A. Garret took over the Crommelin House in the 1870s; to promote his hotel, he “took ‘pleasure parties’ from Georgetown to his hotel several times a week, but he borrowed the canal paymaster’s boat to do so.”²⁷⁷ An 1874 advertisement in the Washington *Evening Star* promoted excursions up to Great Falls and named Garrett’s hotel:

A trip to the Great Falls is now in order. The packet-boat Minnesota makes three trips to the falls every week - Monday, Wednesday and Friday - starting from the foot of High street, Georgetown, at 7 a.m., returning same day. The boat is drawn by horses, and makes the run in about three hours and a half. Fine views of the beautiful scenery along the Potomac are obtained at many points, which are well worth the journey. At the Falls there is a large hotel, newly fitted, where all the accommodations of a first-class house are to be had. It is kept on the European plan, and the proprietors, Messrs. Garrett & Mans, certainly know how to keep a hotel. Meals are furnished at all hours, thus allowing fishing parties to remain "out on the rocks" as long as they please. There is also connected with the hotel a large dancing hall and picnic grounds.²⁷⁸

In 1878, Garrett subleased the Great Falls hotel to J.W. Carroll, and it was known as “Carroll’s Hotel” through the 1880s. Since the early twentieth century, it has been referred to, descriptively, as the **GREAT FALLS TAVERN**.

Several other hotels were built in the study area during the period of commercial navigation on the canal, including the **CABIN JOHN HOTEL** (1870-1925), popular through the early twentieth century. Founded by Joseph Bobinger, a German émigré, the hotel was sited on the river side of Conduit Road (now MacArthur Boulevard) near the Cabin John Bridge, which Bobinger understood would become a tourist attraction. Bobinger had come to the area from Pennsylvania to work as a stone mason on the bridge in 1859; his wife, Rosa, started a canteen business to feed the laborers. By 1873, they had purchased land from Joseph Gustavus White and built a simple inn, which expanded over the years into a 40-room hotel with two banquet halls that seated 100 persons each, three bars, and shops. The hotel was immensely popular at the fin-de-siècle but was closed in 1925; the building was destroyed in a fire in 1931.²⁷⁹ Significantly, the Bobinger family employed many Cabin John residents at the hotel over its 55 years of operation. The 1900 US census of the Potomac District (Election District No. 10) of Montgomery County lists 16 unrelated persons dwelling in the household of William H. and George Bobinger, Joseph and Rosa’s sons and “Hotel Proprietors.” Two of those enumerated were boarders at the hotel while the rest were hotel staff, including three African Americans: **DELLA SIMPSON**, a 20-year-old chambermaid originally from DC; **JULIA A. AREZBO**, a 40-year-old housekeeper from Virginia; and **ARCHIE BAKER**, a 42-year-old waiter from North Carolina. **MATILDA BOWLES**, born in Brookmont in 1885, worked at the Cabin John Hotel’s laundry with **LENA BROWN** for 18-20 years and settled in Cabin John; in a 1976 interview, she also recalled working with **HATTIE FRY** and **BILL WHITE**’s father.²⁸⁰

The **ROCK SPRING CLUB** was an 1884 Shingle-style hotel and resort on Conduit Road, 1 mile from the DC boundary line. Founded in the late nineteenth century, it was operated by Charles Arthur Brill. Around 1900, Brill employed **MARIAH M. GRAY** as a cook, a Black woman who also worked

²⁷⁶ Unrau, 244, 802-803.

²⁷⁷ Unrau, 357-358.

²⁷⁸ “Sport for Everybody,” *The Evening Star* [Washington, DC], 29 June 1874:4 (accessed 2 November 2021, <https://candocanal.org/histdocs/Newspapers-1874.pdf>).

²⁷⁹ Kelly, 37.

²⁸⁰ Kytte, 3.

at the Cabin John Hotel. In the 1900 US census, Brill was listed as a “Hotel Keeper” and the head of a household that included his wife, young son, and four servants. **JOHN W. LEWIS** was a Black man and laborer at Brill’s hotel, originally born in Virginia in January 1860. **CORDELIA SMITH**, a 24-year-old Black woman from Virginia, worked at the hotel in domestic service.

Amusement parks or “pleasure grounds” were also established on the outskirts of DC that were accessed by canal traffic. **GREEN SPRING PAVILION** was a picnic ground and beer garden in the Palisades popular in the mid-nineteenth century.²⁸¹ A Bavarian émigré named Joseph Ehrmantraut had purchased Henry Foxall’s summer house, Spring Hill, and its 60 acres at the intersection of today’s Foxhall Road and P Street after 1865 and converted them into pleasure grounds.²⁸² In 1891, the Chautauqua Assembly opened a seasonal park at **GLEN ECHO**, a residential community a few miles outside DC founded two years prior. To boost attendance in the 1892 summer season, an advertisement was published in the *Washington Evening Star* notifying potential visitors that “at the solicitation of the Glen Echo Company, Mr. John A. Blundon will run on the Chesapeake and Ohio canal a line of passenger packets, making the trip from the Aqueduct bridge to Glen Echo in fifty minutes.”²⁸³ In June that year, the Young Men’s Christian Association made an excursion to Glen Echo by two packet boats fitted with the 18-piece Glen Echo orchestra for entertainment on the return voyage. The news item announcing the event in advance stated that the “grounds and buildings will be lighted by electricity and refreshments will be served in the Hall of Philosophy overlooking the Potomac. An excursion of this character is always attractive, especially so by moonlight, and the occasion promises to be one thoroughly enjoyed.”²⁸⁴

Domestic service and wait staff positions in hotels, restaurants, cafes, and resorts were available to African American women and men in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Figure 2.17). A sample of US census records shows that several African Americans in the study area worked as waiters, maids, cooks, or laborers in hotels in lower Montgomery County and in Georgetown. **DANIEL BOSTON** was a 24-year-old hotel waiter living in Georgetown’s Ward 3 in 1860. In 1900, **CHARLES H. DIGGS** told the census taker that he was the steward at a hotel; he was enumerated in the household of Carl Blaibock, the postmaster in Great Falls in 1905 and the proprietor of the Great Falls Tavern through 1910.²⁸⁵ Blaibock also employed a Black cook, **SARAH GREEN** (aged 21); a Black chambermaid, **ADELAIDE JOHNSON** (23); a Black hostler, **CHARLES MASON** (49); and a Black servant, **EDNA M. STRATTON** (6), at his hotel in 1900. In the 1910 US census, **PHILIP O. JACKSON** was enumerated as a 24-year-old Black man and hotel waiter, while **JAMES FRANKLIN** was a 60-year-old Black man from Mississippi who worked as a waiter and dish washer. Both lived in Potomac and could have served in restaurants or hotels that catered to canal guests. **JAMES H.** and **KATIE J. WAUGH** were a married African American couple living in the Township of Glen Echo in 1920 when they were enumerated in the US census as a caretaker and a housekeeper at a club. **MANUAL WARREN** was a 35-year-old Black man from Alabama who worked as a hotel waiter in the employ of William H. Case, a hotel proprietor in Great Falls, in 1930. As William was the

²⁸¹ Madison Davis, 28.

²⁸² Kathryn Schneider Smith, ed., *Washington at Home: An Illustrated History of Neighborhoods in the Nation’s Capital*, Second Edition (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 144.

²⁸³ “Georgetown New Transportation Lines,” *The Evening Star* [Washington, DC], 15 April 1892:7 (accessed 2 November 2021, <https://candocanal.org/histdocs/Newspapers-1892.pdf>).

²⁸⁴ “A Novel Excursion,” *The Evening Star* [Washington, DC], 4 June 1892:16 (accessed 2 November 2021, <https://candocanal.org/histdocs/Newspapers-1892.pdf>).

²⁸⁵ “Great Falls Inn,” *The Washington Herald*, 17 August 1910:3 (accessed 2 November 2021, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/data/batches/dlc_lima_ver01/data/sn83045433/100493342/1910081701/0311.pdf).

son of George W. Case, the proprietor of the Crommelin House until 1872, it is likely that the hotel in question is the Great Falls Tavern.

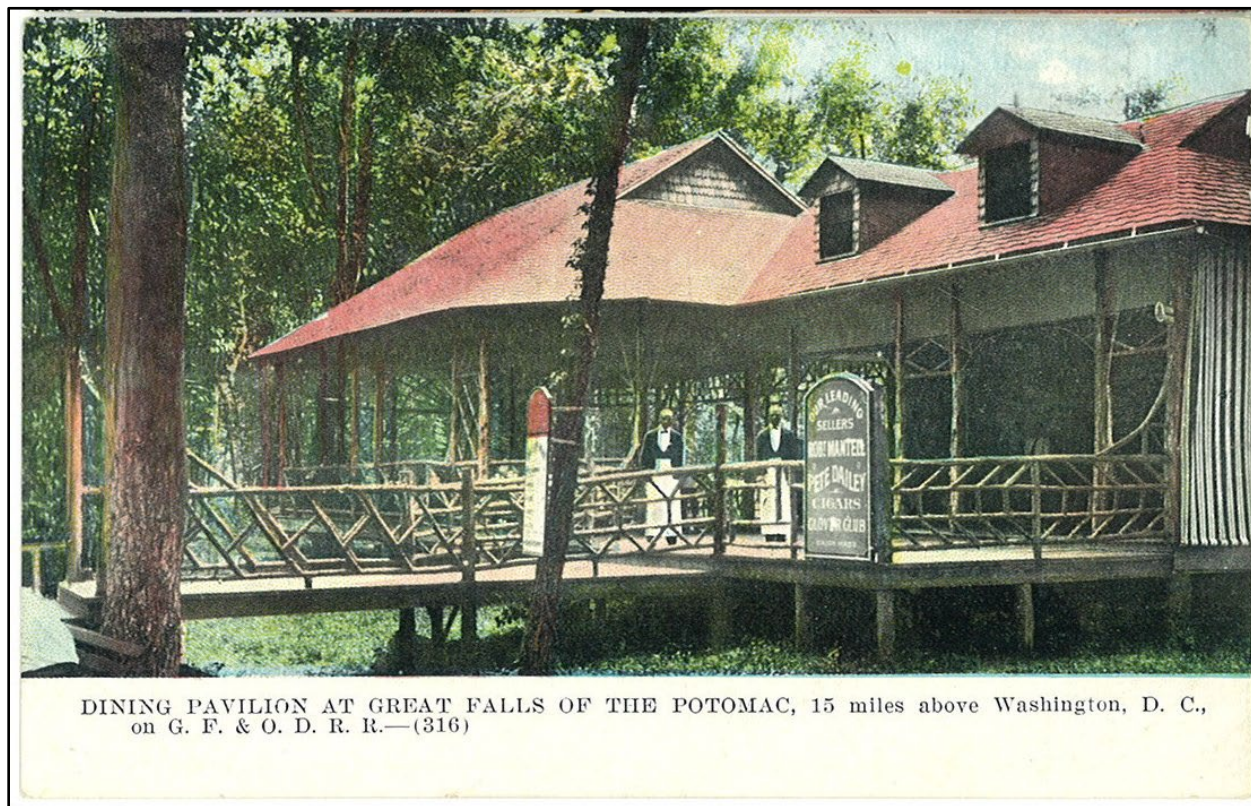


Figure 2.17: “Dining Pavilion at Great Falls of the Potomac,” ca. 1910 (Courtesy of Montgomery History, Jane C. Sween Research Library)

b. Leisure on the Canal

Because Washington was founded at the confluence of two rivers, it logically followed that the working Potomac River was adapted to leisure activities for both white and Black Washingtonians. Riverboat cruises were popular among all classes and races by the turn of the twentieth century. African American mutual aid societies, for instance, “often... pooled their resources to reserve excursion steamers for trips down the river, often under the pretext of fundraising.”²⁸⁶ Cruises were taken on white-owned boats, in which parties were segregated by skin color, or on Black-owned boats that catered only to African American patrons to various destinations, such as Notley Hall (a Black-owned resort), River View (a white-owned resort), and Marshall Hall in Maryland or Colonial Beach in Virginia.

Above the falls, the sights promoted in newspaper advertisements for excursion cruises included the **CABIN JOHN BRIDGE** (which was considered an engineering marvel, with the longest single-span, masonry arch in the world at the time of its completion in 1863) as well as Great Falls. Period news articles describe people picnicking in spots alongside the canal, picking wild blackberries, and generally enjoying the scenery and nature accessible from the canal. After the Seneca quarry was abandoned, it became a site for picnickers who would bathe in the old mill race.²⁸⁷ In fact,

²⁸⁶ Kahr, 1113.

²⁸⁷ Darby, 43.

early leisure destinations were unregulated spaces, patches of open space that were temporarily appropriated by day-trippers. But, with the entrenchment of leisure activities, open spaces became developed, formalized, regulated, and increasingly segregated. As Kahrl notes, the “informal picnic and gathering spaces frequented by African American groups became white-only facilities. In Maryland, the Glen Echo Woods, a popular destination for African Americans in the late nineteenth century, was converted in 1901 into a racially exclusive amusement park.”²⁸⁸ He further asserts that the Potomac River’s “transition from industry to amusement as the river’s primary form of commerce reduced the number of unregulated gathering spots and thus the extent of racial interaction along the shore.”²⁸⁹ Whereas whites and Blacks had intermingled in the countryside in previous decades, the codification and segregation of leisure space precluded that mixing, yet fomented the rise of Black-owned resorts, parks, and businesses patronized by African Americans in lower Montgomery County at the fin-de-siècle.

i. Excursions on the Canal, Pleasure Grounds, and Racism

From the canal’s partial opening in the mid-1830s, the C&O Canal Company offered leisure excursions by packet boat, in addition to its freight travel, and fostered tourism at various picturesque spots along the canal. Parties would rent packet boats for day or evening excursions up to places such as Great Falls, such as the excursion taken by several African Americans on the *Skedaddler* on the evening of 13 July 1876. An announcement in the *Alexandria Gazette* stated that the excursion started at 10 p.m. and featured a brass band composed of Black musicians.²⁹⁰ Unfortunately, that excursion made local news because the revelers were accosted by stone-throwers while the boat passed under a canal bridge at night. The injurious onslaught caused one of the partygoers to shoot his pistol into the crowd of attackers, which then caused a public outcry. One of the party members, J.C. DORSEY, wrote a letter to the editor of the *Alexandria Gazette* the following day that denounced the use of firearms as well as the unprovoked attack by the unknown stone-throwing assailants.²⁹¹

In her book, *Historically African American Leisure Destinations in Washington, DC*, author Patsy Mose Fletcher states that Black Washingtonians either took a “steamer on the C&O Canal” or went “via Conduit Road on the Washington & Great Falls Electric Railway from Thirty-sixth and Prospect in Georgetown” up to Cabin John to see “the great stone aqueduct bridge, the canal and access to the Potomac River” in the late nineteenth century. Fletcher notes that MARY CHURCH TERRELL, an educator and activist, wrote in her journal about her visit to Cabin John, and a photograph reproduced in Fletcher’s book shows LILLIAN EVANS TIBBS (also known as Lillian Evanti, the internationally renowned opera singer from DC) as a young woman in a group of friends, sitting on a rock in the middle of the river, “enjoying Cabin John.” Yet Fletcher also asserts that “unless the steamboat had been chartered to carry an African American excursion group, solo black travelers boarded last and rode on the lower deck.” Furthermore, “Black Washingtonians

²⁸⁸ Kahrl, 1116.

²⁸⁹ Kahrl, 1123.

²⁹⁰ Untitled, *Alexandria Gazette* [Alexandria, VA], 13 July 1876:4 (accessed 3 November 2021, <https://candocanal.org/histdocs/Newspapers-1876.pdf>).

²⁹¹ “Messrs. Editors,” [Letter to the Editors], *Alexandria Gazette* [Alexandria, VA], 14 July 1876:4 (accessed 3 November 2021, <https://candocanal.org/histdocs/Newspapers-1876.pdf>).

took advantage of the natural beauty of [Cabin John], though they were not permitted to patronize the [Cabin John] hotel and later amusement park that operated from about 1876 to 1912.”²⁹²

The racism African American tourists experienced when visiting Cabin John was expressed in two items published in a DC African American newspaper, *The Colored American*, in 1901 and 1902. In the first, under the heading “Town Topics,” the author notes that “Discrimination against the Negro goes on unabated at Glen Echo, Cabin John Bridge and Chevy Chase Lake.”²⁹³ The second, under the section called “The-Man-On-The-Corner,” the author wrote a longer rebuke of the treatment he or others had experienced at Cabin John:

The city parks are open, of course, to all, as they are Government reservations, and private prejudice is obliged to contenting itself with a scowl when you wish to take a rest “neath the shade of the sheltering palms,” so to speak. But go to Cabin John Bridge, Chevy Chase, or any of the resorts where general attractions are offered, and you will be held up by the alert watchman, who will emphatically intimate to you that “these are private grounds” – private for white people’s enjoyment, but he will not tell you that color is the reason for calling you down – that is contrary to his orders, but he will lose his job if a Negro of positive shade is found to have escaped his eagle eye or Sherlock Holmes instinct.... The excursion steamers of the whites are hermetically sealed against colored passengers.... it is well to note how far the metes and bounds of race prejudice extend in this section of the moral vineyard.²⁹⁴

Perhaps because the tourist attractions and resorts in Montgomery County were privately owned and because racism was so overt there, Black Washingtonians, according to Fletcher, sojourned primarily within the District. But the city parks mentioned in the period newspaper account above also had their perceivable color lines. In 1927, William H. Jones published *Recreation and Amusement among Negroes in Washington, DC* as part of the Howard University Studies in Urban Sociology series. Jones related that

a rather wide use of the public parks, Zoological Park, and Botanical Garden is made by Washington’s Negro population. In these public places there is no discrimination other than the usual manifestations of race prejudice. Both races mingle freely, but are careful about maintaining their social distances....

It has become something of a general practice for colored people to take possession of Rock Creek Park the first Monday after every Easter. White people seem to understand that this is the Negroes’ day and either remain at home or go elsewhere.²⁹⁵

Besides municipal parks, pleasure grounds abounded in the Washington metropolitan area at the fin-de-siècle, with the rise of leisure among the middle classes. Precursors to twentieth-century amusement parks, these semi-rural, privately owned pleasure grounds typically were ornamental parks that provided day visitors with promenades or carriage drives under canopy trees, pavilions for music and dancing, a place for refreshment, and possibly an amusement, such as a roller coaster, carousel, or shooting gallery. All of the Black-owned pleasure grounds described in

²⁹² Patsy Mose Fletcher, *Historically African American Destinations Around Washington, DC* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2015), chapter 1.

²⁹³ “Town Topics,” *The Colored American*, 13 July 1901:16.

²⁹⁴ “The-Man-On-The-Corner,” *The Colored American*, 6 September 1902.

²⁹⁵ William H. Jones, *Recreation and Amusement among Negroes in Washington, DC: A Sociological Analysis of the Negro in an Urban Environment* (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1927), 99-100.

Fletcher's book—Suburban Gardens, Eureka Park, Green Willow Park, Madres Park, Booker's Park, and Butler's Park—were located in Anacostia (near Barry Farm) or in Northeast DC.

By the time Jones published his sociological study of recreation in 1927, the focus of Black leisure was on urban playgrounds, municipal swimming pools, golf courses, and country clubs. Still, even in the second quarter of the twentieth century, Black Washingtonians made day trips on excursion boats—such as the **E. MADISON HALL**, owned by African American businessman **J.O. HOLMES** from 1917—but the destinations were south of the city, to River View, Notley Hall, or Marshall Hall.²⁹⁶ All of the beaches, summer camps, and country club resorts patronized by African Americans in the DC metropolitan area listed in Jones's book outside of the District were east or south of DC. Montgomery County destinations were not only conspicuous by their absence in Jones's seminal study, but a review of *The Negro Motorist Green Book* (guidebooks published annually by Victor H. Green between 1936 and 1966 that listed hotels, boarding houses, pubs, restaurants, gas stations, and other business that catered to African Americans in a time of racial prejudice and physical violence) identified zero locales in that Maryland county northwest of DC.

From the 1880s through the 1930s, with the development of residential subdivisions such as Potomac Heights in the Palisades and Glen Echo, those parts of northwest DC and lower Montgomery County adjacent to the Potomac River developed into a white, middle-class enclave from which African Americans were largely excluded. Jones's sole mention of Glen Echo is to say that it “caters only to members of the white race.”²⁹⁷ Yet Black Washingtonians did appropriate leisure spaces for themselves in these white-dominated landscapes. Advertisements and notices from historical African American newspapers in the DC metropolitan area provide insight into how and where Black Washingtonians participated in organized leisure and recreational activities. A July 1892 notice in *The Washington Bee* testified that “a very pleasant excursion was given to Cabin John's Bridge Wednesday last by Berean Baptist church in which a great many participated.”²⁹⁸ Picnics at Great Falls were a popular leisure activity well into the twentieth century among DC's African Americans. In 1907, the junior and senior classes of Howard University's College of Arts and Sciences went on an outing to the favored scenic spot. A group of eight young women and seven young men, led by chaperones, took the trolley up to Great Falls: “The young men had charge of the baskets, boxes and buckets which were filled with all sorts of good things,” and “the ride was delightful.” Once they reached the falls, couples splintered to walk around or recline under shade trees, while “still others were in a cosy [*sic*] spot watching the fishermen as they cast and recast their nets without result.”²⁹⁹ Furthermore, Black Washingtonians established their own small parks and pleasure grounds in these neighborhoods, a subject explored further in Chapter V.

ii. Swimming, Boating, Camping, Hiking, and Cycling

In the same 1876 *Alexandria Gazette* article about the African American excursion cruise aboard the *Skedaddler*, the editors noted that “pleasure seekers on board excursion steamers plying the Potomac here in the evening, are too often favored with the sight of half-grown boys gambling and frisking about in the water.”³⁰⁰ While “bathing,” or swimming, in the river and the canal was

²⁹⁶ Jones, 141-143.

²⁹⁷ Jones, 100.

²⁹⁸ “West Washington Notes,” *The Washington Bee*, 16 July 1892.

²⁹⁹ L.E. McNeill, “The Seniors Outing,” *The University Journal* [Howard University, Washington, DC] 4, no. 33 (24 May 1907):3.

³⁰⁰ “Messrs. Editors” [Letter to the Editors], *Alexandria Gazette* [Alexandria, VA], 14 July 1876:4.

a pastime for boys and men from the 1850s onward, it was not always publicly condoned because, too often, it led to drowning incidents. A particular bathing spot that must not have been far from Georgetown³⁰¹ was “known to men and boys reared in Washington as ‘the Sycamore.’ It has been the bathing place for at least two, if not three generations of our fellow citizens,” according to an 1853 article in the *Washington Evening Star*. The news article mentioned the locale because it was where a Mr. Phelps of Upperville, Fauquier County, Virginia, was drowned, and where the body of David Shoemaker had been discovered by President John Quincy Adams while he was taking a morning swim, decades before.³⁰²

The aforementioned *Evening Star* article describes the boys swimming in the evening; that may be because, on 2 April 1814, the Corporation of Georgetown passed an Ordinance—a Black Code—that prohibited enslaved African Americans from “bathing in certain waters” at certain times of day: “If any slave shall, before the hour of nine o’clock, p.m., and after the hour of five o’clock, a.m., bathe in the Potomac or Rock Creek, within the jurisdiction of this Corporation, he shall be publicly whipped, not exceeding twenty stripes.” This statute was amended on 16 May 1840 to prohibit swimming entirely in the C&O Canal, regardless of the time of day: “If any slave bathe in the Canal, within the jurisdiction of this corporation, he shall be publicly whipped, not exceeding twenty-one stripes.”³⁰³ For African Americans to safely swim in the river and canal in the decades prior the cessation of Black Codes, they would have to have done so either at night or in the outskirts of the city. Even then, arrest was still an issue. In 1866, police arrested several African Americans for “indecent conduct” by bathing in the canal.³⁰⁴ Neither the threat of drowning nor arrest stopped youths from swimming, however, as evidenced by an 1876 news item that reported “every night during the warm weather the wharves have been crowded with men and boys engaged in bathing and swimming in the cooling waters of the river.” For those who could swim well, bathing was a free and enjoyable activity open to all, lauded by the author of the 1876 article, who said “no more healthful or exhilarating practice can be indulged in.”³⁰⁵

Swimming in the canal and river remained a popular pastime, especially for children, well into the middle of the twentieth century. Josephine Godbold Havens, who was born in 1905 in DC, kept a canoe at Lock 8 in Cabin John as a child in the 1910s and recalled swimming in the river, as “it was clean then and there were very few pools.”³⁰⁶ A contemporary, **FRANK DALVERT MCKINNEY** (1916-1993), who spent his life in Cabin John, recalled “the kids would swim in the Cabin John Creek. Sometimes the youngsters would go down to the Potomac to swim... in the 30’s and early 40’s...”³⁰⁷

³⁰¹ Possibly Sycamore Island, although that isle is adjacent to Brookmont, 6 miles from the center of Georgetown.

³⁰² “The Drowning Place,” *Evening Star* [Washington, DC], 21 June 1854:3 (accessed 3 November 2021, <https://candocanal.org/histdocs/Newspapers-1854.pdf>).

³⁰³ Corporation of Georgetown, “Punishment of Slaves for Bathing in Certain Waters,” 16 May 1840, in Worthington Garrettsen Snethen, *The Black Code of the District of Columbia: In Force September 1st, 1848* (New York: A. & F. Anti-Slavery Society, 1848), 52.

³⁰⁴ “Bathing in the Canal,” *Evening Union* [Washington, DC], 25 June 1866:3 (accessed 3 November 2021, <https://candocanal.org/histdocs/Newspapers-1866.pdf>).

³⁰⁵ “Swimming,” *Alexandria Gazette* [Alexandria, VA], 22 June 1876:3 (Accessed 3 November 2021, <https://candocanal.org/histdocs/Newspapers-1876.pdf>).

³⁰⁶ Barbara Martin, “Jo Havens – When Cabin John was Country,” 1994, in “People of Cabin John” (Cabin John, MD: *Village News*, 1995 (Rockville, MD: Repository, Montgomery History, Jane C. Sween Library).

³⁰⁷ Barbara Martin, “Frank D. McKinney: My Heart is in Cabin John,” 1984 (Cabin John, MD: *Village News*, 1995 (Rockville, MD: Repository, Montgomery History, Jane C. Sween Library).

Boating or canoeing on the Potomac River was another activity open to Washingtonians. The lower part of the canal and river, below the falls, was always a popular spot for boating, and several boathouses were built at the turn of the twentieth century for leisure and sport. The oldest was **FLETCHER'S BOATHOUSE** at the mouth of Maddox Branch, which formed a natural cove in the river, just west of the canal in the Palisades. As early as the 1850s, the Fletchers made red rowboats available to local fishermen, then expanded their business to canoes for pleasure trips on the river.³⁰⁸ By the 1910s, as trade on the canal slowed before grinding to a complete halt in 1924, people canoed on the canal, camped on adjacent lands, and hiked along the towpath. A July 1917 piece in the *Washington Evening Star* noted that the canal was busy with “hikers, canoeists and pleasure seekers... out in numbers.” The article recounts “a new form of sport” in which women canoeists boarded freight boats and then dived from them into the water, swimming back to the boats to dive again. In the same piece, the author describes “camps and bungalows... going up everywhere along the canal, and there scarcely is a favorable site south of Seven Locks that hasn't been pressed into service both for temporary and permanent outing purposes.” At these spots, “big crowds of bathers sported in the canal, despite the water being muddy.”³⁰⁹

At least four boating clubs were present in the study area at the turn of the twentieth century. The **SYCAMORE ISLAND CLUB** was established on a small isle in the river about 0.5 mile south of canal lock 7 at Glen Echo in 1885. Washington city directories list three boat clubs in Georgetown: the **POTOMAC BOAT CLUB** at the foot of 31st Street, organized in 1868; the **COLUMBIA BOAT CLUB** at the foot of 32nd Street, organized in 1880; and the **WASHINGTON CANOE CLUB**, organized in 1884 and sited at 3140 Water Street.³¹⁰ Both the Potomac Boat Club and the Washington Canoe Club established summer camps for their members in the Palisades. By the first decade of the twentieth century, individual families, largely from the working and middle classes, had erected “seasonal ‘camps’ near the canal and river: shanties and tents, large enough for several days of fishing, boating, and swimming.”³¹¹

Hiking and cycling were cost-free recreational activities open to all Washingtonians (Figures 2.18 and 2.19). By 1919, a group of hikers, who called themselves “Washington Wanderlusters,” were known to hike the towpath regularly. More often, walks were unorganized and taken by friends together or families. Often, the walks were combined with rides on canal boats. Two oral interviews attest to the popularity of the canal towpath for long walks, even among children. Ralph F. Springmann was born around 1899 and lived with his family in southwest DC. He recalled,

When we were kids [aged between nine and 13, or circa 1908 to 1912] we used to always walk up the canal. We used to catch a streetcar and ride as far as Chain Bridge. It cost a nickel then; streetcar tickets were six for a quarter. We would ride up as far as Chain Bridge, that would be the District line; then we'd walk up to Great Falls.

The canal boats were operating then, and we'd walk up the canal until we got tired and then we'd wait for a canal boat to come along and they'd usually let us get on the boat and

³⁰⁸ Smith, 146.

³⁰⁹ “Boats on Canal Bring Much Coal to Capital: Nearly 4,000 Tons Landed Here in 48 Hours,” *Evening Star* [Washington, DC], 30 July 1917: 4 (accessed 3 November 2021, <https://candocanal.org/histdocs/Newspapers-1917.pdf>).

³¹⁰ Whether any of these clubs admitted African American members or whether similar clubs for Black Washingtonians existed are topics for additional research.

³¹¹ Smith, 147.

ride back to Georgetown. But the canal boats, they were so slow – because of the many locks – that you really could make better time by walking.³¹²

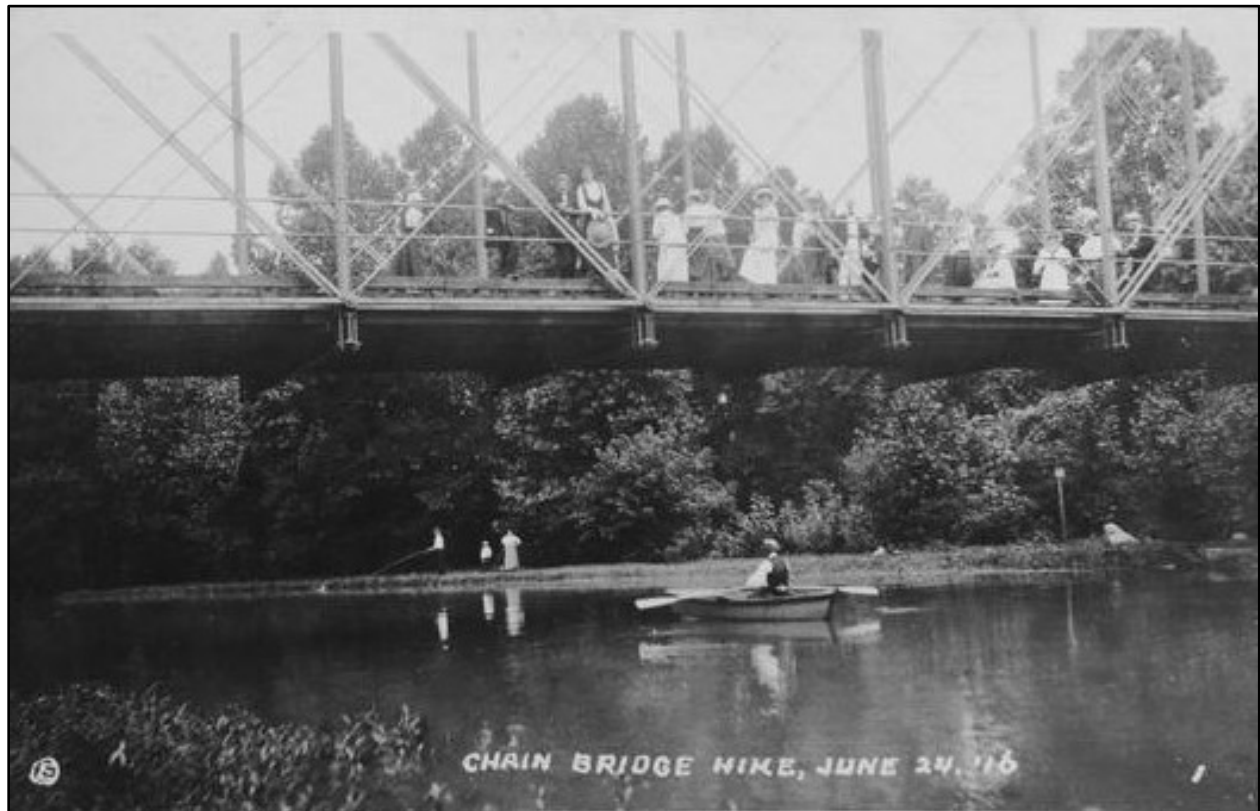


Figure 2.18: Willard R. Ross, “Chain Bridge Hike, June 24, 1916” (DC Public Library)

Havens described typical family outings to Cabin John ca. 1912, in which they would go “nutting”:

It was a day’s outing. We’d come up on the streetcar, and walk up the road to where the Model Basin is now. Those hills up there, those hills were just covered with huge chestnut trees. Walnut and hickory, and others too... And persimmons. There were lots of persimmon trees all through this area. We used to bring our picnic lunch and stay all day. We’d take the chestnuts home and roast them.

Often after going nutting, instead of going back on the streetcar we walked through the [Cabin John] hotel grounds to the canal, to a lock, and if we were lucky, a canal boat would come along and give us a ride back to Georgetown. We did that quite often. Sometimes we started at Georgetown and got a ride up on a canal boat.³¹³

³¹² Kytte, 22.

³¹³ Kytte, 31.



Figure 2.19: Willard R. Ross, “Receiving Reservoir Hike, January 16, 1916” (DC Public Library)

In the 1890s, Washingtonians’ love for boating was replaced by a new craze: bicycling. Clubs for bicyclists emerged, such as the Capital Bicycle Club and the Century Cycle Club, both of which organized excursions into the countryside for their members. “Taking advantage of the smooth macadam with which Conduit Road was now paved, young men bicycled out to the country, stopping at the wonder that was Cabin John Bridge and at the Cabin John Hotel”; and as a further testament to the new sport’s popularity, “in 1896 a bicycle racing track opened south of Conduit Road between today’s Norton and Newark streets”³¹⁴ northwest, in the Palisades. The International Athletic Park, as it was called, featured a bicycle track as well as an amusement park.

According to an 1897 article in *The Washington Bee*, DC had several bicycle clubs for African American men and women. These were invited to participate in a prize contest in which “the most popular gentleman and lady wheelman [received] a Golo Badge, each.”³¹⁵ This announcement was made in tandem with a picnic sponsored by the National Colored Personal League, to be held 4 August 1897 on the park-like grounds of the **HOTEL CYCLE**³¹⁶ in Maryland, which was accessible by the Washington & Great Falls Electric Railway. At least one of these clubs was the **CROSS COUNTRY CYCLE CLUB**, which had moved its headquarters to the corner of 11th and Q Streets, NW, in 1896. An announcement in *The Washington Bee* described the club as “well supplied with newspapers, floor-pumps, rocks, and the necessary furniture” while uniforms were being prepared

³¹⁴ Smith, 147.

³¹⁵ “Grand Picnic!” *The Washington Bee*, 31 July 1897.

³¹⁶ Possibly the same location as the Cycle Clubhouse, which Mary Mitchell described as just outside the DC line on Conduit Road. Further research is warranted to map this/these establishments. See Mitchell, *Chronicles of Georgetown Life, 1865-1900* (Cabin John, MD: Seven Locks Press, 1986), 92.

for the cyclists. Some 35 members were on the club's roster, including **CAPT. S.M. CLARK**, who "is an excellent officer and takes the club for a run every evening at 6.30 returning at 11 o'clock" and who "conducted a party of ladies on a suburban ride a few days ago." On 12 July, the club cycled to Great Falls, which was a 36-mile roundtrip made at "the gait of 11 miles an hour."³¹⁷

After commercial navigation ceased in 1924, the canal was allowed to decay and dry out; once popular leisure activities on the canal, such as swimming and fishing, came to an end at that time. But after the NPS acquired the first 22 miles of the canal property in 1938, CCC camps were mobilized to restore the canal channels and "re-water" them. As soon as water was re-introduced into the canal, it became a site for leisure activities once more, with canoeists on the waterway as early as 1940. After the CCC had repaired the towpath, hikers returned in addition to day trippers who participated in NPS interpretive programming. By the 1960s and 1970s, the NPS had instituted its Summer in the Parks programming, which encouraged water sports on the canal. By the 1980s, visitors to CHOH were biking, walking, and hiking on the towpath and adjacent nature trails, camping in the park, and even ice skating on the frozen canal in winter. The canal had been converted from an industrial, commercial-freight waterway into a playground open to all people.

iii. Hunting and Fishing

One of the most uncommon forms of hunting related to the C&O Canal, albeit outside the study area, in Williamsport and Hagerstown, Maryland, was snake shooting. Still, the 29 July 1899 issue of *The Washington Bee* published the notice "Good Snake Shooting," in which the sport was explained:

Snake shooting is a novel sport of recent introduction at Williamsport, Md., and which is becoming quite popular. There are an unusual number of snakes along the streams and in the country hereabout, and many of them are copperheads, a poisonous reptile and much feared. Rifles, as a rule, are used by persons who indulge in snake shooting. A favorite place for the sport is along the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, where water and black snakes and copperheads abound in great numbers.

Within the past few weeks the reptile population along the canal has been seriously depleted. A Hagerstown man who spent his Sundays shooting snakes killed over a hundred in two days. In one day he shot with a rifle thirty water snakes, besides a number of others. William Stake killed a monster copperhead snake on the towpath, just below town. It measured four feet.³¹⁸

Fishing was another favored pastime on the Potomac River and the C&O Canal for a spectrum of Washingtonians, from elite whites—such as Presidents Grover Cleveland and Theodore Roosevelt, who fished for bass at Great Falls and Widewater—to laboring African Americans.³¹⁹ An *Alexandria Gazette* piece from 1876 relates the story of **JOSEPH BAIN**, a Black canal boatman, who had set a bamboo fishing rod in the water "down at the canal bridge, about the time a loaded boat was there." Bain, having left his rod and walked away a distance, did not notice the approaching coal-laden barge, which snapped his rod. Angered at the loss of his rod, Bain threw a

³¹⁷ "City Brevities," *The Washington Bee*, 25 July 1896:8.

³¹⁸ "Good Snake Shooting," *The Washington Bee*, 29 July 1899.

³¹⁹ Welles, 27.

stone at the coal boat captain, who threw a lump of coal back at Bain, neither of whom was hurt in the tussle.³²⁰

Private clubs, such as the Crescent Fishing Club, offered sport for anglers at the fall line. Packet and charter boats did so much business at the turn of the twentieth century taking tourists from Georgetown to Great Falls to fish for a day that it became a minor sector of the canal's tourism industry. The **ANGLER'S INN** was an elite club for members of the Anglers Association, established as early as the 1860s for sporting fishermen. The club drew Washington's political elite, including several of the nation's presidents, through the 1940s. When the clubhouse burned in 1945, the club moved into the ca. 1910 Cropley General Store and Post Office on Conduit Road (now MacArthur Boulevard).³²¹

Fishing remained a popular pastime in DC and the metropolitan area through the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. Reuben Elwood "Pete" Hunter (1932-2006), a resident of Cabin John, recalled in a 1991 interview that, as a child in the late 1930s and 1940s, "we fished [in the river and canal], we swam. Up by Lock 10 was a favorite place. You could walk out 200-300 yards and just be up to your waist. We got great bass and perch. All the kids in Cabin John spent summers down by the water."³²² In 1957, at the age of 14, **CHARLES MARSHALL III**, a third-generation Georgetown resident living at 2712 P Street, NW, won second place for catching the longest fish in the Tidal Basin during the eighth annual Fishing Rodeo, sponsored by the DC Recreation Department with the DC Junior Chamber of Commerce.³²³ In 2018, **HARVEY M. MATTHEWS** (born 1944) was interviewed about his youth in Montgomery County's River Road African American communities. He recalled that his father and older brother would fish in the river or canal at the Chain Bridge or in Tobytown.³²⁴ In 2020, Drs. Shirley J. Fiske and Don Callaway prepared a report, *Ethnographic Resource Study: Subsistence Fishing on the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers*, in which they interviewed several fishermen and fisherwomen at NPS parks in the NCA. One African American interviewee, **WAYNE ROBBINS**, was (at the time) a 46-year-old man who recalled learning to fish from his father, who, in turn, had learned to fish from his own father. As multi-generation DC residents, they fished at Fletcher's Boathouse, just west of Georgetown.³²⁵ According to Fiske and Callaway's findings, fishing at Great Falls and at Fletcher's Cove is still popular among anglers (catch-and-release sportsmen) and subsistence fishers.

c. *After Commercial Navigation Ended: The CCC and NPS Create a Public Park*

At the turn of the twentieth century, aware of the declining fortunes of the C&O Canal Company, politicians and park advocates reimagined the canal system as a potential public park or scenic amenity. The idea for a parkland utilizing land adjacent to the C&O Canal has its genesis with the

³²⁰ "Broke his Fishing Rod," *Alexandria Gazette* [Alexandria, VA], 17 June 1876:4 (accessed 3 November 2021, <https://candocanal.org/histdocs/Newspapers-1876.pdf>).

³²¹ Kelly, 227.

³²² Barbara Martin, "Reuben Hunter," 1991, in "People of Cabin John," Cabin John, MD: *Village News*, 1995 (Rockville, MD: Repository: Montgomery History, Jane C. Sween Library), 4.

³²³ Susanna McBee, "Big Catfish Brings Boy Rodeo Prize," *Washington Post*, 18 August 1957:A21 (accessed via "Sites: 2710 and 2712 P Street," *Georgetown African American Historic Landmark Project & Tour* [website], Humanities DC, 19 January 2022, <http://www.gaahlp.org/sites/2710-and-2712-p-street/>).

³²⁴ John Power, "Harvey M. Matthews oral history interview, 09 November 2018," *Historic African River Road Connections* (Washington, DC: American University, Special Collections, 2018, accessed 22 November 2021, https://auislandora.wrlc.org/islandora/object/auislandora%3A78255?solr_nav%5Bid%5D=6d979602428d884e04b7&solr_nav%5Bpage%5D=0&solr_nav%5Boffset%5D=1).

³²⁵ Fiske and Callaway, 334.

1901 McMillan Commission plan, *The Improvement of the Park System of the District of Columbia*, submitted to Congress with the aim of beautifying the nation's capital. Despite the fact that the canal was still open to commercial freight in 1901, advocates of the plan suggested building a riverside drive along the water's edge, to be called "Potomac Drive," that would offer leisure drivers "picturesque views of the falls":³²⁶

The primary carriage drive would occupy the most advantageous location, carefully fitted into the hillside to present an appealing mixture of expansive views and intimate woodland scenery. At the base of the escarpment, the historic Chesapeake and Ohio Canal formed a picturesque complement to the natural scenery while affording opportunities for boating, both in private canoes and aboard the traditional canal boats that plied the economically moribund waterway. Recognizing that the canal's commercial prospects were bleak, the commission urged its preservation as a scenic, historic, and recreational resource. The commission's concern for maintaining the canal's "primitive character" and ensuring that future generations would be able to enjoy "the slow, old-fashioned movement of the boats and of the people on this ancient waterway" revealed the nascent historic preservation ethic that found more explicit expression in the drive to protect the ring of Civil War forts surrounding the city.³²⁷

Although a section of such a road would be built three decades later,³²⁸ the federal government did not act on this suggestion or other suggestions involving the public use of the canal for another quarter century.

The death knell for commercial navigation on the canal was rung with the flood of 14 May 1924. Following that devastation, the B&O Railroad Company (under whose influence the canal fell when it acquired the C&O Canal Company's majority shares in 1878 and after the C&O Canal Company was placed in receivership in 1890) paid for the repair of the canal from Lock 5 (Little Falls) to Georgetown because that stretch remained profitable, powering hydraulic mills, but it neglected and effectively closed the residual 180 miles. With the cessation of commercial freight on the canal in 1924, hundreds of people were displaced from their work in various industries that relied on the canal in some manner. Not only did employees of the C&O Canal Company—captains, boatmen, mule drivers, lockkeepers—find themselves without assured income following the canal's closure, but businesses that relied on the canal trade—mills, wharves, hotels—suffered from the decreased traffic and use. In addition, what was to be done with this massive landscape feature, now abandoned?

The idea for a public parkland that would include the canal and towpath was revived. Starting in December 1928, Michigan Representative Louis C. Cramton introduced new legislation for the creation of a canal park and parkway. By the time the act was passed by both houses of Congress and signed into law by President Hoover, on 29 May 1930, the Capper-Cramton Act included

³²⁶ Mackintosh, 5.

³²⁷ US Congress, Senate Committee on the District of Columbia, *The Improvement of the Park System of the District of Columbia*, Senate Report No. 166, 57th Cong. 1st sess. (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1902, 94-95, quoted in Timothy Davis, "Beyond the Mall: The Senate Park Commission's Plans for Washington's Park System," in *Designing the Nation's Capital: the 1901 Plan for Washington, D.C.*, Sue Kohler and Pamela Scott, eds. (Washington, DC: US Commission of the Fine Arts, 2006, accessed 17 September 2021, https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/ncr/designing-capital/sec4.html#27).

³²⁸ Clara Barton Parkway, enabled by act of Congress in 1930 and renamed in 1989, is a 6.8-mile stretch of scenic byway on the Maryland shores of the Potomac from the Chain Bridge in Washington, DC to Carderock, Maryland. It is part of the George Washington Memorial Parkway system that flanks the Potomac River.

ownership of that portion of the canal from Georgetown (Tide Lock, or Lock 0) to Point of Rocks, Maryland (Lock 29). Although the act was passed, no funds were appropriated for the endeavor; action was delayed further by the nation's plunge into the Great Depression, the worst economic recession America had yet seen.³²⁹ The next decade also witnessed the complicated effort on the part of the Department of Interior, the bureau of the federal government that would administer the park, to ascertain what persons or entity had legal ownership of the canal lands and infrastructure. The B&O Railroad had been awarded receivership of the C&O Canal Company, not ownership, yet that had not dissuaded the railroad from attempting to sell the canal in 1936. The Department of the Interior was unable to begin purchasing the land until 28 September 1938.³³⁰

As with many national and state parks during the 1930s and 1940s, construction work at CHOH was undertaken by the CCC, the federal works program initiated in President Roosevelt's New Deal program (see Chapter II, Section B.2.c). The first initiative, labeled Federal Project 712, rehabilitated that portion of the canal infrastructure from Georgetown to Seneca, Maryland, while developing recreational features for the canal's new role as a public park. Between June 1938 and March 1942, two camps of the CCC repaired dikes and timber gates at 23 locks, rebuilt masonry walls, constructed new retaining walls and dams below Great Falls, and rehabilitated a few chosen lockhouses. With the Army Corps of Engineers, new flood control measures were implemented at the Foundry Branch spillway, the canal channel was cleared, and portions of the damaged towpath were replaced. At the same time, they put in place new water and sewer systems for public use, provided picnic areas, paved parking areas, and built concessions at Great Falls. Others recorded the park's historical structures with architectural drawings and photographs, collected historical data and oral interviews, and conducted boundary surveys.

Early on, the NPS established a fishing program as a recreational activity while planning additional recreational parks at Georgetown, Carderock, and Great Falls. By the fall of 1940, visitors were canoeing along the lower portion of the canal or hiking and biking on the adjacent towpath. Unfortunately, a severe flood in 1942 reversed much of the progress the CCC had made on the canal south of Seneca. At that point, America's entry in World War II was underway, and interest in and funds for public projects were put on hold.³³¹

After the war, the NPS developed a parkway scheme that would convert the towpath into a vehicular drive that would serve recreational users as well as local traffic between Great Falls and Cumberland, Maryland. Considered controversial and attracting more detractors than proponents, the proposal was quelled by conservationists in 1954; however, this did not affect the half-century-long plans to create a system of roads flanking the Potomac River south of Great Falls, the George Washington Memorial Parkway. In Maryland, the portion that extended from the Chain Bridge in the District of Columbia to Conduit Road (now MacArthur Boulevard) in Carderock, Maryland—called the Clara Barton Parkway after 1989—was completed in 1965. The roadway's impact on the canal landscape was severe: "Visually and audibly, the road impinges on the canal for most of its length."³³² The 1853 wood-frame house at Lock 5, which had been rehabilitated by the NPS in 1939, was razed in 1957, and the oldest lockhouse then standing, at Lock 7, narrowly missed demolition thanks to an engineering feat that cantilevered the westbound roadbed over the eastbound lanes at the Glen Echo bluff. Furthermore, the stone lockhouse at Lock 13 was lost to

³²⁹ Mackintosh, 6-8.

³³⁰ Mackintosh, 17-18.

³³¹ Mackintosh, 31, 35, 38, 43, 49.

³³² Mackintosh, 80.

the construction of the Capital Beltway over the Potomac River at Cabin John, Maryland, in 1961.³³³

Before leaving office in January 1961, President Dwight D. Eisenhower dedicated that portion of the canal below Seneca as a National Monument. That same year, the C&O Canal was listed in the National Register of Historic Places and a national historical park was formed stretching from Seneca to Georgetown.³³⁴ The integrity of the canal, especially the undesignated portion above Seneca, was threatened by a 1967 proposal, the Potomac National River plan, supported by Interior Secretary Stewart Udall and President Lyndon B. Johnson. A bill to create the C&O National Historical Park (CHOH) and preserve the entire, original configuration of the canal and its towpath was not legislated until 8 January 1971, after over 16 years of lobbying efforts by its proponents.³³⁵ Nearly 150 years following its genesis, the entirety of the historic C&O Canal had completed its full transition from a landscape of labor to a landscape of leisure.

3. Summary

Section B of this chapter explored the ways in which African Americans historically encountered or interacted with the C&O Canal through the dynamic of labor. It opened with a brief look into a canal boat traveler's description of **HENRY BUTLER** and his son (likely **JOHN W. BUTLER**, his eldest child, who was listed as 12 years old in the 1860 US census), both of whom worked as boat hands on the *Caroline of Williamsport* in 1859. The section posited that labor on the canal can be divided into two broad and temporal categories: when it was a landscape of labor and the focus was on commercial freight (the emphasis of which fell between the 1830s and the 1870s), and when it was a landscape of leisure and the focus shifted to tourism and recreation (from the 1880s onward).

African Americans worked on the canal from its inception, first by building it and then by operating boats upon it. Again, period newspaper advertisements and other historical records provide the names of some of the free Black men employed by and some of the enslaved laborers hired out to the C&O Canal Company in the antebellum period, as the canal was under construction. These include **GEORGE SOLOMAN**, **JOHN GODFREY**, **WILLIAM SOLOMAN**, **JOSEPH VOWELL**, **ADAM KOOTS**, and enslaved men only recorded by their first names: **WILLIAM**, **REGIN**, and **ROBERT**. Canal building was dangerous work, and the story of **JOHN STUBBLEFIELD**, a free African American contracted on the C&O Canal whose left arm was severed while using explosives in December 1828, was provided as an example of the dangers these men faced. Once the canal was completed, boat operators also faced danger: **FRANK COOPER** was drowned, **GEORGE H. GARNER** had his leg torn off in dockside machinery, **BEN** (last name unknown) was a lockkeeper killed in a homicide, and **BENJAMIN WHITING** was a Black boatman on the *Andrew Johnson* who was attacked by four canal men who beat him, threw him overboard, and then refused to assist him when he started drowning.

Typically, boys were employed to drive the mule teams that pulled the canal boats, such as **JAMES** and **HENRY JOHNSON**. Period newspaper items relate how dangerous driving mules could be, as

³³³ Mackintosh, 49-57, 65, 76-80.

³³⁴ Clare Lise Kelly, "Places from the Past: The Tradition of Gardez Bien in Montgomery County, Maryland," 10th Anniversary Edition (Silver Spring, MD: Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, 2011, accessed 9 November 2021, https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Places-from-the-Past-web_with_cover.pdf), 153.

³³⁵ Carrie Johnson, "Across the Berm: Senator Charles McCurdy Mathias, Jr." *Along the Towpath* 42, no. 1 (March 2010):7-8.

with [WILLIAM FLETCHER](#) and [FRANK TURNER](#), both kicked by mules and severely injured by the ordeal. After the canal was opened, African American men (both free and enslaved) became boatmen and captains of canal boats. [NED](#) and [JUPE](#) were enslaved by and operated a boat for John Blackford, owner of [FERRY HILL PLANTATION](#), which falls within CHOH. [JOHN THOMAS](#) was Black man described as the “driver of the Canal boat ‘Dove’” in an 1866 newspaper article that announced his death. [LOUIS ROBERSON](#), [WILSON MIDDLETON](#), [KIRK FIELDS](#), and [J.M. JOHNSON](#) were listed as the captains of boats in 1878. Middleton was one of the first trustees of Sharpsburg’s [TOLSON CHAPEL](#), designated a National Historic Landmark. By 1882, [CAPT. HENRY ARNOLD](#) commanded the boat *Weyand Doerner* for the American Coal Company. In the 1920 US census, only one man, [HENRY WILLIAMS](#), was listed as the captain of a boat; but other records conclude that [ANDREW JENKINS](#) was also a captain during the period 1910 to 1923. Women also worked on canal boats, as evidenced by [GERTIE GREEN](#), a 30-year-old Black woman who was a canal boat cook in 1903. That working on the canal could be a family business was illustrated in an analysis of US census data, which showed the two young [GUSTUS BROTHERS](#) from Alexandria, Virginia, or the three [CANADA BROTHERS](#) living in Berlin (renamed Brunswick in 1890), Frederick County, Maryland, as all working for the canal at the same time.

If African Americans did not work directly on the canal, they worked in several industries adjacent to and reliant upon the canal. [JOHN CLAGGETT](#) (mentioned in the previous section as a resident of Rushville in 1860), [JOHN NORRIS](#), and [CARVILLE GREEN](#) were all farmhands living near the canal. [JAMES RICKS](#) was a farmer in the Darnestown District who passed his farm to his son, [JAMES W. RICKS](#). [MARGARET WOOD](#) was a free Black woman, the head of her household, and a farmer at the age of 38 in 1860; her neighbor, [HENRY HEBRON](#), was another free Black farmer. Likely, these farmers shipped their agricultural produce to markets in Georgetown and DC via canal boats. Fishing on the Potomac River was another occupation with which African Americans had a long association, such as [CHARLES CLAIBURNE](#), a fisherman, or [JAMES COX](#), a fishmonger who had a stall in the Georgetown market hall in 1870. African Americans were also merchants who owned and operated grocery stores, feed stores, and ice businesses that relied on the canal. [JOSEPH MOOR](#) ran a grocery in Georgetown. [ALFRED LEE](#) and his sons, [JOHN](#) and [WILLIAM](#), operated [LEE FEED & GRAIN](#) on 29th and M streets in Georgetown for over a century. Other merchants mentioned in this section include [ROBERT J. HOLMES](#), [ALFRED POPE](#), [ALFRED FELTON HARRIS](#), [SWEETIE WILLIAMS](#), [FRANCIS D. DOVER](#), and [JOHN T. RICKS](#). The [GREAT FALLS ICE COMPANY](#) in Montgomery County and the [INDEPENDENT ICE COMPANY](#) in DC used the canal for transporting their product, and [HILLARD GUTHRIE](#), [HARRY J. WISE](#), and [GEORGE CAREY](#) all sold ice as their primary business.

African Americans also labored in industries that were associated with the canal in some capacity: in stone quarries that provided building stone for the canal’s construction and that used the waterway to ship building stone to DC, mills that used canal water to power their operations, lime kilns that operated near the canal, mineral mines either near the river and canal or that used the canal for transportation, foundries established near or on the canal, and factories in the study area. Stone quarried from [AQUIA CREEK](#) and the [SENECA QUARRY](#) built the earliest sections of the canal. Quarries in the study area that used the canal for transport include the [WHITE QUARRY](#), the [POTOMAC MARBLE QUARRY](#), the [CEDAR POINT QUARRY](#), the [POTOMAC BLUESTONE QUARRY](#), and the [STONEHURST QUARRY](#) in Cabin John. Most African American men who worked in quarries were common laborers, like [CHARLES PLUMMER](#) and [HENRY THOMASON](#), but [JAMES H. BROWN](#) was an engineer at a quarry and [CHARLEY THOMPSON](#) was a blaster. Lime kilns associated with

the C&O Canal include **SHAFER'S CEMENT** and the **POTOMAC MILL**, both outside the study area; but the **CASTLEMAN LIME KILN** and the **GODEY LIME KILNS** were in or adjacent to Georgetown, on Rock Creek. **ROBERT SMITH**, **BENJAMIN SHIELDS**, and **JAMES C. DENT** all lived in Georgetown and worked in lime kilns, according to census records.

Mills were sited on the canal to use canal water (rights to which were leased by the C&O Canal Company) to power their hydraulic wheels. Historical mills in the study area that are mentioned in this section include the **SENECA STONE CUTTING MILL**, **BELL'S OLD MILL**, **GAMBRILL'S GRIST AND SAW MILL**, the **OLD PAPER MILL**, the **COLUMBIA FLOURING MILL**, and the **EDES MILL**. **THOMAS BROWN'S BAKERY** with flour and grist mill was one of several located in Georgetown, along with **THOMAS J. DAVIS'S FLOUR MILL**, **R.E. DUVALL'S MILL**, and the **BOMFORD MILL** (renamed **PIONEER MILL**, then **WILKINS-ROGERS MILLING COMPANY**). Women constituted a higher percentage of employees in mills than in other industries during late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, such as **CLARA RICKS**, **ANNA BRUCE**, and **MARY ELLIOT**. More specialized occupations within mills included a "filterer" in a paper mill (**EDWARD MOORMAN**), an engineer in a flour mill (**BERTON HOWARD**), and a chef for a DC paper mill (**ABBY JOHNSON**). Similarly, the Georgetown waterfront had several factories in which African Americans labored, such as the **POTOMAC COTTON FOUNDRY**. **HELLEN TUPPER**, **REBECCA BOOTHE**, **LYDIA SMITHERS**, **JAMES WEBSTER**, **ROBERT MASON**, **HENRY SCOTT**, **ISAAC DAVIS**, and **CAJETAN HEDGMAN** were all factory workers living in Georgetown, according to US census data.

Coal mining was the primary industry that used the canal for transporting its freight during the Reconstruction era. The **SWANTON COAL AND ICE COMPANY** and the **CUMBERLAND COAL AND IRON COMPANY** were just two that had loading docks on the canal. Several African Americans worked in the coal industry, either mining coal, loading and unloading it onto canal boats, as dock workers, or as coal barge captains. **PERRY BARNES** was a foreman in a coal company and **JOSEPH PERRY** was a "boss of coal heavers." According to census data, at least two women worked in the coal industry: **HENRIETTA DOVE** and **JENNIE MATTHEW**. **JONATHAN TAYLOR** and **HILLARY POWELL** both worked at the Borden Company wharf and were badly injured at the workplace. Coal mines were not present in the study area, but gold mines abounded near Great Falls, such as the **MARYLAND GOLD MINE**, **FORD MINE**, and **WATSON MINE**. African Americans were engaged in gold mining in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, such as **ERNEST SMALLWOOD** (a "teamster [at] Gold Yards"), **HENRY SHIELDS**, and **ROBERT WARREN**. Others worked in iron foundries, such as the **ANTIETAM IRON WORKS**, **CATOCTIN IRON FURNACE**, and the **COLUMBIAN (OR FOXALL) FOUNDRY**. **HENRY MASON** worked at an iron foundry, as did **JACK HARRIS**. As this section illustrated, African Americans labored and held positions in several industries central and peripheral to the C&O Canal.

The second part of this section explored how the C&O Canal and the Potomac River transitioned in the late nineteenth century from working landscapes of labor to landscapes of leisure and recreation. An early photograph by **ADDISON SCURLOCK** (who moved with his family to DC in 1900 when his father, **GEORGE CLAY SCURLOCK**, accepted a job with the Treasury Department) depicts him and his wife, **MAMIE FEARING SCURLOCK**, enjoying the countryside near Great Falls in a moment of leisure. Another photograph taken by Scurlock around 1915 shows three unknown African Americans taking a leisure skiff out on the river. Where these bodies of water had been the domain of boat captains, coal heavers, quarrymen, and mill workers, these spaces gradually became dominated by picnickers, hikers, canoeists, bicyclists, day-trippers, and pleasure seekers.

The C&O Canal Company had advocated use of the canal for tourism from the beginning and they capitalized on the scenic beauty of the canal's path and various sites along it, such as the Great Falls and the Cabin John Bridge. The **CROMMELIN HOUSE** (or **GREAT FALLS TAVERN**) began as a lockkeeper's domicile but quickly (by 1832) became a tavern for paying guests eager to see the natural wonder at Great Falls. Similarly, the **CABIN JOHN HOTEL** capitalized on the engineering feat that is the **CABIN JOHN BRIDGE**, built as part of the Washington Aqueduct project in the 1850s. According to census data, African Americans worked at the hotel in the late nineteenth century, including **DELLA SIMPSON**, **JULIA A. AREZBO**, and **ARCHIE BAKER**. **MATILDA BOWLES**, **LENA BROWN**, **HATTIE FRY**, and the father of **BILL WHITE** also worked at the Cabin John Hotel. The **ROCK SPRING CLUB** was another resort (hotel) in the study area that employed African Americans, such as **MARIAH M. GRAY** as a cook, **JOHN W. LEWIS** as a general laborer, and **CORDELIA SMITH** in domestic service. Other period resorts in lower Montgomery County near the canal include **GREEN SPRING PAVILION** and **GLEN ECHO**. Census data provided several names of African Americans who worked in service positions in the study area, as waiters in restaurants, chambermaids in hotels, groundskeepers at resorts and country clubs, or as hostlers. These include **DANIEL BOSTON**, **CHARLES H. DIGGS**, **SARAH GREEN**, **ADELAIDE JOHNSON**, **CHARLES MASON**, **EDNA M. STRATTON**, **PHILIP O. JACKSON**, **JAMES FRANKLIN**, **JAMES H.** and **KATIE J. WAUGH**, and **MANUAL WARREN**.

Besides working in the leisure industry, African Americans took part in the leisure opportunities offered in the study area. Washington residents took day trips out into Montgomery County's countryside to escape urban ills for a while; Cabin John Bridge was a favored destination for many, including **MARY CHURCH TERRELL** and **LILLIAN EVANS TIBBS** (also known as Lillian Evanti, the opera singer). Day trips on excursion boats, such as the **E. MADISON HALL**, owned by African American businessman **J.O. HOLMES** from 1917, were also very popular. Boating on the river (and, later, the canal) became a popular pastime in the late nineteenth century, and several boating clubs emerged in the study area during that period, such as the **SYCAMORE ISLAND CLUB**, **POTOMAC BOAT CLUB**, **COLUMBIA BOAT CLUB**, and the **WASHINGTON CANOE CLUB**. Hiking and bicycling also became popular sports for urban African Americans, such as **CAPT. S.M. CLARK** of the **CROSS COUNTRY CYCLE CLUB**, who led excursions to the **HOTEL CYCLE** in Maryland.

Fishing has long been a leisure pursuit and a way to supplement diet for many African Americans in the DC area. **FLETCHER'S BOATHOUSE**, in the Palisades, is still a favored spot for fishermen. **WAYNE ROBBINS** is a multi-generational DC resident whose family has long fished at Fletcher's Boathouse. An *Alexandria Gazette* piece from 1876 relates the story of **JOSEPH BAIN**, a canal boatman who had set a bamboo fishing rod in the canal, then saw it snap when a coal-laden barge passed by. **CHARLES MARSHALL III** was a third-generation Georgetown resident who won second place for catching the longest fish in the Tidal Basin during the eighth annual Fishing Rodeo in 1957. **HARVEY M. MATTHEWS** recalled in a 2018 interview that his father and older brother would fish in the river or canal at the Chain Bridge or in Tobytown. The **ANGLER'S INN** is just one building left on the landscape that testifies to the popularity of fishing as a long-standing and important leisure activity on the river and canal.

C. CULTURAL CONNECTIONS

Defining "culture" is a tricky task, nuanced by the academic discipline of the person attempting to define the concept. Anthropologists might define it as a shared set of values, ideas, or behaviors, whereas a sociologist might focus on collective identities. Most people would define culture as a

way of life or by its manifestations: language, customs, law, art, and religion. This section explores the many ways African Americans interacted with the C&O Canal and the Potomac River not as sources of income or means of labor production. Rather, it addresses intangible cultural connections, such as religion and leisure. The river and the canal served as a place of worship for some, a playground for others. It was also a graveyard and (at times and in particular places) an undesirable space where vice, crimes, and death abounded; ways of life on the water required living with and among these dangers.

1. *Lifeways on Canal Boats*

Although crew demographics changed over the 100 years of the canal's operations, family units comprised a percentage of canal boat crews in every period, albeit overwhelmingly in the twentieth century. Life for C&O canallers and their families on canal boats was unconventional, not only in comparison with larger society (which tends to live terrestrially) but also with life on other canals in America. Perhaps the most in-depth sociological study undertaken of canaller lifeways was Ethel M. Springer's ethnographic analysis of several canallers on three East Coast canal systems, published in the *Monthly Labor Review* in 1923, one year before the C&O Canal was closed permanently to commercial freight and the canaller lifeways—which had existed for nearly a century—became extinct on the Potomac River. Although lifeways on canal boats were by no means static across the time span of a century, a comparison of insights from Springer's work in the early 1920s to an account of a canal trip taken in the late 1850s shows that certain commonalities persisted over time.

Although Springer states early in her report that all of the canaller families she observed on the C&O Canal were white, African American lifeways on canal boats would not have differed fundamentally; Springer's observations may therefore be applied to both white and Black canal-boat dwellers. Springer observed that, ca. 1922, "practically all of the traffic at the time of the study was conducted by one company which owned the boats and employed captains to operate them."³³⁶ It is possible that the one company had a policy not to employ African Americans at the height of the Jim Crow period, as it did have a policy "to give preference to married men on the ground that a married man is steadier in his job than a single man, and that the presence of his wife and children on a boat raises the moral tone."³³⁷ Thus, Springer observed that the majority of

³³⁶ Ethel M. Springer, "Canal-boat Children," *Monthly Labor Review* 16, no. 2 (February 1923):2 (accessed 3 February 2022, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/41828586.pdf>). Otho Swain, a third-generation C&O Canal boatman, recalled in an interview conducted in 1976 that "When the canal had first been built and was in operation, my grandfather had 15 boats of his own built and he ran those boats until the towage company, the canal company, sold over to the B&O Railroad. When the railroad took it they kept its name but they put their own boats on it and wouldn't allow anybody else's there." See Elizabeth Kytte, *Time Was: A Cabin John Memory Book: Interviews with 18 Old-Timers* (Cabin John, MD: Cabin John Citizens' Association, 1976), 7-8. Swain's comment is slightly mistaken: the canal went into *receivership* in 1890, following the devastation caused by the 1889 Johnstown Flood storms and the C&O Canal Company's financial collapse, and trusteeship was awarded to the B&O Railroad by the local courts; it was not sold to the B&O Railroad. The B&O-C&O partnership repaired and reopened the canal in 1891 and closed it in 1924; thus, about 35 years of the canal's commercial navigation was under the influence of the railroad's board. Further investigation may illuminate whether Swain's claim that the railroad had a monopoly on boat ownership is accurate; if so, the B&O Railroad's policies may be why a lack of diversity among canal boat operators was evident in 1922.

³³⁷ Springer.

canallers lived and worked on boats with their families and that canalling was a multi-generational, family business.

The operation of canal boats is an occupation handed down from father to son. Said one mother: “The children are brought up on the boat and don’t know nothin’ else, and that is the only reason they take up ‘boating.’ Boys work for their fathers until they are big enough to get a boat of their own, and it’s always easy to get a boat.” Several men complained that they knew “nothing else” and realized that their children would have the same disadvantage. Most of the fathers had begun boating before they were 13 years of age; but since the majority had begun by helping their own fathers they did not become “captains” at an especially early age, many of them not until they were 25 years or over.³³⁸

Springer detailed the life trajectory of one captain, who bought his own craft and team of mules at the age of 14. He had no education, was illiterate, and lived the life of a canaller for 54 years. He married, had children, and several of his sons and a grandson (aged 16 at the time of Springer’s study) had followed in his footsteps and become boatmen.

This kinship aspect to canalling was not unique to the 1920s. Fathers and sons, or husbands and wives, working on canal boats together dates to the canal’s early days, as illustrated by the New England man’s 1859 journey with Henry Butler aboard the *Caroline of Williamsport*. Butler’s son, called “little Pic,” also worked on the boat, typically engaged with the mules on the towpath. Little is known of Butler or his son. The 1850 US census enumerated him in Williamsport as a mixed-race laborer born ca. 1828, living with his wife, Julia, and one-year old son, John W. Butler. By the 1860 census, Butler’s family had grown to include two more children. Butler likely died before 1870, as his wife remarried in 1874 and was listed in the 1880 US census of Williamsport as Julia Johnson, living with her second husband (Daniel) and the two younger sons from her first marriage, Josiah and James Butler. John Butler, Henry’s eldest child, lived next door to his mother with his wife and three children in 1880. John Butler gave his occupation as “boatman,” suggesting he had made a career of working on the C&O Canal, rising from a mule driver at age 10 to a steersman by age 30.

Otho Swain was a third-generation boatman on the C&O Canal, born on a canal boat while it was resting in a stop lock on 24 July 1901. His grandfather, John Swain, had helped construct the canal system in the mid-nineteenth century and then became a boat owner and boatman. John Swain met his wife because she was the daughter of a lockkeeper. Swain’s father, Jess, began his career as a boatman and then became a lockkeeper in 1909 at Lock 21 (called Swain’s Lock in his honor). Swain had six uncles (three paternal and three maternal) who also worked as boatmen. And when Swain turned 15, he began working for a few years on his uncles’ canal boats. Swain’s patrimony further attests to canalling and canal-boat living as a kinship vocation and lifestyle.³³⁹

In his recollections of the 1859 journey, the New England traveler described their day-to-day activities and how they lived on the boat together for weeks at a time. Commonly, several people shared small spaces on the watercraft. The narrator describes the *Caroline of Williamsport* as

a boat... divided into three apartments, the center was left open except a narrow walk around the edge and formed the hold where the freight is stored. Over this were placed movable hatches making a watertight covering. At each end of the boat is a cabin with the roof raised about three feet above the deck. The front one is used for a stable and the rear

³³⁸ Springer, 3.

³³⁹ Kytte, 5.

one is divided into a stateroom with berths and a cooking galley. The cabin was not so wide as the boat above the deck leaving foot ways on each side. Behind the rear cabin was the tiller deck from which the cabin stairs went down, and under it was a kind of cockpit, about four feet high, where Pic and his boy slept...³⁴⁰

While Butler and his son were relegated to a tiny, unventilated sleeping space, the captain, the traveler, and presumably Tommy (the white boy who helped Butler's son with the mules) shared the cabin. Springer's description and illustration of a C&O canal boat's living quarters ca. 1922 shows that they had not changed greatly in the span of six decades. In a single room measuring 10x12 feet on average were two sleeping bunks, each measuring 6x3 feet, lining the rear wall. One was within the partitioned stateroom and the other was in the open, main living space. Even though the berths were only 3 feet wide, two people shared one, typically. Additional sleeping space was appropriated in "the feed box extending across the deck at the center of the boat... 4 feet wide and 4 feet high, and with blankets spread over the hay and other feed it provided a fairly comfortable bed, used in some cases by the deck hands and occasionally by the children."³⁴¹ On warm nights, occupants slept on the deck in the open air.

If two berths could hold two people each and the feed box another two, the maximum occupancy on the average canal boat was six, yet Springer observed that a quarter of the boats she studied had as many as seven to 10 residents and half had more than four occupants. The conditions Springer describes were crowded and unhygienic: damp floors, screenless windows that permitted insects (especially mosquitoes) to enter the cabin, and no lavatory. Food preparation and storage was done in the main, open space of the cabin, which had a coal-burning stove, a table, and a cabinet per Springer's illustration. The heat emitted by a coal-burning stove was often excessive, and coal dust would have added to the general insalubriousness of the cabin. Hence, most of the time spent on the canal boat was spent on the deck, out-of-doors.

Again, the New England traveler's account shows that some of the ways canallers lived in the 1920s were consistent with what they had been in 1859: "We had a small cook stove in which we burned the soft coal with which the boat was loaded, a spider, an iron teakettle, plates, knives, forks, and several of the small cooking utensils..."³⁴² Provisions were acquired at "warehouses along the canal and at the village grocery stores," which typically entailed coffee, bread, and ham with an occasional vegetable.³⁴³ Malnutrition, with such a diet, had to be inevitable. Swain described the food they ate on a canal boat as the same they would eat at home, but *fresh* because "You couldn't keep much food on the boat – there wasn't ice or ice boxes – so you bought your food about every day. Most of the stores were right at the locks and you'd just get off your boat right at the lock, just hop over."³⁴⁴ He recalled fishing in the river and canal for catfish and bass. He also said that grocery stores "and little towns that sprung up" opened near the canal, at an average distance of every 25 miles.³⁴⁵ Springer similarly noted that the canallers bought their groceries at canal towns on the route. The cabins had no piped plumbing, and drinking water was

³⁴⁰ Clark, ed., "Life on the C&O Canal: 1859," 93.

³⁴¹ Springer, 7.

³⁴² Clark, ed., "Life on the C&O Canal: 1859," 97.

³⁴³ Ibid.

³⁴⁴ Kytte, 9.

³⁴⁵ Kytte, 9, 22.

“secured from springs along the canal and stored in barrels and kegs.”³⁴⁶ Canal water was used for bathing.

If the living conditions on a canal boat were less than ideal, they were exacerbated by the demands of life as a canaller. As Springer stated, “hours of travel on the canal were practically continuous,” with families laboring at least 15 but typically 18 hours per day, sometimes more. Often, family members took shifts at the helm, thereby never allowing the boat to pause. One boat in Springer’s study operated seven days a week, 19 hours a day in the peak season. Six children lived on this boat with their parents. The youngest two, a six-year-old and a two-year-old girl, were cared for by their mother and elder siblings, had no duties, and were in bed by eight p.m.; the eldest four—an 11-year-old girl, a 12-year-old boy, a 15-year-old boy, and a 17-year-old girl—took shifts as boat hands. These children went to sleep by 10 p.m. but were up at 3 a.m.; they were allowed to take naps at various times through the day when their duties were taken by another.³⁴⁷

Boat work was ceaseless: inclement weather never hindered their progress, and Sundays were not a day of rest for canaller families.³⁴⁸ Because of this demanding schedule, canaller families generally did not attend church and had very little time or opportunity for recreation: “Several families when asked about their pleasures and recreation, replied that they had none. Nearly all said that their only friends were the other boating families. Some complained that the children got lonely and restless.”³⁴⁹ Some children reported that they swam in the canal at the lower levels (i.e., near Georgetown), in water that Springer noted was “much polluted,” and the “towpath... furnished almost the only playground for the children, [which] was littered with manure and refuse.”³⁵⁰

Although a minority of the canaller families Springer interviewed lived on their boats year-round, the majority had homes on land that they inhabited during the canal trade’s down season. Springer described these residences as “small detached wooden houses, some being built of logs. None of them had modern conveniences in the way of inside plumbing.” She noted that they were either in or within striking distances of canal towns so that the children could attend schools (albeit intermittently) and so family members, when sick, could seek health care. Boating made accessing medical care on land difficult, adding to the precariousness of life on the canal, on which (as stated in previous sections) accident, injury, and death were common. One canalling mother gave birth to 17 children, and as doctors were typically few and far between, especially on the remote stretches of the upper canal, it has to be assumed they were midwived on the boat; of this woman’s 17 children, eight died in infancy.³⁵¹ Life on a canal boat was, in summation, meager and hard.

a. Chanteys and Songs

Despite the fact that, in general, canallers worked incessantly and took little time off for recreation, the mule-gait speed down the canal (between 6 and 8 miles per hour) allowed a slower pace of life. Moments of amusement and joy were likely found between the family members and crew hands who lived so intimately together on a canal boat. Music appears to be a form of amusement adopted

³⁴⁶ Springer, 8.

³⁴⁷ Springer, 4, 6.

³⁴⁸ Springer, 4.

³⁴⁹ Springer, 10.

³⁵⁰ Ibid.

³⁵¹ Springer, 6.

by some on canal boats; Springer noted “one father who was musical and teaching his children to sing and play on the banjo and the mandolin.”³⁵²

Joseph Perry Mose (1898-1991) was born to a white canaller family with 11 children. He started working on the canal at age 10, driving the mules, then steering the boat at 12; he left the business when he married in 1919. In an [oral interview](#) conducted in 1986, Mose stated that, in the autumn,

...when days was short and the nights was long, steering the canal boat was a pretty lonely job; and it was a sleepy job – you could stand at the tiller asleep. Well, you had to do something to keep awake. Well, lots of people all blowed a horn, a lot of people sang....I had a song I used to sing about an old mule, and it went something like this:

*I had an old mule, and her name was Elle,
She spent 15 years on the C&O Canal
She was a good old mule and a good old gal,
After 15 years on the C&O Canal.*

*I ate my meals with Elle every day,
I eat meat and she hay,
But, oh, you led a good old gal
After 15 years on the C&O Canal.*

*Hit that mule and make that lock!
You'll be home by six o'clock.
But, oh, you've led a good old gal
After 15 years on the C&O Canal.*

*She was a good old mule and a good old gal
After 15 years on the C&O Canal.*³⁵³

Chanteys, or work songs frequently associated with the sea, are also an African American folkway. At their peak in the 1920s, Black fishermen who netted menhaden in the Chesapeake Bay on the lower Potomac, along the Northern Neck of Virginia, sang chanteys to rhythmically coordinate their collective movements, pulling up a heavy purse seine fraught with fish from the water. As Harold Anderson, who wrote an article on the Northern Neck Chantey Singers (a musical group of retired African American watermen), stated, “Chanteys, and worksongs in general, occupy a special place in African American culture—they are songs that have a function: to make work go better.”³⁵⁴ Anderson provides the origins of call-and-response chanteys, explaining their roots “in some of the earliest African customs brought and nurtured by slave populations in the United States and the Americas.”³⁵⁵ Large gangs of enslaved workers on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century tobacco, rice, and cotton plantations throughout the American South sang them to keep time with their manual labor and to ease their burden. Chanteys were sung in all milieus of labor, such as in the mines, on the railroad, and in chain gangs.³⁵⁶

³⁵² Springer, 10.

³⁵³ C&O Canal Association, “Oral History: Recollections from someone who worked on the canal, Joseph Perry Mose” [website], accessed 4 February 2022, <https://candocanal.org/oralhist/>.

³⁵⁴ Harold Anderson, “Spotlight on Culture: Menhaden Chanteys, An African American Maritime Legacy,” *Marine Notes [A Maryland Sea Grant Publication]* 18, no. 1 (January-February 2000):2 (accessed 3 February 2022, https://www.mdsg.umd.edu/sites/default/files/files/MN18_1.PDF).

³⁵⁵ Anderson, 2.

³⁵⁶ Anderson, 2, 5.

Given the musicality of boatmen and the testament of Mose, it is likely that C&O canallers sang songs related to the water or to their work, either traditional or composed themselves. More research into this aspect of canaller culture could provide nuanced insight into the life of a C&O canaller.

2. Foodways

Foodways are another aspect of intangible culture that characterize a community. The foods people eat and how they prepare them are regional, based on location as well as traditions. The Chesapeake region has a riverine ecology, and fish provided not only sport but a food staple. Seafood has fed the peoples of the Chesapeake for centuries, from the Indigenous who established fisheries on creeks to European settlers who exploited the same resources with nets, traps, and weirs. Shad, mackerel, and herring were staples in Chesapeake diets through the nineteenth century and were typically eaten dried or salted. Cooking methods such as planking, in which fresh fish are attached to wood planks that are propped before an open fire and slowly baked or smoked, were adopted from Indigenous customs.³⁵⁷

In his article, “Shad, Fried Chicken and Apple Butter: the Foodways of Historic Montgomery County 1600-1900,” Michael W. Twitty states that “American food culture is tied into the legacy of migrations and regionalism that gives rise to any aspect of folk life”; in particular, “the food culture of colonial, federal and antebellum Montgomery County would have been impossible without the diverse influences that created it,” which included British planters, German and Irish settlers, and enslaved African Americans.³⁵⁸ Twitty asserts that enslaved Africans brought foods and foodways to Montgomery County from Senegambia, the Gold Coast, and Central Africa. Eighteenth-century Marylanders crossed local produce and meats with European and African cooking traditions and created a culinary palette that included sweet potatoes, leafy greens (such as collards, kale, and turnip greens), tomatoes, and pole beans as well as beef, chicken, pork, and seafood. Colonial foodways culminated in deep fried and spicy dishes. Recipes were passed down and published in nineteenth-century cookbooks penned by local women, such as Elizabeth Lea, who wrote *Domestic Cookery* at her home in Sandy Spring, Montgomery County.³⁵⁹ Lea’s cookbook retains a number of recipes related to mollusks and fish found in local waters, such as oysters, bass, and trout. Fresh fish was baked or roasted whole. The Potomac River supplied most of these fish, but more stagnant millponds and the canal became breeding grounds for chubs, perch, and sunfish. Seneca Creek had warmer water that supported varieties of catfish.

Many enslaved African Americans fished to supplement the meager foodstuffs allotted to them by their enslavers. Charles Ball, born into slavery in Calvert County, Maryland, ca. 1781, wrote a memoir published in 1837 in which he recalled,

...I did not receive much whipping, but suffered greatly for want of sufficient and proper food. My master allowed his slaves a peck of corn, each, per week, throughout the year; and this we had to grind into meal in a hand mill for ourselves. We had a tolerable supply

³⁵⁷ Michael W. Twitty, “Shad, Fried Chicken and Apple Butter: the Foodways of Historic Montgomery County 1600-1900,” *The Montgomery County Story* [Biannual Publication of the Montgomery County Historical Society] 52, no. 3 (Fall/Winter 2009):25 (accessed 3 November 2021, https://mchdr.montgomeryhistory.org/xmlui/bitstream/handle/20.500.12366/224/mcs_v052_n3_2009_twitty_dwyer.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y); Cummins, 4.

³⁵⁸ Twitty, 37-38.

³⁵⁹ Twitty, 26-27.

of meat for a short time, about the month of December, when he killed his hogs. After that season we had meat once a week, unless bacon became scarce, which very often happened, in which case we had no meat at all. However, as we fortunately lived near both the Patuxent river and the Chesapeake Bay, we had abundance of fish in the spring, and as long as the fishing season continued. After that period, each slave received, in addition to his allowance of corn, one salt herring every day.³⁶⁰

Fishing in creeks, rivers, and the bay supplemented a diet dominated by cornmeal, pork, and vegetables (like potatoes and cabbages) grown in small garden patches adjacent to enslaved quarters.³⁶¹ Salt-pickled herring was a staple supplied to enslaved persons in the region and became so associated with Chesapeake foodways that when Frances Trollope published *Domestic Manners of the Americans* in 1832, following her sojourn to Montgomery County two years prior, she noted the prevalence of “herrings of the bountiful Potomac supply their place. These are excellent 'relish' as they call it, when salted and if I mistake not, are sold at a dollar and half per thousand.”³⁶²

A fish meal became associated with this region. Carl Blaubock, the proprietor of the Great Falls Inn, advertised his tavern in the 17 August 1910 issue of *The Washington Herald* by emphasizing his “Famous Bass and Chicken Dinner, 75 cents.” Social picnics advertised in DC’s African American newspapers at the turn of the twentieth century frequently featured fish meals, such as when the CAPITAL PLEASURE CLUB “gave its annual banquet and shad bake” on 1 May 1903 at LAKE VIEW PARK, near the Dalecarlia Reservoir.³⁶³ Two years prior, the club had held a “Planked Shad Dinner in Honor of Hon. George H. White and Others” at Lake View Park on May 2.³⁶⁴ An advertisement for “An All Day Oyster Roast at JONES PARK, Glen Echo” appeared in the 8 September 1900 issue of *The Colored American* (Figure 2.20).³⁶⁵

³⁶⁰ Charles Ball, 26.

³⁶¹ Twitty, 28-29, 32.

³⁶² Twitty, 32.

³⁶³ “Annual Banquet and Shad Bake,” *The Colored American*, 2 May 1903:15.

³⁶⁴ “Up the Palisades,” *The Colored American*, 11 May 1901:12.

³⁶⁵ “An All Day Oyster Roast” [Advertisement], *The Colored American*, 8 September 1900:13.

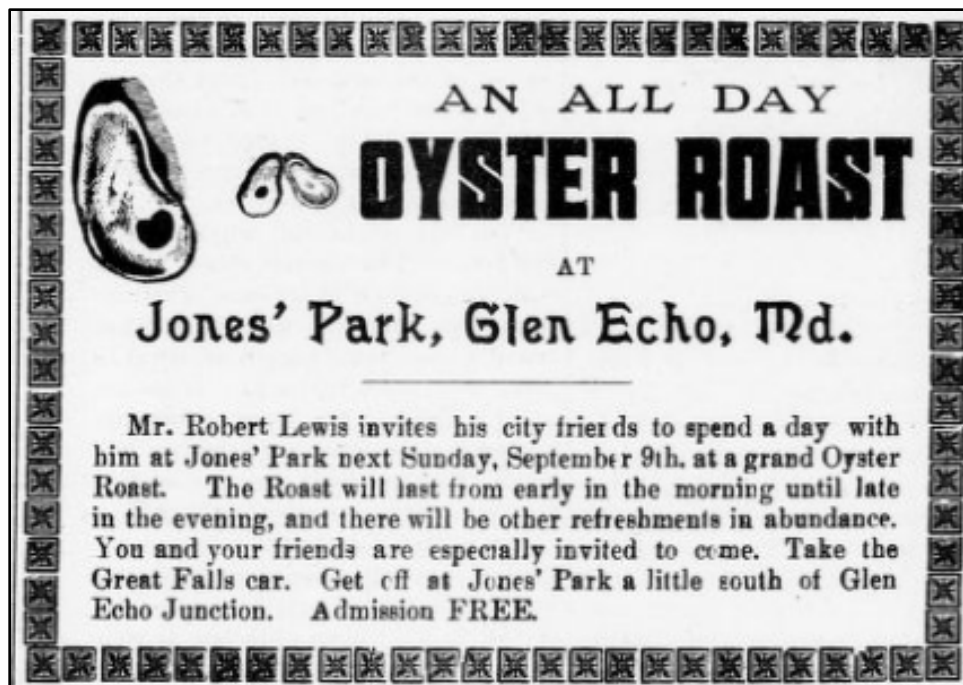


Figure 2.20: Advertisement for an Oyster Roast at Jones Park, Glen Echo, Maryland, in *The Colored American*, 8 September 1900

A more recent example is the annual [Chicken & Crab Feast](#) in Cabin John, Maryland. Chesapeake blue crab is synonymous with Maryland cuisine, so it is not surprising that this fundraising event features the delicacy. The first Crab Feast was held in 1964 to raise funds for the Cabin John Home Study program (see inset box in Chapter V.A.2.c). [BILL WHITE](#) and [CELESTE SWEDENBURG](#) hosted the event for the first few years, and it was held in the open field behind White's house on Carver Road (off Seven Locks Road), a part of the Gibson Grove community (see Chapter VI). For the first eight years, it was organized solely by the Carver Road African American community to benefit the Cabin John Home Study program, which was an at-home tutoring program for the neighborhood's Black children. Afterward, the Cabin John Citizens' Association became involved, and the event was opened to the entire Cabin John community. "But the women of Carver Road have always been the cooks – turning out wonderful pots of collards, green beans, coleslaw, potato salad, and baked beans to go with the delicious crab and chicken."³⁶⁶ As many as 500 people and 100 volunteers attended the most recent annual event, which is ongoing.

3. Religion on the Waterfront

In his HRS on the C&O Canal, Harlan D. Unrau notes that, although canallers "generally appeared to be an irreverent and irreligious lot [who] boated seven days a week if loads were available,"³⁶⁷ religion did play a role in their lives, as it did for most Americans in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Unrau mentioned three missions, or churches, established near the canal to serve this population and especially the canal children. Members of Georgetown's St. John's Episcopal Church established a mission for sailors and canal boatmen who frequented the city's waterfront

³⁶⁶ Barbara Martin, "Bill White: Always Part of Cabin John," *Village News*, 1985, in "People of Cabin John," Cabin John, MD: *Village News*, 1995), 4-5 (Rockville, MD: Repository: Montgomery History, Jane C. Sween Library).

³⁶⁷ Unrau, 818.

in 1855. They built a small frame sanctuary, **GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH**, on Wisconsin Avenue south of M Street. Regular services were held there as well as Sunday school, taught by students from Alexandria's Virginia Theological Seminary. The C&O Canal Company permitted local women, under the umbrella of the American Sunday School Union, to teach the canallers and their families on an abandoned canal boat docked near Cumberland in the 1880s. Lastly, a private citizen, Mrs. S.E. Safford, started a **MISSION SCHOOL** in a one-room brick building that used to belong to Foxall Foundry, located on the towpath about 0.25 mile above the Potomac Aqueduct (Figure 2.21). The mission school lasted from 1874 until 1913, and its tutors provided literacy lessons to the children and trade skills to the adults.³⁶⁸



Figure 2.21: Willard R. Ross, "Church on towpath in Georgetown" (DC Public Library)

Although Unrau does not specify whether these churches and missions catered to both white and Black canallers, there is an explicit reference to the use of waterways in the study area for religious purposes by African Americans in an 1876 newspaper article. The *Alexandria Gazette* item entitled "Going it Timidly" talks about the practice of baptisms in the Potomac River:

Along that portion of the Potomac above the blue bridge, where the African Baptists immerse their converts, there are the remains of a log wall, whence coal was formerly loaded on to flat-boats and carried down the river at high water, long before the canal was built. Last summer the pastor of the flock above mentioned met with a watery mishap by stepping off this wall and going down incontinently in the deep water. Now when immersing at this place, he feels the way very cautiously with his cane, on the principle,

³⁶⁸ Unrau, 838-839.

we suppose (to [illegible] the figure) that a burnt child dreads the fire. At the last baptismal service which took place there last week, the converts were put down in water scarcely more than two feet deep, and considerable mud was stirred up by the concussion. Prudential considerations prevented the pastor from going out farther.³⁶⁹

The exact location of this place may be difficult to discern, especially as there likely were no purpose-built structures to mark the spot for religious purposes, but the account suggests that the river was used—at least once, if not myriad times, and at least in one place, if not in others—as a place of worship for nearby African American communities that practiced adult baptismal rites in the late nineteenth century. Other neighboring waterways were known to host mass baptisms through the early twentieth century. A photograph from the 1920s shows that Rock Creek, near the Q Street Bridge, was used for a mass baptism.³⁷⁰ Scurlock photographed a group baptism on 3 September 1933, which **ELDER SOLOMON LIGHTFOOT MICHAUX** held on a barge towed by the E. Madison Hall, an excursion boat, docked at the foot of Water Street in Georgetown. His photograph depicts scores of adults, both white and Black, robed in white gowns with hundreds of spectators on the shore. A *Washington Post* article on the following day claimed there were 250 participants and 10,000 onlookers to the evangelical event, one of many that Michaux would hold in DC.³⁷¹ For many, the muddy waters of Rock Creek and the Potomac River became purifying. Further research on this topic may be achieved by combing through oral histories or by conducting interviews with remaining members of these communities.

4. *Landscapes of Danger and Vice*

Although danger and vice are not manifestations of culture, they were elements of daily life on the canal. It is important to stress that the idyllic parkland that exists today is a mid-twentieth century construct; for most of its working history, the C&O Canal was a noxious and dangerous place. People working on or living the canal would have known this. Previous sections have noted that accidents, injuries, and deaths were common among those who worked on the canal or in adjacent industries. Canal boat collisions occurred frequently enough to necessitate swimming ashore; winter was an especially dangerous time to cross, even for decent swimmers, as with the case of **JOSEPH WAUGH**, a Black boatman who “froze to death escaping from a coal boat which sunk in the river, near Cumberland.”³⁷² Another Black boatman in the employ of Joseph Magruder, **DAVID KING**, “accidentally fell from the gangplank of the boat into the Canal, about two miles from [Cumberland]... and was drowned before assistance could be rendered.”³⁷³

Passengers and locals frequently met bad ends on the canal, too, usually by accidental drowning and especially when alcohol had been imbibed. **BENJAMIN JOHNSON** was a Black man “who lived in the vicinity of the canal” and whose body was found in the canal locks at Jefferson Street in

³⁶⁹ “Going it Timidly,” *Alexandria Gazette* [Alexandria, VA], 24 May 1876:4 (accessed 3 November 2021, <https://candocanal.org/histdocs/Newspapers-1876.pdf>).

³⁷⁰ “Sites: Q Street Bridge,” *Georgetown African American Historic Landmark Project & Tour* [website] (Humanities DC, accessed 25 January 2022, <https://www.gaahlp.org/sites/q-st-bridge/>).

³⁷¹ National Museum of African American History and Culture, 70.

³⁷² “Froze to Death,” *Cumberland Allegonian* [Cumberland, MD], 1 January 1849:2 (accessed 3 November 2021, <https://candocanal.org/histdocs/Newspapers-1849-50.pdf>).

³⁷³ “Drowned,” *Cumberland Allegonian* [Cumberland MD], 26 July 1865:3 (accessed 3 November 2021, <https://candocanal.org/histdocs/Newspapers-1865.pdf>).

Georgetown. Although an inquest was held to determine cause of death, the coroner determined the drowning was likely accidental and that Johnson “fell into the lock and was drowned.”³⁷⁴

Murder also plagued the canal:

Several captains of coal boats, who arrived last night, report that the dead body of a colored man who lived at the Great Falls, and was employed in attending the canal locks there, was found in the lock on Thursday. The body appeared to have been chopped with an axe and was horribly mutilated. Suspicion rested upon his wife, and she was arrested. The boatmen being in haste to reach the docks did not stop long enough to inquire into the details, or even ascertain the name of the murdered man.³⁷⁵

Death on the canal was not limited to humans but also applied to beasts of burden. Mules and horses often slipped from the towpath or bridges and drowned in the canal. Sometimes, old horses and mules died on the canal from overwork, and their carcasses were just discarded either in the canal or in the wooded lands adjacent to the canal. The canal was a fetid boneyard, according to the New England traveler aboard the *Caroline of Williamsport* in 1859. One reason given for the lack of habitation in the study area close to the canal was the fact that it was a veritable graveyard: “so the boatman hauled a dead mule over to the bottom land between the river and the canal and that was where the buzzards had their royal feasts.... [that is] one reason why our more sensitive Sugar Land Hundred friends of that day preferred to live a safe smell’s distance away from the Potomac.”³⁷⁶ In addition to the smell of decaying horse flesh, the bottom lands near the river were full of mosquitoes and biting flies that carried diseases as well as poisonous snakes. The area adjacent to the canal was a rugged, inhospitable terrain in places, especially in the summer months.

Period newspaper articles represented both the canal and the waterfront as landscapes of danger and vice for Black and white residents, painting them as sites of thievery, robbery, and violence. Georgetown’s waterfront had a reputation for danger and vice in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, when the railroads effectively closed down the wharves. Devoid of bustling trade, the wharves became the playground for “large crowds of fishermen, sailors, stevedores, and ‘common women’...along Water Street... day or night... [where] according to the *Washington Post*, ‘drunken brawls and robberies were of almost daily occurrence.’”³⁷⁷ The area directly south of the Georgetown Market House was

...the red light district...just south of [M Street] in the rowdy, violent neighborhood of interlocking steep little streets, alleys and courts known as “Boston.” “Boston” had its own nomenclature. Below Grace Street, in the warrens around the old milling structures, was “Hungry Hill” where Oisie Ridgely of “Paradise Flats” fired at Jeannette Sims, and the bullet struck a steel rib in Jeannette’s corset, saving her life. Below M Street between west Marketplace and 33rd Street flourished “Frog Island,” “Boston’s” east boundary, where anyone could buy a shot from Bill Davis, the “walking speakeasy.” A block west was “Buzzard’s Roost,” the former Henry Foxall mansion [on 34th Street below the canal], now

³⁷⁴ “Affairs in Georgetown - Drowned in the Locks,” *Evening Star* [Washington, DC], 28 October 1864:2 (accessed 3 November 2021, <https://candocanal.org/histdocs/Newspapers-1864.pdf>).

³⁷⁵ “Affairs in Georgetown. A Murder at the Great Falls,” *Evening Star* [Washington, DC], 17 November 1866:2 (accessed 3 November 2021, <https://candocanal.org/histdocs/Newspapers-1866.pdf>).

³⁷⁶ Wood, 5.

³⁷⁷ Kahrl, 1123.

a shabby boarding house and flophouse, where the furtive Red Bill of Herring Hill would hide out to elude the coppers.³⁷⁸

The Potomac River itself became a site of vice, as it “had long served as a favored location for prostitution... [where] floating barges and cheaply built houseboats (known as arks) had met the demands of white and black Washington males.” Watercraft were used as houses of ill repute and gambling dens because they could “navigate waters inaccessible to police patrol boats.”³⁷⁹ For many, associations with the waterfront and canal were negative, as places to avoid.

5. Summary

This section attempted to outline the ways in which African Americans interacted with the C&O Canal and the Potomac River not as sources of income or means of labor production, not as spaces for recreation and leisure alone, and not in terms of group or identity formation, but in terms of the experiences of everyday life and the cultural connections created by African Americans with the water. It looked at canal boat lifeways among family units that dwelled on canal boats together and how the vocation was passed down through generations; manifestations of canal culture, like songs and chanteys; foodways in the region relating to fishing in the river and canal; religion on the canal and other waterways; and, lastly, the waterfront’s reputation as a place of vice, crimes, and danger.

In the early 1920s, Ethel M. Springer conducted an ethnographic study of several canallers on three East Coast canal systems and published her findings in the *Monthly Labor Review*. Although her study of canallers on the C&O Canal did not include any Black families, the ways in which people lived on canal boats ca. 1922 (as observed by Springer) did not vary significantly from the ways in which Henry Butler and his son, John W. Butler, lived and worked aboard the *Caroline of Williamsport* as observed by the New England traveler in 1859. In short, canal families, white or Black, lived in a similar manner in 1922 as they had in 1859; nothing evolved significantly in over 80 years. The living conditions were cramped, unhealthy, and substandard. Working hours were constant and therefore boat hands had to take shifts that lasted through the night. Canal boat operators had little down time in the peak season but often did not work in the winter months, during which time many of the families resided in houses in or near canal towns. Their peripatetic lifestyles were difficult on the children, who had little to no schooling and felt isolated. Because canal boat children grew up in that specific lifeway, knowing nothing else, they tended to stay in that business, and generations assumed the mantle of canal boat operator from their fathers and mothers. Canal boat living was generational and kinship-based.

A culture is signified by its manifestations, such as language, music, attire, religion, or cuisine. Joseph Perry Mose was a canal boat child, born into that lifeway, who was interviewed in 1986 about his unconventional youth. He remembered composing a song he sang to keep himself awake while steering the boat or leading the mules through the night. Chanteys, or work songs, are an African American intangible cultural artifact, brought from Africa to the New World and employed in all areas of work. Black watermen who labored on the lower Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay sang rhythmic chanteys to keep time with their hard manual labor. It is possible that additional research into customs on the C&O Canal may illuminate more canal-specific language or songs. Foodways are another manifestation of culture. Lower Montgomery County

³⁷⁸ Mary Mitchell, 82.

³⁷⁹ Kahrl, 1133.

and Washington, DC's foodways are strongly influenced by the Potomac River's bountiful fish and shellfish as well as the region's long history of African American settlement. Enslaved Africans brought foods and spices with them across the Atlantic that were melded with Native American and European food preparation methods to create a cuisine particular to the Potomac River valley. Charles Ball, an enslaved man mentioned in the first section, narrated in his autobiography the importance of fish to an enslaved person's diet. Tastes for that particular diet—especially salted herring and planked shad—persisted from the eighteenth century well into the twentieth. This is evidenced by a late nineteenth-century advertisement in *The Colored American* (a DC newspaper with an African American readership) for a shad bake at LAKE VIEW PARK (on the Maryland side of the Dalecarlia Reservoir) held by the CAPITAL PLEASURE CLUB.

Religion is another expression of culture, and although Springer's study suggested that canallers did not take Sundays off to attend church, religion still played a part in the lives of nineteenth-century African Americans in the study area associated with the canal. GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH was built on Wisconsin Avenue south of M Street to serve canallers in the mid-nineteenth century, and the C&O Canal Company permitted local women, under the umbrella of the American Sunday School Union, to teach the canallers and their families on an abandoned canal boat docked near Cumberland in the 1880s. Mrs. S.E. Safford started a MISSION SCHOOL in a one-room brick building that used to belong to Foxall Foundry, located on the towpath about 0.25 mile above the Potomac Aqueduct, which lasted from 1874 until 1913. A newspaper article suggests the river near the canal was used for adult baptisms, and Rock Creek was frequently used for mass baptisms in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Addison Scurlock photographed a group baptism in 1933, organized by ELDER SOLOMON LIGHTFOOT MICHAUX and held on a barge towed by the E. Madison Hall, an excursion boat, docked at the foot of Water Street in Georgetown.

It is slightly ironic that the Georgetown waterfront was used as a place of purification and baptismal rights, as it also had a reputation for vice, crime, and danger in the late nineteenth century. Like many urban working waterfronts, Georgetown's docks doubled as a red-light district, where gambling dens and prostitution houses proliferated. Newspaper accounts suggest that violence erupted frequently in the area south of the canal. The canal was a site of petty theft, as any highway often is, and also a graveyard. Several people drowned in the canal's icy waters, such as JOSEPH WAUGH, a Black boatman who froze to death when escaping a sinking boat; DAVID KING, who accidentally fell in and drowned; and BENJAMIN JOHNSON, who was merely a resident near the canal who was drowned. The amount of death and injury on the canal shapes it as a memorial, a place to be approached with reverence for the lives lost.

D. RECOMMENDATIONS

The C&O Canal had myriad and layered meanings for the African Americans who lived in the upper NCA during the period of the canal company's commercial navigation and afterward. For locals, it was a source of revenue and income; it provided economic opportunities in both rural and urban environments. For several, it was a source of leisure and play, but for too many, it was also a site of danger, injury, accident, and death. The canal sustained the communities formed along it and near it: it provided fish to eat, water to power mills, and transportation to markets. The African American communities that emerged near the canal in the nineteenth century had social, cultural, and economic ties to the C&O Canal and to the C&O Canal Company that were important to the history and development of the canal and vice-versa.

This chapter has provided a contextual overview of several themes as they relate to African Americans and the C&O Canal. In addition, it has identified scores of individuals and places associated with African Americans in the study area. Research on any one of these names or places could further understanding of historical African American lifeways in this region vis-à-vis the Potomac River and C&O Canal. Recommendations for further lines of inquiry follow.

1. Chapter II, Section A.1.b, Self-Liberation, provided several names of freedom seekers (such as Rufus Jackson, Ben Addison, Robert Simmes, and Elias Dowling) that were gleaned from historical newspaper advertisements for runaway enslaved men. Additional research into specific individuals could provide a fuller picture of the act of self-liberation via the Potomac River and the C&O Canal. Investigation of even one of the individuals could provide a more personal narrative or account of one man's journey to freedom.
2. Chapter II Section A.1.c, Civil War, provided a few names of USCT enlistees from the study area (i.e., Montgomery County and Georgetown). A more intensive review of USCT rosters would provide additional names of men from the study area so that a more comprehensive list could be formed. Additional research into any one individual would provide a more personal narrative of a Montgomery County or Georgetown man's experiences during the Civil War.
3. In Chapter II, Section A.2.a, George Pointer's cottage was provided as an example of property that was affected by the building of the C&O Canal. Scholars Torrey and Green have conducted extensive and recent research on Pointer and his descendants; they have suggested the cottage was close to Lock 6, in Brookmont. However, this conflicts with the fact that Pointer was enumerated as a resident of Washington, DC, in three US censuses (1800, 1820, and 1830), in an area equivalent to the Palisades neighborhood of northwest DC. Furthermore, Pointer's letter suggests he resided close to Little Falls, which is on the border between DC and Maryland. More research could identify and map the likely place of Pointer's cottage and frame interpretation at this spot particular to Pointer's extraordinary life.
4. Chapter II Section A.2.a referred to Sugar Hill as a racially integrated neighborhood near Georgetown's waterfront. Only one reference to Sugar Hill has been discovered to date, in the 1857 newspaper article quoted in the narrative. Description of its approximate location per the 1857 news item suggests it roughly equated to known African American neighborhoods south of the canal and west of Wisconsin Avenue, such as Boston, Cherry Hill, and Grace Street. Could it be that "Sugar" Hill was the article author's mistake, and "Cherry" Hill was meant? Or did the name "Sugar Hill" evolve into another name? Or was the neighborhood really eradicated for warehouses and other industrial sites along the waterfront? Further research into Sugar Hill's location and history is warranted to better understand how the C&O Canal contributed to displacement and gentrification of African American neighborhoods.
5. Chapter II Section A.2.c.ii, Schools, noted that other investigators have placed the Chamberlain School at 2512 East Place, NW in Georgetown; building permits suggest the current rowhouse at that address dates to the 1880s. If the Chamberlain School operated from 1866 until ca. 1890, a demolition and new construction in the 1880s disrupts the use of that space. Further investigation into that building's construction history could illuminate whether this important site for African American education still stands or not.
6. Chapter II Section A.2.c.ii briefly mentioned the National Training School for Girls as an integrated reformatory for young women begun in 1893. It was not segregated until 1941 and was not closed until 1953. It was demolished for the present Sibley Memorial Hospital.

- As the role of women has not been highlighted frequently in this report, further study into the individuals who attended the National Training School for Girls and its history as an institution would provide a voice for an underrepresented point of view.
7. Chapter II, Section A.2.d provided several names of the Cabin John and Carderock CCC camp enrollees. Scholars who have conducted in-depth research into these two African American CCC camps admit that the CCC rosters are incomplete and that a full account of all the enrollees, who came and went over a span of four years, does not exist at this time. Additional research could provide a more composite view of the men who enrolled in these CCC camps; a few individuals could be researched further, especially by a genealogist, to understand where certain men settled after their time in Montgomery County. Identified descendants could provide oral interviews, period photographs, and memorabilia that could provide a personal, holistic account of one person's experience living and working on the C&O Canal as a member of the CCC program.
 8. Appendices C through G provide myriad names of African Americans who lived in the study area in during the era of commercial navigation on the C&O Canal. They are organized by occupation. Any one of these names could be investigated by a genealogist who might then identify descendants. This might lead to oral interviews with descendants or the discovery of private memorabilia that could provide insight into one person's experiences with the C&O Canal as a place of labor or leisure.
 9. Chapter II, Sections B.2.b.ii and C.2 mentioned two places that were sites of leisure for African Americans: the Hotel Cycle/Cycle Clubhouse and Lake View Park. They were identified through their repeated mentions in historical African American newspapers in DC, *The Colored American* and *The Washington Bee*. Research into these two locales could map them on the current landscape and further contemporary understanding of ways in which historical Black Washingtonians spent their leisure time.
 10. Chapter II, Section C.1, Lifeways on Canal Boats, relied heavily on the 1923 sociological study published by Springer, who stated at the beginning that she observed no Black canal boat families on the C&O Canal. Further investigation to identify Black canal boat dwellers and canalling families is warranted.
 11. Chapter II, Section C.1.a, Chanteys and Songs, suggested that canallers created songs to pass the time and that work chanteys were common to African American watermen on the lower Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay. An avenue of inquiry would be ascertaining whether there was a body of chanteys known and sung by C&O canallers and whether canallers had a distinct and specialized jargon. As these are both intangible cultural artifacts, their recordation may be non-existent or difficult to locate.
 12. Chapter II, Section C.2, Foodways, pointed to salted herring and planked shad as two historical foodways that relate to both the Potomac River and historical African American culture in the region. Do these tastes persist in regional African American communities today? Is there an opportunity for CHOH park interpretation using foodways?
 13. Chapter II, Section C.3, Religion on the Waterfront, mentions the "mission school" on the towpath that was adapted from a building on Foxall's Foundry property. Do remnants of the building still exist that could be marked and possibly interpreted? Also, further research into the C&O Canal's use as a site of baptisms would strengthen its connection with religion.

SECTION II

III. GEORGETOWN

A. ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT

In a 1937 guidebook of DC published by the Works Progress Administration entitled *Washington, City and Capital*, Georgetown was said to have “had its goodly share of the oldest [African American] inhabitants.”³⁸⁰ As Constance McLaughlin Green points out in her book *The Secret City: A History of Race Relations in the Nation’s Capital*, when President George Washington selected land at the confluence of the Potomac and Eastern Branch (now Anacostia) rivers as the seat of the new national government in 1791, the land was not terra incognita: it was a patchwork of tobacco plantations and farms manned by enslaved African Americans.³⁸¹ Georgetown began as a tobacco inspection warehouse built by George Gordon by 1745, and African Americans resided in the hamlet from its inception. Georgetown quickly grew into a bustling riverport centered on the tobacco trade. By 1800, of the 3,108 people enumerated in Georgetown, nearly one third (981) were African Americans, one fifth of whom dwelled there as free citizens. BENJAMIN BANNEKER, for example, was born free near Baltimore; he arrived in Georgetown in 1791 and took temporary lodgings while surveying the boundaries of the new federal district with Andrew Ellicott.



Figure 3.1: “View of Georgetown DC” 1855 (E. Sachse & Co.)

³⁸⁰ Federal Writers’ Project, Works Progress Administration, *Washington, City and Capital*, 75.

³⁸¹ Constance McLaughlin Green, *Secret City: A History of Race Relations in the Nation’s Capital* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967), 13.

Sited on deep waters, Georgetown became the northernmost port on the Potomac River (Figure 3.1). From its inception, foreign and domestic shipping was Georgetown's primary economic driver. Imports included manufactured goods and wines from Europe as well as sugar, molasses, and rum from the Caribbean. Exports were milled flour and locally grown tobacco, "the latter being the chief commodity marketed at Georgetown until the early 1830s."³⁸² Brooke Beall, for instance, was a tobacco shipping agent who also sold "salt, herring, flour, rum, snuff, tea, spelling books, bridles, and bedsteads."³⁸³ Beall owned Lot 73 on Water Street, west of High Street (now Wisconsin Avenue) and one block away from the river; he had purchased the warehouse and lot in an auction after it had been seized from British loyalists (the Glasgow, Scotland-based firm of Colin Dunlop & Son) during the Revolutionary War. Beall relocated his family from Beall Mount, his seat in Montgomery County (near present-day Potomac), to Georgetown around 1788 and set up **YARROW MAMOUT**, an enslaved African, to direct his import/export business.

YARROW MAMOUT
(1736-1823)

Enslaved, Mamout was a Fulani Muslim brought to Maryland from West Africa aboard the *Elijah* in 1752. He was enslaved by Samuel Beall, whose family he served until he was manumitted in 1796. As a free man, he settled in Georgetown and became a property owner and entrepreneur.

Mamout was a Senegambian captured by slavers, shipped to America, and sold in Annapolis, Maryland, in 1752. He was enslaved for over four decades by the Beall family: first Samuel, then Samuel's sons Isaac and Brooke, and lastly Upton, Brooke's son. For the first quarter-century of his life in slavery, Mamout served as Samuel Beall's body servant, closely attending Beall in his Georgetown residence and then moving with Beall to Sharpsburg and to the Frederick Forge in Washington County, Maryland. Brooke Beall, however, relied more on Mamout's age (he was six years older), experience, and autonomy. Brooke Beall, who owned several properties between Georgetown and Beall Mount, was a busy man; he was the clerk of the court (based in Rockville) for Montgomery County from 1783, an elected alderman for Georgetown from 1789, and the owner of mills on Watt's Branch in Montgomery County. He would have traveled to these locales frequently, and in his absences, Mamout may have been entrusted to operate the Georgetown import/export business. In addition, Brooke Beall hired out Mamout for short-term tasks, such as in September 1790, when Mamout worked for two days on the *Maryland*, John Mason's ship, likely loading cargo. A man with a variety of skills, Mamout worked as a stevedore, weaving baskets, and making charcoal and bricks.³⁸⁴

One year after Brooke Beall's death in 1795, Upton Beall manumitted Mamout. According to Mamout, his enslaver freed him when he believed Mamout had reached an age too old for hard labor.³⁸⁵ But Mamout thrived in freedom despite his later years. Within four years of manumission, in 1800, Mamout bought a half lot and built his home at **3324 DENT PLACE, NW**, where he lived with his son, Aquilla, whose freedom he had purchased from Ann Chambers, Aquilla's enslaver, in 1796 with his earned wages. At his death in 1823, Mamout was one of the most respected men

³⁸² Unrau, 664.

³⁸³ James H. Johnston, *From Slave Ship to Harvard: Yarrow Mamout and the History of an African American Family* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), 70.

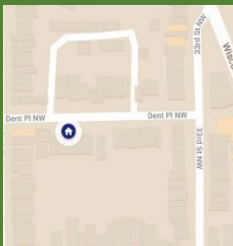
³⁸⁴ Johnston, 60-72.

³⁸⁵ James Johnston, "The Man in the Knit Cap," *The Washington Post*, February 5, 2006 (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/02/03/AR2006020300827.html>).

in Georgetown’s African American community, so much so that portraitist Charles Wilson Peale captured Mamout’s visage for posterity in 1819.³⁸⁶ Although Mamout’s life story is individual and unique to himself, it could be seen as a distillation of the larger experience African Americans had in Georgetown from the eighteenth through the twentieth centuries: a beginning in urban slavery, a transition to freedom, followed by the creation of thriving Black communities.

YARROW MAMOUT SITE
3324 Dent Place, NW, Georgetown, DC

In 1800, Mamout purchased a half lot at this address, where he lived with his son, Aquilla. By 1818, the lot, assessed at \$500, included a small frame dwelling. Aquilla owned the property until his death in 1832. The lot’s mid-nineteenth-century house was demolished ca. 2013 and the lot redeveloped in 2017.



1. *Pre-Emancipation Period: Georgetown’s Sites of Enslavement*

Mamout and Banneker, as free Black men, were in the minority in Georgetown; the vast majority of African Americans there were enslaved. Charles Ball, enslaved and working in the Navy Yard, had his Sundays free, when he would walk to Georgetown and “frequently saw large numbers of people of [his] colour chained together in long trains, and driven off towards the south.”³⁸⁷ Tobacco was not the only commodity that made Georgetown merchants wealthy; quickly, the town acquired a reputation as a market for enslaved African Americans.³⁸⁸ From the mid-eighteenth century, Georgetown was a working landscape of enslaved labor while its waterfront was an embarkation point for enslaved people departing for the American South. As early as 1760, John Beattie established himself as a slave dealer in Georgetown and is thought to have imprisoned enslaved persons in a **SLAVE PEN** at 3206 O Street. On the west side of High Street was **BEATTIE’S AUCTION HOUSE** (1351 Wisconsin Avenue), where Beattie sold enslaved people as chattel property. Adjacent was the **MONTGOMERY TAVERN** at 1363-65 Wisconsin Avenue, where farmers who traveled in from the countryside found lodgings while in town for Beattie’s auctions. Taverns were also sites of slave deals and jails, such as **SEMMES’ TAVERN** at 3206 M Street, named in an

³⁸⁶ Mia Lashaye Carey, “How Religion Preserved the Man: Exploring the History and Legacy of African Islam through the Yarrow Mamout (ca.1736-1823) Archaeology Project.” Dissertation, University of Florida (2017) 27-30.

³⁸⁷ Charles Ball, 28.

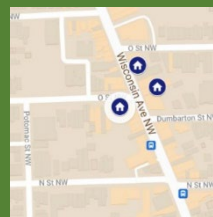
³⁸⁸ The system of slavery was first brought to the Chesapeake in 1619, when a Dutch privateer carrying enslaved Africans landed at the Virginia settlement of Jamestown. In 1642, a Caribbean vessel disembarked 13 enslaved Africans in St. Mary’s City, Maryland. The earliest trans-Atlantic shipments to the upper Chesapeake occurred in the 1690s; in five years, from 1695 to 1700, nine vessels disembarked 1,742 enslaved Africans in ports along the Patuxent River and Annapolis, Maryland. By the early eighteenth century, ports in the upper Chesapeake that received slave ships included Annapolis, Alexandria, and sites along the Patuxent River. The disembarkation point “South Potomac” could refer to any number of places on the Virginia shores of the river; similarly, “North Potomac” referred to any port on the north shore of the Potomac River from the mouth of the river to Great Falls, beyond Georgetown. This district included Georgetown, Bladensburg, Piscataway, Port Tobacco, St. Mary’s, and other sites. After 1741, the port of entry called “South Potomac” was Belvoir, while the port of entry and customs station called “North Potomac” was St. Mary’s City. See “Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database,” *Voyages: Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database* (2019, accessed 8 March 2021, <https://www.slavevoyages.org/voyages/214focMv>); Donald Sweig, “The Importation of the African Slaves to the Potomac River, 1732-1772,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 42, no. 4 (1985):511, footnote 12; Eleanor E. Breen, *The revolution before the Revolution? A Material Cultural Approach to Consumerism at George Washington’s Mount Vernon, VA* (Knoxville: doctoral dissertation, Department of Anthropology, University of Tennessee, 2013), 139.

1805 notice in the *National Intelligencer* for an auction; in the 1830s, this tavern became McCandless' Tavern, also known for hosting slave auctions.³⁸⁹ Auctions of enslaved persons were also held in the basement of the **GEORGETOWN MARKET HOUSE** at 3276 M Street.

JOHN BEATTIE'S SLAVE PEN

3206 O Street, NW, Georgetown, DC

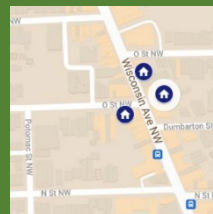
As early as 1760, Beattie established himself as a slave trader in Georgetown. The site on O Street was a prison, or pen, for enslaved individuals waiting to be sold. The present building likely dates to the mid-nineteenth century.



JOHN BEATTIE'S AUCTION HOUSE

1351 Wisconsin Avenue, NW, Georgetown, DC

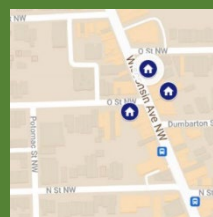
Opposite his O Street slave pen, Beattie held auctions of enslaved persons at his premises on High Street (now Wisconsin Avenue), Georgetown's main road. The original building occupied the site from ca. 1760 to ca. 1850.



MONTGOMERY TAVERN

1363-65 Wisconsin Avenue, NW, Georgetown DC

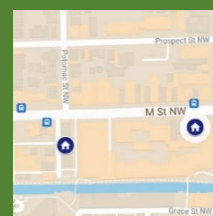
This site was once a lodging house for plantation owners who attended Beattie's slave auctions. The tavern was noted for its stables, large enough to stall 300 horses; they may have also been used to hold enslaved people.



SEMMES' - McCANDLESS' TAVERN

3206 M Street, NW, Georgetown, DC

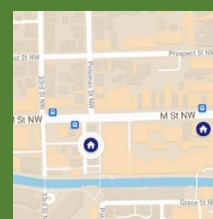
This 1796 building was Joseph Semmes' Indian King Tavern from 1801 to 1806. In the 1830s, it was known as McCandless' Tavern. It held slave auctions under both owners. It was restored in 1962 and is now a private club, the City Tavern.



GEORGETOWN MARKET HOUSE

3276 M Street, NW, Georgetown, DC

This 1865 building replaced the first market hall, built in 1795. Its waterfront location was ideal for receiving goods sailed up the river, including enslaved persons. An auction block in the basement marked it as a site of slave sales.



Georgetown's enslaved population experienced a degree more autonomy than their counterparts on plantations. They could be hired out by their enslavers to other whites, typically for periods up to a year, a practice that was common in DC and the region. Hired-out enslaved persons dwelled in the homes of their enslavers, in the homes to whom they were contracted, or in their own dwellings. Two **COTTAGES AT 3410 VOLTA PLACE** in Georgetown are former quarters for enslaved persons who were hired out by their enslavers. Enslavement and freedom were interrelated realities

³⁸⁹ Lesko et al., 2. Federal Writers' Project, Works Progress Administration, *Washington, City and Capital*, 73; Jesse J. Holland, *Black Men Built the Capitol: Discovering African-American History In and Around Washington, D.C.* (Guilford, CT: The Globe Pequot Press, 2007), 28; Oliver W. Holmes, "The City Tavern: A Century of Georgetown History, 1796-1898," *Records of the Columbia Historical Society, Washington, D.C.* 50 (1980):10-29. (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/40067806>).

in Georgetown. In the decades leading up to the Civil War, Washington provided a gateway for freedom-seeking African Americans via the Underground Railroad, a clandestine network of Black and white persons who helped freedom seekers reach refuge in free states and other countries. Georgetown's Mount Zion A.M.E. Church vault and cemetery were reputed to have been stops on the Underground Railroad.

Although Georgetown had been a prosperous riverport at the end of the eighteenth century, its good fortunes declined in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. As a commodity crop, tobacco had fluctuated in value several times over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, forcing many plantation owners to switch to more stable crops, such as grains. Also, tobacco leached nutrients from the soil, and poor farming practices resulted in fallow fields and abandoned farms. The population in Montgomery County declined in the 1820s as farmers migrated westward in search of fertile, unspoiled lands. This affected Georgetown merchants who had relied heavily on the tobacco trade sustained by adjacent counties' plantations. Georgetown's decline was compounded by a silting up of the Potomac River, which hindered shipping in the 1820s and 1830s. At the same time, Alexandria usurped Georgetown's position as the primary deep-water riverport in the upper Chesapeake. Thus, this period witnessed a marked interest in large public works projects intended to connect the upper Chesapeake region to western lands and open new trade routes, such as the C&O Canal and the B&O Railroad, both begun in 1828.³⁹⁰

By the 1830s, in response to the decline in the tobacco trade, Georgetown became a preeminent port and market for the intra-American slave trade, in which enslaved people from the Chesapeake were forcibly relocated to cotton, sugar, and rice plantations in the deep South. Two known voyages of the ship *Katherine Jackson* occurred in 1836 and 1838 that carried enslaved persons from the Chesapeake to the Mississippi Delta. On 19 November 1836, the *Katherine Jackson* sailed from Georgetown to New Orleans carrying 118 enslaved individuals (62 of whom were children and youths under the age of 16 years), the property of 11 different enslavers. The ship arrived in New Orleans on 9 December 1836, but the fates of the 113 enslaved passengers (five had disembarked in Alexandria, Virginia) is unknown; presumably some were sold in slave markets in New Orleans, shipped to other states and countries, or were transported to the Mississippi Delta plantations of their Chesapeake enslavers.³⁹¹ In 1838, the same vessel carried 272 souls from Georgetown to New Orleans.³⁹² The trade of enslaved individuals in Georgetown lasted a century, until it was banned in 1850.³⁹³

Enslavement was not the only legal status for members of Georgetown's African American populace. Between 1830 and 1860, the number of free African Americans living in Washington doubled while the number of enslaved persons halved. Some of Georgetown's free African Americans rose to prominence and prosperity, such as Yarrow Mamout; however, being a free Black in Georgetown was not without its dangers and tribulations. The passage of two Fugitive

³⁹⁰ Lesko et al., 1; Jonathan V. Levin, "Old Georgetown Road: A Historical Perspective," *The Montgomery County Story [Published Quarterly by the Montgomery County Historical Society]* 45, no. 2 (May 2002):230.

³⁹¹ "Slave Manifests of Coastwise Vessels Filed at New Orleans, Louisiana, 1807-1860" (Fort Worth, TX: M1895, Roll 8 (Old Roll 12-13) Inward, 1837-1841, "Louisiana, New Orleans, Slave Manifests of Coastwise Vessels, 1807-1860," database, NARA microfilm publication M1895, RG36, National Archives and Records Administration, 1986, accessed 2 January 202 via FamilySearch [website], <https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSVZ-V9S8-3?cc=2822773>).

³⁹² "Sale of Maryland Jesuit's Enslaved Community to Louisiana in 1838," *The Georgetown Slavery Archive* [website] (accessed 18 November 2021, <https://slaveryarchive.georgetown.edu/collections/show/1>).

³⁹³ Lesko et al., 2.

Slave Acts, in 1793 and 1850, made capturing and returning (or selling) alleged fugitive enslaved persons a lucrative business for mercenary enslavers and traders; too often, free individuals were caught in the enslaver's snare and sold into bondage. Such was the case of **SOLOMON NORTHUP**, a Black man born free in New York who traveled to Washington, DC, in 1841, where he was drugged, tied up, and imprisoned. When he protested and proclaimed his free status, he was beaten. Northup was transported to New Orleans, where he was sold into slavery on a plantation; he toiled there for 12 years before being freed and reunited with his family. Georgetown's free Blacks would have been aware constantly how tenuous freedom really was.

SOLOMON NORTHUP

(1808 – ca.1864)

Born a free Black man in New York, Northup traveled to Washington, DC, in 1841 where he was kidnapped and sold into slavery. After 12 years toiling on a Louisiana plantation, he returned to his family and dictated the memoir *Twelve Years a Slave*, published in 1853.

Besides living with the threat of potentially being sold into slavery, free Blacks in Georgetown suffered encroachments on their civil liberties by the local government. Every few years, between 1795 and 1845, Georgetown's aldermen legislated Black Codes that prohibited the rights of the city's free Black population. The earliest codes limited the right of assembly to fewer than six persons (except for religious services) and focused on shaping behavior deemed inappropriate, such as attending cock fights, shooting pistols, swimming in the canal or river, or racing in the streets. Constance McLaughlin Green, in *The Secret City: A History of Race Relations in the Nation's Capital*, argued that "as long as the proportion of free [Blacks] to white people in Washington and Georgetown ran no higher than about 15 percent," white society tacitly permitted Black residents to "enjoy a number of simple pleasures, some of which would later be denied them," such as "fishing and bathing in the river;... hunting squirrel in the woodlands and the wild duck, snip, and geese in the tidal swamps along the creeks."³⁹⁴

Antebellum Georgetown was a patchwork of small Black neighborhoods composed of both free and enslaved African Americans. At the turn of the nineteenth century, Black residences coalesced around the Fish Market, which was erected south of the Georgetown Market House and the canal. The market sat on the corner of **CHERRY (NOW GRACE) STREET**, established by 1798. Public alleys were extended on either side of the marketplace by 1818: to the west, Cedar Alley, and to the east, **POTOMAC STREET**.³⁹⁵ **VOLTA PLACE** counted as many as 90 inhabitants in 1840. **HERRING HILL**, in the northeast section of the town, had been an enclave for free Blacks since the early nineteenth century, claiming 951 residents by 1860, the same year that tax assessment records listed 56 properties owned by Black householders.³⁹⁶ Working-class whites and Blacks lived near the wharves, mills, and factories on the waterfront, south of the canal. By 1856, Georgetown had several brick warehouses on M Street and 33 on Water (now K) Street, five flour mills powered by canal water, the Potomac Cotton Foundry's large enterprise, several lumber mills and yards,

³⁹⁴ Constance McLaughlin Green, *Secret City*, 21.

³⁹⁵ Constance W. Werner, *Georgetown Historic Waterfront, Washington, D.C.: A Review of Canal and Riverside Architecture* (Washington, DC: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, 1968, accessed 19 November 2021, <http://npshistory.com/publications/habs-haer-hals/selections/georgetown-historic-waterfront.pdf>), 25.

³⁹⁶ Mary Mitchell, *Chronicles of Georgetown Life, 1865-1900* (Cabin John, MD: Seven Locks Press, 1986), 8.

and extensive coal wharves.³⁹⁷ The C&O Canal, the waterfront docks and quays, and access to railroad lines made Georgetown a center of commerce before the Civil War (Figure 3.2).



Figure 3.2: “Canalboats at Georgetown” (Courtesy of Montgomery History, Jane C. Sween Research Library)

2. *Post-Emancipation Period: The Rise of African American Neighborhoods in Georgetown*

Emancipation came to the District of Columbia’s enslaved population in 1862. During the Civil War, the free African American communities of Washington increased with the influx of “contrabands,” or self-liberating African Americans fleeing slave-holding states. The number of Black people residing in Georgetown increased from 1,935 to 3,271 in the decade ending in 1870. Finding refuge in DC, formerly enslaved people initially were settled in contraband camps established by the federal government throughout the district and northern Virginia, but after the war, a permanent housing solution had to be found for the scores of new residents. As LaRoche and Fletcher asserted in *Reconstruction and the Early Civil Rights Movement in the National Capital Area*,

the large surge of Black migrants during the 1860s... led to the construction of alley housing.... Within the alley pattern distinctive to Washington, “newly arriving African Americans were squeezed into what had originally been the backyards of large lots that then were reconstructed into high-density, low-quality housing along alleys within the residential block.”³⁹⁸

³⁹⁷ Unrau, 664.

³⁹⁸ LaRoche and Fletcher, 124; see also Federal Writers’ Project, Works Progress Administration, *Washington, City and Capital*, 75.

Georgetown's antebellum communities absorbed only some of the new arrivals: the residents on Volta Place, for instance, had doubled by 1870 while only five households in Herring Hill were known to have taken in refugees. Most of the new settlers found housing on alleyways such as Foundry Alley; **POPLAR ALLEY** (now Street), between 27th and 28th; O and P streets; and **BELL'S COURT** (now known as Pomander Walk), on Volta Place between 33rd and 34th streets.³⁹⁹ New communities of freedpeople and transplants emerged in neighborhoods such as **BOSTON** (south of M Street), Fenwick Hill (in northwest Georgetown), Callahan's Lot, and the Heights (Figure 3.3, end of this section).

The housing shortage required quick construction, typically wood frame, or the slipshod conversion of outbuildings. On Olive Street, south of Herring Hill, "many black families from Virginia occup[ied] converted stables who worked in Cox's Tannery, at Palmer's Bottling Depot, or as domestics."⁴⁰⁰ **BRINETOWN** was described as a Black shantytown built upon open meadows at 35th Street and Reservoir Road. In an 1879 survey of housing in Georgetown, analysts discovered that frame construction was more common than brick houses in Black neighborhoods by a ratio of three to one. In Herring Hill (which was the largest African American neighborhood in Georgetown by the late nineteenth century, encompassing 15 city blocks in the area south of P Street, between 29th Street and Rock Creek Park), "1,601 people lived in 47 brick and 146 frame dwellings. Only ten of these were connected to a sewer and only 21 had water closets. The overall [density] was 8.3 persons to a dwelling." Georgetown's segregationist policies were seen on divided streets: the west side of Thomas Jefferson Street below the canal became all-Black and the east side was majority white. Similarly, on the 2700 block of N Street, "there was a sharp contrast between the five brick houses on the north side occupied by Naval Observatory scientists and the six little houses on the south side where 46 blacks lived."⁴⁰¹

African American civic life grew after emancipation, prompted by the passage of the Negro Suffrage Bill in 1866. By 1867, when Georgetown's mayoral race made national headlines because a Black candidate ran for office, Georgetown's African Americans were holding political meetings in the **EBENEZER A.M.E. CHURCH** on O Street or the **GRANT-COLFAX CLUB** on Rock Street. In 1871, Georgetown lost its territorial independence when Congress revoked its town charter and formally incorporated it into DC's governmental jurisdiction. Concurrently, Georgetown could not compete with Washington commercially (despite its mills, fisheries, foundries, and factories), and business and population growth shifted downtown. Over the successive decades, "by default, the waterfront of Georgetown was given over to some of the city's least desirable functions: power production, meat rendering, cement mixing, and the storage of...construction materials."⁴⁰² Georgetown's population was nearly static in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, testifying to the riverport's decline.⁴⁰³ But while trade languished, it did not die entirely: wheat, coal, and timber continued to be hauled down the canal on barges and to be processed in Georgetown's mills. Many of Georgetown's Black men were employed in these mills, docks, and coal yards.

³⁹⁹ Mitchell, 8. LaRoche and Fletcher, 133. "Site List and Narratives," *Georgetown African American Historic Landmark Project & Tour* [website] (accessed 3 January 2022, <http://www.gaahlp.org/sites/site-list-and-narratives/>).

⁴⁰⁰ Mitchell, 90.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid.

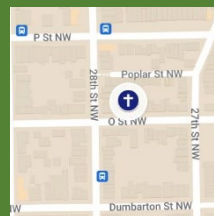
⁴⁰² Smith, 27.

⁴⁰³ Alexandra Jones, "Gibson Grove Gone But Not Forgotten: The Archaeology of an African American Church" (Berkeley: PhD dissertation in Anthropology, Graduate Division, University of California, 2010), 7. Lesko et al., 17-23, 44. Mitchell, 6. Unrau, 665.

EBENEZER AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

2727 O Street, NW, Georgetown, DC

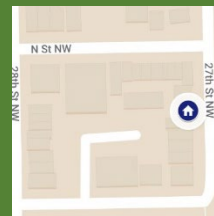
Organized in 1856 by members who split from Mount Zion, this congregation had a 125-year history of political activism. By the 1980s, the dwindling congregation moved to Fort Washington, MD. The building is now the Anglican Christ the King.



GRANT-COLFAX CLUB

South end of 27th Street, NW, Georgetown, DC

Located on Rock Street (what the south end of 27th Street was called historically), the Grant-Colfax Club was a meeting place for political African American residents of Georgetown during the Reconstruction era. Its exact location is unknown.



The most densely populated neighborhoods for African Americans still lay by the waterfront, south of the canal, amid warehouses and working docks. At the turn of the twentieth century, Georgetown's waterfront was industrial, fraught with "smokestacks of a rendering plant, the Capital Traction Company's coal-fired power plants, several large ice warehouses, and sprawling stone and gravel companies."⁴⁰⁴ **CHERRY HILL** was described as a "cluster of brick and wooden dwellings occupied by colored people" ca. 1909, while "further east, on Thirty-second street, Grace Church stands near the end of the uncouth little street which bears its name" and "behind the church is 'Brickyard Hill' where both white and colored people have lived for many years in a remarkable collection of unsanitary houses."⁴⁰⁵ Boston was by the wharves and considered a red-light district. Often associated with unsavory characters, crimes, vices, and unhygienic conditions, alleys received large amounts of vitriol in the contemporary press. In the early twentieth century, these alley dwellings and neighborhoods became a target of urban renewal, clearance, and gentrification.

⁴⁰⁴ Lesko et al., 44.

⁴⁰⁵ "Sites: Grace St./Cherry Hill/Cissel (Cecil) Alley," *Georgetown African American Historic Landmark Project & Tour* [website] (Humanities DC, accessed 31 January 2022, <http://www.gaahlp.org/sites/south-of-m-street-and-west-of-wisconsin-ave-neighborhood/>).

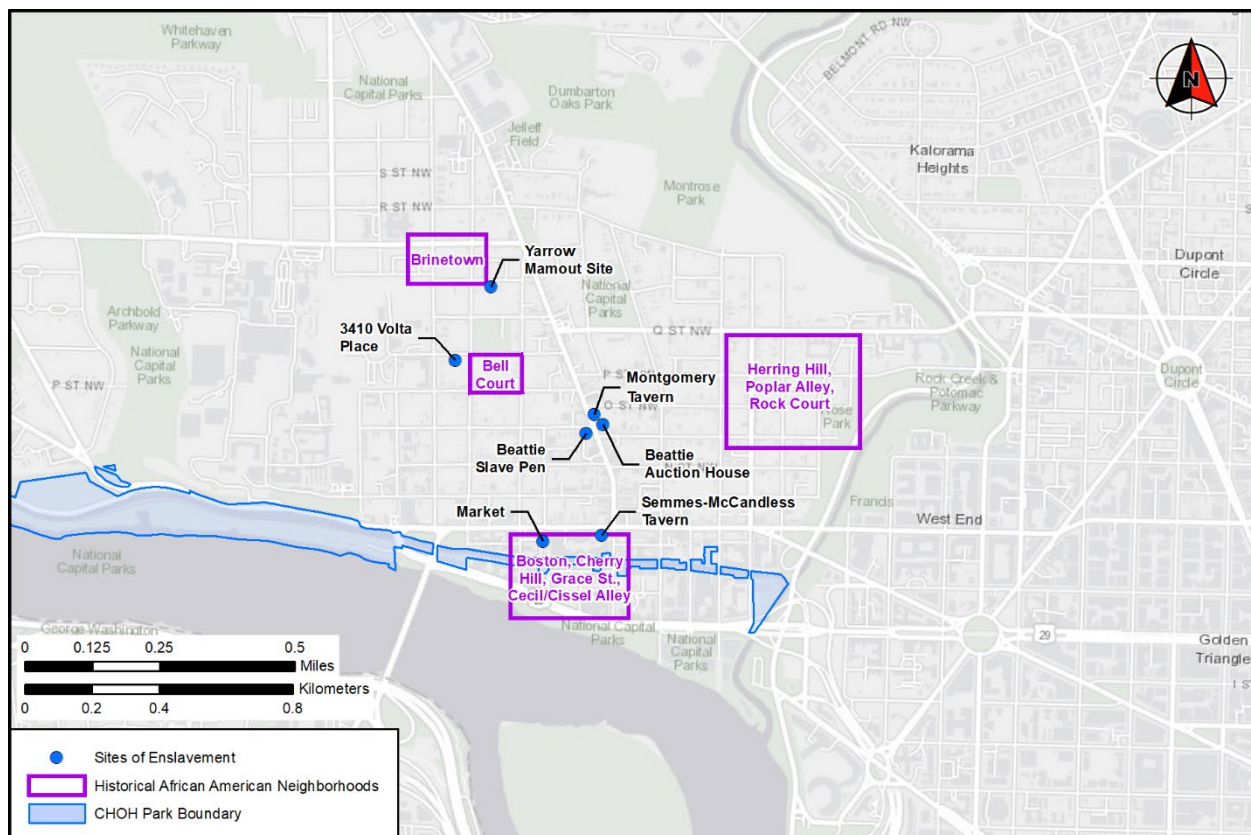


Figure 3.3: Map of Georgetown Sites of Enslavement and African American Alley Neighborhoods

3. *Twentieth Century: Gentrification and Displacement in Georgetown*

The fortunes of the C&O Canal had faded precipitously after 1889, when the regional storms occurring during the Johnstown Flood wrought excessive damage to the canal infrastructure. By the 1900s, its commercial trade was a ghost of what it had been three decades prior (Figure 3.4). A decline in trade resulted in a decline in production, and many of the mills in Georgetown ceased operations, thereby decreasing employment opportunities for all of the town’s residents but especially for its Black population. Many of Georgetown’s African American residents went into service positions, working as wait staff in restaurants or as domestics in hotels. Several worked for the Capital Traction Company at its Union Depot. Georgetown had been predominantly a working-class locale for both whites and African Americans employed in its factories; however, its gentrification began in earnest in the first decade of the twentieth century, as white employees of federal agencies in Washington sought cheaper housing stock in the declining industrial town. As Georgetown’s housing stock was limited, it became expensive, as demand drove market prices.⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰⁶ Lesko et al., 46-47.



Figure 3.4: Willard R. Ross, *C&O Canal at Georgetown*, ca. 1910 (DC Public Library)

By 1900, nearly all of the inhabitants of alleys were African Americans, and Black alley dwellers comprised 15 percent of the city’s total African American population. Georgetown in 1912 had approximately nine alleys peppered throughout the gridded city where concentrations of African Americans lived. Ten dwellings were concentrated on Bell’s Court (now Pomander Walk), branching southward from Volta Place between 34th and 33rd streets. East Place, where the Chamberlain School had been located until ca. 1890, had four dwellings with Black occupants. Poplar Alley and **ROCK COURT**, both on the west side of 27th Street, had the densest concentrations of alley dwellers on the east side of Georgetown, with 12 and 14 dwellings, respectively. On the opposite side of town, Bank Alley (north of M Street, between 34th and 33rd streets) had seven dwellings, Dyers Alley (south of M Street, between 34th and 33rd streets) had eight, Car Stable Alley (south of M Street, between 33rd and Potomac streets) had nine, and Oak Alley (north of M Street, between Wisconsin Avenue and 31st Street) had 8. The largest concentration was also the oldest settlement: **CECIL (OR CISSEL) ALLEY**, south of the canal and Grace Street, immediately west of Wisconsin Avenue, had 25 dwellings.⁴⁰⁷

Although Washington’s first alley dwellings had been subdivisions made by the owners of the street-facing houses and thereby were owned and leased by those property owners, by the turn of the twentieth century, most alley domiciles were owned by investors and absentee landlords. These out-of-town property owners neglected maintenance and upkeep of the dwellings while charging exorbitant rents. Fewer than half of 1 percent of all the alley dwellers in all of DC owned their own

⁴⁰⁷ “Mapping Displacement: From Alley Clearance to Redevelopment,” *Prologue DC* [website] (accessed 11 February 2022, <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=ca5cad337d174bc18e01c40efcb91122>).

home.⁴⁰⁸ Housing for African Americans living in Georgetown at the turn of the twentieth century was typically frame housing, poorly constructed. The impoverishment in these neighborhoods, to which municipal services were denied, allowed real-estate developers and city planners to call them blighted and to plan for their redevelopment. At the same time, wealthier white families were moving into Georgetown, thereby placing pressure on the extant residents by securing the limited housing. Brinetown, centered on 35th Street and Reservoir Road, was redeveloped as the site of middle-income townhouses for whites with a white high school (Western, now the Duke Ellington School of the Arts) ca. 1898. The displaced Black residents moved farther into the District, to Foggy Bottom or the southwest quadrant. Additional displacement of Blacks occurred when Georgetown University expanded with the construction of the hospital in 1898 and when the Capital Traction Company built a streetcar terminal on M Street and a station at Prospect and 36th streets.⁴⁰⁹

The 1920s and the 1930s witnessed a Black Renaissance in urban centers, such as Harlem in Manhattan and Washington, DC. Georgetown's Black renaissance manifested in its business and professional classes: by 1920, Georgetown boasted six African American churches, the **MOUNT ZION COMMUNITY HOUSE** (which operated as a lending library as well as a social hall), and several Black-owned businesses. Many of Washington's African Americans rose to positions of authority in the civil services, and others attained degrees in higher education and assumed roles in professions that had previously been closed to them, such as law and medicine. Black businesspeople owned restaurants, coal delivery services, ice businesses, confectionaries, barber shops, and beauty salons, mostly in the Herring Hill neighborhood. There were Black morticians with their own funeral homes, and three Black doctors served the Georgetown community. **PRIDE'S PHARMACY**, located on a corner lot at the intersection of 28th and P streets, was a Black-owned business for generations. The **BLUE MOUSE THEATER**, which operated until 1949, presented vaudeville shows and films to Black audiences in its building at 1206 26th Street. The nearby **ROSE PARK PLAYGROUND** at 26th and O streets was a rare integrated space of leisure for Black and white residents of the area. It was on the Rose Park tennis courts that **MARGARET PETERS** and **ROUMANIA PETERS WALKER**, sisters who lived at 2710 O Street, practiced the sport that gained them national acclaim. Local athletics also included Black baseball teams, such as the Holly Hill All-Stars and Georgetown Athletics. Georgetown residents and jazz musicians **DUKE ELLINGTON** and **REX STUART** rose to fame collaborating in the 1930s, both as virtuosos at their respective instruments and as band leaders.⁴¹⁰

Despite some progress, life in a southern city during the Jim Crow-era of segregation was fraught with social injustices targeting African Americans. As Georgetown continued to be gentrified by white transplants in the interwar years, Black homeowners who had roots in Georgetown spanning generations were displaced. Real-estate developers' visions, lending banks' restrictions, municipal urban planning policies, and federal legislation and investments conspired to further segregate and disenfranchise Black communities in urban centers across the nation.⁴¹¹ Racial covenants written into deeds of title, a popular tool used from ca. 1900 until 1948 to discriminate against African Americans, prohibited Blacks from owning and occupying residences in new suburban developments intended for whites only. Municipal zoning practices also contributed to

⁴⁰⁸ "Mapping Displacement: From Alley Clearance to Redevelopment."

⁴⁰⁹ Lesko et al., 45.

⁴¹⁰ Lesko et al., 52-79.

⁴¹¹ Lesko et al., 85.

discrimination, and municipal services (such as garbage collection or utilities connections) were often not extended to African American neighborhoods or were discontinued, adding to the dilapidation and blight of the Black community not being served. Most insidious was the practice of “redlining.” Municipal planning departments and lenders’ groups (such as the Home Owners’ Loan Corporation) made maps in which they designated Black urban neighborhoods as “hazardous” or undesirable; this precluded Black homeowners from attaining mortgages and loans at reasonable rates. The Federal Housing Administration (FHA), established as a New Deal program in 1934 to focus on America’s housing crisis during the Great Depression, “institutionalized racial exclusivity as a criterion for mortgage lending. Until 1950, the FHA’s underwriting manuals all but required the use of racial covenants for ensuring the future value of new housing.”⁴¹² All of these factors resulted in targeted racial discrimination in which “African Americans and other people of color were left out of the new suburban communities—and pushed instead into urban housing projects.”⁴¹³

Two period maps show how these discriminatory practices were applied to Washington, DC, and to Georgetown. The FHA’s 1934 *Map of the District of Columbia* depicts, block by block, the density of African American residences in Georgetown and other parts of DC, providing a quick visual reference for where Black neighborhoods were vis-à-vis white enclaves (Figure 3.5). The FHA’s 1937 *Map of the Metropolitan Area of Washington, DC* provides a patchwork of coded swathes overlaid on a map of the DC metro region, in which all of Georgetown received the “Type F Residential Sub-Area” grade; this categorization equated to the following description:

areas [that] have lived their span of life as residential areas and are now declining rapidly into very undesirable sections. The areas are subject to commercial and industrial encroachment and the properties are no longer good residential investment in the general market. These areas house over three-fourths of the negroes in the metropolitan district and are showing effects of negro occupancy; many of the structures are in poor condition and are rapidly tending to become slums if they are not already in that category. There is little or no building activity in these areas as there is very little undeveloped land.⁴¹⁴

Segregation and racial discrimination were elemental aspects of the Black experience in Georgetown in the twentieth century, compounded by white gentrification and the historic preservation movement in the 1930s that sought to “restore” Georgetown into a picturesque, riverside, nineteenth-century village. These forces combined to raise the housing prices in Georgetown and to change the town’s demographics, as white occupants replaced Blacks who were pushed to the geographic fringes. Washington’s 1934 Alley Dwelling Act further exacerbated the housing shortage for African Americans, as the Alley Dwelling Authority enabled by the municipal legislation razed tenements they considered “blighted.” In Georgetown, this resulted in the displacement of 32 African Americans when six domiciles in East Place (an area bounded by 25th, 26th, P, and Q streets) were demolished. In Cecil (or Cissell) Alley, between Water and

⁴¹² Sarah Shoenfeld, “Mapping Segregation in D.C.,” *D.C. Policy Center* [website] (23 April 2019, accessed 19 November 2021, <https://www.dcpolicycenter.org/publications/mapping-segregation-fha/>).

⁴¹³ Terri Gross, “A ‘Forgotten History’ of How the US Government Segregated America,” *Fresh Air* [radio broadcast], National Public Radio, 3 May 2017 (accessed 19 November 2021, <https://www.npr.org/2017/05/03/526655831/a-forgotten-history-of-how-the-u-s-government-segregated-america>).

⁴¹⁴ Federal Housing Administration, Division of Economics and Statistics, “Housing Market Analysis, Washington, D.C.,” 5 August 1937 19-26 (Washington, DC: Research and Statistics Division, Records Relating to Housing Market Analyses, 1935-42, Box 17, RG 31, National Archives and Records Administration), 19-26, quoted in Shoenfeld.

Grace streets on Potomac Street, 112 African Americans in 27 houses were displaced. Present-day Pomander Walk was historically Bell's Court, an area between 33rd and 34th streets, P Street, and Volta Place, that had housed Black domestics who worked in private homes and laborers at Georgetown University. In 1950, the 41 African American inhabitants of Bell's Court were served eviction notices by the Board of Condemnation of Insanitary Buildings; the few who ignored the notices and refused to leave their homes were jailed. These homes were not razed but were restored as "coach houses" and sold to affluent transplants. Tellingly, the only African American neighborhoods in Georgetown that Black residents considered slums were Rock Court (on 27th Street between Dumbarton and N streets) and Poplar Alley. The application of the word *slum* to neighborhoods like Bell's Court stemmed from a prejudiced, white perspective.⁴¹⁵ By 1945, Georgetown had no more African American alley communities.⁴¹⁶



Figure 3.5: FHA's *Map of the District of Columbia: Percentage of dwelling units occupied by persons other than white, 1934* (DC Public Library)

The postwar period proved increasingly oppressive in terms of legislated segregation and racially discriminatory housing practices. In 1945, DC's Department of Recreation attempted to segregate Rose Park Playground, but local protestations forced them to recede their actions. The all-white

⁴¹⁵ Lesko et al., 77-99.

⁴¹⁶ "Mapping Displacement: From Alley Clearance to Redevelopment."

civic groups, the Georgetown Civics Association and the Progressive Citizens Association of Georgetown, spearheaded the white gentrification of Georgetown by lobbying for legislation like the 1950 Old Georgetown Act, which sought to enable and support property owners who rehabilitated their historic properties but de facto served to discriminate against those who could not afford a particular level of home investment and maintenance. The average price of residences in Georgetown doubled between 1930 and 1950, which resulted in higher real-estate tax assessments and real-estate taxes. Black home ownership decreased slightly in the decade ending in 1950, but the hardest hit were renters, especially after rent controls were eliminated in 1951: Black tenants in Georgetown dropped from 599 in 1940 to 313 in 1950. Black Georgetown's institutions suffered with the exodus; the historical Mount Zion United Methodist Church's congregation was decimated, and the church's Community House, which had served as an important lending library and social hall in previous decades, was closed. By 1950, Black residents constituted fewer than 10 percent of Georgetown's population.⁴¹⁷

American postwar urban-planning practice systematically eradicated entire sections of historic neighborhoods (typically occupied by minority populations) for redevelopment (a practice known as urban renewal) and highway expansion. Georgetown was not immune, and between 1947 and 1949, the waterfront was irrevocably altered with the construction of the elevated Whitehurst Freeway. The Freeway was designed by the Iowa-based architecture and engineering practice of Alexander & Repass, whose first principal, [ARCHIBALD ALEXANDER](#), was a civil engineer and the first African American graduate of the University of Iowa's School of Engineering. The loss of so much historic fabric on the waterfront for the freeway and subsequent redevelopment led to the publication of an HRS, *Georgetown Historic Waterfront*, conducted by the US Commission of Fine Arts and the NPS Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation in the summer of 1967, which resulted in the waterfront's designation as a National Historic Landmark that October. Although this was a laudable survey, the publication is a product of its era and makes no mention of historic resources associated with Georgetown's African American communities. Its silence is reflective of the "whitening" of Georgetown at that time; by 1969, Georgetown's population had grown to 12,000 persons but fewer than 5 percent were African American.⁴¹⁸

Today, Georgetown retains several historic buildings and structures that attest to its history as an eighteenth-century riverport and slave market, to its importance as a commercial and industrial center during the C&O Canal years, and to the African American communities that persisted over centuries and worked to make Georgetown a successful city and favored destination.

B. HISTORIC SITES

The preceding chapter (Chapter II) and this chapter have mentioned many historic sites and buildings associated with the C&O Canal and with African American history in Georgetown; many of these sites were described in accompanying graphic text boxes peppered throughout the narrative. These historic sites included several churches, schools, social clubs, mills, sites of slave auctions and jails, and houses and businesses owned by African Americans. Unfortunately, many of the original buildings have been demolished or converted to private use and thereby are not accessible to the public. Others have been converted to retail stores, restaurants, and inns and therefore have limited accessibility (Table 3.1).

⁴¹⁷ Lesko et al., 95-106.

⁴¹⁸ Lesko et al., 121.

TABLE 3.1: GEORGETOWN HISTORIC SITES ASSOCIATED WITH THE C&O CANAL OR AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY

SITE/BUILDING	DATE	LOCATION/ADDRESS	STATUS	CURRENT FUNCTION
Montgomery Street Methodist Church	Ca. 1780	28th Street, NW, between M and Olive streets	Lost/Redeveloped	Unknown
Alexander Memorial Baptist Church	1909	2709 N Street, NW	Extant	Private Residence
Chamberlain School	1866	2512 East Place, NW	Redeveloped 1889	Private Residence
Wormley School	1885	3329 Prospect Street, NW	Extant	Private Residence
Phillips School	1891	2735 Olive Street, NW	Extant	Private Residence
Monticello House Social Club	19th C.	3300 M Street, NW	Lost/Redeveloped 1987	Commercial
GUOOF Hall	1883	1409 28th Street, NW	Extant	Private Residence
Lee Feed & Grain Store	1867	2900-2908 M Street, NW	Redeveloped 1887-1892	Commercial
Bomford/Wilkins-Rogers Mill	1847; 1883	1000 Potomac Street, NW	Partially demolished / Partially extant	Private Office
R.E. Duvall Foundry	1856	1050 30th Street, NW	Extant	Private Office
Potomac Cotton Foundry	1845	Near canal	Presumed Lost	Unknown
Castleman Lime Kiln	Ca. 1866	Rock Creek	Presumed Lost	Unknown
Godey Lime Kilns	1864	27th and L Streets, NW	Lost after 1907	Ruins; Site inaccessible
Canal Company House	1830	1061 31st Street, NW	Extant	Private Residence/Inn
Mrs. S.E. Safford's Mission School	1874	Canal towpath, 0.25 miles above Potomac Aqueduct	Presumed Lost	Unknown
Yarrow Mamout Site	Ca. 1800	3324 Dent Place, NW	Lost/Redeveloped 2017	Private Residence
Beattie's Auction House	Ca. 1760	1351 Wisconsin Ave., NW	Lost/Redeveloped 1915	Commercial
Beattie's Slave Pen	Ca. 1760	3206 O Street, NW	Lost/Redeveloped 1864	Commercial
Montgomery Tavern	Ca. 1760	1363-65 Wisconsin Ave., NW	Lost/Redeveloped 1901	Commercial
Semmes' Tavern	1796	3206 M Street, NW	Extant	Private Club
Georgetown Market	Ca. 1760	3276 M Street, NW	Rebuilt 1865	Commercial
Housing	1840	3410 Volta Place, NW	Extant	Private Residence
Grant-Colfax Club	19th C.	South end 27th Street, NW	Likely Redeveloped	Unknown
Pride's Pharmacy	1931	1425 28th Street, NW	Extant	Commercial
Blue Mouse Theater	Ca. 1900	1206 27th Street, NW	Lost	Unknown

Data provided by the DC Historic Preservation Office, *HistoryQuestDC* [website] and the DC Office of Tax and Revenue, *MyTax DC* [website].

Of the buildings and sites associated with the C&O Canal and/or African American history in Georgetown that are extant and accessible to the public, the majority are churches with active congregations. The following is a list of these sites with brief descriptions of their significance.

1. *Mount Zion United Methodist Church, 1334 29th Street, NW*

Founded in 1816, the congregation of the Mount Zion United Methodist Church is considered the oldest African American congregation in DC. It broke away from the Montgomery Street (now Dumbarton United Methodist) Church, established in 1772. The original structure was a small brick building enlarged in 1856. In 1823, Mount Zion established a Sabbath and Bible school for Georgetown's Black community. During the antebellum period, the church and nearby cemetery were used as stops for self-liberating African Americans on the Underground Railroad. In 1875, a leading citizen in Georgetown's African American community, Alfred Pope, sold the congregation a portion of his property on 29th Street, and over the next five years, the present brick edifice was constructed with funds raised by members' donations and with their labor. In 1897 a parsonage was established at 2902 O Street, followed by the Community House at 2906 O Street in 1920 (within a building dating to 1813). In 1975, the sanctuary building was designated a National Historic Landmark.⁴¹⁹

Contact: [Mount Zion United Methodist Church](#)

Rev. Selena M. Johnson, Pastor

(202) 234-0148

2. *Mount Zion and Female Union Band Society Cemeteries, 27th Street at Mill Road, NW*

This burial ground was founded in 1808 when the Montgomery Street (now Dumbarton United Methodist) Church purchased the property for the burial of its white congregants and their enslaved laborers. In 1842, a group of African American women—members of the Female Union Band Society, a benevolent organization pledged to aid members in times of illness and at death—purchased the western end of the grounds from the Montgomery Street Church, which had not been used for interments up to that point. They desired a separate burial ground for free Blacks in the Georgetown community. In 1879, the African American congregation of the Mount Zion United Methodist Church leased the east end of the cemetery for 99 years and began interring their own Black congregants. The Mount Zion, Female Union Band Society, and Old Methodist Burying Ground parcels were conflated thereafter and colloquially referred to as the Mount Zion Cemetery. During the antebellum period, the cemetery and nearby Mount Zion Church vault were used as stops on the Underground Railroad. The last burial in the cemetery was in 1950, as the DC municipal government declared additional burials a health hazard. Maintenance declined in the following years, and in the late 1960s through the mid-1970s, developers sought to redevelop the open space and disinter the burials at Mount Zion Cemetery. A battle ensued over the proposal, and the cemetery was preserved and designated a National Historic Landmark in 1975. Notable civic leaders in Georgetown's Black community are interred there, and the cemetery is considered one of the oldest existing African American cemeteries in the DC metropolitan region.⁴²⁰

Contact: [Mount Zion-Female Union Band Historic Memorial Park, In\(f\)Foundation](#)

Lisa M. Fager, Executive Director

(202) 253-0435

LFager@mtzionfubs.org

⁴¹⁹ Lesko et al., 28-29, 149-154.

⁴²⁰ Lesko et al., 118.

3. *Ebenezer A.M.E. Church, 2727 O Street, NW*

Constructed in 1856, this brick sanctuary was built by a small congregation of 13 African Americans who had left Mount Zion Church. The Ebenezer A.M.E. Church congregation had a century-long history of political activism and was a meeting place as well as a center for worship. By the 1980s, changing demographics in Georgetown contributed to a dwindling membership at the church, and in 1983 the small congregation moved to Fort Washington, Maryland. Today, the building is occupied by an active congregation of the Anglican Parish Christ the King.

Contact: [The Anglican Parish of Christ the King](#)

Fr. Carlton C. Clarke, Priest-in-Charge

(202) 298-6282

info@ctk-dc.org

4. *First Baptist Church, 2624 Dumbarton Street, NW*

The Rev. Sandy Alexander, who arrived in Georgetown in 1856, founded the First Baptist Church on 5 October 1862. The congregation met initially in “The Ark,” a small, wood-frame building located at 29th and O streets and built on a small parcel donated by Collin Williams. Williams, a preacher from Fredericksburg, Virginia, had been leading Baptist meetings in private residences in Georgetown (on 27th and P streets and 27th and N streets) prior to the establishment of this church. The First Baptist’s parishioners relocated to the present site at 27th and Dumbarton streets by 1882, the year this brick sanctuary’s cornerstone was laid. Oral history has it that the male members of the congregation dug the building’s foundations in the evenings, after a day’s work, and that the female parishioners cooked hot meals and generally supported their labor. The Rev. Alexander served as pastor of the First Baptist Church for nearly 40 years, until a streetcar accident in 1889 forced his retirement. The church is still active today.⁴²¹

Contact: [First Baptist Church Georgetown](#)

Pastor Robert K. Pines

(202) 965-1899

5. *Jerusalem Baptist Church, 2600 P Street, NW*

The Rev. Sandy Alexander with the Rev. William Gibbon organized this Baptist congregation in 1870. Originally called the Seventh Baptist Church, the congregation met first in the Old Quaker Building on 17th and N streets in Georgetown, then relocated several times before purchasing the church’s present site on the corner of 26th and P streets in 1906. The church building at 2600 P Street was built in 1915, at which time the congregation was renamed for the Biblical city. The Jerusalem Baptist Church boasted the largest Black congregation in Georgetown, with some 700 congregants, as late as the early 1990s and is still active.⁴²²

Contact: [Jerusalem Baptist Church](#)

Pastor Rodney Teal

(202) 780-7314

⁴²¹ First Baptist Church, Georgetown, “History,” *First Baptist Church, Georgetown* [website] (accessed August 24, 2022, <https://www.firstbaptistgtown.org/history>).

⁴²² Lesko et al., 161-165.

office@jbcgdc.org

6. *Holy Trinity Catholic Church, 1315 36th Street, NW*

From its founding in 1787 until 1923, when this church's African American members split to organize the Epiphany Catholic Church in east Georgetown, the Holy Trinity Catholic Church was integrated but segregated. The original sanctuary (which is now the Chapel of St. Ignatius), built in 1794, had pews in the nave that were rented by white families only; Black parishioners (both enslaved and free) and whites who could not afford to rent pews had to stand in the rear. By the 1820s, the sanctuary had been enlarged and galleries were built above the entrance. African American worshippers, who constituted as much as one third the entire congregation over the first half of the nineteenth century, were relegated to and allowed to rent pews in this space, which was accessible only by exterior stairs. When the present sanctuary was built in 1851, segregation was continued: first, the African Americans were forced to worship separately in the old sanctuary, and then, when they were admitted to the new space, 138 pews in the nave were reserved for white families while 42 pews in the flanking side galleries and the rear choir loft were reserved for Black congregants. The side galleries were removed in the 1880s and the rear choir loft expanded to hold the growing Black congregation, which counted as many as 700 African American worshippers at that time. Segregation persisted into the twentieth century and stoked the schism that led to Holy Trinity's African American members leaving to establish their own church in 1923.⁴²³

Among Holy Trinity's earliest African American families was the Belt family, who attended services there for over a century. JOHN BELT was an enslaved man who was baptized at Holy Trinity in 1816. His 11 children – including IGNATIUS BELT (1832-1907)⁴²⁴ – were all baptized and married at the church.⁴²⁵ Holy Trinity Church functioned not only as a place of worship but as a community center for local Black Catholics. A Black mutual aid society, the Knights of St. Augustine's Blessed Peter Claver Burial Association, met here during the second half of the nineteenth century. Black participation at Holy Trinity began to decline after the Civil War, as Methodist and Baptist denominations began to rise in DC and Georgetown.

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⁴²³ Peter J. Albert, "'Climbing the Back Stairs': Church Seating at Holy Trinity," *Cura Virtualis* [website], August 19, 2022 (accessed August 24, 2022, <https://www.curavirtualis.org/post/climbing-the-back-stairs-church-seating-at-holy-trinity>).

⁴²⁴ Ignatius Belt is discussed further in Chapter V.

⁴²⁵ Peter J. Albert, "Four Generations at Holy Trinity: The Belt Family," *Cura Virtualis* [website], July 6, 2022 (accessed August 24, 2022, <https://www.curavirtualis.org/post/four-generations-at-holy-trinity-the-belt-family-1>).

7. *Epiphany Catholic Church, 2712 Dumbarton Street, NW*

African American congregants at Holy Trinity Catholic Church broke from their segregated congregation in 1923. Although discriminatory practices at Holy Trinity prompted the exodus (as Black worshippers were relegated to balcony seating and were not allowed to approach the communion rail until after all white families had taken communion, for instance), the schism also followed racially-motivated rioting in DC in July 1919, when white mobs attacked the city's Black community, killing nearly 12 individuals and injuring over 100. Bishop Michael J. Curley, the archbishop of Baltimore who had jurisdiction over DC's Catholic parishes, endorsed the founding of two new African American Catholic churches in the nation's capital for African Americans: the Church of the Good Shepherd on I Street between 2nd and 3rd streets, SW, which opened in 1923; and the Epiphany Catholic Church in Georgetown. As many as 600 African Americans left Holy Trinity to form the Epiphany Church, the sanctuary for which was completed in 1926.⁴²⁶ Although the congregation is still active, its demographics have shifted in the last few decades to a predominantly white membership.

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8. *Grace Episcopal Church, 1401 Wisconsin Avenue, NW*

Members of Georgetown's St. John's Episcopal Church established a mission for sailors and canal boatmen who frequented the city's waterfront in 1855. They built a small, wood-frame chapel on Wisconsin Avenue south of M Street that served the laborers, craftsmen, shopkeepers, and watermen who lived in the working-class and interracial neighborhood called Brickyard Hill. The current masonry building dates to 1867. Regular services were held there as well as Sunday school, taught by students from Alexandria's Virginia Theological Seminary. Conceived as a mission, Grace Episcopal Church was known for administering to the indigent. It still has an active congregation.

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9. *Rose Park Playground, 26th Street between O and P streets, NW*

The Rose Park Playground, on the western banks of Rock Creek, was a rare integrated space of leisure for Black and white residents of Georgetown in the early twentieth century. Established as a play area for Black children by the Ancient United Order of the Sons and Daughters of Moses in 1918, the park was first known as Winship's Lot and then Patterson's Park and Jacob's Park before acquiring its current name. The city purchased the land in 1922 and designated it a "colored" park

⁴²⁶ Peter J. Albert, "Holy Trinity History, Pt. I: The Founding of Epiphany Catholic Church (1923-1925) and the Reconciliation Service for Holy Trinity and Epiphany Parishioners (1994)," *Cura Virtualis* [website], November 3, 2020 (accessed August 24, 2022, <https://www.curavirtualis.org/post/holy-trinity-history-pt-i>).

in its segregated system, but local residents used the park despite their race, ignoring the segregationist policy. In the late 1930s, DC's Department of Recreation renovated the playground and reinforced their segregationist policy by hanging a prominent sign on the entrance gate reading "For Coloreds Only." Members of the Rock Creek Civic Association protested the signage, which was removed, but the policy was in place until 1949 when the American Friends Service Committee assumed operations of Rose Park and opened it as an interracial facility. Rose Park and Garfield Park (in the city's southeast quadrant) became the DC's first officially integrated city-owned playgrounds.⁴²⁷

The park was a stage for political rallies as well as unstructured leisure and athletics. It was on the Rose Park tennis courts that Margaret Peters and Roumania Peters Walker, sisters who lived at 2710 O Street, practiced the sport that gained them national acclaim in the 1930s. Black baseball teams, such as the Holly Hill All-Stars and Georgetown Athletics, may have played on the park grounds as well. Rose Park is a public parkland open to all.

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C. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Georgetown has a long and complex history of African American inhabitation, and thorough research has been conducted on its historic African American neighborhoods and sites. Still, more could be done to partner with organizations and individual sites to highlight the locality's African American experience. Several sites of slavery were mentioned in this chapter that may not be recognized as such on the physical landscape or by walking tours focused on African American and enslaved peoples' experiences. Partner organizations may include Georgetown University's [Slavery Archive](#), [Georgetown African American Historic Landmark Project & Tour](#), the [Mount Zion United Methodist Church](#), and the [Mount Zion-Female Union Band Historic Memorial Park, Inc.](#)

An outstanding research question follows.

1. Further study is needed to identify the bounds and evolution of Sugar Hill, the mixed-race neighborhood by the canal mentioned in an 1857 newspaper article.

⁴²⁷ DC Historic Preservation Office, "Civil Rights Tour: Recreation - Rose Park Playground," *DC Historic Sites* [website] (accessed August 24, 2022, <https://historicsites.dcpreservation.org/items/show/965>).

IV. ST. PHILLIPS HILL AND THE PALISADES

A. ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT

The Palisades of northwest DC is an area roughly bounded by the District boundary line to the northwest, Loughboro Road to the northeast, the Potomac River to the southwest, and Foxhall Road to the southeast. At its southern extreme near the Georgetown Reservoir are two residential neighborhoods, Berkley and Foxhall Village. Glover Archbold Park, east of Foxhall Road, effectively separates the area from Georgetown and other neighborhoods in DC north of Georgetown. On the riverside, the Palisades stretch to Little Falls, and the river is easily navigated up to that point. MacArthur Boulevard (formerly Conduit Road), the B&O Railroad, and the C&O Canal stretch across the area's length.

1. *Pre-Emancipation Period: Tobacco Plantations, Early Industry, and Enslaved Labor*

In the early Colonial period, the land that comprises the Palisades was part of two large tracts granted to settlers by Maryland's Proprietary Governor, Cecil Calvert: St. Phillip and Jacob, a 400-acre land grant patented to Phillip Lines in 1675; and White Haven, 759 acres patented to Col. John Addison and William Hutchison in 1689.⁴²⁸ By the last quarter of the eighteenth century, the Palisades was composed of smaller plantations carved from White Haven, such as Arell's Folly (1771), Below Amsterdam (1784) and the Resurvey of Amsterdam (1789), and Alliance (1791). These were agricultural plantations that used enslaved labor to cultivate tobacco and then wheat and corn as the primary commodity crops in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Industry in this area was light and water-powered, extracting water from the tributaries that flowed into the Potomac River. These light industries included foundries (such as Henry Foxall's cannon foundry, established in 1801 near the western edge of Georgetown and by the river) and mills (such as the Edes Mill established in 1821, which had been mistakenly associated with Abner Cloud until recent scholarship proved otherwise).⁴²⁹

Abner Cloud, Jr. (1772-1812) built a house east of Fletcher's Cove in 1801. JAMES, AMEY, NED, JACOB, NAN, BETTY, and ROSE were African Americans enslaved by Cloud, who was residing in

⁴²⁸ Laura Treischmann (EHT Traceries), "Chain Bridge Road School," Washington, DC, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (Washington, DC: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, 2002, accessed 16 November 2021: <https://npgallery.nps.gov/GetAsset/17d7edb8-80f6-4d1f-8539-6a6f6e52ed70>), Section 8, page 1.

⁴²⁹ Alice Fales Stewart, *The Palisades of Washington, D.C.* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia, 2005), 17-22. A note about the ABNER CLOUD HOUSE and associated mill. Early twentieth century scholarship purported that Abner Cloud had built a gristmill near his house circa 1801. However, no material evidence of a mill building has been found close to the Abner Cloud House, and research into period documents do not support this claim that Cloud owned or operated a mill on his property. There are ruins of the foundations of a building that likely served as a gristmill near Fletcher's Cove, west of the Abner Cloud House. These lie on a parcel that was owned by Leonard H. Johns, who established the Canal Mills by 1821. The Canal Mills were acquired by William H. Edes, who owned and operated the mill through the Civil War. David L. Shoemaker acquired the property in 1869 and conveyed half of the tract to Charles T. Edmonston (4 acres plus 120 inches of water) the following year, at which point the mill works were called the "Lock Mills." The mill produced Evermay flour from 1869 until 1897, when the building was destroyed by fire. As late as 1914, the site was called the "Ruin of Eads' [sic] Mill." Its association with Abner Cloud is unfounded yet persists. See Catherine N. Ball, "Identification of Edes Mill Tract and Potomac Company Locks at Fletcher's Cove," Draft Report for the Colonial Dames, Chapter III (December 2021).

Montgomery County, Maryland, by 1790.⁴³⁰ At that time, Cloud was not an enslaver and he was enumerated in the first US census as the head of a 12-person household that included five white males over the age of 16, five white females, and two white boys under the age of 16. In February 1799, Cloud married Susanna Pimmet Trammell, and through this union he became the enslaver of seven African Americans whom Susanna had inherited from her father, Sampson Trammell. Little is known of these enslaved individuals, save their names as detailed in Sampson Trammell's 1793 deed: "I give unto Susanna the daughter of the said Director [Sampson's wife] the following Negroes James, Amey, Ned, Jacob, Nan, Betty, Rose with their increase to her and her heirs forever..."⁴³¹ An 1804 revision to Sampson Trammell's deed elaborated some kinship, as Jacob was Nan's son and Rose was the mother of Becky (named Betty in the 1793 document). James is likely the "Jim" who, in 1809, at the age of 25, sought freedom but was captured and returned to Cloud, according to an item in the *Washington Federalist*.

JAMES, AMY, NED, JACOB, NAN, BECKY, AND ROSE

Upon his marriage to Susanna Trammell in 1799, Abner Cloud became the enslaver of seven individuals known in the historical records only as James/Jim, Amy, Ned, Nan, Jacob (Nan's son), Rose, and Betty/Becky (Rose's daughter). More research may illuminate their lives at Cloud's house, built in 1801 near Fletcher's Cove.

The 1800 US census enumerates Cloud in that part of Washington, DC, which was "formerly part of Montgomery, Maryland," as the head of a 10-person household that included himself, his wife Susanna, their infant daughter, and seven enslaved individuals. When Susanna's mother, Director, died in January 1813, Susanna became the enslaver of **LYDIA**. Cloud's estate was advertised for sale by auction in February 1813 following his death, at which time two young men, two young women, and a woman with a child were listed in the notice. One of those enslaved persons sold at auction was **JACOB STAKES**, who (aged between 30 and 35) fled his enslaver in 1817 according to an item published in the *Daily National Intelligencer*.

Early development included the erection of the Chain Bridge across the Potomac River, connecting Virginia to DC via the Palisades, in 1797 (the bridge received its name from the third bridge, a chain suspension bridge, built in 1810). By the 1830s, the C&O Canal and the B&O Railroad were opened in this westernmost portion of DC. In the 1850s, the Washington Aqueduct was laid through the Palisades to bring fresh drinking water from above the fall line in the Potomac River down to the residents of DC. Despite this investment in infrastructure, by the middle of the nineteenth century, the Palisades remained sparsely inhabited and as largely undeveloped, rural land with a few country houses. Significant Palisades landowners included the Carberys, Pierces, Sherriers, Shugrues, and Weavers. Most of the land lying west of Chain Bridge Road belonged to the Murdocks, and the land east of the road was owned by W.A.T. Maddox.⁴³² The Martenet and Bond (1865) map depicts only two landowners in the triangle formed by Loughboro and Foxhall roads with the Potomac River: C. Cherry and W.A.J. Maddox.

⁴³⁰ One year later, that part of Montgomery County was included in the new federal District of Columbia.

⁴³¹ Kay Titus, research notes, uploaded to Ancestry.com 17 August 2020 (accessed 15 February 2022, https://www.ancestry.com/mediaui-viewer/tree/76910297/person/44352701089/media/08e7a07c-e747-4b6d-b6ab-858d5c97e6f8?_phsrc=wOZ2146&_phstart=successSource).

⁴³² Stewart, 10, 26, 30; Treischmann, Section 8, page 2.

2. Post-Emancipation Period: Battery Kemble and the Emergence of St. Phillips Hill

During the Civil War, the landscape and demographics of the Palisades began to change. Several defenses were built in the area, including Battery Vermont, east of the Georgetown Reservoir on the Maryland side of the district boundary; Battery Martin Scott, on Potomac Avenue; and batteries Cameron and Parrott on Foxhall Road.⁴³³ Battery Kemble was erected in 1861 on a height east of the Chain Bridge to protect the river crossing from the potential advances of the Confederate Army. Battery Kemble was the site of a contraband camp for freedom-seeking African Americans fleeing enslavement during the Civil War; after the war's end, the area evolved into an African American community called **ST. PHILLIPS HILL**. Tradition maintains that these self-liberating African Americans occupied the hillside below the battery and farmed small plots at the base of the bluff.

During the occupation of the Palisades by the United States Army, Federal soldiers confiscated resources from property owners and liberally felled trees to erect fortifications and to use for fuel. Capt. William A.T. Maddox's timber lands were felled at a cost of \$70,000 according to the claim he filed in federal court for recompense after the war. Receiving less than \$7,000 in compensation in 1873, Maddox went bankrupt and was forced to sell off his land to repay debts and forestall litigation. This allowed freedpeople (some of whom had presumably been living at Battery Kemble) to acquire small parcels, ranging in size from 2 to 5 acres, for \$80 per acre in the mid-1870s. Comparative analysis of the A. Boschke (1861) *Topographical Map of the District of Columbia* and the G.M. Hopkins (1879) *Atlas of Fifteen Miles Around Washington* illustrates that the area just west of the Chain Bridge Road and below the property of "Capt. Wm. A.T. Maddox" had developed in that 18-year interim from woodlands and a few farms to a more settled landscape, with some 15 dwellings and a schoolhouse (the one-room schoolhouse for Black children had been provided by the Freedmen's Bureau in 1865). Residents listed on the Hopkins map as residing on a dirt road southeast of Charles Weaver's estate include (in a row) **JACOB HAYES, MRS. BLACKWOOD, WILLIAM PETERS, DANIEL CUSBERD, JONES, JOHN SEPHES, and EDWARDS**,⁴³⁴ who lived closest to a schoolhouse (Figure 4.1). The 1880 US census enumerated six individuals with the same or similar names as neighbors in this vicinity, and all are identified as African Americans. Each was living at the time of the Civil War and had been born in slave-holding states, including South and North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, and DC. Given their ages, race, and places of origin, a few of these six people were likely freedpeople who had immigrated to Washington during the war.⁴³⁵

At least one of these freedpeople had been in the area for much longer. John Sephes (alternatively spelled Cephus) had been enslaved by Charles and Joseph Weaver, the owners of the 400-acre White Haven estate. When Maddox sold parcels of his land, the Weavers assisted Cephus in buying a few acres off Chain Bridge Road where Cephus built a log dwelling. Maddox, according to the 1860 US census slave schedule, was the enslaver of nine people when the war erupted (two women, aged 28 and 54; one man, aged 21; four girls, aged four years to 12 years; and two boys, aged eight

⁴³³ Treischmann, Section 8, page 3.

⁴³⁴ Many of the names on the Hopkins map are likely misspellings: "Blackwood" is likely "Blackwell," who resided between Jacob Hayes and William Peters in the 1880 US census; "Cusberd" was also written as "Cuspard," "Cuthbert," or similar derivatives in census records; "Sephes" is also spelled "Cephus" [preferred] and "Sefus."

⁴³⁵ Stuart Fiedel, John Bedell, Charles LeeDecker, Jason Shellenhamer, and Eric Griffitts, *"Bold, Rocky, and Picturesque": Archeological Overview and Assessment and Archeological Identification and Evaluation Study of Rock Creek Park, District of Columbia* (Washington, DC: prepared for the National Park Service-National Capital Region, Washington, DC, by The Louis Berger Group, Inc., 2008), 67-69.

and 14). Presumably, Maddox may have also sold some of the lots to freedpeople he had enslaved, suggesting that at least some of the residents of Chain Bridge Road were not freedom seekers from other states and regions but locals.⁴³⁶

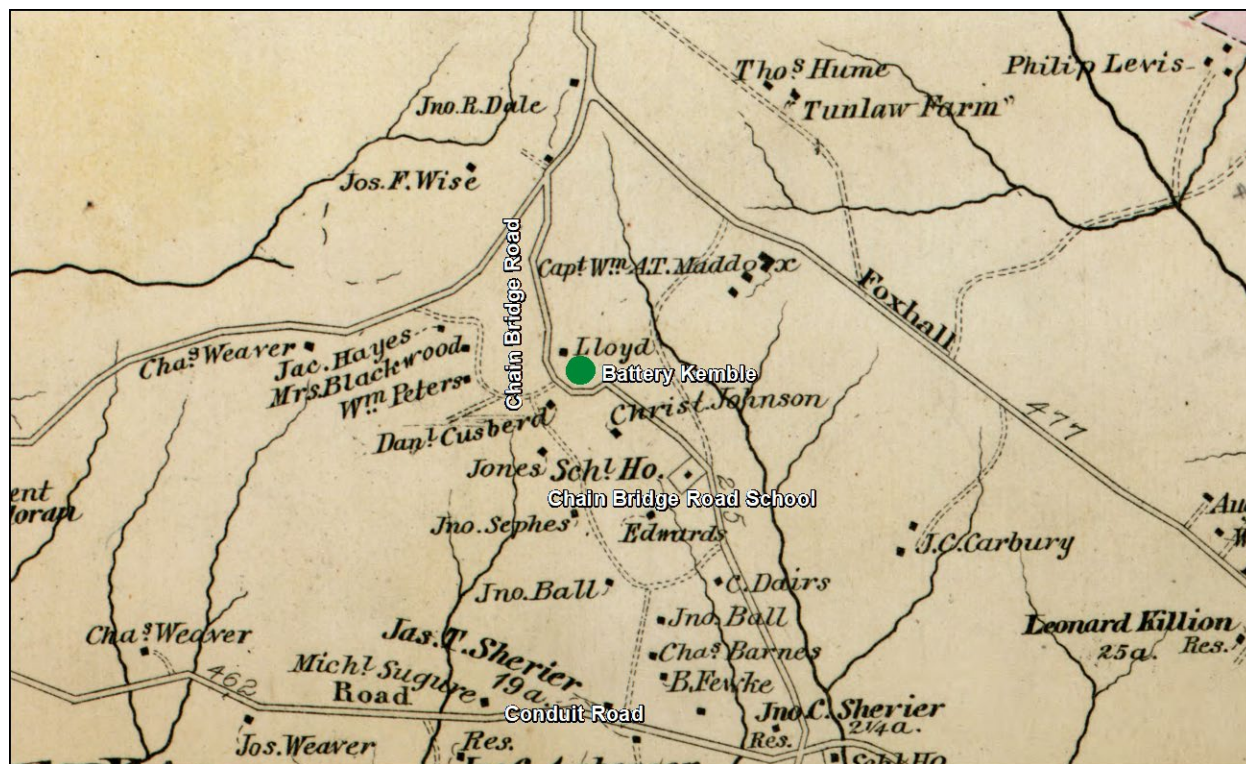


Figure 4.1: Detail from *Atlas of Fifteen Miles Around Washington, 1879* (Hopkins) Showing the St. Phillips Hill Community Around Battery Kemble

In 1887, Hopkins created a more detailed map of the area showing parcels and their owners. Many of the same families were represented from his earlier map, such as the Blackwell family, who owned a 2-acre parcel between neighbors Jacob Hayes and E. Parron. **THOMAS BLACKWELL** was enumerated in the 1870 US census of Washington's Ward 6.⁴³⁷ At that time, he was a 57-year-old carpenter who possessed \$1,000 worth of real estate and \$150 in personal property. He was the head of a six-person household that included himself, his wife **HARRIET** (aged 33), his eldest son **AMERICUS C.** (aged 15), his son **LOUIS** (aged 9), his daughter **MARTHA** (aged 4), and his daughter **VICTORIA** (aged 2). Thomas, Harriet, Americus, and Louis all had been born in Virginia, but the young girls had been born in DC; given Louis's and Martha's ages in 1870, the family must have settled in DC between 1861 and 1866. On 27 October 1877, Americus married **HELEN ANN MAGRUDER** in DC, and by the 1880 US Census, Americus (aged 27), Helen (aged 21), and their one-year-old daughter **GERTRUDE** were living in the First District, neighbors to Jacob Hayes and William Peters. Presumably, because the Blackwells had been enumerated in northeast DC in 1870, they were not freedom-seeking African Americans who had settled in Battery Kemble's contraband camp during the war and continued to remain after the war's end; more likely, they had been resettled in camps in DC and settled in the city as soon as they were able. By the mid-

⁴³⁶ Smith, 142.

⁴³⁷ In 1870, Ward 6 lay east of the Capitol and was bounded by Maryland Avenue, Sixth Street, NE, Boundary Street (now Florida Avenue), and the Eastern Branch (now Anacostia) River. See *Map of the city of Washington District of Columbia* (Washington?: map, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2011593651/>, 1870).

1870s, when Maddox was selling off his land, the second generation of Blackwells took advantage of the opportunity to establish their own farm in the country.

Analysis of the Hopkins (1887) map shows that the “Road to Chain Bridge,” by that time the location of the African American schoolhouse as well as a “colored cemetery,”⁴³⁸ was an integrated neighborhood (Figure 4.2). The Sherriers and Weavers were long-established families in the area, but the Ambergers were immigrants from Bavaria whereas Michael Shugrue had been born in Ireland. The African American residents mapped by Hopkins included JOHN and MARY LEE, John Cephus, DANIEL HONESTY, GEORGE NERO, Daniel Cuspard/Cuthbert, G. HENRY BARNES, SILVY WILLIAMS, William Peters, the Blackwells, and Jacob Hayes. Their occupations ranged from dairyman to farm laborer, although Hayes was a carpenter and Cuthbert a cook according to the 1880 census. The majority hailed from Maryland, Virginia, and DC, although Nero had been born in Georgia, Cuthbert in South Carolina, and Hayes in North Carolina.



Figure 4.2: Detail from *Map of the District of Columbia from official records and actual surveys, 1887* (Hopkins) Showing African American Landowners Along Chain Bridge Road

The 1890 city directory lists Americus Blackwell’s address merely as Conduit Road, but by the 1900 US census, his address (still next to Jacob Hayes) was part of St. Phillips Hill. The 1900 census defined St. Phillips Hill as 15 households, one of which was white; the neighboring area of Little Falls Road, by contrast, had 10 households, of which three were Black. The St. Phillips Hill community represented a Black enclave in a predominantly white portion of DC. “The life of the community on Chain Bridge Road... centered on the African American Chain Bridge Road School built in 1865 and St. Phillips Church.”⁴³⁹ In the latter quarter of the nineteenth century, “the

⁴³⁸ The CHAIN BRIDGE ROAD SCHOOL and the UNION BURIAL SOCIETY OF GEORGETOWN CEMETERY are described in Section B of this chapter, under “Historic Sites.”

⁴³⁹ Smith, 143.

African American men living on Chain Bridge Road worked as laborers, farmers, butchers, and gardeners, while the women worked as domestics or laundresses.”⁴⁴⁰ The land ownership remained stable through the early twentieth century, with many properties (and the modest, frame houses built thereon) passing to the next generation.

The Hopkins (1879) map also depicts the presence of “US Government” properties by the Dalecarlia Reservoir and by the canal, in an area marked “Little Falls.” Industries lined the canal, especially between Little Falls and Foundry branches, including a quarry, a gristmill, and a guano (fertilizer) factory. A large cattle drovers’ yard is depicted just west of the Georgetown Reservoir, identified as the “Distributing Reservoir” for the waters pumped in via the Washington Aqueduct. By the end of the nineteenth century, four or five slaughterhouses were present on Foxhall Road and two were on Canal Road.⁴⁴¹ This agricultural-industrial landscape was intermingled with a resort landscape, epitomized by the Green Spring Pavilion-Scheutzen Park, a pleasure grounds and beer garden that lay just west of the gridded streets of Georgetown, below which (south of the canal) were two buildings marked as a gristmill. The International Athletic Park, a bicycle track, was located near the District line near the Dalecarlia Reservoir, on the grounds of which “stood a hotel which, among other things, had a gambling casino. This period also was noted for the roadhouses, taverns and saloons that existed along both Conduit and Canal roads.”⁴⁴²

3. *Twentieth Century: Potomac Heights and the Development of White, Exclusionary Residential Suburbs*

Residential development of the Palisades began in 1876 with the platting of Harlem, 33 house lots on 40 acres adjacent to the west side of Georgetown. By 1880, Foxhall Village had been planned. However, residential development was slow until the turn of the twentieth century, because any new subdivision in the Palisades faced competition from other new developments closer to central Washington; by 1890, there were 63 new subdivisions in what had been Washington County. Furthermore, the Palisades was considered isolated, as it was not served by a streetcar line.⁴⁴³ This changed, however, with the formation of the Washington & Great Falls Electric Railway company in July 1892, which intended to operate a trolley service between Cabin John and 36th and Prospect streets in Georgetown. But by 1894, when the proposed route for the trolley was laid on that strip between the canal and Conduit Road, the land was largely undeveloped: only 20 buildings and structures stood in the future railway’s path, and they were mostly agricultural outbuildings and farmhouses.⁴⁴⁴

⁴⁴⁰ Treischmann, Section 8, page 4.

⁴⁴¹ Harold Gray, “A Brief History of the Palisades, DC, Presented at the 40th Anniversary Celebration of the Palisades Citizens’ Association, October 2, 1956” [Pamphlet] (Washington, DC: Palisades Citizens’ Association, 1966), 5.

⁴⁴² Gray, 6.

⁴⁴³ Smith, 147-148.

⁴⁴⁴ EHT Tracerics, “Palisades Trolley Trail, Washington, DC: Historic Resources Report for the Built Environment” (Washington, DC: prepared for the District Department of Transportation, December 2019), 3-13 (accessed 15 February 2022,

https://ddot.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ddot/page_content/attachments/Appendix4_HistoricResourcesReport_FINAL_Reduced.pdf).

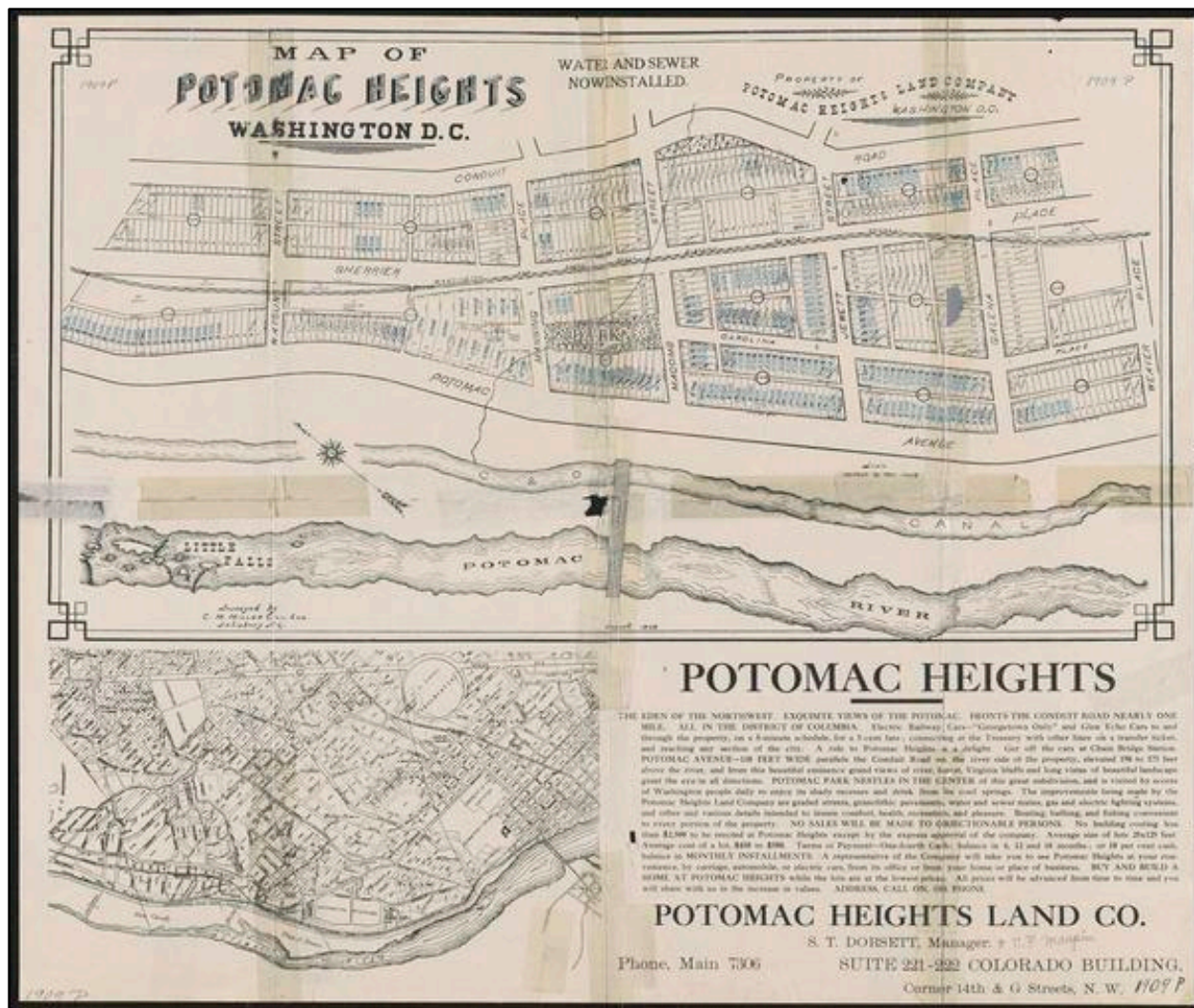


Figure 4.3: Calvin M. Miller, *Map of Potomac Heights, Washington, DC, 1909* (DC Public Library)

Development accelerated after the Palisades of the Potomac Land Improvement Company platted a streetcar suburb, served by the Washington Railway and Electric Company, in 1893. Founded in 1890 by Stilson Hutchins, the founder of the *Washington Post* newspaper, the Palisades of the Potomac Land Improvement Company envisioned development of the riverside from Georgetown to Great Falls. The Palisades area abuts Brookmont and Glen Echo in Montgomery County, Maryland, which were being developed as a resort community in the late 1880s and early 1890s, so Hutchins merely capitalized on the area’s adjacency to the nascent Maryland resort area and the railway line constructed to access it and the tavern at Great Falls. However, the building boom in the Palisades did not occur until the 1910s and 1920s. In 1909, the Potomac Heights Land Company purchased 75 acres of the International Athletic Park tract between Conduit Road and the Potomac River and created 800 house lots for modestly sized residences; this was the final subdivision laid out in the Palisades, and lots were sold slowly (Figure 4.3).⁴⁴⁵

With the closure of the C&O Canal in 1924 and the contemporaneous widening of Conduit Road, residential development in the Palisades quickened. Foxhall Village was largely completed from

⁴⁴⁵ Smith, 149.

the mid-1920s through the early 1930s. At the same time, the Glover Archbold Park was created when 183 acres were donated by Charles Carroll Glover and Ann Mills Archbold. “Modest Houses and shacks that had stood on attractive sites overlooking the river were replaced by” small estates in the interwar period, although the largest amount of development occurred after World War II.⁴⁴⁶

St. Phillips Hill, the post-emancipation African American community that formed around Battery Kemble, received a new school building in 1923 that served Black children during the Jim Crow era of segregation until 1941. At its height, the St. Phillips Hill community covered the hillside below Loughboro Road and included nearly 100 families. Maps and census records suggest the African American community continued to thrive into the 1920s, but suburban development pressures in the 1930s resulted in the heirs of the original St. Phillips Hill landowners selling their properties. By 1938, development pressures forced residents of St. Phillips Hill away, and only eight families remained. Most of the modest frame dwellings that characterized the Black community were razed for contemporary, single-family, suburban residences; the historical community’s built fabric was effectively eradicated by 1940.⁴⁴⁷ One scholar has attributed the decline of the African American community to the closure of the Chain Bridge Road School in 1941 “in response to pressure from white neighbors.”⁴⁴⁸

Analysis of census and real-estate data compiled by *Prologue DC* as part of their “Mapping Segregation in Washington DC” project shows that, in 1940, there were two tracts between Arizona Avenue and Chain Bridge Road, NW, where the population was 50 percent non-white: Tract 9-55 had eight units, of which 50 percent had non-white occupants, 50 percent were rented (the average rent was \$22.63), 25 percent were deemed severely crowded, and 75 percent needed maintenance or lacked indoor plumbing. Tract 9-57, which corresponds with the St. Phillips Hill community on the west side of Chain Bridge Road and across from Battery Kemble Park, had 18 units of which fewer than 40 percent were occupied by non-white residents; only half of these were owned by the occupants (the rent averaged \$30.10), 11 percent were deemed overcrowded, and 71 percent of the homes needed repair or lacked facilities. All of the areas surrounding these two tracts were occupied by white families.⁴⁴⁹ By 1950, Tracts 9-55 and 9-57 had been merged with others to form Tract 9-043, in which non-white households composed fewer than 2 percent. This gentrification was consequent of deed restrictions and racial covenants that prohibited Black home ownership in several areas of the Palisades adjacent to St. Phillips Hill.⁴⁵⁰

In contrast to this trend are the several Mid-Century Modernist houses built after World War II on Chain Bridge Road, University Terrace, Arizona Avenue, and Garfield Street, all in the area historically known as St. Phillips Hill. This land had been held by individual landowners and never

⁴⁴⁶ Smith, 152.

⁴⁴⁷ Treischmann, Section 8, page 5; “Historic African American Communities in the Washington Metropolitan Area,” *Prologue DC* [website] (accessed 15 October 2021, <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=5d16635c4fde41eca91c3e2a82c871e8>).

⁴⁴⁸ Smith, 143.

⁴⁴⁹ Two subdivisions, Spring Valley (platted 1929) and Wesley Heights (1923), flank the St. Phillips Hill-University Terrace neighborhood. Both were designed for white, middle-class residents and had restrictive covenants through 1948, prohibiting Black ownership. Thus, African Americans living in the Palisades during the first half of the twentieth century were legally barred from dwelling in several adjacent areas, limiting their opportunities and choices while effectively containing them. See Kathryn Schneider Smith, ed., *Washington at Home: An Illustrated History of Neighborhoods in the Nation’s Capital*, Second Edition (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 416.

⁴⁵⁰ “Mapping Segregation in Washington DC,” *Prologue DC* [website] (accessed 15 February 2022, <https://www.mappingsegregationdc.org/#maps>).

sold to residential developers, who were the ones largely responsible for entailing deeds with restrictive covenants. As the area had been racially integrated since the Civil War, it proved 80 years later to be “a welcoming place for a new group of educated and professional African American families in the 1940s at a time when housing discrimination persisted in the city.”⁴⁵¹ These large lots had been considered challenging to develop because of their topography, but the individually designed Modernist houses built upon them through the 1950s “took advantage of the hilly, heavily wooded lots” to create desirable middle- and upper-class residences.⁴⁵²

One such example is the **NIXON-MOUNSEY HOUSE** at 2915 University Terrace, NW. Designed by **WILLIAM D. NIXON**, who taught at Dunbar High School but was also a self-taught architect, with **HOWARD DILWORTH WOODSON**, a Black civil engineer from Pittsburgh, the Art Deco-style house was intended as a residence for Nixon and his daughter, **DR. ETHEL L. NIXON-MOUNSEY**, with her husband and three young children. Originally, the 0.5-acre lot purchased in 1949 by **FRANK E. MOUNSEY** and Ethel L. Nixon-Mounsey, a psychiatrist who received her doctorate from John Hopkins University, had belonged to Daniel Honesty, an African American landowner noted on the Hopkins (1887) map; Honesty owned the parcel through 1937. The house was completed in 1950 and served as Nixon’s studio (until his death in 1962) as well as the Mounsey family residence until 1976. The present owners, who purchased the house in 1979, and the DC Preservation League nominated the property for designation as a local landmark in September 2021.⁴⁵³

B. HISTORIC SITES

Chapter II and this chapter have mentioned several historic sites associated with the C&O Canal and with African American history in DC’s Palisades. Unfortunately, many of the original buildings have been demolished or converted to private use and thereby are not accessible to the public, or the exact location of the historic site is unknown (Table 4.1).

A few buildings and sites strongly associated with the C&O Canal and/or African American history in the Palisades and St. Phillips Hill neighborhood are listed and described below, but only the first two are generally accessible to the public because they lie within CHOH parklands. Battery Kemble Park and Glover Archbold Park are owned by the NPS and also are open to the public.

TABLE 4.1: PALISADES HISTORIC SITES ASSOCIATED WITH THE C&O CANAL OR AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY

SITE/BUILDING	DATE	LOCATION/ADDRESS	STATUS	CURRENT FUNCTION
Independent Ice Company	19th C.	Adjacent to the Foxall Foundry	Likely lost	Unknown
Potomac Bluestone quarries	19th C.	On Little Falls	Likely lost	Unknown
Edes Mill	1821	On canal near Abner Cloud House	Lost by fire in 1897	Ruins

⁴⁵¹ Smith, 152.

⁴⁵² Smith, 52.

⁴⁵³ Norma Braude, Mary Garrard, Peter Sefton, and John DeFerrari, “The Nixon-Mounsey House,” Washington, DC, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (Washington, DC: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, 2021, accessed 28 March 2022: <https://planning.dc.gov/publication/2915-university-terrace-nw-nixon-mounsey-house-case-21-20>), Section 8, pages 21, 34.

SITE/BUILDING	DATE	LOCATION/ADDRESS	STATUS	CURRENT FUNCTION
Green Springs Pavilion – Schuetzen Park	1865-1891	Near Foxall Foundry and on former Foxall estate	Lost/Redeveloped	Unknown
Fletcher’s Boathouse	19th C.	4940 Canal Road, NW	Extant	Commercial
International Athletic Park	Ca. 1900	Near Dalecarlia Reservoir, on DC line	Lost/Redeveloped	Unknown
Fair View Park	Ca. 1900	Near Dalecarlia Reservoir, on DC line	Exact location unknown; likely lost	Unknown
Nixon-Mounsey House	1949	2915 University Terrace, NW	Extant	Private Residence

Some data provided by the DC Historic Preservation Office, *HistoryQuestDC* [website] and the DC Office of Tax and Revenue, *MyTax DC* [website].

1. *Abner Cloud House, CHOH*

Pre-dating the construction of the C&O Canal, the Abner Cloud House is the oldest surviving building adjacent to the water feature. Completed in 1801, Abner Cloud, Jr. built his home on riverside property he acquired in 1795. Built in grade, the stone house, measuring 28.75x30.5 feet, is two stories on the façade (facing Canal Road) and three in the rear (facing the canal); it sits atop an English basement used as a storeroom for the milling grains that Cloud processed in the flour mill he built west of the house. The house falls within the CHOH parkland, and the building was restored in 1978.⁴⁵⁴

Following his marriage in 1799, Cloud became an enslaver of seven individuals who likely resided on the property from circa 1801 to 1813. Further research could elucidate the lives of these individuals and whether they were employed in industries that relied on the adjacent Potomac River or were associated with the Patowmack Company or nearby mills.

*Contact: [The Colonial Dames of America, Chapter III](#)
(202) 234-4874
admin@cda1890.org*

2. *Foxall Foundry, CHOH*

The ruins of Henry Foxall’s 1801 cannon foundry lie near the 1.5-mile marker and the Foundry Branch culvert on the C&O Canal. The ruins testify to the early, light-industrial enterprises that emerged on the Potomac River prior to the construction of the C&O Canal. Foxall sold the enterprise to John Mason, who renamed the ironworks the Columbian Foundry (but it was often called Mason’s Foundry through the 1850s). Further research into the labor at the foundry is warranted, as enslaved or free Blacks may have worked there through the first half of the nineteenth century. The 1820 US census lists Foxall as a resident of Georgetown and the head of a 17-person household that included 13 free Blacks and one enslaved person; although he had sold the cannon foundry five years prior, it is possible that he employed enslaved or free Blacks at the foundry during his ownership.

LOST

⁴⁵⁴ Romigh and Mackintosh.

3. *Union Burial Society of Georgetown Cemetery, 2616 Chain Bridge Road*

Founded in 1868, the small cemetery served the African American community of St. Phillips Hill as well as Black residents in the larger vicinity. It has been said that the Cephus family served as sextons for the cemetery.⁴⁵⁵ The Freedmen's Bureau deeded the community 5 acres on Chain Bridge Road as a burial ground. It interred congregants from Georgetown's Mount Zion A.M.E. and First Baptist churches as well as those who attended the Ebenezer A.M.E. Church. The last burial took place in 1966. Today, it is owned privately and maintained by the descendants of the St. Phillips Hill community.⁴⁵⁶

Privately owned

4. *Chain Bridge Road School, 2800 Chain Bridge Road*

The Chain Bridge Road School is a lasting vestige of the African American community of St. Phillips Hill, which grew organically near Battery Kemble in the Reconstruction era. The two-story, masonry building dating to 1923 replaced a one-room, wood-frame schoolhouse established by the Freedmen's Bureau in 1865. The new school building was meant to alleviate overcrowded conditions and replace the inadequate facilities of the nineteenth-century schoolhouse. Designed in the Colonial Revival style by DC city architect Albert L. Harris, the 1923 schoolhouse served African American students in northwest DC as well as adjacent neighborhoods in Montgomery County, Maryland. In 1925, the Chain Bridge Road School taught 40 students in grades one through seven, but by 1940, it served only 17 students in grades one through six. The school was closed in January 1941, at which point the students were enrolled in the Phillips-Wormley School in Georgetown.⁴⁵⁷

Privately owned

C. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Two vestiges of the St. Phillips Hill African American community exist on Chain Bridge Road. Although they are privately owned, they front the roadway that abuts the NPS-owned Battery Kemble Park; an opportunity exists to interpret or commemorate the importance of these two sites to the Battery Kemble Park and St. Phillips Hill community within the NPS parkland. Further avenues of research include the following.

1. Identifying the labor at Abner Cloud's House to ascertain how enslaved African Americans may have lived and worked there in the early nineteenth century;
2. Identifying workers at the Foxall-Columbian Foundry under both Henry Foxall's and John Mason's tenures to ascertain whether free Black or enslaved labor was used in the manufacture of heavy ordnance used in two American nineteenth-century wars.

⁴⁵⁵ Gray, 3.

⁴⁵⁶ Treischmann, Section 8, page 4.

⁴⁵⁷ Treischmann, Section 8, pages 1, 5, 25-27.

V. GRAYSVILLE, ROCK SPRING, BROOKMONT, AND GLEN ECHO

A. ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT

Brookmont is an undefined, unincorporated, census-designated place that lies between the DC boundary line and the town of Glen Echo. The C&O Canal, Clara Barton Parkway, and MacArthur Boulevard (formerly Conduit Road) follow the Potomac River’s shoreline through these areas. Canal Locks 5 and 6 are in Brookmont, and Lock 7 is in Glen Echo. Graysville and Rock Spring are historical African American communities—the former on River Road, the latter on Conduit Road—that are not named on period or contemporary maps.

1. Post-Emancipation Period: Graysville

As of late 1880, the area between the DC line and the east side of Cabin John Creek, south of River Road, remained rural, characterized by large farms, mostly divided between the Loughboroughs, Brookes, Shoemakers, and Lawrence A. Lodge (Figure 5.1). A small enclave of African Americans resided on Conduit Road near the Dalecarlia Reservoir: **JAMES HARPER** (aged 57 in the 1880 US census), his wife **MATILDA** (aged 51), son **FRANK** (aged 25), and Frank’s wife, **LUCY** (aged 23), all born in Virginia. Harper’s younger sons, **THOMAS** and **RICHARD H.**, had been born in DC ca. 1867 and 1869, respectively, and Frank’s two children, **WILLIAM T.** (aged 3) and **MARY V.** (aged 1), had been born in Maryland, leading to the conclusion that both Harper families had been in Montgomery County since at least 1877. The Harpers’ neighbor was **IGNATIUS BELT**, a farmer who had been born in Georgetown. His two sons, **IGNATIUS, JR.** and **WILLIAM H.** (aged 10 and 8), had been born in Maryland, however, suggesting that the Belts had been in the Brookmont area since at least 1870. Other African American households between the Harpers and Thomas A. Brooke included those of **GEORGE WILLIAMS**, **SAMUEL GREEN**, and **THOMAS MINER**. All of these men had been born in Virginia but had children born in DC and Maryland between ca. 1866 and 1874, suggesting they had settled the area shortly after emancipation.



Figure 5.1: Detail from *Atlas of Fifteen Miles Around Washington*, 1879 (Hopkins) Showing African American Enclaves near the Dalecarlia Reservoir and on River Road

According to the 1880 US census, a larger enclave of African Americans lived on the other side of Thomas A. Brooke and Lawrence A. Lodge, including households headed by DANIEL GRAY, RICHARD BROWN, GEORGE FRYE, JAMES NOLAND, MOSES SMOTHERS, WILLIAM WARREN, MARTIN TURNER, GEORGE KINSLOW, THOMAS HARDESTY, and DENNIS BOSWELL. Of these 10 men, four had come from Virginia but the majority were Marylanders by birth. The surnames Brown, Gray, Warren, and Jackson were depicted on the Hopkins (1879) atlas as residents of River Road, in the historical African American community of GRAYSVILLE (also known as RIVER ROAD-GRAYSVILLE and infrequently as Friendship, taken from the seventeenth-century land patent name), now within Westwood. The 1937 Works Progress Administration guidebook, *Washington, City and Capital*, described this as “a small [African American] settlement... which includes the remains of a slave colony of the old Loughborough Place.”⁴⁵⁸ More recent scholarship dates the community to the Reconstruction era. Between 1869 and 1872, white landowner James Ray sold 16 acres south of River Road to several African Americans, including JOHN HALL, FRANK and CHARLOTTE GRAY, JANE RIVERS, HENRY JACKSON, William Warren, and NELSON WARREN. At the same time, the heirs of John Counselman sold two 2-acre lots north of River Road to NELSON WOOD and JOHN BURLEY. Many of the residents came from or had ties to Reno City (a working-class, multi-racial community in DC that formed after the Civil War around Fort Reno) as well as an African American enclave north of Reno City, centered on historical Broad Branch and Rock Creek Ford roads in DC. These community ties were strengthened through shared association with the Rock Creek Baptist Church in Reno, founded in 1872, and WHITE’S TABERNACLE, a benevolent organization founded ca. 1870.⁴⁵⁹

Daniel Gray’s wife was MARIAH M. GRAY, who was employed in the Rock Spring Club and Cabin John Hotel as a cook at the turn of the twentieth century. Born (presumably into slavery) in North Carolina ca. 1853, Mariah migrated to Montgomery County, Maryland, by 1870. There, she met and married Daniel, with whom she had eight children. Mariah remained in the Brookmont area until her death, and her movements can be traced via US censuses. Although she was living with Daniel in Graysville in 1880, by 1900 she was residing closer to Conduit Road and was the head of her own household, owning her own home. She was neighbor to Charles Arthur Brill, owner of the Rock Spring Club (hotel) and her employer. Several other African Americans lived in Mariah’s neighborhood, including MOSES JONES (a hotel proprietor) with his family and two boarders, ROLLY LEWIS and WILLIAM FRY; Mariah’s boarder, ANDREW BECKLEY; JOHN COATES and his family; WILLIAM RANDALL, ROSE FORD, and GEORGE TONEY, who were servants to George Sullivan, who operated a “livery [and] lunch room”; and ROBERT HARROD. The area was known as ROCK SPRING, a community between Glen Echo and Brookmont that does not figure on period maps but was described by former resident FRANK DALVERT MCKINNEY: “It was a block past Sycamore Store, on top of the hill. A man named Frank Bock owned about 40 acres in that area and rented houses. I think he owned all the houses in the Rock Spring community.”⁴⁶⁰ McKinney rented a house from Bock for \$10 a month in the 1930s.⁴⁶¹

⁴⁵⁸ Federal Writers’ Project, Works Progress Administration, *Washington, City and Capital*, 814.

⁴⁵⁹ David S. Rotenstein, *The River Road Moses Cemetery: A Historic Preservation Evaluation*. Report prepared for the River Road African American community descendants. (Silver Spring, MD: September 2018) 36.

⁴⁶⁰ Barbara Martin, “Frank D. McKinney: My Heart is in Cabin John,” 2.

⁴⁶¹ The G.M. Hopkins (1894) map illustrates the Rock Spring Hotel (underlined in blue) to the left of “Geo. Bock 50a” (see Figure 5.2). Although no George Bock was identified in period census records, Frank A. Bock does appear in the US censuses of Montgomery County in 1910, 1930, and 1940. Bock was in the area, however, from at least 1899,

MARIAH M. GRAY
(ca. 1853 - after 1940)

Born in North Carolina, Mariah migrated to Maryland by 1870, where she married Daniel Gray and settled in the Graysville community on River Road. She was a cook in the Cabin John Hotel and the Rock Spring Club before taking in laundry in her Glen Echo Heights home.

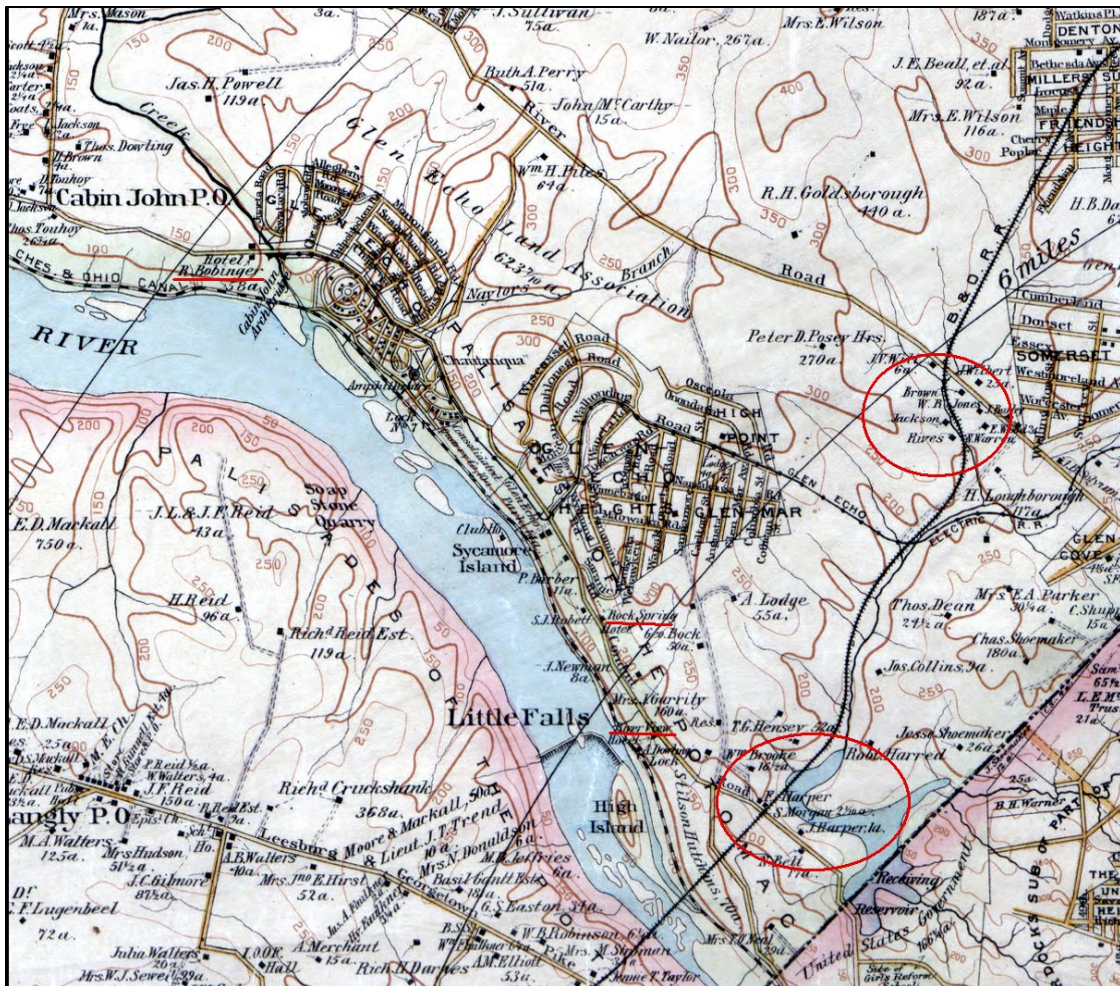


Figure 5.2: Detail from *The Vicinity of Washington, DC, 1894* (Hopkins) Showing African American Landowners near the Dalecarlia Reservoir and on River Road

when he married Jeanette Crist. In the 1910 census, Bock gave his age as 46 (born in 1864) and his birthplace as DC, although both of his parents hailed from Germany. He gave his occupation as a truck farmer and an employer. His immediate neighbors on both sides were several African American families, including [RICHARD W. PRYOR](#), [CHARLES TONEY](#), [LEWIS KINSLow](#), [CONROY STINER](#), [FRANK KINSLow](#), [SUSAN WARREN](#), [WILLIAM CLIPPER](#), [WILLIAM ANDERSON](#), [PETER C. HARRIS](#), [DOUGLAS L. WILLIAMS](#), [JAMES A. HARRIS](#), [ELIZABETH HOPKINS](#), [CHARLOTTE CARTER](#), [VICTORIA SMOTHERS](#), and [JACKSON COATES](#). Presumably, these were the inhabitants of the Rock Spring community. In Edward H. Deets and Charles J. Maddox, *A Real Estate Atlas of the Part of Montgomery County Adjacent to the District of Columbia* (1917), Bock's 50 acres abut the southern border of Glen Echo Heights, a suburb platted by Edward and Edwin Baltzley in 1889.

The G.M. Hopkins (1894) map, *The Vicinity of Washington, DC*, shows that the Glen Echo Land Association owned nearly 624 acres southwest of River Road, where the nascent communities of Glen Echo (chartered as a town in 1904), the Chautauqua assembly grounds, Glen Echo Heights, High Point, and Glen Mar had been superimposed atop old farmsteads (Figure 5.2). The map also depicts the Graysville community on River Road bisected by the Metropolitan & Southern Branch of the B&O Railroad (which extended southeast across the reservoir, Conduit Road, and the Potomac River), and the two Harper households were drawn on the northeast side of Conduit Road, very close to the reservoir. Frank Harper had, by that time, established his own household on the northeast side of Conduit Road and northeast of the railroad tracks. Two doors down lived his father, James Harper, who owned 1 acre just south of the reservoir. The Belt family owned 17 acres by the reservoir; their house was on the southwest side of Conduit Road, across from the house of the elder Harper. By 1916, the federal government had purchased (or possibly condemned through eminent domain) most of the properties near the reservoir and flanking Conduit Road, displacing the Harpers and Belts.

By 1910, Mariah Gray (aged 57) was a widow and working as a laundress from her house. Her neighbors included both white families—such as the households of Beverley G. Kennedy, Lee Hutchins, Edwards Shoemaker and Henry P. Shoemaker—and Black families, starting with her former boarder, Andrew Beckley, and [JOHN H. CARTER](#), [JOSEPH WEBSTER](#), Thomas Miner (the Harpers' neighbor in 1880), [JOHN NEAL](#), [RICHARD W. PRYOR](#), [CHARLES TONEY](#), [LEWIS KINSLOW](#), [CONROY STINER](#), [FRANK KINSLOW](#), [SUSAN WARREN](#), [WILLIAM CLIPPER](#), [WILLIAM ANDERSON](#), [PETER C. HARRIS](#), [DOUGLAS L. WILLIAMS](#), [JAMES A. HARRIS](#), [ELIZABETH HOPKINS](#), [CHARLOTTE CARTER](#), [VICTORIA SMOTHERS](#), and [JACKSON COATES](#). With some 20 families enumerated in this area in 1910, this was the highest concentration of African Americans living close together within Rock Spring. By the 1920 US census, the area was included within the adjacent Glen Echo Heights neighborhood. A review of the 1920 US census shows that Glen Echo Heights contained 16 Black households, including Mariah's, Beckley's, Coates's, Harris's, Kinslow's, Neal's, Toney's, and Webster's. Newcomers included [JOHN CRAWFORD](#), [GEORGE HARRIS](#), [LEWIS HARRIS](#), [GEORGE KINSLOW](#), [MAJOR H. PETER](#), and [WALTER STEWART](#). Three of the men gave their occupations as railroad laborers, two as chauffeurs, and several as general laborers; many of the women took in laundry. Nearby, the household of [EDWARD SPOTFORD](#) was one of two families enumerated on the "Canal C&O." Spotford, a 39-year-old from Florida, gave his occupation as a general laborer. Mariah, still a laundress, had paid the mortgage on her house and owned it outright.

Glen Echo Heights, although platted in 1890, took decades to develop. However, by 1930, the landscape between Brookmont and Glen Echo Heights, along Conduit Road and west of River Road, had densified dramatically: the 1930 US census enumerated 195 residences, of which 23 (or 12 percent) were occupied by African Americans. Many of the residents had been there for decades, but they had new neighbors settling in between them. By the 1940 census, the area between Glen Echo Heights and Brookmont contained 418 households, of which 29 (7 percent) were Black. Mariah's family and the family of [ALICE COATES](#) were enumerated on Conduit Road, and 10 families resided on River Road near Maryland Avenue; 12 families lived on Madawaska Road and one family on Wiscasset Road, both in Glen Echo Heights; and four families resided on Columbia Drive in Brookmont. The suburbanization and densification of this once rural landscape resulted in the whitening of the demographics through the twentieth century, which accelerated after World War II when "the population growth of Montgomery County paired with liberalized FHA insured mortgage loans and a lack of adequate housing led to the rapid construction of single-

family planned subdivisions primarily for caucasians.”⁴⁶² One of the tools employed to maintain exclusionism in a residential development was racial covenants on deeds of title. Brookmont and Glen Echo Heights did have African American families (albeit few, proportionally) in part because surrounding suburban developments—like Sumner, Mass Avenue Hills, Wood Acres, and Tulip Hill—had restrictive covenants as late as the 1960s while Glen Echo Heights-Mohican Hills-Potomac Overlook and Brookmont did not.⁴⁶³

2. *Twentieth Century: Growth and Displacement*

a. *The Rise of the White Leisure Resort*

Between 1887 and 1888, Edward and Edwin Baltzley (twins from Ohio) acquired 516 acres stretching from Cabin John Creek to the eastern side of Naylor’s Branch with the intent of founding a suburban resort community for wealthy Washingtonians, which they named Glen Echo. They formed a real-estate firm, E. & E. Baltzley Company, that sold several residential lots in 1889 to prominent Washingtonians (including former President Grover Cleveland) in the oldest, easternmost section, called Glen Echo Heights. The Baltzleys enticed Clara Barton, the founder of the American Red Cross, to establish the organization’s headquarters at Glen Echo by donating land and the labor to construct a large house. Barton made her home-cum-headquarters there in 1897.

In 1891, the brothers opened a Chautauqua Assembly camp on 80 riverside acres adjacent to Glen Echo. Named for a lake in upstate New York, the Chautauqua Institute was conceived in 1874 as a summer camp for Sunday school teachers, at which instruction on the Bible was paramount. It spawned several Chautauqua assemblies across the nation within the span of a decade. By the 1920s, at the movement’s peak, there were several hundred permanent Chautauqua Assemblies across the country. The Baltzleys’ vision for the Glen Echo Chautauqua Assembly grounds included the community’s post office and shops (built in the summer of 1890) as well as an 8,000-seat amphitheater, a lecture hall, and a restaurant with hotel. The undertaking was enormous, and as many as 900 men were employed by the developers in 1891. The Baltzleys brought 300 masons to the area from New York because they wanted all the buildings to be of local granite; five quarries were opened on the property to supply the building materials. Small cottages were erected by the leisure grounds to house the hundreds of workers who not only built the buildings but laid the trolley rails.

The 1891 Chautauqua summer season was a financial success, but the spread of false rumors that malaria had been contracted at Glen Echo effectively shut down the 1892 season despite the Baltzleys’ promotional efforts. The financial panic of 1893 caused the third season to be canceled, and by 1895, the faltering venture was threatened with foreclosure. Glen Echo’s association with the Chautauqua Assembly ended in 1896, but between 1897 and 1899, Edwin Baltzley rebranded the fairgrounds as an entertainment destination featuring vaudeville acts, prize fights, and light operas. Despite the failure of the Chautauqua Assembly, several families bought small house lots

⁴⁶² Montgomery Planning, “Public Hearing Draft Plan: Potomac Overlook” (Fall 2021, accessed 21 February 2022: https://montgomeryplanningboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Attachment-1_Potomac-Overlook-Public-Hearing-Draft-Amendment_11-2-21.pdf), 10.

⁴⁶³ “Hearings Before the United States Commission on Civil Rights: Housing in Washington. Hearings Held in Washington, DC, April 12-13, 1962” (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1962), 363-367; Rotenstein, 74-75.

and constructed summer cottages that eventually became year-round residences. Approximately 100 of these homes form the core of the town of Glen Echo, which was chartered in 1904.⁴⁶⁴

The Hopkins (1894) map illustrates the resort aspect of that area called the Palisades of the Potomac by the number of hotels drawn: the Bobingers' Cabin John Hotel, just west of the creek and town of Glen Echo; the Rock Spring Hotel, adjacent to and south of Glen Echo Heights; and the Riverview Hotel, farther south and between Conduit Road and the canal. These summer resorts and suburban developments fostered growth, and by 1922, a news item in the *Washington Herald* ascertained that there were approximately 700 "bungalows on the Maryland side of the river between the Potomac and the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal," or "summer dwellings... between Glen Echo and the Aqueduct Bridge" at Cabin John.⁴⁶⁵

But a different opinion of the Glen Echo development was expressed by Dr. Samuel Clagett Busey, a native of Cabin John, in his 1896 memoir:

It is strange, nevertheless true, that the location now known as Glen Echo was a part of my rabbit-trapping and hunting-ground, over which I have tramped through wind, cold, frost, and snow to my traps and in search of other game. It was then a rough and neglected region and known only to those who might tramp the pathless forests and broom-sage lowlands with dogs and gun to trap or chase the rabbit, or bag other game which, at times, sought refuge in the lonely forest and secluded valleys and ravines. It had not then engaged the speculative conception of the human mind that land that could not find a purchaser at five dollars per acre would ever be subdivided into town lots and sold by the square foot at prices far beyond the wildest dream of the most visionary and reckless theorist in future gains and profits. And even now, as I drive along the conduit road which bisects this region, which recent romance and poetry and financial wreck have made as famous as the South Sea Island bawble, I cannot realize the lavish and fruitless waste of money, taste, and enterprise in speculative future that decorates the lonesome hunting-ground of my youth. Glen Echo with her mansions on the sloping hillsides, her great Chautauqua buildings falling to ruin, the numerous un-occupied cottages on the level where broom-sage and poverty grass grew in luxuriant evidence of the poorness of the soil, and the driveways over the rugged hills and through the primeval forest, is more desolate than when the rabbit, opossum, woodcock, and other game abounded and made merry the sportsman with his gun and dog.⁴⁶⁶

By the end of the 1890s, the Chautauqua had closed and many of the Baltzleys' speculation lots sat unsold and undeveloped. As a response to the venture's slow growth, William Jeffers formed the Glen Echo Company in 1899 to transform the Chautauqua campus into an amusement park, with a carousel, rifle-shooting galleries, a pony track, a bowling alley, boat rentals, and a dance pavilion. Between 1900 and 1910, the amusement park was operated by a string of different managers and consistently faltered. The park also had to compete with several other amusement parks in the region, including the Marshal Hall Park, Washington's Luna Park, and a small park at the Cabin John Hotel. Glen Echo vied for prominence among pleasure grounds by adding electric rides as well as two roller coasters, a larger carousel in 1904, and the gyroplane ride. Despite these

⁴⁶⁴ Richard A. Cook, "A History of the Glen Echo Chautauqua" and "The Town of Glen Echo, Maryland," *Glen Echo-Cabin John Area History* [website] (last updated 24 January 2009, accessed 15 November 2021, <https://glenecho-cabinjohn.com/GE-03.html> and <https://glenecho-cabinjohn.com/GE-02.html>); Kelly, 238-239.

⁴⁶⁵ "Melting Snow Threatens Flood in Washington," *The Washington Herald* [Washington, DC], 1 February 1922:1. (accessed 15 November 2021, <https://candocanal.org/histdocs/Newspapers-1922.pdf>).

⁴⁶⁶ Busey, 41-42.

investments, Glen Echo's amusement park did not begin to turn profits steadily until 1911. World War I did not hinder the park's revenues, nor did the onset of the Great Depression in the 1930s: as the nation plummeted into a decade of economic depression and social malaise, theme parks (like movies) became even more popular among America's middle classes for offering a cheaper form of entertainment and escapism. World War II's gas rationing did depress the number of visitors to the park, but the numbers rebounded after the war. By the mid-1950s, Glen Echo's amusement park was widely popular.⁴⁶⁷

However, Glen Echo's amusement park had been founded as a playground for the region's white society, and segregation policies and practices prohibited African Americans from patronizing the park as guests. Local advocates for desegregation asked the park management to admit African Americans in 1957, but the management refused. On June 30, 1960, about 28 activists (most of whom belonged to the Nonviolent Action Group, which was composed primarily of Black and white students from DC) led by LAURENCE HENRY, a 26-year-old Howard University divinity student, and allied residents of the Bannockburn community began a nine-week picket of Glen Echo park. The first evening, Joan Trumpauer (later Mulholland), a young white activist, purchased entrance tickets to the park and passed them among the student activists. Henry led about one dozen of the activists in protest to the carousel, which they rode until five of the protestors were arrested for violating the private park's segregationist policies by the state-deputized security guard, Frank Collins.⁴⁶⁸ The owners of the Glen Echo amusement park (Kebar, Inc.) refused to negotiate and kept the park segregated through the summer season.

By March 1961, however, the threat of lawsuits, the involvement of US Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, and the turn of public opinion convinced the management to desegregate the park that year.⁴⁶⁹ The park installed a ticket booth and charged admission for the first time that season, which coincided with the closure of the trolley line from Washington, DC—both acts of defiance against desegregation. Desegregation did not diffuse racial tensions, which were underscored on 11 April 1966, the Monday after Easter. The sudden closure of a roller coaster prompted altercations said to have been started by Black youths. The park was immediately shut down and the visitors ejected. Reports of vandalism on the public bus to DC prompted DC Transit to halt suddenly all service to Glen Echo, leaving hundreds stranded and escalating the situation. Purportedly, the African Americans forced to walk back to DC participated in acts of minor vandalism, which further exacerbated the neighboring white communities' reactions to the park's desegregation. Articles in the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* were quick to label the Easter Monday disturbance

⁴⁶⁷ Richard A. Cook, "A General History of Glen Echo Park," *Glen Echo-Cabin John Area History* [website] (last updated 24 January 2008, accessed 15 November 2021, <https://glenecho-cabinjohn.com/GE-04.html>).

⁴⁶⁸ Heritage Montgomery. Cheryl Janifer LaRoche and Patsy M. Fletcher, *Thematic Framework for the History of Civil Rights in the National Capital Area* (Washington, DC: Department of Interior, National Park Service, National Capital Area, 2021), 136, 159.

⁴⁶⁹ Matt Blitz, "Civil Rights Protestors Recount the Little-Told Story of the Fight to Desegregate Glen Echo," *DCist* (June 29, 2019). <https://dcist.com/story/18/06/29/glen-echo-park-segregation-protest/>, accessed July 22, 2022.

GLEN ECHO PARK ACTIVISTS

Several of the activists who protested the white-only policy at Glen Echo Park in June and July of 1960 went on to have distinguished careers in public service and activism. WILLIE HARDY was a civil rights activist and later a councilwoman for Washington, DC, who participated in the picket at Glen Echo Park with her family. GWENDOLYN BRITT was an 18-year-old Howard University student when she protested at Glen Echo and was one of the five Black protestors arrested for riding the carousel; she later became a Maryland state senator. DION DIAMOND, also a Howard University student in 1960, devoted his life to activism and followed his work with the Nonviolent Action Group promoting desegregation in the DC area by participating in the Freedom Rides on interstate buses through southern states, which started in March 1961. JOAN MULHOLLAND helped organize the Freedom Rides from DC and continued her social justice activism through the decade and beyond. LAURENCE HENRY, who continued organizing Civil Rights actions across the country, provided a memorable summation of the Glen Echo protest's mission to make the park accessible to all: when a deputy sheriff at Glen Echo approached Henry on the carousel and asked him what race he belonged to, Henry replied, "I belong to the human race."

a "riot" and to describe "thousands of teenagers in suburban Washington" (estimates of the day's attendance to the park vary between 6,000 and 12,000) who engaged in "isolated acts of rock- and bottle-throwing vandalism."⁴⁷⁰ However, a citizen's committee report published in early May 1966 found that share of the responsibility for the disturbance lay with the park management, the DC Transit Company, and the local community at large in addition to a few dissatisfied youths. The report found that "no instances were reported where violence was directed at the person of any fellow walker, policeman, passing motorist or homeowner."⁴⁷¹ Despite this qualifying report, attendance bottomed after the 1966 incident, and Glen Echo Park gained a reputation for being a hangout for malevolent teenage gangs. DC Transit bus service to Glen Echo Park was canceled (the trolley had ceased running in 1961), which further accelerated the park's drop in attendance, until the park closed its doors in 1968.⁴⁷²

The federal government acquired Glen Echo Park in 1970 and transferred aegis to the NPS. The NPS envisioned a sort of Chautauqua programming at the new public park, which opened in June 1971. Early programming included classical music concerts and outdoor ballet performances, but from the mid-1970s onward, the NPS offered fine arts and artisanal classes at Glen Echo, such as in ceramics, spinning, photography, drawing, leather working, sculpture, dance, and music, among many others. Weekly dances have been held in the Spanish Ballroom, and an art gallery and museum were opened in the Tower building. Glen Echo continues to serve the regional community with cultural activities and classes, reflecting its early Chautauqua spirit.⁴⁷³

⁴⁷⁰ "Thousands of Teen-Agers Riot in a Park Outside the Capital," *New York Times* (12 April 1966): 29.

⁴⁷¹ Victoria W. Wolcott, "Integrated Leisure in Segregated Cities: Amusement Parks and Racial Conflict in the Post-War North," Paper presented at the Urban History association (October 2004): 8. See also "Park is Blamed in Capital Riot: Citizens' Group Reports on Easter Monday Outbreak," *New York Times* (5 May 1966): 41.

⁴⁷² Wolcott, 8.

⁴⁷³ Cook, "A General History of Glen Echo Park."

b. *Counterpoint: Places for African American Leisure in the Palisades, Brookmont, and Glen Echo*

Faced with discrimination, African Americans established their own private, small-scale pleasure grounds and hotels in the vicinity of Cabin John, Glen Echo, and the Palisades. Weekly editions of *The Colored American* from 4 May through 5 October 1901 advertised **WATSON'S PARK** as “an ideal summer resort located on Glen Echo Railway” where “Societies, Clubs and Parties are invited to spend a day’s outing... [with] No charge for grounds.”⁴⁷⁴ The advertisement continued to offer a “large and shady” park with “crystal spring water” and “meals served to order.” In addition, “Warren’s concert band will play on the lawn every Sunday – 11:30 to 4.” An August 1901 article in *The Washington Bee*, another DC publication written for and read by the city’s African American population, advertised Watson’s Park as an ideal destination for Labor Day celebrations:

The Special Attractions for the day will be the Athletic Sports which will consist of a foot race of 100 yards; a potatoe race at 100 yards; a hurdle race at 50 yards; and a Cake Walk at 9:30 a.m. The Cake will be specially beautifully decorated with American flags. If there are other persons wishing to take part in these amusements on the above date will please call at the Park or address A. D. Watson, 2025 L Street, N. W., on or before August 30th, 1901. It is hoped that the Bricklayers and Hod-carriers Unions will take advantage of this grand opportunity for a day’s pleasure. Take Chevy Chase Car to the Circle, change to Cabin John Bridge Car to the Park; or take the F St. Car to 32nd and P St., change to Tenny-town to District Line. Country fried chicken and boiled dinner. Music by Warren’s Band. Large Pavilion. All are welcome. Admission Free.⁴⁷⁵

ALEXANDER D. WATSON was the park’s proprietor and namesake. Washington city directories from 1896 through 1905 list him as a waiter at that L Street address in the West End neighborhood of DC. The 1900 US census lists Watson as the head of an African American family residing at that address and provides his occupation as the head waiter at a hotel, aged 37 years and born in Maryland. Watson’s Park was advertised in *The Colored American* and *The Washington Bee* for only two years, from 1901 through 1902, suggesting it was a short-lived venture. Perhaps this park’s brief operation may have to do with an altercation in August 1903 that received bad press in the *Evening Star*:

Razors, pistols and gin and other intoxicating beverages played an important part in a colored picnic at Watson’s Park, about two miles distant from Glen Echo, Md., Saturday night, and as a result several free-for-all fights were pulled off among those in attendance. Julia Bell, twenty-five years old, a resident of Georgetown, was among the most seriously wounded, being shot in the right thigh. According to the story told to the authorities at the Georgetown University Hospital, where the bullet was extracted, the wound was inflicted by Chas. Jackson. The assault was committed in a crowd, and Jackson got away.

Jessie Parker will long remember the outing by a razor slash across her face inflicted by an unknown man. The wound extended from the forehead to the lower jaw. She was also treated at the Georgetown University Hospital.⁴⁷⁶

⁴⁷⁴ “Watson’s Park” [Advertisement], *The Colored American*, 7 September 1901:10.

⁴⁷⁵ “At Watson’s Park Labor Day” [Advertisement], *The Washington Bee*, 31 August 1901.

⁴⁷⁶ “Affairs in Georgetown. Brief Mention of Happenings the Other Side of Rock Creek,” *The Evening Star*, 3 August 1903:7.

FAIR VIEW PARK was described in weekly editions of *The Washington Bee* in 1909 as a “beautiful, elevated park... one of the healthiest resorts in the District of Columbia... noted for its water and shady grove”; it was “situated on the Little Fall Road or District Line; reached by the Cabin John or Glen Echo cars.” Readers were encouraged to “spend the day in the country with birds and flowers” and to picnic at the park, which would be open every Sunday to the public.⁴⁷⁷ The proprietor of Fair View Park was **JOHN R. SCOTT**, whom the 1902 Washington city directory listed as a messenger living on Loughboro Road; by 1905, his address had changed to Little Falls Road. By 1914, Scott’s home was listed as on Little Falls Road but his workplace was given as 2 North Conduit Road. This may be the same John R. Scott enumerated in the Wesley Heights neighborhood of DC in the 1900 US census. If so, that Scott was a Black man aged 50 who had been born in Virginia. He lived with his wife, Emma, to whom he had been married 18 years, but the couple had no children. Rather, their household included a hostler (George West) and a butler (Joseph W. Dunlop). The presence of live-in servants suggests that Scott, who gave his occupation as a messenger in DC, was affluent. A register of District of Columbia government employees in 1903 shows John R. Scott, born in Virginia but residing in DC at that time, as a messenger for the Marshal’s Office of the DC Courts, earning \$60 per pay period.

In proximity to Fair View Park but in Maryland was **LAKE VIEW PARK**, another leisure destination advertised in DC’s African American newspapers. A July 1900 advertisement in *The Colored American* described the park as “one of the prettiest outings and summer resorts in the neighborhood of Washington... located on a high knoll near the lake on the Conduit Road a short distance east of Glen Echo.”⁴⁷⁸ In another advertisement, from late June 1900, the interested reader was instructed to take the “Washington and Great Falls road [and] get off at the station at the District Line [then] take the road leading to the Girls Reform School,” from which the park was a mere 200 yards away; this would situate the park in the vicinity of the present-day Sibley Memorial Hospital and the “lake” as the Dalecarlia Reservoir. The park was founded by the **COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION**, which, “knowing the need of a Pleasure Park for our people... arranged and fitted up [the park] with a large pavilion 40 x 60 feet. Summer houses, swings, croquet grounds, and other facilities. There is plenty of shade and an abundant supply of elegant water.”⁴⁷⁹ A 1901 news item described the park as “overlooking the beautiful palisades of the historic Potomac” and containing a “spacious dining-room.”⁴⁸⁰ The July 1900 advertisement continued to specify that “Sundays are devoted largely to sacred concerts and to out door meetings. Thus far the attendance each Sunday has been in the neighborhood of 2,000.”⁴⁸¹ The park, which was open from 9 am until 11:30 pm and for which admission was 25 cents, was managed by **JOHN W. GREEN**, residing at 1822 Florida Avenue. Both the 1900 city directory and the US census, however, show Green’s address as 1816 Florida Avenue, where he was enumerated with his wife and daughter. In the census, Green gave his age as 40, his birthplace as Virginia, and his occupation as a messenger in government service.

Similarly, from the late 1890s through the early 1900s, Moses Jones (the Rock Spring resident mentioned previously as a neighbor of Mariah M. Gray) advertised the **JONES HOTEL** in Glen Echo to Black Washingtonians in *The Washington Bee* as a “strictly first-class resort” where one

⁴⁷⁷ “Fair View Park” [Advertisement], *The Washington Bee*, 7 August 1909.

⁴⁷⁸ “Lake View Park, Md.,” *The Colored American*, 7 July 1900.

⁴⁷⁹ “A Grand Picnic at Lakeview Park,” *The Colored American*, 30 June 1900.

⁴⁸⁰ “Up the Palisades,” *The Colored American*, 11 May 1901:12.

⁴⁸¹ “Lake View Park, Md.,” *The Colored American*, 7 July 1900.

could “spend a pleasant day in the woods. Meals and lunches served at all hours.”⁴⁸² Described in a 1901 advertisement in *The Colored American*, Jones Hotel and Club House was “about two miles above the District line on the Great Falls railway.”⁴⁸³ That year, its proprietorship had passed to **A.R. PETERS**, who was “a first-class caterer and [who] proposes to make this resort the most popular of any in the suburbs of Washington.”⁴⁸⁴ By 1902, it was called “Jones Park on the Conduit road” and hosted the Republican Barbecue (the meal consisting of a large ox) in September.⁴⁸⁵ In fact, Jones’s hotel had long been a gathering place for politicized African Americans in the area. An 1898 notice in *The Washington Bee* announced that in “Glen Echo, Md., July 16, 1898, -- There was a Gould meeting held there last Saturday evening, in Jones House near Cabin John Bridge” in which “about 35 colored republicans” came to support Captain John M. McDonald, candidate for public office.⁴⁸⁶

Not much is known about Jones, save the information gleaned from the 1900 US census. That year, he was enumerated three houses away from Edwin Baltzley and as a neighbor to Charles Brill on a street called only “Headquarters Red Cross.” Born in Virginia in 1848, he was the head of an eight-person household that included his wife, Emma (to whom he had been married 25 years); two daughters and a son, aged 16 to 19; his son-in-law, Robert Lewis; and two male boarders. His residence was described as a farm that he rented, and he gave his occupation as a day laborer rather than a hotelier. The 1870 US census enumerated a Moses Jones in Sandy Spring, Maryland, which may be the same person. He gave his birthplace as DC, however, and his birth year as 1844. At the age of 26 in 1870, this Jones was a railroad laborer. It could be that Jones’s experience in hospitality on the railroad allowed him to open a summer hotel in his later years. More research into Jones and his hotel is warranted, because if prevalence of advertising is any measure of importance, then Jones Hotel was an important center for Black political and social life in Glen Echo and environs at the fin-de-siècle.

c. Graysville

At the turn of the twentieth century, the Graysville Black community on River Road coalesced around a 1912 public school (which was replaced by a Rosenwald school in 1925) as well as the ca. 1920 **MACEDONIA BAPTIST CHURCH**. The third institution was a benevolent society’s cemetery, founded in 1911 for members of **WHITE’S TABERNACLE NO. 39** of the Ancient United Order of Sons and Daughters, Brothers and Sisters of Moses, based in Reno City.⁴⁸⁷ Edward H. Deets and Charles J. Maddox’s *A Real Estate Atlas of the Part of Montgomery County Adjacent to the District of Columbia*, published in 1917, shows a 1-acre parcel for the “White Tabernacle A.O.U. Sons & Daughters, Sisters and Brothers of Moses” at the center of the community.⁴⁸⁸

According to this 1917 real-estate map, Graysville had coalesced around the junction of the B&O Railroad’s Metropolitan & Southern Branch with River Road, nestled in a bend in Willett Brook. It was hemmed in by the Somerset and Somerset Heights subdivision on the northeast; several large, Loughborough family holdings on the southeast; a 270-acre tract owned by the heirs of Peter

⁴⁸² Fletcher, chapter 1. “Summer Resorts,” *The Washington Bee*, 23 July 1898.

⁴⁸³ “Special Advertisements: Summer Resorts,” *The Colored American*, 6 April 1901:5.

⁴⁸⁴ “Special Advertisements: Summer Resorts,” *The Colored American*, 6 April 1901:5.

⁴⁸⁵ “Republican Barbecue,” *The Washington Bee*, 13 September 1902.

⁴⁸⁶ “Capt. John M. McDonald – The Colored Vote United – Gould Denounced – Paid Negroes Denounced,” *The Washington Bee*, 23 July 1898.

⁴⁸⁷ Rotenstein, 21.

⁴⁸⁸ A sister Moses Hall was located in Gibson Grove, in the vicinity of Cabin John, discussed in the next chapter.

D. Posey on the southwest; and a 204-acre tract owned by the American Security and Trust Company on the northwest. In contrast to these large parcels were the small, concentrated lots ranging from less than 1 acre to 3 acres, owned by African Americans with the surnames Wood, Matthews, Burns, Turner, Burley, Warren, Brooks, Jackson, Duvall, Clipper, Coleman, Hawkins, Jones, Rivers, and Brown. The disposition of the Wood and Clipper family lots, north of River Road, illustrates the kinship ties in this quintessential post-emancipation African American community and the derivation of title to kin: with each successive generation, a parcel was subdivided into smaller lots and bequeathed to family members. The 1917 atlas ascribes five narrow, rectangular lots to Frank Wood, G.M. Wood, A.A. Wood, William D. Wood, and A.A. Wood. In the 1910 US census, the families of [DANIEL W. WOOD](#) (aged 44), [ANDREW A. WOOD](#) (38), and [FRANK W. WOOD](#) (36) were all immediate neighbors and likely (given their ages) brothers. Similarly, three Clippers—William, C., and I.—divided a deep, narrow lot into three equal shares in a railroad configuration (only William’s fronted River Road; the other two were landlocked, behind). Interestingly, the 1920 census enumerated only [ISAAC CLIPPER](#) (aged 47) as a resident, between the households of Frank W. Wood and [GEORGE F. COLEMAN](#).⁴⁸⁹

Increased suburbanization in DC during the interwar years, and River Road’s direct access to those subdivisions, resulted in creeping suburbanization across the River Road-Grayville landscape, which had previously remained predominantly rural and agricultural. The rise of automobiles and the implementation of streetcar lines hastened residential development on Montgomery County lands just over the DC border. During that period, Graysville’s Black residents worked primarily in the fields of groundskeeping, quarrying, construction, canalling, or in government jobs if they were men and as domestics in white households or laundresses if they were women. During Prohibition, the River Road area “supported a colorful and thriving informal economy with liquor sales, numbers gambling, scavenging, and off-the-books jobs that helped the residents make ends meet in Jim Crow Montgomery County.”⁴⁹⁰

From the 1920s through the 1940s, the African American presence in Reno City was eroded as eminent domain and land purchases displaced the residents, who often relocated across the district line to Graysville. After World War II, increased residential development further hemmed in the residents of Graysville, who were often denied the same municipal services as their white neighbors. Municipal water service, for instance, was not available to most families of Graysville, most of whom had wells or relied on fresh-water springs. [FRANK LANCASTER](#), who spent his early childhood in Graysville in the 1940s, recalled having no indoor plumbing or electricity.⁴⁹¹

The recollections of [HARVEY M. MATTHEWS](#), a contemporary of Frank Lancaster’s who grew up in the Graysville community in the 1950s, paint a portrait of African American dispossession of land title through chicanery. In oral interviews conducted in 2018, “he described white realtors and developers using alcohol to trick [undereducated and often illiterate] African Americans into giving up their land.”⁴⁹² As David S. Rotenstein, who interviewed Matthews and other members

⁴⁸⁹ Edward H. Deets and Charles J. Maddox, *A Real Estate Atlas of the Part of Montgomery County Adjacent to the District of Columbia* (Rockville, MD: 1917, Repository: John Hopkins University Sheridan Libraries, <https://jscholarship.library.jhu.edu/handle/1774.2/35333>), plate 11-O.

⁴⁹⁰ Rotenstein, 72.

⁴⁹¹ Rotenstein, 72-73; “Historic African American Communities in the Washington Metropolitan Area,” *Prologue DC* [website] (accessed 15 October 2021, <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=5d16635c4fde41eca91c3e2a82c871e8>).

⁴⁹² Rotenstein, 73.

of the former Graysville community in preparation for his report on the River Road Moses cemetery, surmised,

It is likely that families in River Road and elsewhere in Montgomery County who believed that they owned their land were victimized by a scam called land-installment contracts or simply contract sales. In this system prospective Black homebuyers unable to get conventional mortgages and excluded from many areas by redlining entered rent-to-own agreements. These predatory agreements inflated the property values forcing African Americans to pay for properties that whites could buy for substantially less. African Americans caught up in this system were vulnerable to evictions for any reason and they had few legal alternatives.⁴⁹³

Over the course of the 1950s and 1960s, the Graysville community dispersed, most moving into DC but others resettling in Poolesville, Tobytown, and Rockville. The construction of the Little Falls Parkway further severed the community spatially and “squeezed everybody...out.”⁴⁹⁴ By 1962, testimony before Congress about racialized housing practices in the region relayed that “several Negro families who lived in the area have been bought out by builders in recent years. Nearby, there is a pocket of Negro homes at River Road and the B. & O. tracks.”⁴⁹⁵ But by 1969, the landscape of the Reconstruction-era community had been replaced thoroughly by residential, commercial, and industrial development. The last community member, [ELLA WATKINS](#), sold her property and moved away by 1977. The Macedonia Baptist Church “is the sole surviving cultural institution from River Road’s African American community.”⁴⁹⁶

CELESTE E. (NEE LEWIS) SWEDENBURG
(1925-2000)

Celeste Elizabeth Lewis was born in Georgetown in 1925. Her father, Lester Riley Lewis, was a landscaper and her mother, Louise Ellen (née Woodard) Lewis, was a housekeeper for a Bethesda family. Around 1935, the family moved to Graysville. She attended River Road Elementary and Lincoln Junior High School in Rockville. After marrying Gilbert Swedenburg, who was a steel cutter at the Carderock David Taylor Model Basin, the couple moved to 7 Carver Road in Cabin John.

As a resident of Cabin John, Swedenburg drove the country school buses from 1965 until 1987. During the 1960s, she became acutely aware that “Black kids were being kicked out of school on a daily basis. They weren’t learning anything. They needed individual help and encouragement.” So, Swedenburg spearheaded the Cabin John Home Study program, in which she and colleagues matched tutors with students, who came primarily from the Carver Road and Cabin John area. “It made a big difference in attendance and we had kids doing well and enjoying school.” Larry Ware was a student of the Cabin John Home Study program who received financial aid to matriculate to college and believes he wouldn’t have gotten there without the help.

See Barbara Martin, “Making a Difference: Celeste Swedenburg,” *Village News*, 1994. In “People of Cabin John” (Cabin John, MD: *Village News*, 1995), 1-3.

⁴⁹³ Rotenstein, 73-74.

⁴⁹⁴ Rotenstein, 81.

⁴⁹⁵ “Hearings Before the United States Commission on Civil Rights: Housing in Washington. Hearings Held in Washington, DC, April 12-13, 1962” (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1962), 32-33, quoted in Rotenstein, 82.

⁴⁹⁶ Rotenstein, 10.

B. HISTORIC SITES

Chapter II and this chapter have mentioned several historic sites associated with the C&O Canal and with African American history in Montgomery County’s Brookmont, Glen Echo, Rock Spring, and Graysville areas. Unfortunately, many of the original buildings have been demolished or converted to private use and thereby are not accessible to the public, or the exact location of the historic building or site is unknown (Table 5.1).

TABLE 5.1: BROOKMONT, GLEN ECHO, ROCK SPRING, AND GRAYSVILLE HISTORIC SITES ASSOCIATED WITH THE C&O CANAL OR AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY

SITE/BUILDING	DATE	LOCATION/ADDRESS	STATUS	CURRENT FUNCTION
Rock Spring Club/Hotel	1884	On Conduit Road 1 mile from the DC line	Lost	Unknown
Riverview Hotel	Ca. 1900	Between Conduit Road and canal, south of Rock Spring	Presumed Lost	Unknown
Sycamore Island Club	1885	Island located approximately ½ mile south of Lock 7	Extant	Private Club
Hotel Cycle/Cycle Clubhouse	Ca. 1900	Just over the DC line on Conduit Road	Presumed Lost	Unknown
Watson’s Park	Ca. 1900	Near DC line, exact location unknown	Presumed Lost	Unknown
Lake View Park	Ca. 1900	Short distance east of Glen Echo, exact location unknown	Presumed Lost	Unknown
Jones Hotel	Ca. 1900	2 miles from DC line, in Glen Echo, exact location unknown	Presumed Lost	Unknown

The following are descriptions of a few sites in the areas of Brookmont, Glen Echo, Rock Spring, and Graysville that are strongly associated with the C&O Canal and/or African American history and that are accessible to the public to some degree.

1. *Battery Bailey, 5315 Elliott Road (Westmoreland Hills Park)*

Erected between 1861 and 1865, Battery Bailey is part of the Civil War Defenses of Washington, a system of fortifications conceived by President Abraham Lincoln as a measure to protect the federal city from the Confederate Army in Virginia, just across the Potomac River. The system formed a ring around DC and Arlington, composed of several forts, batteries, and encampments built every 0.5 mile. Battery Bailey is the only Civil War-era fortification constructed in Montgomery County, Maryland, that exists today. Named for Capt. Guilford D. Bailey, who was killed at the Battle of Fair Oaks, Virginia, in May 1862, the battery is a C-shaped earthwork atop a hill that overlooks Little Falls Branch. It contained six platforms on which field guns were to be affixed, but the battery was never armed nor was it consistently manned. No known action occurred at Battery Bailey throughout its four-year tenure as a defense.⁴⁹⁷

Two forts (Simmons and Mansfield) and Battery Bailey were erected on lands belonging to members of the Shoemaker family: Isaac, Charles, Jesse, and Samuel. The Shoemaker brothers had emigrated from Pennsylvania; all were farmers in their 40s and 50s when the 1860 US census was taken. None of the Shoemakers were enslavers at that time, although Charles had enslaved two persons, a 20-year-old man and a 12-year-old girl, in 1850. After the war, Jesse Shoemaker

⁴⁹⁷ Kelly, 252.

filed a claim with the federal government for his property, which he valued at \$2,800, stating that he had lost to the United States Army (for their erection of encampments and fortifications) 23 acres of land “including seven acres of potatoes, five acres of corn, four acres of clover, a fourth of an acre of asparagus, and at least forty-eight apple trees, fifty-one peach trees, forty-six quince trees, twenty-three cherry trees, and two large persimmon trees.”⁴⁹⁸

As contrabands—self-liberating enslaved people from Confederate states who migrated to federally controlled territories to find freedom and refuge—are known to have worked on the Civil War Defenses of Washington, and as some African American settlements sprang up around forts (such as at Battery Kemble), it is possible that African Americans helped built Battery Bailey or are associated with it in some capacity. Further research into this topic is warranted.

*Contact: [Montgomery Parks Information & Customer Service Office](#)
(301) 495-2595
Info@MontgomeryParks.org*

2. *Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Boulevard*

An early twentieth-century amusement park, Glen Echo Park is a historic district listed in the National Register of Historic Places as well as a federal park operated by the NPS. It was founded in 1891 as one of 52 national Chautauqua Assemblies across the nation, which were “an effort to democratize learning within an ecumenical Protestant religious framework by bringing art, science, and literary culture to the masses.”⁴⁹⁹ The Chautauqua Assembly was a short-lived success, and by 1900, the grounds had been converted into an amusement park. In 1911, the park was purchased by the Washington Railway and Electric Company, which ran the trolley to the park and beyond to Great Falls. Thereafter and through the 1950s, Glen Echo Park was Washington’s most popular amusement destination. The privately owned park was the site of desegregation protests during the Civil Rights era, in the late 1950s and early 1960s. It was closed in 1968, purchased by the federal government, and reopened as a public park in 1971.

*Contact: [Glen Echo Park, National Park Service](#)
(301) 320-1400*

3. *White’s Tabernacle, Order of Moses Cemetery, 5401 Westbard Avenue, Bethesda*

The original location of White’s Tabernacle lodge and cemetery, founded ca. 1870 and incorporated in 1876, was the Reno subdivision in DC. By 1893, development of the Chevy Chase subdivision to the north and the city’s plan to extend 37th Street NW threatened the Order of Moses cemetery, established by 1881. The last interment was made in that Tenleytown location in 1910, the same year the cemetery was closed and the land sold; in 1911, the Moses Order re-established their cemetery on a 1.04-acre parcel acquired from [FRANK](#) and [KATIE DOTSON](#), possibly on land that had pre-existing burials for members of the Graysville community.⁵⁰⁰ In September 1912, [CHARLES H. BROWN](#), a founding member of the No. 10-Seven Locks Road-Gibson Grove community (see Chapter VI) as well as a founding trustee of White’s Tabernacle, was the second

⁴⁹⁸ Benjamin Franklin Cooling and Walton H. Owen, *Mr. Lincoln’s Forts: A Guide to the Civil War Defenses of Washington* (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2010), 150.

⁴⁹⁹ Kelly, 238.

⁵⁰⁰ Rotenstein, 41, 49-51.

burial there. Other known burials include Graysville founder John Burley in 1915 and early resident George Frye in 1926. The last known burial was in 1935.⁵⁰¹ By the 1940s, the Graysville Moses Cemetery had been abandoned, and it was completely overgrown with native vegetation by the 1950s. The 1-acre property was sold to a real-estate speculator in 1958 and subdivided into two lots. Both parcels were buried under asphalt surface parking in ca. 1968, when the Westwood Shopping Center and Westwood Tower Apartments were built. The easternmost portion was redeveloped in 2017. In 2018, the Montgomery County Housing Opportunities Commission purchased the two parcels that constituted the historic cemetery and that hold the Westwood Towers building and adjacent parking lots.⁵⁰²

LOST

4. *Macedonia Baptist Church, 5119 River Road, Bethesda*

Established in 1920 as a mission arm of Rockville's Mount Calvary Baptist Church, the first congregants of the Macedonia Baptist Church met in members' homes. In May 1937, the congregation purchased 7/10 of an acre on River Road, which had been the property of Rev. [WILLIAM A. JONES](#). It was located north of the White's Tabernacle Moses cemetery and south of River Road until it moved in 1945 to its present location on the north side of River Road. This church converted a one-story, rectangular, wood-frame dwelling into their sanctuary.⁵⁰³ It is considered the last physical vestige of the Graysville community.

Contact: [Macedonia Baptist Church](#)

Rev. Segun Adebayo, Pastor

(301) 656-0994

C. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Very little is known about African American residents of Brookmont or Glen Echo, which were enclaves of upper- and middle-class whites through the early twentieth century. Despite this, pockets of African Americans did live in Rock Spring-Glen Echo Heights in the early twentieth century and were largely employed by the railroad. More research into the African American presence of these two communities is warranted, and further avenues of research include the following.

1. Researching the construction of Battery Bailey to ascertain whether known African Americans, free or enslaved, worked on its construction or were associated with the Civil War fortification in some capacity
2. Using US census data and other sources to map the African American pockets in Brookmont and Glen Echo, in order to better understand where African Americans lived over several decades in these two areas and to gain insight into what industries employed them
3. Interpreting the effects of segregation on places of leisure and recreation, like Glen Echo

⁵⁰¹ Rotenstein, 61-62, 65.

⁵⁰² Rotenstein, 4, 61.

⁵⁰³ Rotenstein, 68-71.

4. Determining the locations of Fair View Park, Lake View Park, Watson's Park, and the Jones Hotel, as well as researching further into the lives of the proprietors, Alexander D. Watson and Moses Jones
5. This chapter introduced the African American families of Frank Harper, James Harper, and Ignatius Belt who were living south of the Dalecarlia Reservoir along Conduit Road by 1879, according to the Hopkins (1879) atlas; they were also depicted on the Hopkins (1894) map, and by that time the Belt family owned 17 acres near the reservoir, south of Conduit Road. But by 1917, the families had been bought out by the federal government.⁵⁰⁴ Several smallholders adjacent remained, however. Further research may yield whether race was a factor in this displacement.

⁵⁰⁴ See Edward H. Deets and Charles J. Maddox, *A Real Estate Atlas of the Part of Montgomery County Adjacent to the District of Columbia*, plate 13G.

VI. GIBSON GROVE AND CABIN JOHN

A. ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT

Cabin John is an unincorporated, census-designated place in Montgomery County, roughly bounded by the Potomac River on the south, River Road to the north, and Wilson Lane on the east. It is separated from Carderock, a neighborhood nestled between River Road and the Potomac River, by Interstate 495 on the west. To the east of Wilson Lane lie Glen Echo and the residential neighborhood of Bannockburn. Seven Locks Road and Cabin John Parkway cross the area from north to south, and the C&O Canal, Clara Barton Parkway, and MacArthur Boulevard (formerly Conduit Road) traverse the southern extreme of the area from east to west. Canal Locks 8 through 14 lie in Cabin John and Carderock, which is why the area was called “Seven Locks.”

1. *Pre-Emancipation Period: Cabin John’s Landscape of Enslavement*

Cabin John is a toponym for the tributary that runs through the area, which was originally called “Captain John’s Run” (possibly named for John Addison, who was appointed captain of the Potomac Rangers militia in 1694) but devolved over time into “Cabin John.” In the eighteenth century, this land was agricultural and characterized by tobacco plantations of varying sizes and irregular shapes. Although large tracts were subdivided increasingly into smaller landholdings over time, the general population of the area remained sparse through the middle of the nineteenth century, as most properties were held by a few white elites with kinship ties. Although various light industries (smithies, quarries, and mills) were scattered throughout the countryside, the area was predominantly agricultural and reliant on enslaved labor.⁵⁰⁵

UNCLE WILL and AUNT HANNAH were two of 21 African Americans enslaved in the 1840s by the White family, one of the major landholders in this area.⁵⁰⁶ They were the caretakers of Stony Lonesome, the White homestead that was located 0.5 mile east of the Cabin John Bridge, on land through which a 1.5-mile segment of the Washington Aqueduct was built. Hannah had been the cook for the Whites, and her husband had been the body-servant to Joseph White, the family patriarch. Dr. Samuel Clagett Busey (1828-1901), Joseph White’s grandson, wrote an autobiography in 1896 in which he recalled several of the enslaved individuals who lived at Stony Lonesome. Busey described Hannah’s later years, during which she “had her garden-patch for vegetables and herbs, cow, chickens, and pet cat and dog,” while Will “was a rough carpenter and occupied himself, when it suited his amiable disposition, in making baskets and chair-seats of white-oak splints, door-mats of corn-shucks, axe-helves, hoe-handles, toy wagons and sleds, and foot-stools, which he sold or gave away as might be his pleasure.”⁵⁰⁷

⁵⁰⁵ Dwyer, 39, 44. Sheila Cochran, “The Early History of River Road,” *The Montgomery County Story* [Published by the *Montgomery County Historical Society*] 28, no. 4 (November 1985):187-188 (accessed 17 November 2021, https://mchdr.montgomeryhistory.org/xmlui/bitstream/handle/20.500.12366/139/mcs_v028_n4_1985_cochran.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y).

⁵⁰⁶ L. Paige Whitley, “The History of the Gibson Grove Community and the Gibson Grove AMEZ Church, Cabin John School and Morningstar Tabernacle No. 88 Moses Hall and Cemetery” (Cabin John, MD: prepared for Friends of Moses Hall, January 2021, accessed 17 November 2021, <https://mchdr.montgomeryhistory.org/xmlui/bitstream/handle/20.500.12366/381/History%20of%20Gibson%20Grove%20Community%20%20Sween%20FINAL2.5.21.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>), 3.

⁵⁰⁷ Busey, 19.

CATO was likely one of the 21 enslaved workers on Stony Lonesome engaged in agricultural labor in 1840. Busey recalled being with Cato in the woods, who “with maul and wedge... [split] huge logs into rails” while smoking a pipe and telling the young Busey the story of Jack the Giant-killer. YI was an enslaved woman with children on the plantation. Other enslaved individuals named by Busey included TOM, LEWIS, and FRANK, the coachman. Tom was only a few years older than Busey and was his childhood playmate; Tom’s mother was not named in Busey’s memoir but was only referred to as “a voodooist [who] believed in ‘tricks’ and incantations.”⁵⁰⁸ CHARITY MARTIN was the Busey family’s cook and had been Busey’s nurse in his infancy. Her son was ALFRED MARTIN, who was about Busey’s age and Busey’s favored companion. As a youth, Alfred “was ready to open the yard-gate for visitors, hold their horses, or fasten the reins to the rack and receive the penny-tip which he gave to his mother” and “was for a year or more [Busey’s] horse-boy, who rode behind me to and from the entrance-gate of the orchard farm.” After emancipation, Alfred Martin was enumerated in the 1870 US census of the Rockville District of Montgomery County as a 40-year old blacksmith, residing with an older woman, Cinthia,⁵⁰⁹ in a house next door to the home of Joseph Gustavus White (Busey’s older half-brother who had inherited Stony Lonesome in 1844) (Figure 6.1). Of Alfred, Busey concludes that he moved to Washington, DC, where “he was a dignified and reputable colored gentleman” and died there several years before the memoir’s publication in 1896.⁵¹⁰ In fact, the last census record for Alfred Martin, in 1880, shows him living on Frederick Street in Georgetown with his wife, Mary.

ALFRED MARTIN

(ca. 1827 - before 1896)

The son of an enslaved woman, CHARITY MARTIN, Alfred was born on the Cabin John plantation of the White-Busey family, Stony Lonesome. By 1870, he was a freedman and blacksmith residing on the same land. By 1880, he had moved to Washington, DC, where he died before 1896.

⁵⁰⁸ Busey, 56.

⁵⁰⁹ It is possible that this woman was neither his wife nor even named Cynthia, but was his mother, Charity.

⁵¹⁰ Busey, 55.



Figure 6.1: Detail from *Map of Montgomery County, Maryland, 1865* (Martenet et al.) Showing Landowners Flanking Cabin John Creek

The house at Stony Lonesome was obliterated by the construction of the Washington Aqueduct. Constructed between 1853 and 1863 by the US Army Corps of Engineers (under the leadership of Montgomery C. Meigs), the aqueduct infrastructure was intended to bring abundant, clean river water from above Great Falls down to the residents of Washington. The system entailed the construction of a dam and intake works, 12 miles of conduit (a circular masonry tube 9 feet in diameter), two reservoirs, six bridges, 11 tunnels, 26 culverts, and pumping stations. The largest undertaking was the construction of the **CABIN JOHN AQUEDUCT BRIDGE**, completed in 1863. Conduit Road (now called MacArthur Boulevard) was laid atop the conduit following its construction; the road parallels the river and was intended to provide future access to the aqueduct for maintenance purposes but soon became a scenic drive.⁵¹¹

The vast public works project brought an influx of laborers into lower Montgomery County over the course of a decade. Similar problems that had plagued the C&O Canal construction stymied the aqueduct project, from Congressional funding shortfalls and issues attaining rights-of-way to labor shortages and sickness (malaria) among the workforce. The outbreak of civil war only prolonged the effort, as the area was a borderland between North and South and aqueduct workers were afraid of Confederate raids across the Potomac River.⁵¹² Also like the C&O Canal's construction, the work was back-breaking and involved manual earth-moving at a grand scale, a

⁵¹¹ Kelly, 19. Ben Levy and Paul Ghioto, "Washington Aqueduct," Montgomery County, Maryland, and Washington, DC, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (Washington, DC: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, 1973, accessed 11 November 2021, https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/PDF/NR_PDFs/NR-1177.pdf).

⁵¹² Levy and Ghioto.

mile of tunneling, and feats of masonry construction. The labor required was massive and the laborers myriad. In 1858, the US Army Corps of Engineers employed “5 assistant engineers, 50 surveyors and inspectors, 700 skilled tradesman, 1,100 laborers, 40 teams, 60 cooks and waiters, 30 overseers, 20 clerks, and 12 slaves” on the aqueduct, while contractors retained an additional thousand laborers, making the total employed in one year between 3,000 and 4,000. The enslaved workers were hired out from local plantations, as the wages they earned (\$1.20 per day) were paid to their enslavers.⁵¹³ A maximum of 15 enslaved men were employed by the US Army Corps of Engineers for the Washington Aqueduct project from 1857 to 1860.⁵¹⁴ Very little is known about the enslaved laborers employed in the construction of this public works project; further research into the topic may illuminate the names of some individuals.

2. *Post-Emancipation Period: The No. 10-Seven Locks-Gibson Grove African American Community*

After the Civil War, a dispersed community of emancipated African Americans arose on Seven Locks Road, halfway between River and Conduit roads. The first recorded land sale to an African American in this vicinity was 3 acres conveyed to **PETER JONES** in 1870. Jones’s domicile is shown on the Hopkins (1879) atlas as halfway down a dirt road, flanked on the north and south by property belonging to John D.W. Moore, the stone quarry owner (Figure 6.2). In the 1880 US census, Moore was a neighbor to four Black households, those of **DENNIS COATS**, Peter Jones, **CHARLES HARRIS**, and **SILAS RICHARDS**. **PETER CARTER** was an African American widower living in Moore’s household and laboring on his farm. Between January 1885 and November 1887, Moore conveyed 10 2- to 5-acre parcels to Black families who had worked for him (primarily at the quarry), including **PETER HOLMES**, **JAMES COATS** (eldest son of Dennis Coats), **HENRY CARTER**, **PHILIP JACKSON**, **LLOYD JACKSON**, **GEORGE SCOTT**, Daniel and Mariah Gray, **CHARLES H. BROWN**, Peter Jones, and **GEORGE FRYE**.⁵¹⁵ The families practiced small-scale farming on their properties; the Browns, for instance, used their land as a truck farm and earned an income from the fruits and vegetables they sold at markets in Georgetown.⁵¹⁶

These families formed the crux of the Gibson Grove community on Seven Locks Road, which at that time was called “No. 10” to reflect the 10 households (Figure 6.3). The community was named later for **SARAH** and **ROBERT GIBSON**, emancipated African Americans who had settled in the area after the Civil War. Oral tradition maintains that Sarah and her husband were separated in Virginia during the war. With her two children, Sarah traveled to Washington, DC, where she eventually reunited with Robert at the Shiloh Baptist Church. After the war, the Gibson family migrated to Cabin John, where they lived and worked on the Edwin Wallace farm (north of River Road and east of Thomas Run) and then on John Saunders’s estate, Ellerslie (west of Seven Locks Road and south of River Road). Robert worked as a farm laborer and drove the farm wagon and Sarah was a seamstress. By 1880, the Gibsons had purchased a 4-acre parcel on Seven Locks Road.⁵¹⁷

⁵¹³ Harry C. Ways, *The Washington Aqueduct, 1852-1992* (H.C. Ways, 1996), 29.

⁵¹⁴ Washington District Corps of Engineers, *History of the Washington Aqueduct* (Washington, DC: Washington District Corps of Engineers, 1953), 14.

⁵¹⁵ Whitley, 9; Kelly, 230.

⁵¹⁶ Jones, “Gibson Grove Gone But Not Forgotten: The Archaeology of an African American Church,” 13.

⁵¹⁷ Whitley, 8-9; “Founders Day Celebration: Gibson Grove African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, 7700 Seven Locks Road, Cabin John, Maryland” [program], 17-18 June 1976 (accessed 17 November 2021,



Figure 6.2: Detail from *Atlas of Fifteen Miles Around Washington*, 1879 (Hopkins) Showing the Origins of the Seven Locks-Gibson Grove African American Community

The Black community first coalesced around a one-room schoolhouse, 16x24 feet, on Seven Locks Road between River and Conduit roads. The Gibsons sold a 0.25-acre lot to John D.W. Moore in 1881, who then sold it to the county's School Board the following year. Called Moore's School or "No. 10" colloquially, the log cabin built from timber harvested on the Gibson property was intended to double as a house of worship for the Black community on Seven Locks Road. Originally, the Methodist Episcopalians in Gibson Grove worshipped in a log cabin on River Road; sometime after 1882, a second log cabin was built adjacent to the schoolhouse as a sanctuary.

<https://mchdr.montgomeryhistory.org/xmlui/bitstream/handle/20.500.12366/382/FoundersDay1976GibsonGroveAMEZChurch.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

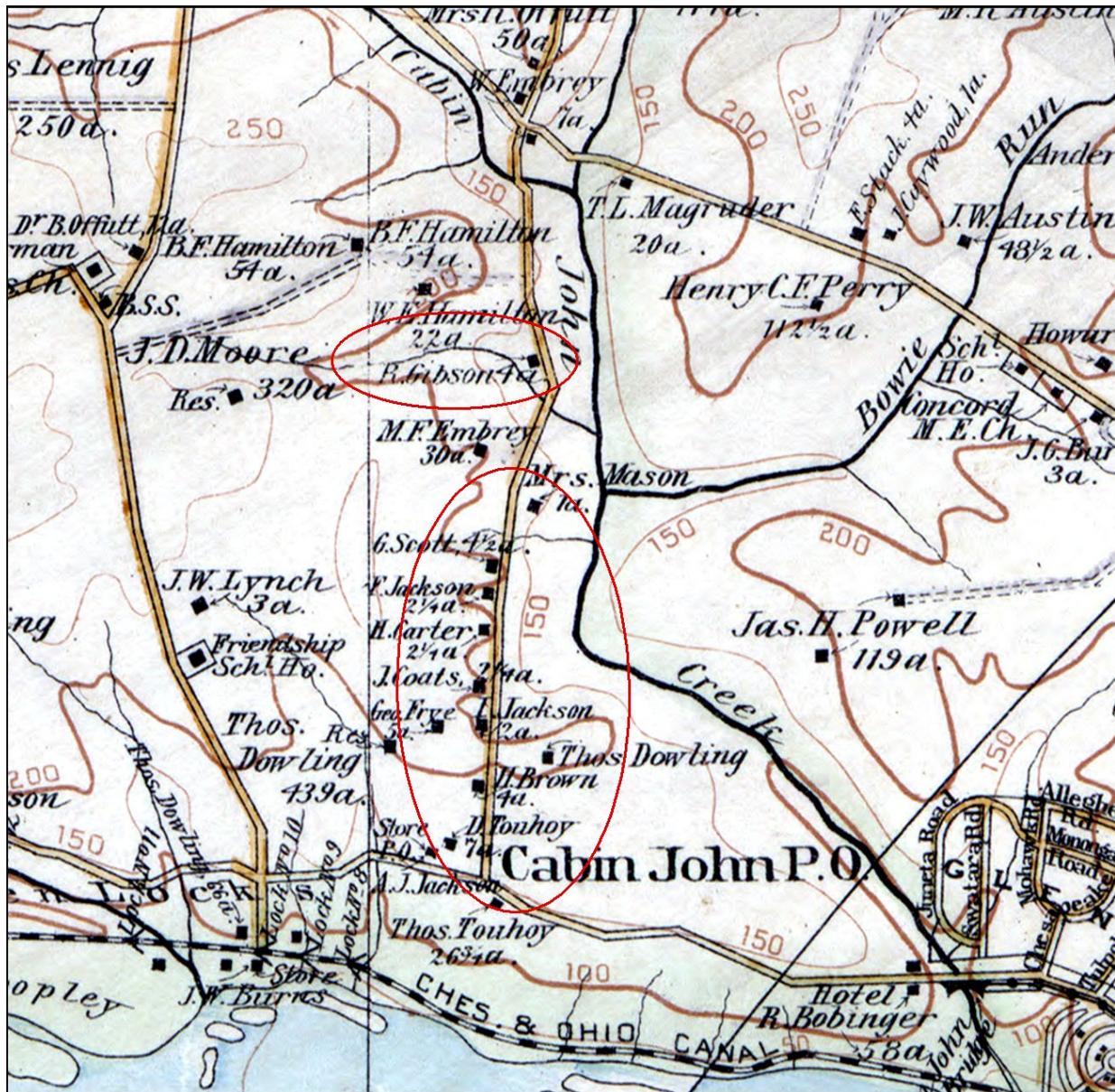


Figure 6.3: Detail from *The Vicinity of Washington, DC, 1894* (Hopkins) Showing the Gibson Grove African American Community on Seven Locks Road

Congregants used nearby Cabin John Creek for baptismal rites in the summer months and a small brook on the Gibson property in colder temperatures. The church also functioned as a community center, where political discussions were held in addition to religious services. Sarah Gibson legally conveyed the land on which the church was sited to trustees of the Gibson Grove A.M.E. Zion Church in 1898. In 1923, the **GIBSON GROVE A.M.E. ZION CHURCH** erected a new sanctuary northwest of the log sanctuary.

In 1885, the community established a fraternal organization, the “Ancient United Order of the Sons and Daughters, Brothers and Sisters of Moses, hereafter the Order of Moses.” The Order of Moses proved to be the backbone of the Gibson Grove community; all of its households were members

and it welcomed men, women, and children. Its mission included “the maintenance and education of the orphan children of deceased members, the burial of its dead, and the care and oversight of its sick and destitute.” It acted as a financial-aid organization, its membership dues pooled to cover burial costs and care for sick African Americans who were barred from attaining medical or life insurance policies in white society at the time. Furthermore, it fostered civic participation, promoted educational programming, and offered a social center for the Gibson Grove community. Meeting minutes record that the lodge “paid cash benefits to those unable to work (\$3.00 per week), to widows (\$17.50), and for burial (\$20).” In 1887, John D.W. Moore sold a 1-acre lot on which a two-story, wood-frame building was constructed and a cemetery established. The **MORNINGSTAR TABERNACLE NO. 88** was the first Order of Moses building erected in Montgomery County, although the order had a longer history in DC (the first lodge was founded in 1876). The rectangular building on a concrete-slab foundation held a single room on each floor. Concerts, dances, and meetings were held in the new building, which provided additional income to the lodge as the hall was rented for funerals and meetings. (The No. 10 Baseball Club, for instance, paid a nominal fee to meet at the Morningstar Tabernacle).

At the turn of the twentieth century, several Gibson Grove residents were employed by Clara Barton at her **AMERICAN RED CROSS HEADQUARTERS** in neighboring Glen Echo. Although Barton had been given land for her organization in Glen Echo as early as 1891 by the Baltzleys (who had developed the streetcar suburb in the late 1880s and 1890s), the property served mostly as a warehouse for materials and goods meant for the Red Cross until her residence-cum-offices were built in 1896-1897. Local African Americans worked on her Glen Echo property during its construction and afterward, including **ROBERT JONES**, a groundskeeper and handyman; **FRANCES WALKER** (Robert Jones’s mother-in-law), a caretaker; Silas Richards, the groundskeeper; and **LUCY RICHARDS**, Silas’s wife, as a periodic housekeeper. **EMMA JONES**, who, with her husband Robert, had moved to Gibson Grove in 1897, served Barton as both a nurse and housekeeper until Barton’s death in 1912. Jones also served as a midwife in the area.⁵¹⁸

According to the 1900 US census, Gibson Grove had grown to include 122 inhabitants divided among 18 African American households. Lucy and Silas Richards, who had been in the area since at least 1880, were occupying a house with Sarah Gibson and her three children. Peter Jones, who had first purchased property from John D.W. Moore in 1870, had died, but his wife, **DORCAS JONES**, and two of his grandchildren remained in the area. Charles Harris had also been there since at least 1880. George Frye, George Scott, Philip Jackson, Lloyd Jackson, Charles H. Brown, Henry Carter, and the family of James Coats had been living on Seven Locks Road since 1885. **JENNIE MASON**, living alone, was featured on the Hopkins (1894) map of the area. Newcomers included **JAMES FRANKLIN** and his wife **ANNA**, **MATILDA HARPER** and her family, **FRANK HARPER** with his family, **JAMES CRAWFORD** and his dependents, **LEWIS WASHINGTON** with his wife, **HENRY STEWARD** and his large family, and Robert and Emma Jones.

Robert and Emma had been born in Virginia in the 1850s and likely had been born into slavery. Their first child was born in Washington, DC, in 1884, but by 1885 (with the birth of their second child), they were residing in Maryland. Both Joneses had worked for Barton in DC before she relocated to Glen Echo and they came to live in Gibson Grove. Emma’s mother, Frances Walker, was known as “Auntie” and she lived, for time, in the cottage on Barton’s estate, acting as caretaker

⁵¹⁸ Whitley, 9-10.

through 1896. Even **ODELIA JONES**,⁵¹⁹ Robert and Emma's oldest child, worked for Barton in the summer of 1897, as Barton wrote in her diary on 17 August 1897 that she had "spent a good deal of time with Oda in the kitchen and she is making a good little house girl."⁵²⁰ It was after the Joneses temporarily stopped working for Barton in 1901 that Barton hired the Richardses. Both Silas and Lucy also came from Virginia; Silas, born in 1846, had been enslaved.

3. *Twentieth Century: Growth and Displacement*

Increased development of the area in the twentieth century brought varied employment opportunities to African American residents of Cabin John other than traditional farm labor and domestic service. Improvements to the Dalecarlia Reservoir in Brookmont, part of the Washington Aqueduct system, from 1893 to 1895 provided temporary government jobs. The Bobingers' Cabin John Hotel provided work for cooks, groundskeepers, and domestics. A popular resort in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the hotel became more of a destination when the Bobingers opened a small amusement park by 1900 that could be accessed via the trolley service operated by the Washington Railway and Electric Company, which paralleled Conduit Road and reached Cabin John as early as 1896. The trolley offered not only employment to African Americans but transportation into the city, where more jobs were available. Stone quarrying was still a vital industry in the area, and Frank P. and Lilly Moore Stone's Stoneyhurst quarry employed local Black men (such as **ROBERT CARTER** and **EUGENE MASON**), operating continuously from 1913 through 1977.⁵²¹ According to the 1900 US census of Gibson Grove's 18 households, nine men held jobs as farmers, seven as construction workers and laborers, six as quarrymen, five as railway workers, and three were hotel staff. Several women worked as domestic help in private homes or in local hotels, and others took in laundry to supplement their incomes.⁵²²

Residential suburbanization arrived in Cabin John in 1912 when J.S. Tomlinson purchased land from Amanda Dowling and established the American Land Company, a real-estate vehicle to sell housing lots in his new subdivision, Cabin John Park. Tomlinson's subdivision, like most in the South established during the Jim Crow era of segregation, maintained restrictive covenants that precluded African American ownership and occupancy. Thus, the Gibson Grove community became further isolated as white-only housing developments, country clubs, and golf courses arose

⁵¹⁹ "Miss Odie Jones" was recalled by Pat Duff (born **PANYA CARYL SMITH** in Georgetown ca. 1916) in a 1983 interview as a midwife for the Seven Locks community. Pat Duff moved from DC after her marriage, building a house on her parent's (**JOSEPH W.** and **LOUISE MAGRUDER SMITH**) lot on Seven Locks Road in 1951. See Barbara Martin, "Pat Duff: A Remembrance," *Village News*, 1983, in "People of Cabin John" (Cabin John, MD: *Village News*, 1995), 1.

⁵²⁰ Elizabeth Jo Lampl, "Clara Barton National Historic Site: Developmental History" (Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Capital Region, Historic Architecture Program, 2004), V-3.

⁵²¹ **BILL WHITE** was a Sunday school teacher at the Gibson Grove A.M.E. Zion Church and a lifelong resident of Cabin John when he was interviewed in 1985. White had "roots in Cabin John as far back as the end of the Civil War when his ancestors, freed slaves, were given plots of land in the Cabin John area." With the Masons, Carters, Joneses, Harpers, and Harrises, the Whites have lived in the vicinity for over a century. In White's interview, he stated that, "over the years some of the [Seven Locks Road-Gibson Grove] families lost their land when they were unable to pay the taxes, and most of the properties were purchased by Mrs. Lilly Stone. [His] family and other families rented from her." See Barbara Martin, "Bill White: Always Part of Cabin John," *Village News*, 1985, in "People of Cabin John" (Cabin John, MD: *Village News*, 1995), 1-2.

⁵²² Whitley, 5, 7, 11-12.

around it. Until 1970, the Gibson Grove community did not expand beyond the original property bounds established in the 1885-1887 Moore land sales.⁵²³

In 1911, the Seven Locks-Gibson Grove school adopted the name “Cabin John School,” and the 1882 log schoolhouse was vacated and rented by the county School Board. Classes were held in the adjacent log sanctuary until 1922, when attendance to the Cabin John School became so low that the school was closed. For five years, the children in that community had no school. Parents presented their grievances to the county school board, which agreed to rent space in the Morningstar Tabernacle lodge. In 1931, however, the school board closed this school, too, and the children were forced to commute to the Graysville School. After the 1954 watershed case of *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education* served to desegregate schools nationwide, Gibson Grove’s youths attended the integrated Clara Barton Elementary School in Cabin John.⁵²⁴

FRANK DALVERT MCKINNEY
(1916-1993)

In 1984, McKinney recalled attending the Cabin John school in the Gibson Grove A.M.E. Zion Church (he was in the first grade in 1921). Mrs. Dorsey taught all seven grades in the one-room building. He recalled the school closing then reopening within Moses Hall after his mother and neighbors “went to Rockville to ask for a school for their children [from] the Montgomery County school board.” McKinney went to Francis Junior High School in Georgetown and then the Armstrong Vocational High School in DC.

See Barbara Martin, “Frank D. McKinney: My Heart is in Cabin John,” Village News, 1984, in “People of Cabin John” (Cabin John, MD: Village News, 1995), 1-3.

By 1917, when Edward H. Deets and Charles J. Maddox published *A Real Estate Atlas of the Part of Montgomery County Adjacent to the District of Columbia*, the Black landowners depicted on Seven Locks Road were the same founding families that had been depicted on the Hopkins (1894) map, including (from north to south): S. Gibson, 3 acres; Geo. Scott, 4 acres; R. Jackson, 2.5 acres; E.C. Jones; H. Carter, 2.5 acres; P. Jones, 2.5 acres; Jas. Coates, 2 acres; Ida Jackson, 2.25 acres; and Chas. H. Brown, 4 acres. Dennis Twohey (alternative spelling Touhey) owned a 6-acre parcel on the northwest corner of Conduit and Seven Locks roads that featured a store and post office; these institutions formed the heart of the Cabin John community well into the twentieth century.⁵²⁵

The oral history of Josephine Godbold Havens suggests that Cabin John began to develop during World War I as a summer-cottage community for Washingtonians. Previously, her family had vacationed at Colonial Beach, southeast of DC, but “when World War I came along, the boats stopped running, so we had no transportation to Colonial Beach. We knew Cabin John because on weekend days in the spring and fall, we used to take the trolley out there and walk in the hills – go nutting or pick flowers along the canal...”⁵²⁶ By 1919, Haven’s father, Charles Henry Godbold, had bought a plot in Cabin John and the family pitched tents there every summer before building a house some years later. “At the time of World War I, other city families built summer cabins

⁵²³ Jones, “Gibson Grove Gone But Not Forgotten: The Archaeology of an African American Church,” 15. Whitley, 12.

⁵²⁴ Whitley, 16-17.

⁵²⁵ See Kytte. Several of her interviewees spoke about the Touhey store as central to their recollections of Cabin John in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

⁵²⁶ Martin, “Jo Havens – When Cabin John was Country,” 1.

along the river and canal. They would take the streetcar to the city and to work. But the flood of 1936 destroyed all those cabins.”⁵²⁷

Cabin John’s resort era came to an end with the closure of the Bobinger family’s Cabin John Hotel in 1925 followed by the loss of the building to fire in 1931. In the 1920 US census, **EDWARD EARNEST JONES**⁵²⁸ gave his occupation as laborer doing roadwork; this could be related to the laying of the second conduit for the Washington Aqueduct from 1922 to 1928, which created many jobs and brought another injection of residents to Cabin John.⁵²⁹ Jones’ wife, **IRENE V. JONES**, was a “laundry woman” at home in the 1920 census. In a 1976 recollection, Irene Jones stated she took in laundry from residents of Glen Echo and managed the truck farm on their property. She recalled that her neighbors, spread across large farms, included Henry Brown, Annie Coates, Robert and Emma Jones, the Bowles family, Carters, and Jacksons.⁵³⁰ At the onset of the Great Depression, the Gibson Grove community was intact. The region was slightly buffered from the catastrophic economic downturn because of the federal government’s presence. Federal work programs provided employment options for unemployed men, both white and Black, in the region. Two CCC camps were established on the canal in Carderock and Cabin John; from 1938 to 1942, hundreds of African American men restored the C&O Canal for new use as a national park.

From 1936 to 1939, the US Navy built the David Taylor Model Basin in Carderock, a naval laboratory complex focused on a 1,300-foot basin in which to-scale ships could be tested for seaworthiness. In the spring of 1939, the Navy constructed worker housing for the laborers on the basin’s construction: on 20 acres purchased from Mary Ellen Bobinger (the former hotel site), the Navy contracted 100 homes for white workers in a development called Cabin John Gardens, off Conduit Road. The Navy built a second development, called **CARVER ROAD**, with 25 homes for Black workers on Charles H. Brown’s 4.5-acre property off Seven Locks Road. The Cabin John Gardens homes were sold to the white employees with the land held in a cooperative, but the homes to Black employees were rented for a monthly payment of \$28 (and many were sold to the occupants within a few years).⁵³¹ The Carver Road community brought a second wave of Black settlement into Cabin John and integrated with the extant Gibson Grove community.⁵³² Bill White was a member of the prewar Gibson Grove community who was able to rent a house at 9 Carver Road because he was a federal employee (a janitor at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda),

⁵²⁷ Martin, “Jo Havens – When Cabin John was Country,” 4.

⁵²⁸ Edward E. Jones was the son of Robert and Emma, born in 1894; he married Irene V. (born 1895) and the couple purchased a house on Seven Locks Road by 1919.

⁵²⁹ By 1920, it was noted by the water authority “that the [World War I] population jump [in DC] was causing an alarming increase in water consumption and a major increase in the water supply facilities was necessary as soon as possible.” In 1921, Congress authorized the construction of a new conduit from Great Falls to the Dalecarlia Reservoir, and between 1922 and 1928, construction crews updated the aqueduct system, laying a second giant pipe (concrete) parallel to (and interconnected with at three points) the original pipe; tunneling under the hill at Widewater; building a new filtration plant at the reservoir; and building new transmission mains and storage reservoirs. The canal was used during the first few years of construction: boats were used to haul sand and gravel for the roadwork. Isaac Marshall was just one worker who settled in Cabin John as a result of the second conduit work. He and his wife arrived from Virginia in 1922 and originally rented in Cropley. See Elizabeth Kytte, *Time Was: A Cabin John Memory Book: Interviews with 18 Old-Timers* (Cabin John, MD: Cabin John Citizens’ Association, 1976), 62.

⁵³⁰ Kytte, 41-43, 62.

⁵³¹ Judith Welles, *Cabin John: Legends and Life of an Uncommon Place* (Cabin John, MD: Cabin John Citizens Association, 2008); Whitley, 12.

⁵³² Jones, “Gibson Grove Gone But Not Forgotten: The Archaeology of an African American Church,” 13.

albeit not an employee of the David Taylor Model Basin. Years later, he and his wife Mildred purchased the home at 21 Carver Road from his sister-in-law.⁵³³

LENA BROWN
(1882 – 1980)

Lena was the daughter of CHARLES H. BROWN, who (per Lena Brown’s 1976 interview) purchased 4.5 acres from J.D.W. Moore for \$300. Her father ran a truck farm, raising several fruits and vegetables that he took to markets in DC, including the Center Market, Georgetown Market, P Street Market, and especially the K Street Market. Her father died in 1912, and she moved to DC where she worked as a cook for a private family as well as for a boarding house.

By the 1920s, Lena had moved back into her father’s house, which she had inherited, and worked as a domestic in private homes in the area as well as for the Cabin John Hotel. The Rev. William A. Jones, who had been executor of her father’s will, was responsible for paying the property taxes, which he failed to do for several years in the 1930s. In 1937, her property was seized and sold for back taxes (totaling \$31.13) to Lilly Moore Stone in 1939. Brown sued Stone in the Montgomery County circuit court for the 4.5-acre parcel worth \$4,000 at that time. Although she won the suit in 1941, her family property was already slated for redevelopment as the Carver Road housing for the David Taylor Model Basin in Carderock. Brown negotiated with the federal government and sold the property for \$4,500 in 1941. She resided at 12 Carver Road until the mid-1970s. See Kytile, 1; Rotenstein, 66-67.

By 1942, half of the men in Gibson Grove traveled to DC to work for federal agencies, including the War Department, the Department of Agriculture, and US Corps of Engineers. The other half worked locally at country clubs,⁵³⁴ on farms, or were in business for themselves. After the war, the government sold its surplus housing on Carver Road to many of the residents renting there. By 1958, the Gibson Grove community consisted of 32 families on Carver and Seven Locks roads, including families descended from the original settlers, such as the Harrises, Joneses, and Jacksons. But the general postwar trend in Montgomery County was Black flight to urban centers: whereas African Americans comprised a third of the total population in the county in 1900, by 1950, they comprised fewer than 7 percent.⁵³⁵

The Gibson Grove community was effectively severed by the construction of the Capital Beltway (Interstate 495) at Cabin John in the 1960s. The Morningstar Tabernacle building and its cemetery as well as most of the residences lay south of the interstate, and the Gibson Grove A.M.E. Zion Church and former Gibson property lay to the north. Postwar highway building and urban renewal projects systematically wiped out or dislocated historical African American communities across the nation, such as the case of Tobytown, which lay within the study area and is discussed further in Chapter VIII. The consistent application of negative terms to Black communities, such as “impoverished” or “blighted,” allowed municipal planners to eradicate whole settlements in the late twentieth century in acts of racial injustice.⁵³⁶ At Gibson Grove, the Morningstar Tabernacle building survived the Beltway construction but was burned by arson in the late 1960s; the Cabin John School was also lost. The Morningstar Tabernacle Cemetery and the Gibson Grove A.M.E.

⁵³³ Martin, “Bill White: Always Part of Cabin John,” 3.

⁵³⁴ Bill White, for example, was a caddy at the Burning Tree Golf Club before working at the National Institute of Health (NIH) in Bethesda, Maryland.

⁵³⁵ Whitley, 13-14.

⁵³⁶ Whitley, 14.

Zion Church remain, however, as built manifestations of the historical Gibson Grove African American community.

B. HISTORIC SITES

Chapter II and this chapter have mentioned some historic sites associated with the C&O Canal and with African American history in Montgomery County’s Cabin John area and the historic African American community of Gibson Grove. Unfortunately, many of the original buildings have been demolished or converted to private use and thereby are not accessible to the public, or the exact location of the historic site is unknown (Table 6.1).

TABLE 6.1: CABIN JOHN AND GIBSON GROVE HISTORIC SITES ASSOCIATED WITH THE C&O CANAL OR AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND THEIR PUBLIC ACCESSIBILITY

SITE/BUILDING	DATE	LOCATION/ADDRESS	STATUS	CURRENT FUNCTION
Stoneyhurst Quarry	1913	Seven Locks Road	Closed in 1977	Unknown
Cabin John Hotel	1870	Conduit Road near Cabin John Aqueduct Bridge	Lost to fire 1931	Unknown
Seven Locks School	1882	Seven Locks Road	Lost	Unknown
Carver Road housing	1939-1940	Carver and Seven Locks roads	Extant	Private Residences

The following are descriptions of a few sites in the areas of Gibson Grove and Cabin John that are strongly associated with the C&O Canal and/or African American history and that are accessible to the public to some degree.

1. *Cabin John Aqueduct Bridge, MacArthur Boulevard and Cabin John Parkway*

From the time of its completion in 1863 until 1904, this local landmark (also known as the Union Arch Bridge) held the record as the longest single-span, masonry-arch bridge in the world. Faced in Seneca red sandstone, the 220-foot-long bridge was built as part of the Washington Aqueduct project (1853-1863) to funnel potable water from the Potomac River above Great Falls to the residents of DC. It was designed by Montgomery C. Meigs, US Army Corps of Engineers, who innovatively used the water conduit as the primary structural support. The Washington Aqueduct began pumping water to Georgetown and DC in 1864, enabling the city to grow and develop into the twentieth century. In 1873, the bridge’s sandstone deck was converted into an asphalt roadbed to accommodate local traffic, and the bridge became a popular tourist attraction through the early twentieth century. It was designated a National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark in 1972.⁵³⁷

African Americans, enslaved and free, worked at local stone quarries like the Seneca quarry that supplied the red sandstone for the Cabin John Aqueduct Bridge. Furthermore, records have shown that as many as 15 enslaved men were employed by the US Army Corps of Engineers to provide labor for the Washington Aqueduct project from 1857 to 1860, but very little else is known about the enslaved laborers employed in the construction of this public works project. Further research into the topic may illuminate the names of some individuals associated with the Washington Aqueduct’s and the bridge’s construction.⁵³⁸

*Contact: US Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District
5900 MacArthur Boulevard*

⁵³⁷ Kelly, 251.

⁵³⁸ Ways, 29; Washington District Corps of Engineers, 14.

Washington, DC 20016-2514
(202) 764 -2753
WashingtonAqueductInquiries@usace.army.mil

2. *Clara Barton House National Historic Site, Glen Echo, Maryland*

First established in 1891 as a warehouse for materials and goods to support the American Red Cross, Clara Barton made her home and the American Red Cross Headquarters here in 1897. Several African American residents of Gibson Grove were employed by Barton at her house. Other African American employees lived on the property, in the “servants’ sleeping room at the basement level [of the house] or the converted carriage house (“Auntie’s house”) on the west side of the main house.”⁵³⁹

Contact: [Clara Barton National Historic Site](#)
5801 Oxford Road
Glen Echo, Maryland 20812
(301) 320-1410

3. *Gibson Grove African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, 7700 Seven Locks Road*

Erected in 1923, this was the second sanctuary built to serve the African American community of Gibson Grove, which was established in the mid-1880s. The wood-frame, single-story church is clad in asbestos shingles. It sits atop a concrete-block foundation and terminates in a pitched roof. On the side elevation is an attached, off-centered belfry reflecting the modest building traditions of the rural church typology. A small, gabled vestibule leads to the one-room nave.

The A.M.E. Zion denomination has its roots in New York City in the early nineteenth century, and Gibson Grove is one of three A.M.E. Zion churches in Montgomery County, including the Scotland A.M.E. Zion and the Clinton A.M.E. Zion in Rockville. Although a rear frame ell was added in 1979, the church maintained its integrity through the early twenty-first century.⁵⁴⁰ By 2002, declining membership closed the church, the interior of which was gutted by fire in 2004. Although the exterior envelope was damaged only minimally by the fire, the congregation has not accumulated the funds to restore and open the church as of January 2021.⁵⁴¹ It persists as the last remaining building associated with the historical, post-emancipation African American community on Seven Locks Road.

Contact: [First Agape A.M.E. Zion at Gibson Grove](#)
Rev. Edward S. Bankhead, Sr., Pastor
P.O. Box 1016
Burtonsville, MD 20866 -1016
(301) 879-3341

⁵³⁹ Lampl, V-3.

⁵⁴⁰ Kelly, 230; Robert D. Rivers, “Gibson Grove A.M.E. Zion Church,” Montgomery County, Maryland, Maryland Historical Trust Inventory Form for State Historic Sites Survey (Annapolis: Maryland Historical Trust, 1979, accessed 18 November 2021, <https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/PDF/Montgomery/M:%2029-39.pdf>).

⁵⁴¹ Whitley, 17.

4. *Morningstar Tabernacle No. 88 of the Ancient United Order of Sons and Daughters, Brothers and Sisters of Moses Cemetery, 7550 Seven Locks Road*

Although the Morningstar Tabernacle No. 88 hall was lost to arson in the late 1960s, the cemetery remains. Approximately 88 burials on the Morningstar Tabernacle grounds have been identified through newspaper notices, ranging in date from 1884 to 1977. The lightly wooded parcel contains several gravestones, many marked, but most of the burials are unmarked. Gibson Grove founders buried in the cemetery include James Coats (the earliest documented interment) as well as the probable graves of Robert Gibson (ca. 1895), Louis Gibson (ca. 1893), Sarah Gibson, and Emma Jones.⁵⁴²

In 2021, the National Trust for Historic Preservation listed the Morningstar Tabernacle No. 88 Cemetery on its annual list of America's *11 Most Endangered Historic Places*. Plans to expand Interstate 495 would encroach on the grounds, disturb the existing gravesites, and require reinterment in another cemetery. The [Friends of Moses Hall](#) is a partnership formed in 2021 to maintain the burial grounds through voluntary participation and to raise awareness of the threats facing the historical cemetery, one of the last vestiges of the nineteenth-century Gibson Grove community.

Contact: Friends of Moses Hall
morningstarmosescj@gmail.com

C. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Of all the African American communities discussed in this report, the Gibson Grove community is the best documented. Recent scholarship on the community began with the dissertation of archaeologist Dr. Alexandra Jones, RPA, on the Gibson Grove A.M.E. Zion Church for the graduate program in Anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley, in 2010. In 2008 and 2009, Jones conducted archaeological fieldwork at the historic church site to ascertain whether burials existed on the grounds (none were found). At the same time, Jones conducted oral interviews with several Cabin John residents whose roots stemmed to the founding and early days of Gibson Grove. In January 2021, independent historian L. Paige Whitley prepared a paper on the history of Gibson Grove for the Friends of Moses Hall that provides excellent detail about the community's founding and its evolution as well as the personal histories of several individuals and families associated with Gibson Grove. Further avenues of research may include the following.

1. Researching the enslaved individuals who worked on the 10-year construction of the Washington Aqueduct and identifying free Black persons who may have worked on the aqueduct's construction or operation after its opening
2. Researching the history of the Magruder blacksmith shop to ascertain whether it may have served the construction of the C&O Canal, as well as researching the enslaved individuals held in bondage by the Magruder family to ascertain whether any are associated with the smithy
3. Using the 1904-1914 [minute books](#) of the Morningstar Tabernacle No. 88, held at the Montgomery County Historical Society's archives, to provide further insight into the early

⁵⁴² Whitley, 23.

Gibson Grove residents and the ways in which benevolent societies supported community growth and cohesion

4. Researching further the individual Black workers associated with the Clara Barton site (and identifying their descendants) to enhance and expand park interpretation at the NPS-operated historic site
5. Conducting further research into the residents of the Navy-sponsored Carver Road community

VII. BRICKYARD, CARDEROCK, GREAT FALLS, AND POTOMAC

A. ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT

The C&O Canal spans the parkland around Great Falls, a series of 14 natural cascades in the Potomac River. Historically, the area was known also as “Six Locks,” for canal Locks 15 through 20 that navigate the fall line. Falls Road leads north from the Great Falls to the town of Potomac, formerly called Offutt’s Crossroads because it sits at the intersection of Falls and River roads. To the east of Great Falls is Carderock, largely developed today by the David Taylor Model Basin. The nineteenth-century community of Cropley straddled MacArthur Boulevard (formerly Conduit Road) near its intersection with present-day Garmon Road. The African American enclave called Brickyard, now lost, was situated south of MacArthur Boulevard and north of the canal.

1. *Pre-Emancipation Period: Landscape of Slavery*

“Carderock” was the assemblage of three large eighteenth-century tracts—Griffiths Park, Dyall’s Delight, and Clewerwell Enlarged—in 1802 to create the 1,705-acre plantation of Robert Peter (1726-1806), a Scottish emigrant and Georgetown’s first mayor (in 1789) who had made his wealth as a tobacco merchant.⁵⁴³ In 1790, Peter was enumerated in the first US census in Montgomery County as the head of a ten-person household; no enslaved persons were listed. However, by the 1800 census, Peter was enumerated in the newly formed Washington, District of Columbia, as the enslaver of six people. Likely, Carderock was a seasonal home for the Peter family and was worked by enslaved African men and women, who raised the tobacco that Peter sold in Georgetown.

In the Great Falls area, the C&O Canal was built through two large eighteenth-century tracts—Goose Ponds (1726) and Bear Den (1729), the property of William Offutt—which, by 1808, had been largely subsumed within a plantation known as Crawford’s Lodge.⁵⁴⁴ The early landowners of these plantations were wealthy tobacco merchants from Georgetown and were absentee. When they developed the tracts in the mid- to late eighteenth century, the work would have been undertaken by tenant farmers and enslaved laborers. Following the pattern in the rest of Montgomery County, these plantations would have used an enslaved workforce to cultivate tobacco well into the early nineteenth century, followed by wheat and corn.⁵⁴⁵ But early industry also had a role in the development of the land around Great Falls: In 1785, the Patowmack Company was incorporated to build works and improvements on the Potomac River to make the river more navigable at and above the fall line. The company used enslaved laborers to erect skirting canals over the course of nearly 20 years, but the company was bankrupt by 1828, its infrastructure subsumed by the nascent C&O Canal Company.

Between the 1830s and 1860s, Crawford’s Lodge was owned by a Rockville medical doctor, John Wallace Anderson (1804-1867). The Andersons were enslavers who held as many as 23 enslaved persons on their several Montgomery County estates in 1840, a high number in the county. In 1850, Anderson enslaved 14 individuals; that number dwindled to eight enslaved persons by 1860. By the time Maryland enacted emancipation on 1 November 1864, the Andersons enslaved seven

⁵⁴³ Cochran. Mary Charlotte Crook, “The David W. Taylor Naval Ship Research and Development Center,” *The Montgomery County, Story* vol. 22, no. 3 (August 1979):1-10. <http://montgomeryhistory.org/pdf/22-3.pdf>

⁵⁴⁴ Boyd, 34, 44.

⁵⁴⁵ Kelly, 5.

individuals. Although Anderson may have manumitted some of these enslaved individuals over time, at least one, **ALFRED HOMER**, escaped bondage, around 31 May 1856 from Anderson's estate northwest of Rockville. The following week, an advertisement was placed in the *Montgomery County Sentinel* advertising a reward for Homer's return. In the news item, he was described as a "rather good looking" 22-year-old, standing 5 feet and 7 inches and wearing a dark blue and green plaid frock coat and plaid pants.⁵⁴⁶ Despite the newspaper notice, Homer eluded captors and reached Philadelphia by mid-June, where he met William Still, an abolitionist and founder of the Vigilance Committee (which aided freedom seekers to travel to free states or other countries). Still recorded in his 1871 book, *The Underground Railroad*, that Alfred "gave a full description of [John W. Anderson's] character, and the motives which impelled him to seek his freedom," but the details were not recounted in the text.⁵⁴⁷ Where Homer landed after that meeting with Still is unknown; an Alfred Homer does appear in the 1870 US census as a laborer in a cotton factory in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He gave his age as 46 (which would have been 10 years older than the Homer who fled Rockville) and his birthplace as Virginia (rather than Maryland), yet the discrepancies aside, it is possible that Homer moved to the Deep South after the Civil War in search of work.⁵⁴⁸

ALFRED HOMER

(ca. 1834 - after 1870)

Enslaved by the Anderson family at Crawford's Lodge, Alfred Homer self-liberated on 31 May 1856. He eluded captors and arrived in Philadelphia by mid-June, where he met William Still, an abolitionist and conductor on the Underground Railroad.

In addition to the eight enslaved individuals that Anderson claimed on the 1860 census slave schedule, Anderson shared his home with a free Black man, **BENJAMIN DAVIS**. Davis, born in Maryland ca. 1815, was the only non-kin member of Anderson's 12-person household and gave his occupation as a farmhand. By 1870, Davis had moved to Frederick County, Maryland, where he was again a farmhand for a white family, that of Henry Drill. Little else is known about Davis, who (aged 55 in 1870) may have died soon thereafter.

Anderson's Potomac Valley land was coveted by both the C&O Canal Company and mining companies. In 1853, Anderson sold a right-of-way through his land to the C&O Canal Company for \$200, where they built a waste weir, a guard bank, and a stop lock (to control the flow of water) between Lock Houses 16 and 17. Improvements to the canal continued until the outbreak of the Civil War. During the war years, commercial navigation on the canal was hindered by repeated Confederate raids in which the canal infrastructure was sabotaged; as a result, Federal soldiers

⁵⁴⁶ "\$100 Reward!!" *Montgomery County Sentinel*, 7 June 1856 (accessed 3 March 2022, https://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc5400/sc5496/runaway_advertisements/pdf/18560607mcs1.pdf).

⁵⁴⁷ William Still, *The Underground Railroad. A Record of Facts, Authentic Narratives, Letters, &c., Narrating the Hardships, Hair-breadth Escapes, and Death Struggles of the Slaves in their efforts for Freedom...* (Philadelphia: People's Publishing Company, 1871), 388.

⁵⁴⁸ Rachel Frazier, "Alfred Homer (b. ca. 1834 – d. ?)," *Archives of Maryland (Biographical Series)* [website] (2009, accessed 3 March 2022, <https://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc5400/sc5496/047800/047808/html/047808bio.html>).

were stationed to guard the canal from Seneca to Cabin John. It was during the war, purportedly, that gold was discovered at Great Falls by a Federal soldier. Gold mining became a popular venture in the area immediately after the war's cessation. Because Anderson's land abutted the **MARYLAND GOLD MINE** property, speculators leased 125 acres of Crawford's Lodge from Anderson in 1866 to mine for gold.⁵⁴⁹

2. *Post-Emancipation Period: Great Falls, Potomac, Carderock, and the Establishment of Brickyard*

By 1879, when Boyd published *The History of Montgomery County, Maryland, from its Earliest Settlement in 1650 to 1879*, he described Great Falls as a village of 150 people containing a hotel, a store, and a post office. In addition, it was home to the Great Falls Ice Company's warehouses, and Boyd stressed that the "Government Dam and Water Works are located here for supplying the District of Columbia. This is the largest available water-power in the world, and its development and utilization for manufacturing purposes, cannot fail to eventuate in the growth of a considerable town at this point."⁵⁵⁰ The Hopkins (1879) atlas depicts a club house on Conduit Road, "gold deposits" vaguely between the canal and Falls Road, the "Great Falls Ice House," Dr. J.W. Anderson's property next to a grocery and feed store (built near the towpath in 1869), several domiciles next to the canal locks, a store, a blacksmith shop, the hotel (formerly the **CROMMELIN HOUSE**, operated by Garrett and Maus after 1872), and the **WASHINGTON AQUEDUCT GATEHOUSE** and "water works" in the vicinity of Great Falls. By 1880, Great Falls was a distinct village and destination, which boomed again in 1884-1885 when as many as 500 workers settled in the area to extend the Washington Aqueduct dam across the river, to the Virginia shore.⁵⁵¹

About 2.5 miles inland from Great Falls was Offutt's Crossroads, a village that emerged at the intersection of River and Falls roads. Although a rural hamlet emerged in the eighteenth century and a concentration of houses around the crossroads was in place by 1820, by the outbreak of the Civil War, Offutt's Crossroads contained only two general stores and a blacksmith's shop. By 1879, Boyd described Offutt's Crossroads as a town of 125 persons with three schools, two churches, and agricultural land that sold from \$10 to \$30 per acre and raised wheat, potatoes, oats, and corn. In 1881, the town's name was changed to Potomac in response to an appeal by the US postal system for shorter place names.⁵⁵²

Per Hopkins (1879) atlas the name Richard Cropley figured predominantly in the area of Carderock that would be later named Cropley Post Office (Figure 7.1). Richard Lambert Cropley (1836-1904) was the eldest son of Samuel Cropley, a Georgetown grocer. In the years following the Civil War Samuel Cropley's seven sons established pharmacies and groceries across Georgetown; presumably the family's investment in agricultural land in Montgomery County was to raise produce for their markets or wheat for their mills. By 1870 Richard Cropley was a

⁵⁴⁹ Rachel Frazier, "Dr. John W. Anderson (b. 1805 – d. 1867)," *Archives of Maryland (Biographical Series)* [website] (2010, accessed 11 November 2021, <https://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc5400/sc5496/036200/036252/html/036252bio.html>).

⁵⁵⁰ Boyd, 131-132.

⁵⁵¹ Saylor Moss and Ginger Howell, *Great Falls Tavern: Cultural Landscape Report* (Washington, DC: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, National Capital Region, 2009, accessed 12 November 2021: <http://npshistory.com/publications/choh/clr-great-falls-tavern.pdf>), 10-11.

⁵⁵² Boyd, 136; Christopher Owens, "Potomac Village Historic District," Montgomery County, Maryland, Maryland Historical Trust Determination of Eligibility Form (Annapolis Maryland Historical Trust, 1975).

successful and wealthy flour merchant (worth \$29,000 in real estate and \$7,800 in personal property) residing in Georgetown. In the 1880 US census, however, he gave his occupation as a “brick machin[ist]” while in the 1900 census, he was a clerk in a lime kiln. In 1883, Arthur Bird Cropley (the younger brother of Richard Cropley, a resident of Georgetown, and a retail grocer) purchased over 500 acres of Carderock, presumably meant to sustain his grocery business. But in 1894, Arthur Cropley divested 56 acres to the Potomac Brick & Tile Company, a business co-owned by himself and his brother, Richard.

South of Conduit Road and near the Potomac Brick & Tile Company property was the small African American enclave called **BRICKYARD**, presumably named for a cluster of dwellings for the laborers in the brick manufactory near the canal. Canal brickyards were not mentioned in local newspaper periodicals until ca. 1874, suggesting that a concerted brick-making enterprise began earlier that decade. Although it predates the establishment of the Potomac Brick & Tile Company by a full decade, the African American community of Brickyard had taken root by 1884: on June 12 that year, landowner Robert W. Stone conveyed a 0.5-acre parcel on Conduit Road in Carderock to school trustees **LAWTON GARNER**, **WILLIAM GIBBS**, and **JOSEPH TONEY** for the erection of a schoolhouse for African American children.⁵⁵³

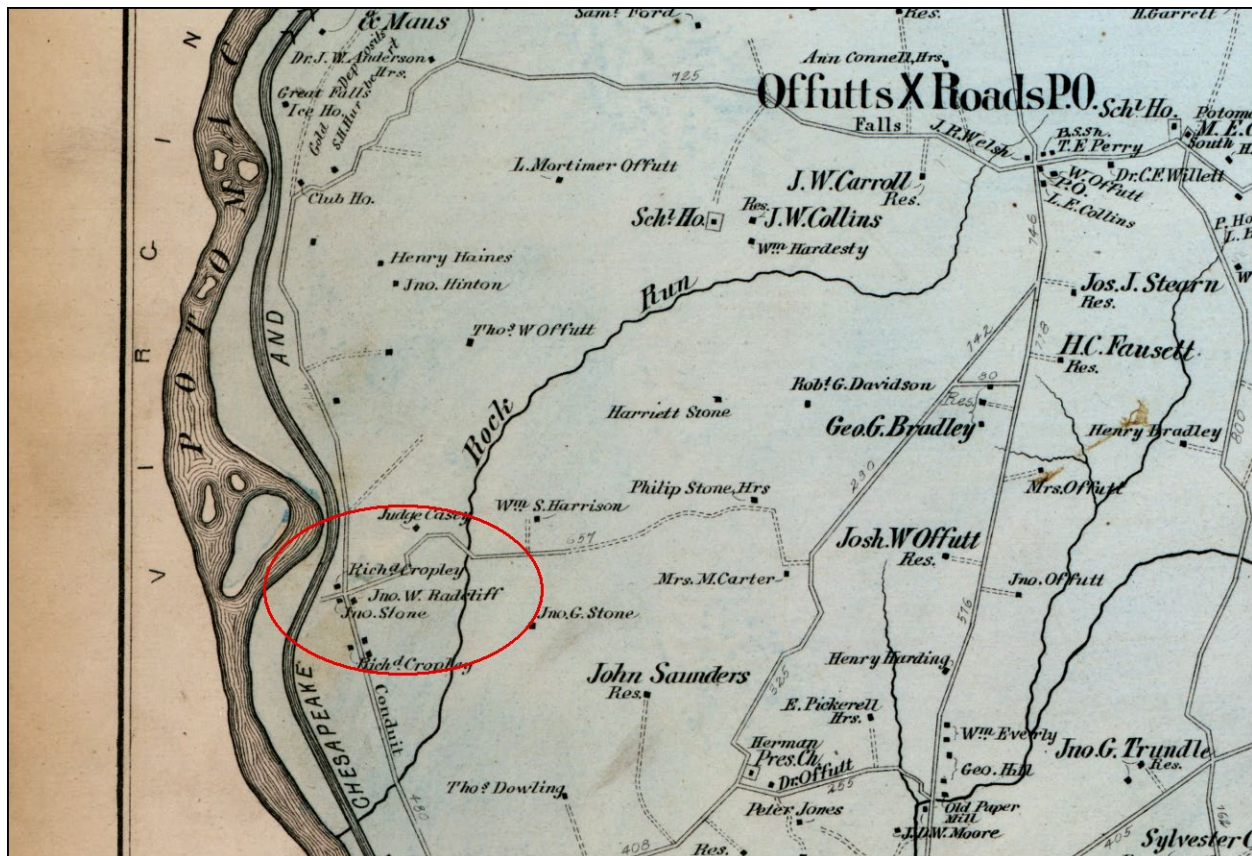


Figure 7.1: Detail from *Atlas of Fifteen Miles Around Washington, 1879* (Hopkins) Showing the Area of Cropley, Maryland

⁵⁵³ Whitley, 15.

The area remained light industrial through the turn of the century: By 1894, the Irma Mining Company (a gold-mining enterprise), the Eagle Mine, Sawyer’s Gold Mine, a store, a stamp mill, and a small rail line were present north of Brickyard, on Stone’s former lands, and the Potomac Brick & Tile Company was mapped on a 59-acre parcel between the canal and Conduit Road (Figure 7.2). The residents of Cropley, according to the 1900 US census of the Potomac District (No. 10) of Montgomery County, included William Gibbs and Joseph Toney, two of the three trustees for the African American schoolhouse established on Conduit Road in June 1884. Gibbs and Toney were next-door neighbors, and Toney’s property also abutted that of William L. Redden, whose house Hopkins depicted on his 1894 map. Between Redden and the farm of Arthur Cropley were 14 African American households interspersed with several white households. These included the households of Gibbs and Toney as well as [ELIZABETH BLAIR](#), [LEWIS HINKLE](#), [HORACE DIGGS](#), [JARRETT BOWMAN](#), [HENRY RANDALL](#), [JOHN ROBINSON](#), [ALSEY TONEY](#), [REUBEN SIMS](#), [JAMES M. DAVIS](#), [TOBIAS GREY](#), [EDWARD A. COOPER](#), and [JOHN H. SPRIGGS](#). Interestingly, all of the heads of household were born in Maryland, with the exception of one (Hinkle, who hailed from Missouri). Eight men in the community worked as laborers for the Washington Aqueduct, three worked as laborers in a park, and seven worked on the railroad. Given the predominance of men who worked on the Washington Aqueduct, and given that Brickyard dates to 1884 (at the same time as some 500 workers were settled in the area to extend the Washington Aqueduct dam across the Potomac River), it is likely that the name “Brickyard” is a canard—it was not founded by laborers in the local brickyard but as worker housing for the Washington Aqueduct.

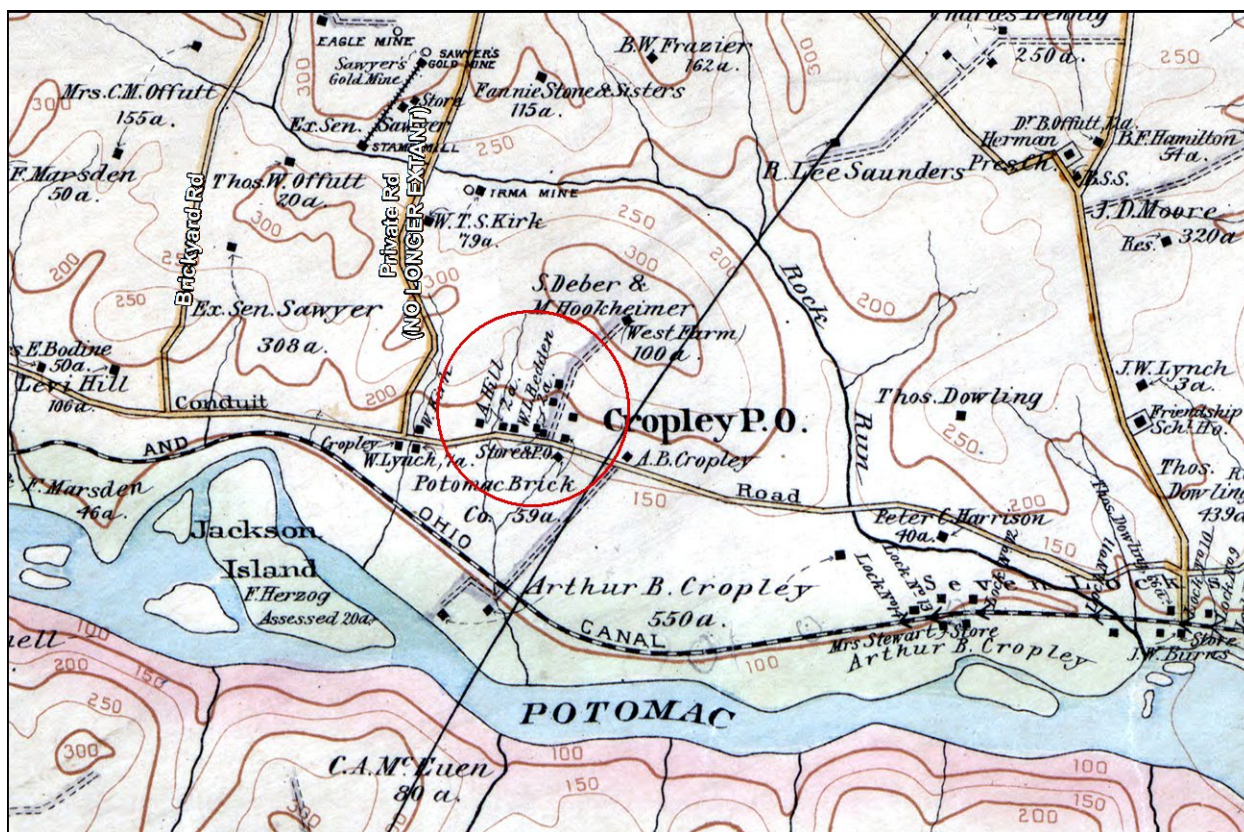


Figure 7.2: Detail from *The Vicinity of Washington, DC, 1894* (Hopkins) Showing the Area of Cropley, Maryland

3. Twentieth Century: Growth and Displacement

The success of the Potomac Brick & Tile Company under Cropley ownership was short lived; two mortgages were defaulted upon, and the property was sold by 1908. The brick works operated until 1928, however, at which time the property was still commonly referred to as “the Cropley Brick Yard Property,” but the tract had been reduced to 11 acres.⁵⁵⁴ Two US Geological Survey topographic maps from 1900 and 1909 show approximately seven buildings south of or on the north banks of the canal, just below the brickyard, on two dirt roads that ran through the brickyard property. They likely represent houses, perhaps of brickyard workers, and may have been the nucleus of the Brickyard African American community. These seven houses are on lands that were developed in the late 1930s as CCC camp site NP-2 and as the David Taylor Model Basin facility.



Figure 7.3: Detail from *A Real Estate Atlas of the Part of Montgomery County Adjacent to the District of Columbia*, 1917 (Deets and Maddox, plate 10) Showing African American Landowners, Churches, and a School Associated with the African American Community of Brickyard in Cropley, Maryland. Courtesy of Special Collections, The Sheridan Libraries, Johns Hopkins University.

By 1904, a cluster of houses and a store lined Conduit Road west of the Cropley Post Office. By 1917, when two Rockville, Maryland, surveyors created a real-estate atlas for the lower part of Montgomery County, two churches and a school were located at the intersection of a private road⁵⁵⁵ and Conduit Road (Figure 7.3). No houses were depicted, but the majority of residences were clustered on land owned by the Atlantic Development Company, between Offutt (now Brickyard) Road and the private road that terminated in the acreage owned by the Lynch family. Only two families within the African American community owned land at that time: **C. FRYE** (who

⁵⁵⁴ In 1928, the former brick yard land was purchased by Woodside Homes Corporation and platted as part of a subdivision. In 1937, the tract was purchased by the US Navy and is the part of the David Taylor Model Basin site. See Montgomery County Deed Book 673, Folio 370, July 15, 1937.

⁵⁵⁵ No road exists today that stems from Conduit Road and stretches north to meet Persimmon Tree Road; however, present-day Garmon Road may be a vestige of that nineteenth-century private roadway.

owned 5 acres) and J. and C. TONEY (who owned 2.5 acres). Both properties lie north of Cropley Park and Conduit Road and east of the private road.

Following World War I, Washingtonians began to eye Carderock as a seasonal vacation spot or for the development of suburban residences. The rise of leisure and suburban real estate development was underway, and it would eventually erase Cropley and Brickyard. The initial residential development of the land between Conduit Road and the canal began in June 1920 when Michael J. Keane, a DC-based lawyer and real-estate developer, purchased 275 acres of Carderock.⁵⁵⁶ Keane platted the land as a residential subdivision that he called “Camp Carderock,” which held 74 1- and 2-acre lots superimposed on a largely undeveloped landscape between the C&O Canal and the Potomac River, just east of Lock 14.⁵⁵⁷ Whether Keane envisioned this speculative development as rustic cabins and riverside vacation bungalows is uncertain; what is known is that he made only one sale—the western halves of abutting lots 54 and 66 to Ethel E. Alicoate of DC—in August 1922.⁵⁵⁸ Keane sold the Camp Carderock lands south of the canal in 1925; it was sold again in 1927 to the Woodside Homes Corporation, which also purchased and subdivided the land between the canal and Conduit Road (including the former brickyard property, now occupied by the David Taylor Model Basin) in 1928.⁵⁵⁹

The Woodside Homes Corporation had been incorporated in Maryland in 1925 as a subsidiary of the Woodside Development Corporation, formed in Virginia in 1922 by Charles Ward Hopkins and Morgan K. Armstrong, locals in Newport News and Hampton, Virginia. This corporation produced residential developments in Newport News, New Orleans, Atlanta, and Montgomery, Alabama. In Maryland, Hopkins and Armstrong created the subdivision of Woodside Park in Silver Spring in the mid-1920s before turning their attention to Camp Carderock in 1928.⁵⁶⁰ Hopkins and Armstrong did not envision Carderock as a seasonal vacation enclave but encouraged the development of permanent home sites. Starting in July 1928, the partners published several advertisements for Carderock (they dropped the word “camp” from the title) in two Washington newspapers, *The Washington Post* and *The Evening Star*. The advertisements illustrate the partners’ desired exclusivity for Carderock, manifest in the advertised land prices (from \$950 to \$1,500 per acre) and the lot sizes (2-, 3-, and 5-acre “estates”) as well as by the alert to readers that Hopkins-Armstrong, Inc. had selected “from the most substantial subdivisions in American and applied to Carderock” sundry “carefully devised restrictions” that the partners considered “safeguarding but not burdensome.”⁵⁶¹

Ten covenants were written into the one deed of title (for lot 70 with parts of lots 69 and 71) that Woodside Homes Corporation sold to Roscoe C. and Sue T. Green of DC in 1928.⁵⁶² The first five covenants addressed the built environment while covenants 6, 8, 9, and 10 detailed how the covenants functioned, for how long they must be in place, and how a majority of homeowners in Carderock could amend the covenants except for covenant 7, which must remain in place and unchanged for 50 years from 1928. Covenant 7 was a racial covenant that excluded Black Americans from either owning or renting any property in Carderock. If the seven houses depicted

⁵⁵⁶ Montgomery County Deed Book 294, Folio 253, June 11, 1920.

⁵⁵⁷ Montgomery County Plat 230, July 1920.

⁵⁵⁸ Montgomery County Deed Book 322, Folio 416, November 9, 1922.

⁵⁵⁹ Montgomery County Deed Book 422, Folio 134, March 14, 1927.

⁵⁶⁰ Robert E. Oshel, “The History of Woodside Park, Silver Spring, Maryland” (Silver Spring: Woodside Park Civic Association, 1998). <http://users.starpower.net/oshel/H01.htm>

⁵⁶¹ “Carderock,” *Evening Star* (7 July 1928).

⁵⁶² Montgomery County Deed Book 468, Folio 414, October 2, 1928.

on the US Geological Survey topographic maps from 1900 and 1909 were associated with the African American community of Brickyard, those residents were not only displaced and their housing eliminated from the landscape, but they were precluded from returning to the area by a prejudiced legal vehicle. The onset of the Great Depression dashed Hopkins and Armstrong's hopes of turning Carderock into a much-desired subdivision, however, and they only made a total of 11 sales by 1935, when they sold the land to the federal government.⁵⁶³

The 1930 US census lists a few African American households on "Conduit towards & to Cropley," including the home of JAMES HARRIS, JOHN HALEY, and BEVERLY DAVIS. Members of the African American community worshipped in the MOUNT GLORY BAPTIST CHURCH, sited between the canal and Conduit Road. Purportedly, the low water table in this area was problematic, as the graves at the southern end of the church cemetery were prone to occasional flooding. The southern portion of Brickyard-Cropley, south of Conduit Road and north of the canal, was redeveloped as the David Taylor Model Basin by 1939. The Mount Glory Church property, also south of Conduit Road, was bisected by the Clara Barton Parkway in 1963. When the parkway was built, all the graves were reinterred in Galilean Fisherman's (Lincoln Park) Cemetery, the historical Black cemetery in Rockville.⁵⁶⁴ The school, church, and properties belonging to the Fries and Toneys that were sited north of Conduit Road and that were extant in 1917 have been obliterated by late twentieth-century, private housing developments on Gorman Road and Natelli Woods Lane. A comparison of two aerial photographs of the area dating to 1949 and 1957 show that the church north of Conduit Road was lost in that interim, but the schoolhouse was already absent from the landscape by 1949.

B. HISTORIC SITES

Chapter II and this chapter have mentioned some historic sites associated with the C&O Canal and with African American history in Montgomery County's Potomac, Great Falls, and Carderock areas and the historic African American community of Brickyard. Unfortunately, many of the original buildings have been demolished or converted to private use and thereby are not accessible to the public, or the exact location of the historic site is unknown (Table 7.1).

⁵⁶³ The land south of the canal, which had been platted as Camp Carderock, became the site of the two CCC camps – CCC Camp 325 and CCC Camp 333. These camps were established in 1938 on two temporary camp sites, NP-2-MD in Carderock and NP-1-MD in Cabin John. The land north of the canal, the western half of which was formerly the Potomac Brick & Tile Company property and which also was platted in the late 1920s as part of the Carderock subdivision, was redeveloped as the David Taylor Model Basin by 1939.

⁵⁶⁴ "Historic African American Communities in the Washington Metropolitan Area," *Prologue DC* [website] (accessed 15 October 2021, <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=5d16635c4fde41eca91c3e2a82c871e8>); Jeff Miller, "Mt. Glory Baptist Church Cemetery [Relocated]," Montgomery County Cemetery Inventory Revisited (Rockville, MD: Montgomery Preservation, 2018, accessed 12 November 2021, https://www.montgomerypreservation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/226_Mt-Glory_B_Cabin-John_2018_Survey.pdf).

TABLE 7.1: POTOMAC, GREAT FALLS, CARDEROCK, AND BRICKYARD HISTORIC SITES ASSOCIATED WITH THE C&O CANAL OR AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND THEIR PUBLIC ACCESSIBILITY

SITE/BUILDING	DATE	LOCATION/ADDRESS	STATUS	CURRENT FUNCTION
Great Falls Ice Company (House)	19th C.	Great Falls	Presumably Lost	Unknown
Ford and Watson Gold Mines	Ca. 1865	Great Falls	Closed	Unknown
Old Angler's Inn/ Cropley General Store and Post Office	Ca. 1910	Conduit Road, Cropley/Great Falls	Extant	Private Inn and Restaurant
Potomac Brick & Tile Company site and Brickyard housing	Ca. 1894	Cropley; present-day David Taylor Model Basin property	Lost/Redeveloped 1939	David Taylor Model Basin
CCC Camps 325 and 333	1938-1942	South of the canal and present-day David Taylor Model Basin property	Lost/Closed and disassembled during WWII and afterward	CHOH parkland

The following are descriptions of a few sites in the areas of Potomac, Great Falls, and Carderock that are strongly associated with the C&O Canal and/or African American history and that are accessible to the public to some degree (all lie on CHOH parkland).

1. *Great Falls Tavern, Falls Road, CHOH*

Completed in 1829 as a lockkeeper's house and then expanded in 1831 to serve as a tavern, the Crommelin House has functioned as a landmark at Great Falls for nearly two centuries. The Federal-style building has functioned as a lockkeeper's home, hotel, provisions store, private club, and meeting place. An assemblage of buildings once occupied the site to support the guest services, including separate kitchens, storerooms, and dwellings. The Great Falls Tavern has served at the core of the leisure and tourism industries at Great Falls and continues to be a popular destination on the C&O Canal trail (Figure 7.4).⁵⁶⁵

African Americans in the study area frequently worked in domestic positions at large hotels and in restaurants as waiters, cooks, laundresses, and maids. Isabelle (née Case) Redden, whose mother operated the Great Falls Tavern in the 1910s and 1920s, recalled in an interview conducted in 1976 that an African American man and an African American woman lived with her family and worked at the Great Falls Tavern. Redden specifically mentions "Aunt Hannah," an older African American woman who had been enslaved and who lived with the Cases as a domestic servant until Isabelle Redden's marriage in 1912.⁵⁶⁶ Nothing more about the African American domestic servants who lived with the Cases at Great Falls Tavern is known, as they were not enumerated with the Case household in the 1910 or 1920 US censuses. Further examination into the lives of the domestic staff at Great Falls Tavern is warranted.

⁵⁶⁵ Kelly, 213.

⁵⁶⁶ Kytte, 29-30.



Figure 7.4: Willard R. Ross, “Canal Lock, Great Falls,” ca. 1910, Showing the Great Falls Tavern and Lock 20 (DC Public Library)

Contact: [Great Falls Tavern Visitor Center](#)
(301) 767-3714
CHOH_Information@nps.gov

2. *Maryland Gold Mine, Falls Road and MacArthur Boulevard, CHOH*

Established in 1867, the Maryland Gold Mine was the first of several gold mines to be commercialized in the Great Falls and Cabin John areas. Not permanently closed until 1951, it had the longest tenure among the score of gold mines in the county and was said to have been the largest vein in the Appalachian gold belt, which ran from Maryland to Alabama. Presently located within the CHOH park boundaries, only vestiges associated with panning and mining for the mineral remain, including the supports of a water tower (the tank has been removed) and ruins of an amalgamation mill.⁵⁶⁷

US census records showed that a few local African American men were employed at gold mines. In 1900, Ernest Smallwood was a 23-year-old Washingtonian living at 706 Madison Street in DC. He listed his occupation with the census taker as a “teamster [at] Gold Yards,” presumably those at Great Falls or in Cabin John. In the 1920 US census, two African American laborers listed their industry as “Gold Mine.” Henry Shields was 29 years old and Robert Warren was 53 years old; both dwelled on Falls Road in Potomac, Maryland. The Maryland Gold Mine site presents an

⁵⁶⁷ Kelly, 219.

opportunity for further research into and interpretation of the African American participation in the nineteenth-century gold rush and the industry's development in Maryland.

*Contact: [Great Falls Tavern Visitor Center](#)
(301) 767-3714
CHOH_Information@nps.gov*

3. *Washington Aqueduct Control Gatehouse (Water Supply Building), Falls Road, CHOH*

Built of Seneca red sandstone in the 1850s, the Second Empire-style building is a lasting testament to the massive public works project intended to bring clean, potable water from above the Potomac River's fall line down to the residents of DC. Located northeast of the Great Falls Tavern, the control building marks the origin of the diverted waters' travel down 12 miles of conduit. The building was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1975. The property is owned and maintained by the US Army Corps of Engineers.⁵⁶⁸

Several African American men worked on improvements made to Washington Aqueduct in the mid-1880s, when as many as 500 workers were settled in the area to extend the Washington Aqueduct dam across the Potomac River. Despite its evocative name, the community of Brickyard, founded circa 1884, was likely worker housing for those men working in the Washington Aqueduct and their families. Further research into Brickyard and its association with the Washington Aqueduct is warranted.

*Contact: [US Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District](#)
5900 MacArthur Boulevard
Washington, DC 20016-2514
(202) 764-2753
WashingtonAqueductInquiries@usace.army.mil*

4. *Mount Glory Baptist Church Site, Conduit Road, Carderock*

The church was built and a cemetery established on a 0.5-acre parcel purchased in April 1920. The property was remanded, in a "declaration of taking from US District Court" to the United States government on 1 November 1962. By 1963, the building had been razed and the graves disinterred and relocated to Galilean Fisherman's (Lincoln Park) Cemetery in Rockville.⁵⁶⁹ The approximate site of the church and cemetery lies within CHOH parklands and thereby provides NPS staff an opportunity to erect a historical marker or signage to explain the site's significance as the last vestige of the Brickyard African American community.

LOST

⁵⁶⁸ Kelly, 216.

⁵⁶⁹ Juan Castro, Stephen Aldrich, David Anspacher, and Jason Sartori, *MacArthur Boulevard Bikeway Improvements Project – Segment 1 (CIP Project No. 509337, Mandatory Referral No. MR20200024, MCPB Item No. 5 (Rockville, MD: Montgomery County Planning Department, 17 September 2020, accessed 18 April 2022, https://montgomeryplanningboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/MR2020024-MacArthur-Blvd_9-10-20_Final.pdf)*, 21.

C. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Today, nothing remains of the historical African American enclave of Brickyard, but its location within CHOH parkland offers the NPS an opportunity to commemorate the settlement and to interpret the lives of some of the residents who lived there. Other historical properties and sites also offer the opportunity to better illustrate how African Americans in the Great Falls area interacted with the canal, river, and industries that relied on those water features. Recommendations for future avenues of research include the following.

1. Researching the enclave of Brickyard: identifying the companies (such as the Potomac Brick & Tile Company) that were established near the canal for the manufacture of bricks and their employees; identifying residents of brickyard; commemorating the site of the Mt. Glory Baptist Church and cemetery that were razed for the Clara Barton Parkway
2. Researching the African American men who labored on the Washington Aqueduct in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries
3. Researching the African American service staff at the Great Falls Tavern (and like clubs and hotels) to offer their narrative in the interpretation of that site
4. Elucidating the ways in which African Americans used the canal and river as sites of leisure in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries
5. Exploring the Black experience in nineteenth-century gold mining in the region
6. Mapping African American enclaves by researching, in depth, US census records and other data: for instance, the 1930 US census of Montgomery County's Potomac Electoral District (10) shows a concentration of six Black householders on a "dirt road east of the Potomac – Great Falls Pike." Careful study of the census records could provide better geographic knowledge of African American enclaves and how they may have changed or migrated over time. Such knowledge could lead to acknowledgment of extant African American-built resources and possibly to their protection.

VIII. TRAVILAH AND TOBYTOWN

A. ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT

Present-day Travilah is an unincorporated, census-designated place encompassing approximately 17 square miles in lower Montgomery County. An irregularly shaped area, it extends roughly from the Potomac River north to Glen Road and is bounded on the east by Watt's Branch and on the west by Travilah Road and the southern portion of Muddy Branch. The once rural area has been suburbanized and is characterized by residential roads and cul-de-sacs of single-family homes. Tobytown is a historical African American community south of River Road and adjacent to Pennyfield Lock Road, just east of Muddy Branch. The C&O Canal follows the Potomac River through the southern extreme of Travilah and Tobytown; canal Locks 21 and 22 lie in this section.

1. *Pre-Emancipation Period: the Martins, One of the Oldest Free Black Families of Montgomery County*

Scholarship has suggested that Tobytown (historically written as Tobey Town) was founded in 1875 as an African American enclave within Travilah by emancipated [WILLIAM DAVIS](#), [AILSIE MARTIN](#), and [EMORY GENIES](#) (also spelled Genus). The community's name purportedly came from [TOBIAS MARTIN](#), the son of founder Ailsie Martin.⁵⁷⁰ Extensive genealogical research has been conducted on the Martins of Montgomery County, who were present, both free and enslaved, as early as 1790.⁵⁷¹ Tobias Martin was born ca. 1805 and married Elsie (likely "Ailsie" is a phonetic spelling of Elsie), born ca. 1815. Both were enslaved and had nine children born into slavery between 1846 and 1863. Their second son, Tobias, Jr. (born 1848), married Julia (born 1845), and the couple had a son, Tobias III, born in 1870 who is likely the eponym. Although these Martins were enslaved in the antebellum period, free African American Martins were living in the neighboring Medley and Rockville districts (Election District Nos. 3 and 4, respectively) of Montgomery County from at least the 1820s.

[SAMUEL MARTIN](#) first appears as a free African American householder in the 1820 census of the Medley District,⁵⁷² in which two Black men—one enslaved and aged over 45 years, and one free and aged over 45 years—were enumerated together. In 1825, Samuel Martin was assessed for taxes for Lot 32 in Rockville that he co-owned with Honoré Martin, a white merchant from France and an enslaver;⁵⁷³ by 1831, that lot belonged solely to Samuel Martin. When he died in 1837,

⁵⁷⁰ American University Museum, Project Space, "Plans to Prosper You: Reflections of Black Resistance and Resilience in Montgomery County's Potomac River Valley" [exhibition catalog] (Washington, DC: American University Museum, 2019, accessed 8 November 2021, https://www.american.edu/cas/museum/2019/upload/ps_plans-to-prosper_e-library_17v.pdf), 22.

⁵⁷¹ Eileen McGukian's notes are held at the Montgomery History's Jane C. Sween Research Library and Special Collections in Rockville, MD.

⁵⁷² The Medley District (Election District No. 3) was centered around Poolesville, just west of Travilah. Also note that a free Black man named Samuel (no surname) was in the first US census, in 1790, of Montgomery County. That year, Samuel was enumerated with a free "yellow or black" female and two free boys under the age of 16.

⁵⁷³ Honoré Martin (1758-1828) had been in Montgomery County since at least 1786; he was enumerated in 1790 as the head of a three-person household that included no enslaved individuals. By 1800, his household had grown to 26 persons, including 14 enslaved individuals; by 1820, his 27-person household included 18 enslaved persons. Although the exact nature of the relationship between Honoré and Samuel Martin is unknown, the fact that the two share a surname suggests, if not direct kinship, that there was a previous relationship between them not entirely financial; perhaps Samuel Martin had been enslaved to Honoré and freed before 1790.

Samuel Martin owned 0.5 acre with a furnished log house (40x16 feet) and livestock; his estate went to his wife, Helen, and then the residual to their eldest son, **SAMUEL MARTIN, JR.** The junior Samuel was born into slavery ca. 1803 and purchased his own freedom in 1832 from John Braddock for \$71.30. By 1839, county tax assessments recorded that he “owned” two enslaved individuals—a boy aged eight to 14 years and a male aged over 14 years—who were likely his children born into slavery, as well as nearly 9 acres on Frederick Road, which became an area known as “Martin’s Lane,” north of Rockville. At his death in 1873, Samuel Martin, Jr. was considered a man of considerable property.⁵⁷⁴

SAMUEL MARTIN
(before 1775 - 1837)

Possibly one of the 70 free Black persons enumerated in all of Montgomery County in 1790, Samuel Martin was a property owner by the 1820s. He may also have been one of the patriarchs of the larger Martin family, which had several free Black persons prior to emancipation.

JESSE MARTIN (born 1757) and **MOLLY MARTIN** (born 1772) and their 10 children were all recorded as free in 1832. An 1832 survey taken in Montgomery County of free African Americans (asking them whether they would voluntarily move to Liberia) identified seven other Martins: **MICHAEL MARTIN** (born 1782) and his son, **MICHAEL MARTIN, JR.** (born 1824); **NATHAN MARTIN** (born 1805); **ADELIN MARTIN** (born 1808); **ARTELIA MARTIN** (born 1822); **HANSON MARTIN** (born 1828); and **OCTAVIA MARTIN** (born 1830). **MARY MARTIN** (born 1809, daughter of Jesse and Molly) was enumerated as the head of a free Black household in 1820, which included five free persons of color and four enslaved individuals. By the 1840 census, there were several free Black Martins dwelling in the Rockville District, including Michael Martin and his household of seven others; Nathan Martin with his seven dependents; Molly Martin and her three youngest children; and Samuel Martin, Jr., head of an eight-person household. Because the residents’ surnames were listed alphabetically in the 1840 census, the geographic locations of the families cannot be discerned.

In the 1850 US census, six Black households were clustered together in an undisclosed location within the election district, which included the homes of Nathan⁵⁷⁵ and Polly Martin with their three children, Samuel and Lavinia Martin and their seven dependents, **ANN SMITH** and her small daughter, Margaret Warren and her seven children, and two solitary households of **LEWIS SPELMAN** and **NANCY CARROLL**. Other free Black Martins in this census include **MASSEY MARTIN**, a 30-year-old female sharing a domicile with a 70-year-old Black woman named **KATY SMITH**; the two women were neighbors to Elbert Perry, whose farm was south of Darnestown and east of Seneca Creek. In 1850, Hanson Martin was a 23-year-old laborer dwelling in the white household of Basil Barry, a Methodist clergyman whose neighbors were also free African Americans (**JOHN NORRIS** and **ROBERT BUTLER**). **THOMAS MARTIN** was a 20-year-old laborer enumerated in the large, non-kin household of Edward L. Ward, a lockkeeper. **VIRGINIA** and **WILLIAM MARTIN** were elderly, free Black servants in the household of a white farmer, John Counselman, in the 1860

⁵⁷⁴ Eileen McGuckian, “Haiti, An Historic Black Community,” *The Montgomery County Story* (Published by the Montgomery County Historical Society) 32, no. 1 (February 1989):2-3 (accessed 7 March 2022, https://mchdr.montgomeryhistory.org/xmlui/bitstream/handle/20.500.12366/257/mcs_v032_n1_1989_mcguckian.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y).

⁵⁷⁵ Nathan (born 1805) and Samuel Jr. (born 1803) were likely brothers, as both had been enslaved by John Braddock. Nathan was manumitted on 26 October 1841, at the age of 36. He worked as a blacksmith and owned property (part of Lot 76) in Rockville.

census. That year, Samuel Martin’s family was enumerated again as neighbors of Margaret Warren and her children. Although the exact locations of these households are not known, it is proven that Martins had a longer history of settlement in Montgomery County, in both the Rockville and Medley electoral districts, as free African Americans than present scholarship on Tobytown suggests.

2. *Post-Emancipation Period: Coalescence of an African American Community in a Period of Racialized Terror*

Travilah (named for Travilah Claggett, the first postmaster, in 1883) did not emerge as a place until the last quarter of the nineteenth century. By the early 1880s, the crossroads hamlet at the intersection of Travilah and Glen roads supported a dispersed, rural community and featured a post office, a general store, a school, and several homes. The Hopkins (1879) atlas depicts isolated homesteads between Muddy and Piney branches associated with white landowners. The map also depicted a store, warehouse, and “Beall’s old mill” near the canal. A schoolhouse and a blacksmith shop were illustrated on Stony Creek Road, which diverges northward from River Road. By 1894, the Travilah Baptist Church was built in the hamlet, followed by the Travilah Town Hall in 1910.⁵⁷⁶ The area was supported by two gristmills (Glen and DUFIEF’S) as well as commerce on the canal.

Tobytown, as aforementioned, is thought to have emerged as a cohesive community in the Reconstruction era. The Hopkins (1879) atlas depicts four domiciles close together on the south side of River Road and just east of Muddy Branch, belonging to William Davis, Emory Germs [*sic*], and T. Martin (Figure 8.1). On 29 March 1875, Davis purchased 4 acres from a tract called “Brackenridge” for \$80 from white landowners (and Great Falls, Virginia, residents) John and Susan Rowzee; the Rowzees then sold 5 acres to Genies and Martin.⁵⁷⁷ But the 1870 US census suggests that Tobytown, as a distinctly Black community, is at least a bit older: in that year’s enumeration of the residents around the Brighton post office in the Rockville District (Election District No. 4), there was a concentration of seven Black households in an otherwise all-white neighborhood. These seven households included JOHN CLAGGETT, an 85-year-old, with several children; a childless couple, HAMILTON and ELIZA STEWART; William Davis (30 years old), his wife Susan, and their baby James; Tobias Martin, aged 65, his wife and two children; JULIA MARTIN, 25 years old, with eight other siblings or children under the age of 19; Emory Janus [*sic*], aged 60, with his wife and three children; and HALL JACKSON with his wife and two toddlers. Consistently, all the men were listed as “farm laborers” and all the women were “keeping house.” The location of these dwellings near the canal is suggested by the fact that the next neighbor to

⁵⁷⁶ G.M. Hopkins; Alison Hays, “Travilah Baptist Church,” Montgomery County, Maryland, Maryland Historical Trust Inventory Form for State Historic Sites Survey (Annapolis: Maryland Historical Trust, 1979); Alison Hays, “Travilah Hall,” Montgomery County, Maryland, Maryland Historical Trust Inventory Form for State Historic Sites Survey (Annapolis: Maryland Historical Trust, 1979).

⁵⁷⁷ Jesse W. Lewis, Jr., “Toby Town: Hope is Long Gone, and Talk Dulls Its Memory, in a Pocket of Misery Festering in Suburbia’s Affluence,” *The Washington Post*, 21 March 1965; Clare Lise Cavicchi, “Tobytown Cemetery,” Montgomery County, Maryland, Maryland Historical Trust Inventory Form for State Historic Sites Survey (Annapolis: Maryland Historical Trust, 1994, accessed 9 November 2021, <https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/PDF/Montgomery/M;%2025-14.pdf>).

assaulting and raping her in her home, ransacking the house, and then fleeing in the morning. Bulletins were printed in local newspapers for two days in late July, and a posse was formed to track down Dorsey, who was traveling by foot. Dorsey was apprehended by Zachariah Joseph Davis in Olney and taken to the Rockville jail, where he supposedly confessed to his crimes. An angry lynch mob coalesced around the jail, rushed the sheriff and his men, and released Dorsey after threatening the jailer for the keys to Dorsey's cell. The vigilantes walked Dorsey, manacled, to farmland on the outskirts of the town, where they hung him from an old black-heart cherry tree before dawn on 27 July 1880.⁵⁸⁰

In her article on the two lynchings of Black men in Montgomery County in 1880, Sarah Hedlund stated that "lynchings during the post-Reconstruction era (1877 onward) in former slave states like Maryland became particularly targeted to terrorize the black population, often carried out over any infraction, real or imagined."⁵⁸¹ Terror was meant to reinforce white supremacy in the social hierarchy, and the extra-judicial aspect of lynching allowed the cruxes of the slave system—namely, power and control—to persist in a post-emancipation world. Maryland's former enslavers were never disenfranchised even if their appeals for reparations for lost "property" were denied; the Lost Cause mentality pervaded parts of the state, especially those close to Virginia that had Confederate leanings during the war. The pro-Southern Democratic party won local elections in the county, and an economic depression starting in 1877 further demoralized the Republican party of former President Abraham Lincoln. All of these variables coalesced to foment a heightened racism in Montgomery County in the last two decades of the nineteenth century.⁵⁸²

Hedlund posits that, although historians have yet to trace the reactions of Montgomery County's Black population (which composed one-third the county's total population in 1880) to these lynchings of local Black men, it cannot be denied that African Americans were aware that sentence without due process and murder-by-mob were being perpetrated by their white neighbors and that these crimes were either condoned or ignored by authorities. This likely made African American communities more insular, isolated, and self-sufficient, becoming refuges from a threatening, dangerous, hegemonically white world.⁵⁸³ The residents of Tobytown had to have heard about the purported crimes Dorsey committed at the nearby Tschiffely farm, likely read vitriolic accounts of him in the local newspapers, and knew of his tragic end. Perhaps this is one reason that the residents of Tobytown grew more self-sufficient and separate from their neighbors in Travilah, forming a strong sense of community. In response to the formation of the Travilah Baptist Church congregation in 1884, the Martin family dedicated a parcel of land for "a meeting house or place of worship for the colored Baptist congregation worshiping in the neighborhood of Travillah" that would also double as a schoolhouse in 1887. When it was built, it was one of a handful of Baptist churches in this part of the county for Black congregations.⁵⁸⁴ The nineteenth-century building was rebuilt in 1917, following a fire, and was called the Refugee Church of the Lord Jesus

⁵⁸⁰ Sarah Hedlund, "At the Hands of Parties Unknown: The 1880 Lynchings in Montgomery County, Maryland," *The Montgomery County Story* 63, no. 1 (Summer 2020):6-12 (accessed 3 November 2021, https://mchdr.montgomeryhistory.org/xmlui/bitstream/handle/20.500.12366/292/mcs_v063_n1_2020_hedlund.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y).

⁵⁸¹ Hedlund, 1.

⁵⁸² Hedlund, 1-2.

⁵⁸³ Hedlund, 13.

⁵⁸⁴ Kelly, 221.

Christ.⁵⁸⁵ The building served as two pillar institutions for a community that had not been provided educational services by the county public school system and that wished to worship separately.

An article written in 1965 poetically portrayed Tobytown's halcyon days in the late nineteenth century: "That [Tobytown] prospered is not in dispute. Its residents, freed slaves and their descendants, were in constant demand as laborers in the new agriculture that flourished everywhere around them. And in Toby Town itself, old orchards were revived and new ones planted." The article recounts the success of founding member William Davis, who "expanded his holdings from the four acres of 1875 to 93 acres by the turn of the century." But Tobytown's halcyon days waned in the twentieth century, mirrored in the personal experience of Davis, who "lost most of the land in 1913 when one of his sons was fined \$2,000 for a hit and run accident with a wagon. The farm went to an area landowner who lent the Davises money and eventually foreclosed on the farm." By the time the article was published (in 1965), Tobytown's area (or the collective land owned by its members) had been reduced to 10 acres.⁵⁸⁶

Tobytown was a kinship community in which certain family names dominated over generations, particularly Martin, Davis, and Genies. By 1900, Tobytown included the household of Clem Martin, aged 42 and working as a laborer in a stone quarry, with his wife and five children. His neighbors to one side were Charles and George Pennyfield; the latter worked for the C&O Canal company as a lockkeeper but put his occupation down in the 1900 US census as "fisherman." His other neighbors were [SCOTT MARTIN](#), a Black head-of-household that included his wife and young son, as well as Arthur Selby, a white lock tender. Other Black households in Tobytown included those of [RICHARD GENUS](#), Charles Martin, [GEORGE JACKSON](#), William Davis, [CHARLES DAVIS](#), [REASON TURNER](#), [TOM JONES](#), and [FRANK STEWART](#). All of these men gave their occupations as farmers. The same families were there in 1910, minus the households of Richard Genus and Charles Davis, with the reinstatement of Tobias Martin and Perry Thomas, and with the addition of [MATILDA JACKSON](#), [JOHN TURNER](#), and [ANDREW LYNCH](#). Except for Tobias Martin, who was a clergyman, all the men gave their occupations as farm laborers. Richard Genus returned in the 1920 census, and the family names stayed the same although widows and sons became the heads of some households.

By the 1930 US census, both "Travillah" and "Toby Town" were specified as the street addresses for several families in the Darnestown District. Travilah was a predominantly white area in 1930; the few African American families in Travilah were headed by [HARRY PALMER](#), [CLARENCE J. McDONALD](#), [WILL F. LAIR](#), and [DAVID W. MARTIN](#), all farm laborers. Conversely, Tobytown had nine households listed that were majority Black. The households of Luther O. Foster, Galveston Norris, and James W. Lowe were headed by white men, whereas the households of [BEN L. HUMES](#), [ROBERT A. MARTIN](#), Richard R. Genus, [HENSON DAVIS](#), [CARRIE DAVIS](#), and [LEONARD MARTIN](#) were African Americans. In the 1940 census, Henson Davis, [IDA GENIES](#), [ALICE JOHNSON](#), [CLEM MARTIN, JR.](#), [CLIFF MARTIN](#), and Leonard Martin were the heads of Black households in Tobytown and neighboring Travilah. When Clem Martin, Jr. registered for the draft in April 1942, he gave his address as "Tobytown (near Travilah), Mont. Co. Md." Martin recorded his age as 49 and that he had been born in Tobytown in 1892. [WILLIAM CLARENCE MARTIN](#) also registered for the draft, in June 1942, and provided his birthplace as Tobytown and his birthdate as May 1923.

⁵⁸⁵ American University Museum, Project Space, 22; Cavicchi.

⁵⁸⁶ Lewis, "Toby Town: Hope is Long Gone."

ERNEST DAVIS, 42 years old when he registered for the draft in February 1942, wrote that he was born in Travilah (Tobytown).

3. *Mid-Twentieth Century: Displacement and Urban Renewal*

“The road to Hell is paved with good intentions.”

Proverb

On 7 January 1965, an article in the *Washington Star* focused attention on Robert A. Martin and the little-known community of Tobytown. The headline read “Civic Leader is Accused of Land Fraud,” and the article recounted how “Washington I. Cleveland, Montgomery County civic leader...was accused of defrauding an elderly Negro out of title to a tract of land in Potomac.”⁵⁸⁷ The article explained that Martin, who “was born on the property in 1888” and was illiterate, had been working for Cleveland’s family as a groundskeeper and handyman for the past 15 years. When Martin expressed to his employer his financial troubles following an illness that kept him from working for a prolonged period, Cleveland (according to Martin) offered to pay the property taxes on Martin’s inherited property in Tobytown, which Martin had been able to pay himself until 1958, in Martin’s name. Martin would then work off his debt to Cleveland. But Cleveland failed to pay the 1958 taxes and the property went into default; it was offered at a tax sale on 8 June 1959, at which Cleveland purchased the 1.25-acre parcel for \$600 (which included the \$47.16 in unpaid taxes) on land valued at \$3,500 in 1965. According to Martin, Cleveland never informed him of the default and his subsequent purchase. In 1961, Cleveland filed to foreclose on Martin, kicking him off the land he had always lived on. Martin, whose house had burned down, was living in an uninsulated, old horse trailer by that time. Martin (whose father, Charles, had died in 1918, followed by his mother, Arianna, in 1921) had never transferred the land title into his own name, and rightful ownership was in question. Martin appeared to be without recourse.

Into this sad scene entered the Montgomery County Welfare Board, which filed a lawsuit against Cleveland on behalf of Martin. The welfare board had been paying Martin a marginal stipend since 1955; after a decade of payments, they had given Martin a total of \$3,458. Since Martin’s property was valued at \$3,500 in 1965 (an alternative estimate was \$5,000), the welfare board felt they had the “right to recover the money from Martin’s estate,” which they would not get at Martin’s death because, according to the suit, Cleveland had defrauded Martin by withholding information on the parcel’s default and sale. Cleveland claimed that a verbal agreement had been made between him and Martin in 1961, in which Cleveland would assume ownership and pay the property taxes henceforth and allow Martin to live (in the horse trailer, presumably) there the remainder of his days, rent free.⁵⁸⁸

While regional newspapers like the *Washington Star* and *Washington Post* continued to publish articles on Tobytown through the year, stories on Martin’s personal litigation were discarded for stories on the community as a whole, which was described as “one of Montgomery County’s few pockets of poverty” with a population of about 50, five of whom were on relief, living in “11 tar paper shacks.” By mid-January, the Montgomery County Health Department issued a citation to

⁵⁸⁷ “Civic Leader is Accused of Land Fraud,” *Washington Star*, 7 January 1965:A1.

⁵⁸⁸ Thomas R. Kendrick, “Civic Leader Sued Over Land Purchase,” *Washington Post*, 8 January 1965.

the Tobytown community, setting deadlines for the community members to provide 16 new privies, sink three wells, and rid itself of the trash that had accumulated across the community. Nathan Cohen, the president of a Silver Spring, Maryland, construction company, came forward (after reading about Tobytown's plight) to provide new toilets and trash removal services.⁵⁸⁹

The largest coverage was provided by **JESSE W. LEWIS, JR.**, an African American staff writer at the *Washington Post* who spent a several weeks visiting Tobytown residents and published a seven-page spread on 21 March 1965. Lewis's coverage was in-depth and personal, introducing *Post* readers to residents such as **WILLIAM MCKINLEY DAVIS III**, "a one-handed woodchopper who wears his empty right sleeve tucked into a jacket pocket"; **WILLIAM JOHNSON**, who had left Tobytown but had returned the previous year to care for his dying mother; Ernest "Girlie" and **MARION DAVIS**; "KINK" and **CLARICE "MUZZ" WILLIAMS**; **PHYLLIS "DOT" SHAW**; **ETHEL** and **ALBERT CHAMBERS** and their six children; **HERMAN "TICK MOUTH" THOMAS** and **EDWARD PALMER**, who lived with the Chambers; Clem Martin, Jr.; and Henson and **MAGGIE DAVIS**. Lewis presented several facets of Tobytown's perceived ills. The state of the built environment and the mandate from the county were the first topics covered:

Toby Towners, the order stipulated, must increase their outdoor toilet facilities by 1500 per cent and restore to usefulness the one public privy they already had. In addition, two more public wells must be dug to triple the supply of muddy water they were pumping from the community's only operable source. Thirdly, the order said in thinly veiled effect, Toby Town must clean itself up.⁵⁹⁰

Lewis then turned his attention to Tobytowners' poverty. He compared Tobytown to "countless other communities in West Virginia and Pennsylvania" made desolate by closed factories and coal mines, claiming that although Tobytown may have been on par with other rural communities in the Montgomery County 30 years prior, "progress [had] passed them by."⁵⁹¹ He observed that the older generation seemed adrift, bereft of hope, with meager employment opportunities.

Starting in the 1940s,⁵⁹² suburbanization in Montgomery County began encroaching on farmland in the Darnestown area, and the demand for agricultural labor decreased. Rural, marginal Black communities like Tobytown suffered disproportionately and fell under the scrutiny of public officials. Unlike other post-emancipation Black communities in the region, Tobytown's houses were small, one-story buildings with one to three bedrooms (Figure 8.2). Of the 15 houses extant in Tobytown ca. 1960, only one had two stories and five rooms.⁵⁹³ By January 1965, when Montgomery County urban planners visited Tobytown with a film crew to record its housing conditions and interview its residents, the Montgomery County planning authority considered Tobytown a "poverty pocket" in the otherwise affluent county. The film imagery depicted a community frozen in time, showing small, wood-frame houses clad in asbestos shingles and roofed

⁵⁸⁹ "Toby Town, Md," *Washington Star*, 22 January 1975; Anne Christmas, "Builder Bolsters Montgomery Steps to Bring Improvements to Tobytown," *Washington Star*, 30 January 1965.

⁵⁹⁰ Lewis, "Toby Town: Hope is Long Gone."

⁵⁹¹ Ibid.

⁵⁹² Lewis's article includes the statement that "1941 [was] commonly picked as the year that the curtain started to descend on Toby Town's 'good old days.'"

⁵⁹³ American University Museum, Project Space, 25.



Figure 8.2: A Typical House in Tobytown, Maryland, ca. 1965 (Courtesy of Montgomery History, Jane C. Sween Research Library)

with tar paper. None of the homes had plumbing or access to sewer lines: the entire community of approximately 70 persons used a single outdoor lavatory and one well with a hand pump. They had no garbage collection, so the site was littered with detritus. The houses had no electricity or central heating (they used wood-fired stoves). Footage of the canal showed it was polluted, with signs posted to keep out. Four Tobytown men were interviewed in the film. More than one stated it was hard to make a living in the area, but one worked seasonally as a general farm laborer, and another worked in construction and as a truck driver.⁵⁹⁴

The film had a very specific agenda and successfully portrayed the community as impoverished and depressed, paving the way for the urban renewal project that commenced two years later. Despite this agenda, the film depicts healthy, happy children playing tetherball and basketball on a makeshift hoop as well as attending the local Travilah Elementary School. The 1917 church building was in a state of ruin by 1965, but plans were afoot to repurpose it for housing. Mentioned in the film yet not highlighted was that, when the county authorities demanded that the community meet current hygienic standards, Tobytown members Clem Martin and Henson Davis (with some help from other community members) buried the littered trash and sank another well.

⁵⁹⁴ Tom Finn, narrator, "Toby Town, USA: A Way of Life," [30-minute film], produced by the Evening Star Broadcasting Co. for WMAL Television, 1965 (Rockville, MD: Repository, Montgomery County Historical Society, Collection No. SC-V-00012).

In his article, Lewis lamented the pitiable state of the housing, recounting that three homes had recently been destroyed by fire. His strong language on the subject also reflected his self-awareness of bias:

A city dweller would be shocked by Toby Town. I was. My first reaction was a desire to level the whole damned place and fill it with new bungalows. But after spending more time there, I realized that I had been applying urban standards to a very rural slum.

I also recognized that the one privy and the one well were merely symptoms of a hopelessness caused by a breakdown of discipline and a loss of initiative among the town's older residents. But, I wondered, how long will that cycle continue? What will become of the younger people? This is Toby Town's real problem.⁵⁹⁵

Lewis' conclusion, after two months of interviews, was that "perhaps the best hope for [Tobytown residents] is Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), the domestic peace corps program [which] would put a volunteer into the community who could help the Toby Towners break out of their unending cycle" by assisting in finding the men employment and fostering community pride. Lewis declared Tobytown an anachronism, comparable to defunct coal-mining and textile towns in Appalachia, and recommended breaking the community's isolationism, saying "Society can bring the modern world to them, or it can transport them into the modern world. Each solution has its disadvantages, and that is what the War on Poverty is all about."⁵⁹⁶ Both Lewis's and the film crew's portrayal of Tobytown's poverty—and the resulting resolutions made by local government agencies to "fix" Tobytown—must be placed in context within President Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty. Manifested in a series of social welfare legislation introduced in 1964, Johnson's "unconditional war on poverty" was a progressive political attempt to eradicate the nation's pockets of poverty by providing impoverished communities with access to healthcare, primary education, and jobs.

Lewis's article must have resonated, because by November 1965, Tobytown had received two VISTA volunteers. By that point, however, all of the houses had been condemned.⁵⁹⁷ Despite Lewis's astute observations of Tobytown's varied issues, including access to health and education, widespread disillusionment, lack of transportation networks, and underemployment, subsequent government action focused on housing. By March 1967, the Montgomery County Council slated Tobytown for urban renewal. By April 1969, all of the Black-owned land parcels owned for generations were either purchased or condemned by the county, as well as 1.5 acres adjacent on River Road belonging to the Jorgensen and Ritterpush families. The plan was to build 27 new housing units and a community center on undeveloped land (15 acres) so that the Tobytown residents could remain in place while construction commenced. Subsequently, however, all of the historical buildings (17 structures) that had composed the built fabric of the community were condemned and demolished. By December 1972, 26 brick residences (nine duplexes and eight single-family houses) were erected on 5 acres and approximately 125 residents moved into the new Tobytown. The bulk of land that the historical houses had occupied was made into a community park in 1978. The only vestige of the historical community remaining is the **TOBYTOWN CEMETERY**.⁵⁹⁸

⁵⁹⁵ Lewis, "Toby Town: Hope is Long Gone."

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁷ Walter B. Douglas, "A House Is Not a Home in Toby Town: It's a Crate," *Washington Post*, 14 November 1965.

⁵⁹⁸ American University Museum, Project Space, 25-26; Kelly, 221.

Although Tobytowners may have benefited from new housing with indoor plumbing, electricity, and central heating, their gains were contradicted by the loss of home ownership. The Montgomery County housing authority owned the land and the dwellings thereon, which would be leased to tenants; and although Tobytowners received priority for housing placement, others could be placed in the community. The housing authority's stated plan was that lessees would pay 20 percent of their adjusted monthly income on rent, and when the equity fund was reached and maintained, they had the option to purchase the housing units (not the land) from the authority.⁵⁹⁹ Journalists continued to follow up on Tobytown throughout the decade; a November 1977 article reported that four families had left Tobytown, two of their own accord and two who were evicted by the county (one for non-payment of rent and the other for antisocial behavior). Five of the houses were vacant. The author of the article had strong opinions about what she perceived was a failed experiment in Tobytown:

In the years preceding construction... county officials, volunteer agencies, and black activists made Tobytown a cause célèbre, insisting that decent housing could be built without scattering the community; that the pioneer effort at urban renewal should not become an excuse in negro removal.

But in 1967, S.W. (Spike) Parrish, then director of community development for the county, made a statement that has since proved prophetic. "The redevelopment of Tobytown is actually condemning them to another 100 years of isolation," Parrish wrote. "The real solution of their problem is...to be assimilated into the mainstream of the county, which will not happen as long as they remain there."⁶⁰⁰

Subsequent articles throughout the 1980s and 1990s focused on the perceived (by outsiders) ills still plaguing Tobytown residents, including widespread under- or unemployment, low incomes, teenage pregnancies, low graduation rates, lack of access to public transportation, racial segregation, and the dearth of home ownership. In 1982, MELVIN MARTIN became the first Tobytowner to purchase his home after a decade of equity payments.⁶⁰¹ He was celebrated in several articles as a poster child for upward mobility, having two jobs (driving the county school buses and computer programming) and having put himself through college.⁶⁰²

Journalistic or public interest in Tobytown faded after 1982. Only a few articles were published every decade thereafter. In 2016, when an article disclosing Tobytowners' lack of a public bus service was published, the residents of the community totaled 60, half of its population in 1972. Questions posed in a 1982 *Washington Post* article are still pertinent today: "What happens to people when they become a national laboratory? Was the new Toby Town... a mistake or a

⁵⁹⁹ Another explanation for the Housing Opportunities Commission of Montgomery County's formula for home ownership was that the lessee automatically became the owner if he/she lived there for 30 years or if the mortgage was paid off in full. This latter path to home ownership was complicated, however, by the fact that no valuation for the housing units had been made or disclosed to the lessees as late as 1981. See Jai Singh, "Tobytown: A Decade Later," *The Journal* (13 February 1981):A5.

⁶⁰⁰ Elizabeth Weiner, "Tobytown: Massive infusions of money, and liberal goodwill have failed to correct problems in this small enclave of slave descendants," *The Sentinel* [Rockville, MD], 10 November 1977.

⁶⁰¹ Melvin Martin was also one of a few; as late as 2001, half of the units were still owned by the Housing Opportunities Commission of Montgomery County.

⁶⁰² Elsa L. Walsh, "It Takes More Than a Facelift to Change Toby Town's South," *Washington Post*, 7 July 1982.

courageous attempt at demonstrating what activism and concern can do to make life better for a community?”⁶⁰³

B. HISTORIC SITES

Very little of historical Travilah and Tobytown exist today. The 1894 Travilah Baptist Church was destroyed in a fire in 1980, and Tobytown lost its 1917 church to urban renewal between 1967 and 1972. The one-room schoolhouse in Travilah, which closed in 1943, was also destroyed in a fire. The 1910 Travilah Town Hall at 12808 Glen Road still remains, where the crossroads community “held strawberry festivals and minstrel shows” before it became a general store, closed in 1967.⁶⁰⁴ Despite this loss, a few sites remain in Travilah that have links to the C&O Canal, although only one site remains as a testament of the historical Tobytown community. The following is a description of a few sites associated with the C&O Canal and/or African American history in the Travilah area and within the historic African American community of Tobytown that are accessible to the public to some degree (namely, the first three lie within public parklands).

1. *The DuFief Mill Site, Muddy Branch Park near Turkey Foot Road*

John Lawrence DuFief (1815-1877), a wealthy landowner from Georgetown, established a saw- and gristmill on the banks of the Muddy Branch by 1855. In February of that year, DuFief purchased 423 acres on the road leading to Seneca Mills, formerly the tract Hartley Hall, from Nathan Childs.⁶⁰⁵ The site included the four-story mill building, with a head-race aqueduct and millpond with a stone dam; a house for the miller; and a blacksmith shop. DuFief then constructed a roadway to connect the mill site with another assemblage of buildings down at the canal, near Pennyfield’s lock, including a wharf, a warehouse, and a barrel house. The mill produced between 10,000 and 12,000 barrels of flour per year and was influential in the development of this section of the county.⁶⁰⁶

The 1850 US census supplemental Slave Schedule enumerated DuFief in Washington’s Ward 3 (Georgetown) as an enslaver of a 40-year-old Black female and a 12-year-old Black boy. Ten years later, in 1860, the US census captured the household of a J.L. DuFief in Prince George’s County; it is possible that this is not the same John Lawrence DuFief who established a mill on Muddy Branch in Montgomery County, but as the surname is not common and the initials are the same, it is most likely that DuFief maintained a residence in Georgetown and plantations in both Prince George’s and Montgomery counties. At his Prince George’s County plantation, he enslaved 19 African Americans in 1860, from ages varying from one to 70. In 1863, Montgomery County tax assessment records noted that “John L. Du Fief” was a “retail dealer” in Darnestown who owned a stallion, two horse-drawn carriages, and a buggy, all of which were taxed for \$23.00.⁶⁰⁷

⁶⁰³ Walsh.

⁶⁰⁴ Kelly, 226.

⁶⁰⁵ Montgomery County Deed Book JHG-4, Pages 176-178 (Annapolis: Archives of Maryland Online, MDLANDREC, www.mdlandrec.net).

⁶⁰⁶ Kelly, 12, 217.

⁶⁰⁷ US Census, 1850 and 1860, Slave Schedules *Internal Revenue Assessment Lists for Maryland, 1862-1866* (Washington, DC: Series: M771; Roll: 18; Description: District 5; Annual Lists; 1863-1864; Record Group: 58, Records of the Internal Revenue Service, 1791–2006, National Archives and Records Administration, accessed via Ancestry.com).

DuFief was made captain of a company of the Darnestown volunteers but remained in the Travilah area, farming, through the Civil War.⁶⁰⁸ In February 1864, he was taken into custody as a Confederate sympathizer but was released a week later once he had taken a loyalty oath to the United States of America.⁶⁰⁹ By the 1870 US census, DuFief was living in the Rockville District and working as a farmer. His household included his wife, Catherine Amelia, and seven children as well as three white, male farm laborers and one Black domestic servant, [MARY JACKSON](#), a 12-year-old girl. Further research may elucidate the role of African Americans (free and enslaved) working in the DuFief household and mill complex.

Contact: [Montgomery Parks Information & Customer Service Office](#)

(301) 495-2595

Info@MontgomeryParks.org

2. *Rock Run Gold Mines, Watt's Branch Stream Valley Park, Travilah*

The Rock Run Gold Mines—which include the Sawyer, Eagle, Reserve, and Irma mines—constitute the small-scale, private enterprise of a Georgia-born miner, W.T.S. Kirk. After opening the mines in 1887, Kirk hand-quarried over \$20,000 in gold in his first year. Kirk's enterprise quickly folded, however, following litigation by local farmers whose cattle were poisoned by the mining operation's cyanide runoff.⁶¹⁰ The archaeological site in Watt's Branch Regional Park presents an opportunity for further research into and interpretation of the African American participation in the nineteenth-century gold rush and the industry's development in Maryland in the twentieth century.

Contact: [Montgomery Parks Information & Customer Service Office](#)

(301) 495-2595

Info@MontgomeryParks.org

3. *Pennyfield's Lock House (Lock 22), Pennyfield Lock Road, CHOH*

Named for the lockkeeper George Pennyfield, the lock house at Lock 22 was completed in 1831. The one-and-one-half-story, stone house atop a full basement features door and window lintels and sills of Seneca red sandstone. The Pennyfield family lived in a two-story frame house inland from the canal, built in 1879. In the 1880s, it was a destination for President Grover Cleveland, who came to fish in the canal and river. A small hamlet developed around the Pennyfield Lock in the latter half of the nineteenth century. John L. DuFief, a mill owner, built a wharf and warehouses by the lock to support his gristmilling business, and a general store was opened that supported the nearby residents of Tobytown.⁶¹¹

The Pennyfield surname has a long history in Montgomery County. Thomas Pennyfield was enumerated in the Medley District (Election District No. 3) of Montgomery County in the 1820 US census as the head of a 12-person household that did not include any enslaved persons. By the

⁶⁰⁸ Kelly, 217.

⁶⁰⁹ *War Department Collection of Confederate Records* (Washington, DC: NARA film publication #M598; Record Group: War Department Collection of Confederate Records; Record Group Number: 109, National Archive and Records Administration, accessed via Ancestry.com).

⁶¹⁰ Kelly, 20, 223.

⁶¹¹ Kelly, 214, 217, 221.

time the 1850 US census was taken, Thomas was a 53-year-old “overseer” in Medleys. In 1840, Levi Pennyfield was enumerated in the Rockville District (Election District No. 4) as the head of a seven-person household, again, without any enslaved persons or free Black laborers. The 1850 US census enumerated Levi (aged 44 years) with his wife and 10 children as a farmer. The 1900 census enumerated the two households of George and Charles Pennyfield right before the Black residents of Tobytown. Given the Pennyfields’ proximity to Tobytown and the fact that the Lock 22 area held a general store that supported Tobytown residents, there is likely more to be discovered about the relationship between the two communities.

Contact: [CHOH, National Park Service](#)
142 W. Potomac St.
Williamsport, MD 21795
(301) 739-4200
CHOH_Information@nps.gov

4. *Tobytown Cemetery, 12649 Tobytown Drive, Potomac, Maryland*

The only site in this portion of the study area that has direct ties to the local African American community is the Tobytown Cemetery, south of River Road and west of the Pennyfield Lock Road. It is all that remains of historical Tobytown, which was redeveloped between 1967 and 1972. The late nineteenth- and twentieth-century graveyard is a rectangular area surrounded by chain-link fencing and located in the rear of houses facing a residential drive. The cemetery holds approximately 25 red-sandstone head- and footstones, most unmarked. These commemorate several African Americans who lived in this Black kinship-based community for generations, including Charles Davis (died 1914) and William Davis, brother of Henson Davis. The Montgomery County Housing Opportunities Commission owns the townhouse site as well as the cemetery, which is maintained by the remaining residents of Tobytown, descendants of its founding families.⁶¹²

Contact: [Housing Opportunities Commission of Montgomery County](#)
10400 Detrick Avenue
Kensington, MD 20895
(240) 627-9400
help@hocmc.org

⁶¹² Cavicchi; Kelly, 221.

C. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the vicinity of Travilah or in the African American community of Tobytown, very little of the historical built fabric directly linked to African Americans associated with the canal exists today. Scholarship on African American individuals in this area is also slim, and only broad generalizations can be made about how African Americans used the canal or how their communities interacted with the river. More in-depth research into individual families in Tobytown is warranted. Further avenues of study include the following.

1. Researching specific African American families in Travilah from the 1870s through the 1940s, with a focus on agricultural pursuits and farm life in the area
2. Collecting oral histories from present-day Tobytown residents and ancestors of the founding families, to gain a more thorough understanding of living conditions and lifeways in historical Tobytown and to ascertain whether the canal provided direct economic opportunities to the residents therein
3. Researching how Pennyfield's Lock and the store there benefited the Tobytown residents

SECTION III

IX. CONCLUSION

For the majority if not entirety of its history as a commercial waterway, the C&O Canal was, fundamentally, a working, industrial landscape. As such, it was noxious, fraught with the carcasses of dead and discarded mules and lined with intermittent animal hospitals and pens to treat and keep the mules and horses that tugged canal boats. It bred mosquitoes, was a haven for water snakes, and must have been humid in the DC area's hot summers. In Georgetown, it was industrialized, where the fisheries, mills, foundries, and factories were located. In Montgomery County, the stretch in the study area was largely undeveloped and isolated; besides the lockkeepers, only a few other businesses (mostly groceries but including some taverns) were built adjacent to the canal. Most businesses and communities were sited on Conduit or River roads. The historical record suggests that at least parts of the canal, for some period of time, were rather unsavory and desolate.

The rural African American communities and enclaves in Montgomery County that were included in this narrative were centered on roads rather than the canal. Tobytown, at the western end of the study area, and Graysville, at the eastern end, were nucleated on River Road, the arbitrary boundary established for the study area's northern extreme to set defined parameters for this study. Brickyard, Rock Spring, and African American enclaves in Brookmont and Glen Echo Heights were either centered around or closest to Conduit Road. Gibson Grove was centered on Seven Locks Road between Conduit and River roads. St. Phillips Hill coalesced around Chain Bridge Road north of Conduit Road. Roadways prove to be the defining landscape feature that promulgated communities, not the canal. If African Americans created communities on Conduit or River roads close to the canal during the second half of the nineteenth century, it has to be assumed that was because the bottomlands were relatively inexpensive and available to them, in contrast to other areas where the real estate would have been considered prime.

One starting hypothesis to this study is that there may have been a causal (or at least symbiotic) relationship between the canal and the formation of late nineteenth-century African American communities near it. The evidence outlined in this narrative fails to substantiate that theory. Certainly, some African Americans who lived in the study area did work for the canal or in industries related to or which used the canal. The canal and its subsidiary businesses certainly proved to be sources of employment for some African Americans. But most Black men who lived in the Montgomery County portion of the study area continued to farm or work in landscaping, construction, or truck driving well into the twentieth century. In Georgetown, with its adjacency to the capital city, occupational options were diverse. Many of Georgetown's African American residents were employed by the long-standing fishing industry on the Potomac River or in other industries, and so settled (and formed communities) in locations close to the canal and river. But the largest African American community in Georgetown was Herring Hill, in the northeast corner of the city, quite removed from the canal and its squalid-sounding industrialized landscape.

The canal's construction from 1828 to 1850 did engender small, temporary shantytowns for the canal workers, but these did not evolve into permanent settlements in the study area. The African American communities that were included in this report have different origin stories, but none of them was founded *because of the canal*. African Americans have lived in Georgetown from its inception in the 1750s. They lived in several areas throughout the city, and neighborhoods organically grew as the population increased. African American neighborhoods arose far from the river, including Brinetown, Volta Place, and Bell's Court west of Wisconsin Avenue and Herring Hill and Poplar Alley east of Wisconsin Avenue. These areas were settled because Georgetown

spread northward slowly, and these lands were available for settlement as late as the 1860s. In contrast, neighborhoods such as Boston, Cherry Hill/Grace Street, and Potomac Street arose south of M Street, near the city market, and close to the river because of the fishing industry. In the case of Sugar Hill (which may have been the temporary name for a neighborhood like Boston), the canal's construction and financial success served to gentrify and displace the antebellum, mixed-race residents there. **More research into this particular neighborhood and its displacement is warranted.**

St. Phillips Hill is thought to be a continuation of the Battery Kemble contraband camp, yet analysis of historical data suggests that St. Phillips Hill arose out of nothing more than opportunity. If W.A.T. Maddox and other plantation owners like him had not been bankrupted by the Civil War, they likely would not have subdivided their land and sold it at affordable prices. At least two of the early residents of the Chain Bridge Road area (which later became known as St. Phillips Hill), John Cephus and Thomas Blackwell, were not self-liberators known to have been at Battery Kemble. Other scholars have suggested that Cephus was enslaved on a local plantation; he was, like many examples of African American men and women peppered throughout this narrative, a local, likely with generational and familial ties to the area and merely settled in place after emancipation. Blackwell's family did migrate from Virginia either during or after the Civil War, but they were settled in a home of their own in northeast DC by 1870. The eldest son, recently married, took advantage of Maddox's land sales to move out into the country and buy a plot of his own. The historical evidence suggests that the contraband camps in the outskirts of DC were merely holding or staging areas. Likely, self-liberators who found refuge in western fortifications (like Fort Reno) and eastern fortifications (like Fort Carroll) were transferred eventually to larger camps closer to the city center (such as Camp Brightwood) or to farms and resettlement villages in northern Virginia (like the Freedman's Village in Arlington). DC's post-emancipation communities Barry Farms and Reno City were subdivision developments in which self-liberators could purchase lots; they were founded in areas where forts had been built, manned for four years, then abandoned because that land was considered wasted by their prewar owners and sold off. Yet no evidence found to date has directly tied the inhabitants of places like Reno City and St. Phillips Hill to individual self-liberators who took refuge at their corresponding military installations. **Intensive genealogical work would have to be undertaken to tie known individuals who resided in these neighborhoods during the Reconstruction era with particular contraband camps, and likely that evidence does not exist.**

A 1937 Works Progress Administration guidebook of the Washington, DC, area claimed that the African American community of Graysville in Montgomery County stemmed from an antebellum plantation's enslaved population. More current scholarship suggests that (as is the case with almost all of the rural, Montgomery County African American communities in this study) white landowners sold land to local African American men and women following the war. Often, these people had been enslaved by the same (or neighboring) white landowners before the Civil War. Such is the case with Gibson Grove-Cabin John. Many of the original residents of Gibson Grove on Seven Locks Road were freedpeople from the area. John D.W. Moore sold parcels of his plantation holdings to 10 African American families following the war, many of whom had been enslaved by either Moore or his neighbor, Joseph Gustavus White. The simplest explanation is that African Americans always had lived on plantations scattered throughout Montgomery County, Maryland, and Washington, DC, and that a few concentrated Black households organically expanded into cohesive African American communities following emancipation. Brickyard is an outlier in this study. It did not really emerge until the 1880s, and likely it was settled by workers

on the Washington Aqueduct's Great Falls dam expansion. The temporality of that work may be why Cropley/Brickyard has not garnered much scholarly attention to date and why so little is known about it; it may have never emerged as an African American community with a cohesive identity but merely as an enclave of mixed-race workers, although it did have a school and two churches in its heyday. **More research into the Brickyard community, including its origins, its inhabitants, and its disintegration, is warranted.**

Rock Spring, Brookmont, and Glen Echo Heights were largely settled after the Reconstruction era ended. They were concentrations of African Americans who worked in the service industries, as domestics, groundskeepers, laundresses, and golf caddies, for the hotels, resorts, and country clubs that arose in this part of the county in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. There was also a lot of movement between these enclaves and larger African American settlements, such as Gibson Grove to the west and Graysville to the northeast. Recent scholarship underscores the mobility and connections between several African American communities in this report. Rotenstein has illustrated the connections between members of the Reno City community in DC with the Graysville community as well as with the Gibson Grove community in Montgomery County. A benevolent organization, the Order of Moses, ties all three together. **Future research into the frequent mobility of African Americans between these communities and into individual community members' civic and marital ties to one another likely will prove that, instead of thinking of these communities as isolated, nuclear settlements, they were part of a much larger network of a regional African American community system.**

Tobytown received nationwide attention in the late 1960s and early 1970s, during the height of the Civil Rights movement (coupled with a period in urban planning history that favored urban renewal practices). It can be considered the model example of how an isolated and disadvantaged community of African Americans was severed from its land ownership. The history of Tobytown is complex and requires an objective review of the trajectory of post-emancipation, rural, African American communities as a typology and a discourse on how their isolation became problematic over time. These rural enclaves emerged as self-sufficient and independent communities in the Reconstruction era; they positively signaled African Americans' recently won freedoms and ability to own land and accumulate wealth. If self-segregation was a conscious choice, it was intended as a salve and a form of self-protection against a hostile white hegemony. But as the nineteenth century progressed, and the freedoms and rights won by African Americans during the Reconstruction era were gradually eroded, that isolation became imposed from that same white hegemony. Racial covenants (in effect in Montgomery County from 1905 through the 1960s), urban planning practices (such as redlining and the refusal to provide basic municipal services), inchoate poverty (fostered, in part, by banks and insurance lenders' refusal to provide loans and low-rate mortgages), and land developers' chicanery systematically eroded African Americans' freedom of mobility and wealth accumulation through property ownership. African Americans were literally hemmed in by white subdivisions in which they were barred admittance except as live-in domestic servants by restrictive covenants. Their nineteenth-century communities were denied access to municipal water, electricity, and trash services by local planning authorities, making their aged built environments pockets of poverty. And the segregation and prejudicial practices rife in all modes of life during the Jim Crow era kept the inhabitants of these communities in menial, low-paying jobs and with little to no access to education. Too often research for this report uncovered the story of an individual Black man or woman losing his or her property to white landowners and developers because of failure to pay minimal property taxes, because the title to

the land was never filed in local courthouses, from eminent domain, or because the Black property owners did not understand or could not read the instruments that eventually robbed them of their inherited properties.

One such example was published in Elizabeth Kytly's 1976 book, *Time Was: A Cabin John Memory Book: Interviews with 18 Old-Timers*. Kytly interviewed Lena Brown, then 94 years old, whose inherited family land was sold to the US Navy in 1940 for the construction of the Carver Road housing. The housing was meant for Black employees of the newly built David Taylor Model Basin in Carderock, but

before the government purchase, there had been an attempt made on Miss Lena's property. She had fallen on hard days and was in such financial distress that she was unable to pay her taxes. Although some would suggest that it is morally wrong, it is, as is common knowledge, entirely legal to "buy for taxes." It is next to impossible to explain the applicable law except in terms of individual cases, because specifics change frequently even in the same locality. The law sets up conditions by which property "sold" for taxes can be redeemed if the original owner can meet them. If.

In the economic climate of the thirties and, given Miss Lena's low earning power even in the best of times, the chances of her becoming able to redeem her property were, in Eliza Doolittle's immortal words, "not bloody likely."

And Miss Lena's was not a rare case. Another old-timer can recall several individuals who were so quick to profit by the misfortune of others, who were such habitual buyers-for-taxes, that they were known as "tax sharks." This kind of situation exemplifies the observation made by Brendan Gill during the depression. "It has to be remembered," he wrote later, "that depressions provide many advantages for the rich;...on every hand the rich were gathering up bargains they didn't need and the poor were starving."

Miss Lena wasn't "starving," but she came close to losing her property to a tax shark. Detail of the incident have dimmer in her mind now, and she can't recount exactly how she and her lawyer managed to hold on to her property, but hold on she did. Of course when the government wanted her four and a half acres later, it was no contest. But the government paid her and her half-brothers a fair price. And although Miss Lena sometimes still mourns the changed face of her old home place, it's not the government but the earlier would-be "buyer" that she remembers bitterly.⁶¹³

In addition to individual and personal histories of property loss, macro-scale market forces effectively displaced African Americans in the study area in the twentieth century. The population boom in DC and its surrounding area after two world wars and the growth of the federal government in the same period led to a supply-demand issue in which land became increasingly scarce and therefore more valuable. Suburbanization and residential development only intensified this trend. African Americans who had been living in these communities for generations were priced out and forced to seek opportunities and living situations elsewhere. Gentrification upended Sugar Hill, in Georgetown, in the 1850s and eventually affected all of the African American communities in this study. It is notable, however, that the particular time period of 1940 or the 1940s is cited by many as the moment when this sea change first affected life in these particular Black communities.

⁶¹³ Kytly, 2.

Generally, 1940 is given as a vague end date to the cohesion of the predominantly Black enclaves in DC, Reno City, and St. Phillips Hill. In writing about Tobytown in March 1965, *Washington Post* journalist Jesse W. Lewis, Jr. stated that “1941 [was] commonly picked as the year the curtain started to descend on Toby Town’s ‘good old days.’” By then, residential suburbanization had so encroached on former agricultural lands in Montgomery County that being a farm laborer—a long-standing occupation for Black men in the region—was no longer viable. The year 1940 was also the year that Brown’s Gibson Grove property was purchased by the federal government and redeveloped. But, importantly, it was also the year that the NPS opened the C&O Canal as public parkland. Kytte also interviewed Cabin John resident Ralph Springmann in 1976, who painted a very different picture of the canal landscape in the 1920s and 1930s (*emphasis added*):

There was nothing out here but the lock houses and a lot of squatters along the canal. There were all kinds of shacks and things like that; they even had streetcars. They would get abandoned streetcars that were for sale, and they’d bring them out here and put them on piles and live in them. Some of the houses were kept very nicely; *but then the government came along and bought the canal, they tore down all those places.*

I think the canal was prettier then than now. There was more vegetation. There were quite a few little houses between here and Washington, and they all had gardens. And there were wild flowers – Jack in the Pulpit, thousands of ferns growing up and down the canal in the woods, and there was arbutus. And violets! My goodness, you could pick a bunch of violets almost anywhere, just growing wild along the canal. There was a big grove of pawpaw trees right down past Cabin John Creek, and I used to go down every year after I first came out here, and in the fall pick the pawpaws. *When the canal got very popular, after the government took it over, people took them in the summer when they were green and no good; and so when fall came there was none left. The trees may still be along the canal, but the last few times I went out to look for them there was no fruit.*⁶¹⁴

Perhaps one way the CHOH administration might consider “returning” the canal landscape back to its historical appearance is by purposely making parts of it “wild” again by intentionally planting native wildflowers and fruit- and nut-bearing vines and trees. Per Springmann’s quotation, education on pawpaws may be necessary for today’s public.

What role did the NPS play in the gentrification of the lands adjacent to the C&O Canal? Although the canal bottomlands functioned as a commercial waterway and had been settled sparsely over the century (presumably because of the industrialized nature of the landscape), there was residential housing on the canal from the interwar years that the NPS demolished as part of its master plan to convert the area into a picturesque parkland. As parkland, the canal shifted from a potential eyesore to an amenity; presumably, property values of land near the new park would have risen, resulting in an increase in property taxes and market demand for such suddenly prime real estate. **If the “curtain started to descend” on Tobytown, Cabin John, and other African American enclaves near the canal in the early 1940s, how much is the NPS’s success in creating a beloved public park responsible?**

The 1940s were only the first in a combination punch that knocked out these local African American communities. The death knell truly occurred in the 1960s. Kytte’s interviewed Cabin John residents “often brought-up the generally lamented street car, discontinued around 1960” as

⁶¹⁴ Kytte, 23.

a sign of the scourge of modern times.⁶¹⁵ Glen Echo was closed and converted (again by the NPS) into a public parkland in this period. Tobytown was lost (except for vestiges of the cemetery) in urban renewal in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The last vestiges of Brickyard were eradicated and several historical properties in Gibson Grove were lost to highway expansion in the 1960s; all that remains in Gibson Grove is its cemetery and a church no longer in use. All that remains of the Graysville community is the site of an historical cemetery, buried under asphalt surface parking ca. 1968. The Chain Bridge Road-St. Phillips Hill community has a historical school property and a historical cemetery, both privately owned. Georgetown, by nature of its urbanity, has several preserved sites and buildings relating to its African American heritage (primarily a large cemetery and several churches), but just as many sites and buildings have been lost over the years. The thread that runs across all of the individual narratives of the post-emancipation African American communities here is *loss by redevelopment*. **Perhaps the NPS could partner with property owners and African American heritage organizations (outlined through this report) to explore ways in which they can support or help preserve the few sites and buildings that are left and to bring awareness of, educate the wider public on, and interpret those vestiges.**

Although the built material of these historic African American communities largely has been lost to us over time, the people who comprised these communities have not. Residents of these communities and their descendants (either through direct genealogy or broader affiliation) continue to reside in the great DC metropolitan area. There has been recent activism in preserving not only physical sites (such as the cemeteries in Gibson Grove and Mount Zion) but the collective memories – the intangible culture and history – once so closely affiliated with historic spaces that have since been lost. Websites, photographs, ephemera, oral histories, and reports like this one strive to recognize and record those histories. In addition to its efforts concerning the remaining sites and buildings, **the NPS could partner with African American heritage organizations (outlined through this report) and local repositories to explore ways in which they can support or help preserve the intangible aspects of the communities that survive today.**

⁶¹⁵ Kytte, 31.

X. APPENDIX A: A Brief History of the C&O Canal and National Park

When the C&O Canal was first conceived in 1822, waterways provided the fastest and securest means of transportation in the country. Its better-known contemporary, the Erie Canal (constructed between 1817 and 1825), was considered a modern marvel and an engineering feat that would enrich New York by solidifying its standing in international trade. Similar visions were held by Virginians and Marylanders for the Chesapeake region in prior decades, and the C&O had a local antecedent: in 1785, George Washington incorporated the Patowmack Company. Interested in both economic growth and western expansion, Washington dreamt of connecting the Chesapeake Bay to the Ohio River Valley by improving the navigation on the Potomac River above the fall line.⁶¹⁶

Constructed over 17 years, the Patowmack Company was a system of discontinuous improvements and works on the Potomac River that included building water sluices and skirting locks to bypass five falls above Georgetown: Little Falls, Great Falls, Seneca Falls, Payne's Falls, and the falls around Harpers Ferry. Five locks were constructed on the Virginia side of the river and three or four on the Maryland side. The system proved efficient for downstream traffic but difficult for poling upstream, and the Patowmack Company was bankrupt by 1828—the same year the C&O Canal Company, chartered in 1825, began constructing a contiguous canal system on the Maryland side of the Potomac River from Georgetown to Cumberland. (The Patowmack Company works at Great Falls were used until 1830, however.) The C&O Canal Company had acquired the rights to the Patowmack Company's infrastructure; they would incorporate and improve upon the locks and the feeder at Little Falls built previously but build a separate, linear canal system running parallel to the river on the Maryland side. Completed in 1850, the C&O Canal eventually extended 184.5 miles to encompass bridges, a tunnel, seven dams, 11 stone aqueducts, myriad culverts, and 74 lift locks that would accommodate grade changes between Georgetown to Cumberland, wherein the elevation rose 605 feet.⁶¹⁷

By 1831, the C&O Canal was complete from Georgetown to Little Falls (Lock 5) and the period of commercial navigation had begun. Boats laden with shipments of flour, grain, masonry, and whiskey floated to the markets in Georgetown.⁶¹⁸ Within two years, the terminus in Georgetown was continued 1.5 miles eastward to meet the Washington City Canal (1815-1855), which connected the Eastern Branch (now Anacostia) and Potomac rivers via Tiber Creek. Meant as a conduit for the freight of goods, the canal served to transport “coal, agricultural products, lumber, and building stone” downriver, to eastern seaports, while “lesser westward cargoes included fish, salt, fertilizer, and iron ore.”⁶¹⁹ The canal also carried mail, passengers, and tourists from the 1830s on. Except for a few years, however, the C&O Canal Company operated at a loss.

The “golden years” of the C&O Canal Company followed the Civil War and a period of neglect. The peak year for the company's finances was 1875, when nearly one million tons of goods were

⁶¹⁶ National Park Service, “The Patowmack Canal,” Great Falls Park, Virginia [website] (last updated 19 October 2020, accessed 16 September 2021, <https://www.nps.gov/grfa/learn/historyculture/canal.htm>).

⁶¹⁷ Barry Mackintosh, *C&O Canal: The Making of a Park* (Washington, DC: History Division, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, 1991), 1; Philip S. Romigh and Barry Mackintosh, “Chesapeake and Ohio Canal” Washington, District of Columbia, Montgomery County, Frederick County, Allegany County, and Washington County, Maryland, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (Washington, DC: US Department of Interior, National Park Service, 1979, accessed 19 October 2021, <https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/GetAsset/f89d868a-a1d4-4549-a89a-9283c7312fde>), Section 8.

⁶¹⁸ Romigh and Mackintosh, Section 8.

⁶¹⁹ Mackintosh, 2.

transported on the canal. Fortunes faded quickly, however, after the B&O Railroad poached the canal's lucrative coal-hauling business. The canal company began its gradual decline in 1889, when the same storms that caused the catastrophic Johnstown Flood affected the Potomac's flow and greatly damaged the canal's infrastructure. The following year, unable to meet the costs of repair, the C&O Canal Company went into receivership. Its competitor, the B&O Railroad, had acquired the majority shares in the C&O Canal Company's stock options by 1878 and played a dominant role in the company's future.

The B&O's board, appointed trustees of the C&O Canal Company by the district courts after the canal company went into receivership, financed the restoration of the damaged locks and reopened the canal in September 1891. But an expanding network of railroads in the region had been siphoning business off the canal for decades, and the golden days of transporting freight by water were past. Aware of the declining fortunes of the canal, politicians and park advocates reimagined the canal system as a potential public park or scenic amenity. The idea for a parkland using and adjacent to the C&O Canal has its genesis with the 1901 McMillan Commission's plan, *The Improvement of the Park System of the District of Columbia*, submitted to Congress with the aim of beautifying the nation's capital. Despite the fact that the canal was still open to commercial freight in 1901, advocates of the plan suggested building a riverside drive along the water's edge, to be called "Potomac Drive," that would offer leisure drivers "picturesque views of the falls":⁶²⁰

The primary carriage drive would occupy the most advantageous location, carefully fitted into the hillside to present an appealing mixture of expansive views and intimate woodland scenery. At the base of the escarpment, the historic Chesapeake and Ohio Canal formed a picturesque complement to the natural scenery while affording opportunities for boating, both in private canoes and aboard the traditional canal boats that plied the economically moribund waterway. Recognizing that the canal's commercial prospects were bleak, the commission urged its preservation as a scenic, historic, and recreational resource. The commission's concern for maintaining the canal's "primitive character" and ensuring that future generations would be able to enjoy "the slow, old-fashioned movement of the boats and of the people on this ancient waterway" revealed the nascent historic preservation ethic that found more explicit expression in the drive to protect the ring of Civil War forts surrounding the city.⁶²¹

Although a section of such a road would be built three decades later,⁶²² the federal government did not act on this suggestion or other suggestions involving the public use of the canal for another quarter century.

The death knell for commercial navigation on the canal was rung with the flood of 14 May 1924. Following that devastation, the B&O Railroad paid for the repair of the canal from Lock 5 (Little Falls) to Georgetown because that stretch remained profitable powering hydraulic mills, but it

⁶²⁰ Mackintosh, 5.

⁶²¹ US Congress, Senate Committee on the District of Columbia, *The Improvement of the Park System of the District of Columbia*, Senate Report No. 166, 57th Cong. 1st sess. (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1902), 94-95, quoted in Timothy Davis, "Beyond the Mall: The Senate Park Commission's Plans for Washington's Park System," in *Designing the Nation's Capital: the 1901 Plan for Washington, D.C.*, Sue Kohler and Pamela Scott, eds. (Washington, DC: US Commission of the Fine Arts, 2006, accessed 17 September 2021, https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/ncr/designing-capital/sec4.html#27).

⁶²² Clara Barton Parkway, enabled by act of Congress in 1930 and renamed in 1989, is a 6.8-mile stretch of scenic byway on the Maryland shores of the Potomac from the Chain Bridge in Washington, DC to Carderock, Maryland. It is part of the George Washington Memorial Parkway system that flanks the Potomac River.

neglected and effectively closed the residual 180 miles. The C&O Canal Company remained in receivership and under the influence of the B&O's board until 1938, when the canal lands were acquired by the federal government.⁶²³

Eventually, the idea for a public parkland that would include the canal and towpath was revived. Starting in December 1928, Representative Louis C. Cramton of Michigan introduced new legislation for the creation of a canal park and parkway. By the time the act was passed by both houses of Congress and signed into law by President Hoover, on 29 May 1930, the Capper-Cramton Act included ownership of that portion of the canal from Georgetown (Tide Lock, or Lock 0) to Point of Rocks, Maryland (Lock 29). Although the act was passed, no funds were appropriated for the endeavor; action was delayed further by the nation's plunge into the Great Depression, the worst economic recession America had yet seen.⁶²⁴ The next decade also witnessed the complicated effort on the part of the Department of Interior, the bureau of the federal government that would administer the park, to ascertain what persons or entity had legal ownership of the canal lands and infrastructure. The B&O Railroad had been awarded receivership of the C&O Canal Company, not ownership, yet that had not dissuaded the railroad from attempting to sell the canal in 1936. The Department of the Interior was unable to begin purchasing the land until 28 September 1938.⁶²⁵

At that time, two companies in Georgetown had been leasing water rights from the canal to power their hydraulic mills since 1887: the Wilkins-Rogers Milling Company and the District of Columbia Paper Mills. A total of nine leases between the two companies accounted for annual revenue of over \$23,000, which now belonged to the Department of the Interior. The NPS, stewards of the new C&O Canal Recreational Waterway, continued their relationship with these companies, collecting revenue for the Treasury Department, into the 1960s.⁶²⁶

As with many national and state parks during the 1930s and 1940s, construction work for the park was undertaken by the CCC, the federal works program initiated in President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal program. The first initiative, labeled Federal Project 712, rehabilitated that portion of the canal infrastructure from Georgetown to Seneca, Maryland, while developing recreational features for the canal's new role as a public park. Between June 1938 and March 1942, two camps of the CCC repaired dikes and timber gates at 23 locks, rebuilt masonry walls, constructed new retaining walls and dams below Great Falls, and rehabilitated a few chosen lockhouses. Working with the Army Corps of Engineers, new flood control measures were implemented at the Foundry Branch spillway, the canal channel was cleared, and portions of the damaged towpath replaced. At the same time, they put in place new water and sewer systems for public use, provided picnic areas, paved parking areas, and built concessions at Great Falls. Others recorded the park's historical structures with architectural drawings and photographs, collected historical data and oral interviews, and conducted boundary surveys.

Early on, the NPS established a fishing program as a recreational activity while planning additional recreational parks at Georgetown, Carderock, and Great Falls. By the fall of 1940, visitors were canoeing along the lower portion of the canal or hiking and biking on the adjacent towpath. A severe flood in 1942 reversed much of the progress the CCC had made on the canal south of

⁶²³ Mackintosh, 2.

⁶²⁴ Mackintosh, 6-8.

⁶²⁵ Mackintosh, 17-18.

⁶²⁶ Mackintosh, 22.

Seneca. At that point, America's entry in World War II was underway, and interest in and funds for public projects were put on hold.⁶²⁷

After the war, the NPS developed a parkway scheme that would convert the towpath into a vehicular drive that would serve recreational users as well as local traffic between Great Falls and Cumberland, Maryland. Considered controversial and attracting more detractors than proponents, the proposal was quelled by conservationists in 1954. This did not affect the half-century-long plans to create a system of roads flanking the Potomac River south of Great Falls, the George Washington Memorial Parkway, however. In Maryland, the portion that extended from the Chain Bridge in the District of Columbia to Conduit Road (now MacArthur Boulevard) in Carderock, Maryland (called the Clara Barton Parkway after 1989) was completed in 1965. The roadway's impact on the canal landscape was severe: "Visually and audibly, the road impinges on the canal for most of its length."⁶²⁸ The 1853 wood-frame house at Lock 5, which the NPS had rehabilitated in 1939, was razed in 1957, and the oldest lockhouse then standing, at Lock 7, narrowly missed demolition thanks to an engineering feat that cantilevered the westbound roadbed over the eastbound lanes at the Glen Echo bluff. Furthermore, the stone lockhouse at Lock 13 was lost to the construction of the Capital Beltway over the Potomac River at Cabin John, Maryland, in 1961.⁶²⁹

Before leaving office in January 1961, President Dwight D. Eisenhower dedicated that portion of the canal below Seneca as a National Monument. That same year, the C&O Canal was listed in the National Register of Historic Places and a national historical park was formed, stretching from Seneca to Georgetown.⁶³⁰ The integrity of the canal, especially the undesignated portion above Seneca, was threatened by a 1967 proposal known as the Potomac National River plan, supported by Interior Secretary Stewart Udall and President Lyndon B. Johnson. A bill to create the C&O National Historical Park (CHOH) and preserve the entire, original configuration of the canal and its towpath was not legislated until 8 January 1971, after over 16 years of lobbying efforts by its proponents.⁶³¹

⁶²⁷ Mackintosh, 31, 35, 38, 43, 49.

⁶²⁸ Mackintosh, 80.

⁶²⁹ Mackintosh, 49-57, 65, 76-80.

⁶³⁰ Clare Lise Kelly, "Places from the Past: The Tradition of Gardez Bien in Montgomery County, Maryland," 10th Anniversary Edition (Silver Spring, MD: Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, 2011, accessed 9 November 2021, https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Places-from-the-Past-web_with_cover.pdf), 153.

⁶³¹ Carrie Johnson, "Across the Berm: Senator Charles McCurdy Mathias, Jr.," *Along the Towpath*. 42, no. 1 (March 2010):7-8.

XI. APPENDIX B: C&O Canal Infrastructure Built 1828-1838, First 20 Miles

MILE	NAME	YEAR(S)	DESCRIPTION
0.00	Tide Lock (Lock 0)	1831	Included a dam, wastegate, and earthen mole
0.01	Rock Creek Basin	-	Boat basin encompassing 8.5 acres
0.35	Beginning of towpath on berm	-	Extended from Lock 1 to the Potomac Aqueduct
0.38	Lock No. 1, Georgetown	1830	15-foot wide, 8-foot lift
0.41	Side Pond and Boat Basin	-	Boat basin 100x46 feet
0.42	29th Street Bridge over Lock 2	1830s	Originally a low-arched stone bridge
0.42	Lock No. 2, Georgetown	1830	15-foot wide, 8-foot lift; built of Aquia Creek freestone
0.49	Lock No. 3, Georgetown	1830	15-foot wide, 8-foot lift; built of Aquia Creek freestone
0.49	30th Street Bridge over Lock 3	ca. 1830	Originally a low-arched stone bridge
0.54	Lock No. 4, Georgetown	1830	15-foot wide, 8-foot lift; built of Aquia Creek freestone
0.54	Bridge over Lock 4	1831	Originally a low-arched stone bridge
0.57	Jefferson Street Bridge	1830	Originally a low-arched stone bridge
0.59	31st (Congress) Street Bridge	1830	Originally a low-arched stone bridge
0.68	Wisconsin Avenue Bridge	1831	54-foot-wide span; built of Aquia Creek freestone
0.80	Potomac Street Bridge	-	Originally wood bridge
0.84	33rd Street Footbridge	1831	Originally wood bridge
0.84	34th Street Bridge	-	Originally wood bridge. Towpath crossed canal from berm to riverside until 1856
1.07	Potomac Aqueduct	1833-1843	Built to carry canal traffic across the river to Alexandria, Virginia; converted to a bridge during the Civil War
1.48	Foundry Branch Road Culvert	ca. 1830	Stone-faced, 22-foot-span, outflow culvert with a 10-foot rise
1.51	Spillway and Footbridge at Foxhall Road	ca. 1835	Originally wooden bridge; included two stone waste weirs
3.18	Battery Kemble Culvert	ca. 1830	6-foot-wide, stone culvert with 3-foot-radius barrel
3.21	Road Culvert at Fletcher's	ca. 1830	14-foot-wide, stone, 9.5-foot-rise arch
3.23	Waste weir No. 3	-	Originally stone with wicket gates
3.86	Chain Bridge Spillway No. 2	ca. 1830	354-feet long, longest in canal system; originally stone-faced
4.17	Chain Bridge extension	ca. 1830	Originally wooden bridge spanning canal and towpath to approach ca. 1808 Chain Bridge
5.00	Inlet Gates, Little Falls Skirting Channel and Feeder Canal	1832	Incorporated the ca. 1800 Patowmack bypass
5.02	Lock No. 5	1830	8-foot lift; Aquia Creek freestone
5.40	Lock No. 6	1830	8-foot lift; originally sandstone and granite rubble. Included bypass flume, dry-laid stone ditch on berm side of canal
5.40	Lock No. 6 Lockhouse	1830; rebuilt 1848	Stone house with full basement located on a manmade island
5.64	Dam No. 1 at Little Falls	1832	Extended to Virginia shoreline to divert water to the canal
5.74	Culvert No. 2	1830	Stone headwall with 8-foot and 12-foot, angled wing walls, 6-foot-span arch
7.00	Lock No. 7	1830	Granite and Aquia Creek freestone. Includes bypass flume
7.00	Lock No. 7 Lockhouse	1829	Stone house on man-made island

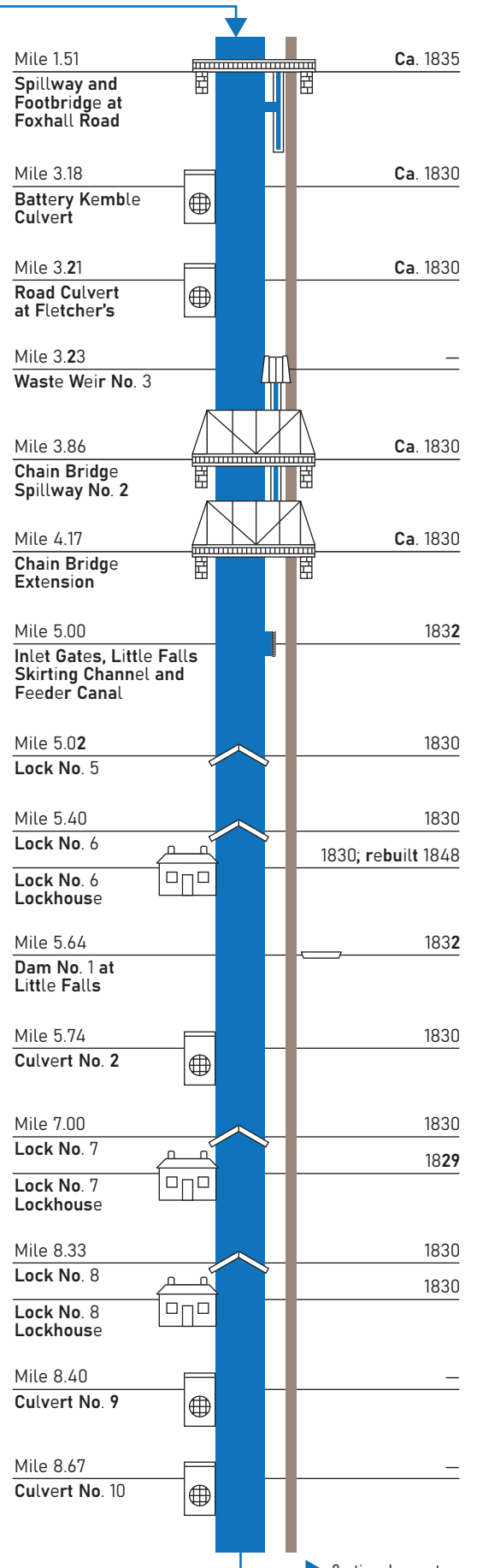
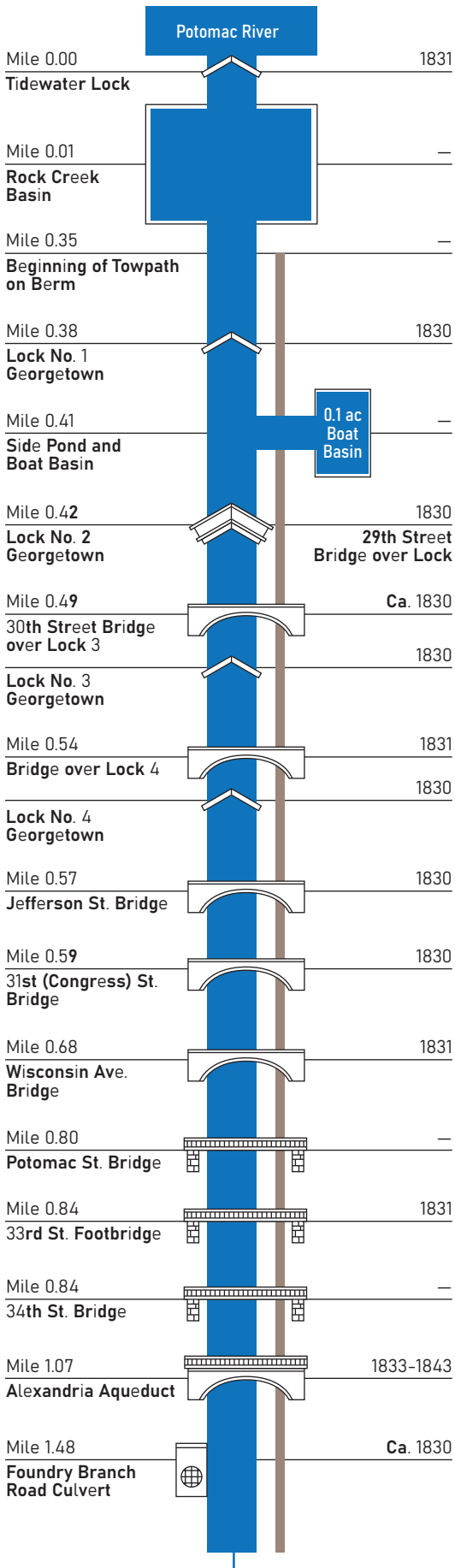
MILE	NAME	YEAR(S)	DESCRIPTION
8.33	Lock No. 8	1830	8-foot lift; Seneca red sandstone; 100-foot-wide boat basin adjacent. Includes bypass flume
8.33	Lock No. 8 Lockhouse	1830	Stone house set 60 feet from berm.
8.40	Culvert No. 9	-	4-foot wide with a 2-foot diameter arch ring; granite
8.67	Culvert No. 10	-	6-foot wide with a 3-foot diameter arch ring; granite
8.70	Lock No. 9	1830	Aquia Creek freestone coping. Includes bypass flume built at same time
8.77	Lock No. 10 Lockhouse	1830	Stone house with full basement
8.79	Lock No. 10	1828-1830	8-foot lift; granite. Includes bypass flume
8.93	Rock Run Culvert	1830	152-foot long, with 12.5-foot-wide barrel arch; gray and red sandstone
8.97	Lock No. 11	1830	8-foot lift; rubble granite and Seneca freestone. Includes bypass flume
8.97	Lock No. 11 Lockhouse	1830	Stone house with full basement set 42-feet from towpath
9.29	Lock No. 12	1830	8-foot lift; gray granite with red sandstone coping. Includes bypass flume
9.37	Lock No. 13	1830	8-foot lift; granite with Seneca freestone coping. Includes bypass flume
9.47	Lock No. 14	1830	8-foot lift; granite. Includes culverts and a bypass flume
9.97	Canal Overflow	ca. 1830	Depression in towpath for 144 feet, stone riprap
10.02	Culvert	-	4-foot-span arch of Seneca freestone
10.43	Road Culvert at Carderock	-	12-foot-span arch with 6-foot-high side walls
10.67	Canal Overflow	-	Depression in towpath for 132 feet, stone riprap
10.90	High Wall of Canal	ca. 1828	Dry-stone, stepped retaining wall, 900 feet long and 40-feet high at highest point; originally longer
11.76	Culvert No. 17	1835	10-foot-wide arch, 5-foot rise; stone
12.26	Culvert No. 18	1835	8-foot-wide arch, 2.5-foot rise; stone
12.62	Widewater	ca. 1830	Older river channel utilized; 500-foot wide at widest point, 0.75-mile long, 40-feet deep
13.45	Lock No. 15	1830	8-foot lift; rubble granite and Seneca freestone. Includes bypass flume
13.63	Lock No. 16	1830	8-foot lift; rubble granite and Seneca freestone. Includes bypass flume
13.63	Lockhouse No. 16 Lockhouse	1837	Stone house with full basement
13.99	Lock No. 17	1830	8-foot lift; rubble granite and Seneca freestone. Includes bypass flume
14.09	Lock No. 18	1830	8-foot lift; Seneca freestone. Includes bypass flume
14.09	Lock No. 18 Lockhouse	1830	Stone (Seneca freestone) house with full basement
14.17	Lock No. 19	1830	9-foot lift; Seneca freestone. Includes bypass flume
14.30	Lock No. 20	1830	8-foot lift; Seneca freestone. Included bypass flume
14.30	Lockhouse/Great Falls Tavern	1829-1832	Stone, 1.5-story house placed mid-lock
14.33	Masonry Spillway and Waste weir	-	70-foot-long depression on towpath, originally stone-surfaced. Stone-walled weir at spillway end
15.26	Culvert No. 21 (Cool Spring Branch)	-	Arched, stone culvert with 8-foot span
15.85	Culvert No. 22 (Sandy Landing)	-	Arched, stone culvert with 8-foot span

MILE	NAME	YEAR(S)	DESCRIPTION
16.54	Lock No. 21 (Swain's Lock)	1831	8-foot lift; Seneca freestone. Included bypass flume
16.65	Lock No. 21 Lockhouse	ca. 1830	Stone, 1.5-story house placed mid-lock
16.76	Canal Overflow	ca. 1830	160-foot-long depression in towpath, originally stone-faced
17.74	Culvert No. 25 (Watt's Branch)	ca. 1830	115-feet long, 20-foot span, 20-foot arch, gray sandstone
19.63	Lock No. 22 (Pennyfield Lock)	1831	7-foot lift; Seneca freestone. Included bypass flume
19.64	Lock No. 22 Lockhouse	ca. 1830	Stone house with full basement placed mid-lock
20.01	Culvert No. 30 (Muddy Branch)	ca. 1835	16-foot span, 8-foot radius arch; Seneca freestone

Romigh and Mackintosh

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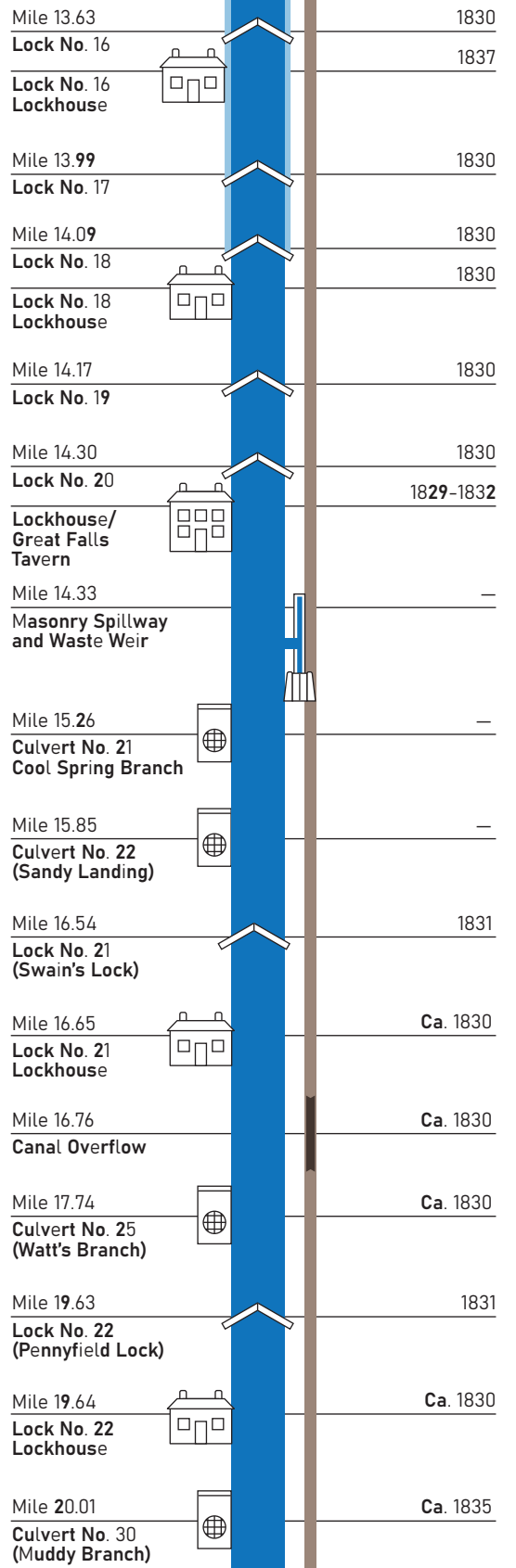
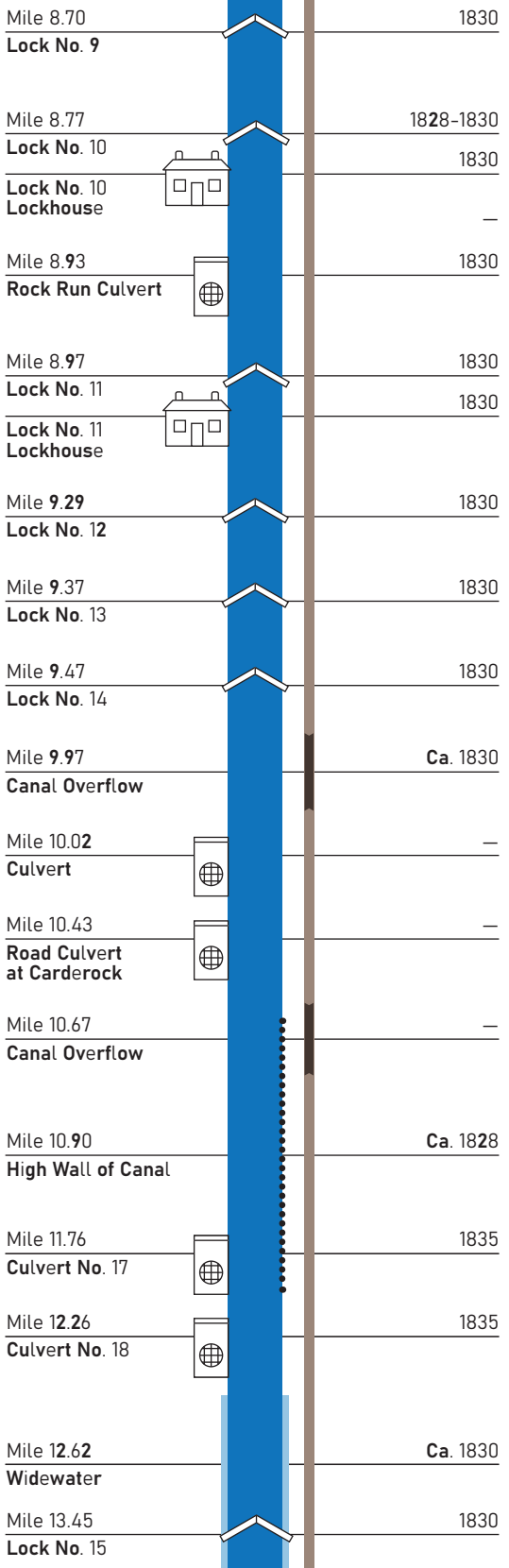
Figure B.1: First 20 Miles of Canal Infrastructure Construction from 1828-1838



Continued on next page



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Legend

-  Lock across Canal
-  Stone Bridge
-  Stone Aqueduct
-  Culvert
-  Lockhouse
-  Lock with Wooden Bridge
-  Wooden Bridge
-  Chain Bridge
-  Wasteweer
-  Dam

XII. APPENDIX C: Sample of African American Canal Laborers, 1870-1920 US Censuses

CENSUS YEAR	NAME	RESIDENCE	AGE	BIRTHPLACE	OCCUPATION and INDUSTRY
1870	Joseph Bond	Ward 2, Washington, DC	45	Maryland	“Boatman”
1870	Daniel Busy	Medley District (#3), Montgomery County, MD	33	Maryland	“Working on Canal Boat”
1870	Robert R. Carter	Fairfax County, VA	17	Virginia	“Boatman on Canal”
1870	Philip Clark	Fairfax County, VA	18	Virginia	“Canal Boat Driver”
1870	George Clemen	Jefferson, Alexandria County, VA	-	Virginia	“Canal Hand”
1870	James H. Cook	Jefferson, Alexandria County, VA	11	Maryland	“Canal Hand”
1870	H.W. Davis [father of John H. Davis]	Jefferson, Alexandria County, VA	45	Virginia	“Canal Hand”
1870	John H. Davis	Jefferson, Alexandria County, VA	26	Virginia	“Canal Hand”
1870	James Diggs	Rockville District (#4), Montgomery County, MD	4	Maryland	“Canal Hand”
1870	John Fortune	Cumberland, Allegany County, MD	29	Virginia	“Boating on Canal”
1870	Austin Gustus [brother of Elzie]	Arlington, Alexandria County, VA	18	Virginia	“Canal Hand”
1870	Elzie Gustus	Arlington, Alexandria County, VA	10	Virginia	“Canal Hand”
1870	George Sayles	Alexandria, VA	14	Virginia	“Canal Hand”
1870	William Thompson	Ward 1, Washington, DC	22	Virginia	“Laborer on Canal”
1870	Andrew Walker	Arlington, Alexandria County, VA	12	Virginia	“Canal Hand”
1870	William Watkins	Jefferson, Alexandria County, VA	-	Maryland	“Canal Hand”
1880	James Bird	Cumberland, Allegany County, MD	40	Virginia	“Work on Canal”
1880	Alfred Canada [brother of James and Benjamin]	Berlin, Frederick County, MD	19	Maryland	“Canal Boatman”
1880	Benjamin Canada	Berlin, Frederick County, MD	16	Maryland	“Canal Boatman”
1880	James Canada	Berlin, Frederick County, MD	22	Maryland	“Canal Boatman”
1880	Charles Carroll	Berlin, Frederick County, MD	21	Maryland	“Canal Boatman”
1880	Solomon Fisher	Medley District (#3), Montgomery County, MD	27	Virginia	“Work on Canal Boat”
1880	William Fletcher	Petersville, Frederick County, MD	22	Maryland	“Canal Boatman”
1880	Henry Frame	Knoxville, Frederick County, MD	36	Maryland	“Canal Boatman”

CENSUS YEAR	NAME	RESIDENCE	AGE	BIRTHPLACE	OCCUPATION and INDUSTRY
1880	George Johnson	Buckeystown, Frederick County, MD	35	Virginia	“Works on Canal”
1880	Daniel H. Jones	Petersville, Frederick County, MD	22	Maryland	“Canal Boatman”
1880	Charles Lightfoot	Cedar Street, NW, Washington, DC	25	Virginia	“Canal Boatman”
1880	Armstead Lucas	Jefferson, Alexandria County, VA	16	Virginia	“Driver on Canal”
1880	Richard Spottswood	Jefferson, Alexandria County, VA	21	Virginia	“Canal Hand”
1880	George Thomas [brother of James]	Bethesda, Montgomery County, MD	14	Virginia	“Works on Canal”
1880	James Thomas	Bethesda, Montgomery County, MD	16	Virginia	“Works on Canal”
1880	Henson Thomas [brother of John]	Darnestown, Montgomery County, MD	22	Maryland	“Works on Canal”
1880	John Thomas	Darnestown, Montgomery County, MD	21	Maryland	“Works on Canal”
1880	Lewis Tower	Cumberland, Allegany County, MD	19	Maryland	“Mule Driver”
1880	John Tyler	Medley District (#3), Montgomery County, MD	25	Virginia	“Work on Canal Boat”
1880	Amos Warren [brother of Derius]	Bethesda, Montgomery County, MD	15	Washington, DC	“Works on Canal”
1880	Derius Warren	Bethesda, Montgomery County, MD	11	Virginia	“Works on Canal”
1880	Nelson Warren	Bethesda, Montgomery County, MD	25	Maryland	“Works on Canal”
1900	Grant Beall	Poolesville, Montgomery County, MD	32	Maryland	“Boating on Canal”
1900	Henry Green	Hancock, Washington County, MD	58	Virginia	“Boatman Canal”
1910	Howard Gross	North Jonathan Street Jail, Hagerstown, Ward 5, Washington County, MD	18	Maryland	“Laborer,” Industry “Canal”; Prisoner
1910	Jeff Thomas	District 6, Montgomery County, MD	35	Maryland	“Canal Driver”
1910	Freddie Tyler	District 6, Montgomery County, MD	25	Maryland	“Gateman,” Industry “Canal”
1910	Clifton H. Veney [brother of Thomas]	District 5, Washington County, MD	15	Maryland	“Boating,” Industry “Chesapeake & Ohio Canal”
1910	Thomas W. Veney	District 5, Washington County, MD	18	Maryland	“Steam Man,” Industry “Chesapeake & Ohio Canal”
1910	Charlie Ward [father of George and Golden]	District 6, Montgomery County, MD	74	Virginia	“Boatsman,” Industry “Canal”
1910	George W. Ward	District 6, Montgomery County, MD	16	Maryland	“Boatsman,” Industry “Canal”
1910	Golden D. Ward	District 6, Montgomery County, MD	27	Maryland	“Boatsman,” Industry “Canal”

CENSUS YEAR	NAME	RESIDENCE	AGE	BIRTHPLACE	OCCUPATION and INDUSTRY
1910	Henry Williams	District 5, Washington County, MD	50	Virginia	“Captain [of] Canal Boat”
1920	Henry Jackson	Darnestown, Montgomery County, MD	52	Maryland	“Labor,” Industry “Canal”
1920	Frank Mills	Darnestown, Montgomery County, MD	41	Maryland	“Labor,” Industry “Canal”

US Census, via Ancestry.com

XIII. APPENDIX D: Sample of African American Farmers, 1850-1940 US Censuses

CENSUS YEAR	NAME	RESIDENCE	AGE	BIRTHPLACE	OCCUPATION NOTES
1860	Henry Hebron	Rockville District (No. 4), Montgomery County, MD [P.O. Rockville]	56	Maryland	Farmer in multi-racial farming community
1860	Margaret Wood	Rockville District (No. 4), Montgomery County, MD [P.O. Rockville]	38	Maryland	“Farm laborer” in multi-racial farming community; non-adjacent neighbor to Henry Hebron
1870	George Barker	Ward 2, Washington, DC	45	Virginia	Farmer in multi-racial urban community where all other occupations are in trades
1870	Arthur Brent	Ward 1, Washington, DC	30	Virginia	Farmer in multi-racial urban community where all other occupations are in trades
1870	George Brown	Ward 1, Washington, DC	62	Maryland	Farmer in predominantly white area where others are in trades; real estate valued at \$2,000
1870	George Clark	Ward 3 [Georgetown], Washington, DC	24	Maryland	Farmer in predominantly Black, urban community where all other occupations are in service
1870	Henry Eagon	Ward 2, Washington, DC	93	Maryland	Farmer in predominantly Black, urban community where all other occupations are in service
1870, 1880	James Ricks [father of James W. Ricks]	Darnestown District (No. 6), Montgomery County, MD	40, 50	Maryland	Farmer in multi-racial farming community
1870	Henry Samson	“West part,” Washington, DC [P.O. Washington]	30	Maryland	Farmer in multi-racial urban community where occupations vary from farming to trades
1870, 1910, 1920	Simon Snowden	Rockville District (No. 4), Montgomery County, MD [Darnestown District (No. 6) by 1880]	35, 75, 85	Maryland	Farmer in a predominantly white farming community [became more mixed racially by 1910]
1870	Luke Wellington	Ward 2, Washington, DC	65	Maryland	Farmer in predominantly Black, urban community where all other occupations are in service
1870	Barney Williams	“West part,” Washington, DC [P.O. Tenleytown]	54	Virginia	Farmer in predominantly white farming area; real estate valued at \$500
1880	Clem Barnes [neighbor of Samuel Cooper]	Rockville District (No. 4), Montgomery County, MD	40	Maryland	Farmer in multi-racial farming community
1880	Samuel Cooper	Rockville District (No. 4), Montgomery County, MD	50	Maryland	Farmer in multi-racial farming community
1880	Beavley Davis	Darnestown District (No. 6), Montgomery County, MD	38	Maryland	Farmer in Black community where neighbors are laborers
1880, 1900, 1910	William Davis	Darnestown District (No. 6), Montgomery County, MD	40, 59, 66	Maryland	Farmer in multi-racial farming community, near a Lockkeeper’s house; non-adjacent neighbor of Richard Genus in 1900

CENSUS YEAR	NAME	RESIDENCE	AGE	BIRTHPLACE	OCCUPATION NOTES
1880	Gary Green	Darnestown District (No. 6), Montgomery County, MD	45	Maryland	Farmer in multi-racial farming community
1880	Charles Jackson	Darnestown District (No. 6), Montgomery County, MD	70	Virginia	Farmer in multi-racial farming community
1880	Warren Johnson	Darnestown District (No. 6), Montgomery County, MD	50	Maryland	Farmer in a predominantly white farming community
1880	William Johnson	Rockville District (No. 4), Montgomery County, MD	56	Virginia	Farmer in multi-racial farming community
1880	William Johnson	Rockville District (No. 4), Montgomery County, MD	35	Virginia	Farmer in Black community where neighbors are laborers
1880	George Kensilo	Bethesda District (No. 7), Montgomery County, MD	35	Maryland	Farmer in multi-racial farming community
1880	William Matthews	Bethesda District (No. 7), Montgomery County, MD	50	Maryland	Farmer in multi-racial farming community
1880	Perry Thomas	Darnestown District (No. 6), Montgomery County, MD	40	Maryland	Farmer in Black community where neighbors are laborers
1880	Richard Wills	1210 M Street, NW, Washington, DC	50	Maryland	Farmer in multi-racial urban community where other occupations are in trades
1880	James R. Wise	Washington, DC	63	Virginia	Farmer in multi-racial farming community
1900, 1910, 1920, 1930	Richard Genus	Toby Town, Darnestown District (No. 6), Montgomery County, MD	34, 51, 55, 60	Maryland	Farmer in multi-racial farming community, near a Lockkeeper's house
1900, 1910, 1920, 1930	Alfred Harding	Travilah Road, Potomac, Montgomery County, MD	48, 55, 66, 80	Maryland	Farmer in a Black farming community that gentrified to predominantly white by 1930
1900, 1910	Frank Jackson	Potomac, Montgomery County, MD	33, 35	Maryland	Farmer in multi-racial farming community
1900, 1910	Georgiana Mason [Prince in 1910]	Potomac, Montgomery County, MD	36, 44	Maryland	Farmer in multi-racial farming community; female head of house
1900, 1910, 1920, 1930, 1940	James W. Ricks	Quince Orchard Road, Travilah, Darnestown District (No. 6), Montgomery County, MD	47, 48, 62, 72, 82	Maryland	Farmer in a multi-racial farming community
1910, 1920, 1930, 1940	Wallace H. Brown	Poplar Grove Road, Darnestown, MD	31, 41, 50, 60	Maryland	Farmer in a multi-racial farming community
1910, 1920	Lorenzo Crawford	Wayside Road [off of Seven Locks Road], Scotland, Rockville District (No. 4), MD	42, 53	Maryland	Farmer in Black community of laborers
1910	Milford Dove	Scotland, Rockville District (No. 4), Montgomery County, MD	50	Maryland	Farmer in Black farming community

CENSUS YEAR	NAME	RESIDENCE	AGE	BIRTHPLACE	OCCUPATION NOTES
1910	William Henry Dove	Scotland, Rockville District (No. 4), Montgomery County, MD	58	Maryland	Farmer in Black farming community
1910	Sarah Gibson	Potomac, Montgomery County, MD	69	Maryland	Farmer in multi-racial farming community
1910	Catherine Frye	Potomac, Montgomery County, MD	58	Maryland	Farmer in a multi-racial community, most in trade
1910, 1920, 1930	George D. Magruder	Quince Orchard Road, Travilah, Montgomery County, MD	40, 52, 62	Maryland	Farmer in a multi-racial farming community; neighbor of James W. Ricks in 1910 and 1920
1910	Thomas H. Ravenue	Scotland, Rockville District (No. 4), Montgomery County, MD	72	Maryland	Farmer in multi-racial farming community
1910, 1920, 1930	Joseph Toney	Conduit Road, Bethesda, MD	58, 67, 72	Maryland	Farmer in multi-racial community, mostly laborers
1910	Thomas J. Villars	Georgetown Pike, Rockville District (No. 4), Montgomery County, MD	48	Maryland	Farmer in a multi-racial community, mostly in trades and service
1910	Robert Warren	Falls Road, Potomac, MD	42	Maryland	Farmer in a multi-racial farming community
1910, 1920	Moses F. Wilson	Seven Locks Road, Scotland, Rockville District (No. 4), MD	57, 69	Maryland	Farmer in Black farming community; non-adjacent neighbor of William Henry Dove
1920	John W. Bowens	Seven Locks Road, Rockville, MD	72	Maryland	Farmer in a multi-racial farming community; neighbor of James F. Cooper
1920	James F. Cooper	Seven Locks Road, Rockville, MD	57	Virginia	Farmer in a multi-racial farming community; neighbor of John W. Bowens
1920	Daniel W. Cooper	Falls Road, Potomac, MD	48	Maryland	Farmer in a Black farming community
1920, 1930	Samuel Jackson	Falls Road, Potomac, MD	46, 56	Virginia	Farmer in a multi-racial farming community
1920	David Johnson	Seven Locks Road, Rockville, MD	63	Virginia	Farmer in a multi-racial farming community; non-adjacent neighbor of John W. Bowens
1920, 1930	Joseph H. Plummer	Poplar Grove Road, Darnestown, MD	54, 64	Washington, DC	Farmer in a multi-racial farming community; neighbor of Richard Talley
1920	Mathew Shorter	3632 N Street, Washington, DC	37	Georgia	Only famer in urban Black community
1920	Agnes V. Weems	Piney Meeting House Road, Travilah, MD	50	Maryland	Small farmer in a predominantly white farming community
1930	Benjamin Anderson	Old River Road, Darnestown District (No. 6), Montgomery County, MD	44	Virginia	Farmer in a predominantly black community, most are laborers
1930	John H. Bell	Poplar Grove Road, Darnestown, MD	40	Maryland	Farmer in a multi-racial farming community; non-adjacent neighbor of Joseph H. Plummer

CENSUS YEAR	NAME	RESIDENCE	AGE	BIRTHPLACE	OCCUPATION NOTES
1930	Samuel Lee	Poplar Grove Road, Darnestown, MD	44	Maryland	Farmer in a multi-racial farming community; neighbor of Richard Talley
1930, 1940	Richard M. Talley	Poplar Grove Road, Darnestown, MD	53, 62	Maryland	Farmer in a multi-racial farming community; neighbor of Samuel Lee and Joseph H. Plummer
1930	Luther D. Williams	River Road, Potomac, MD	55	Maryland	Farmer in predominantly white community, mostly laborers

US Census, via Ancestry.com

XIV. APPENDIX E: Sample of African American Quarrymen, 1870-1930 US Censuses

CENSUS YEAR	NAME	RESIDENCE	AGE	BIRTHPLACE	OCCUPATION and INDUSTRY
1870	Archie Carter	Georgetown, Ward 3, Washington, DC	33	Virginia	"Works in Quarry"
1870	Israel Haskin	Medley District (No. 3), Montgomery County, MD	45	Maryland	"Laborer in Quarry"
1870	Lewis T. Jackson	Medley District (No. 3), Montgomery County, MD	46	Maryland	"Laborer in Quarry"
1870	George Jones	Ward 2, Washington, DC	60	Virginia	"Works in Quarry Stable"
1870	Gilmore Lynch	Medley District (No. 3), Montgomery County, MD	42	Maryland	"Laborer in Quarry"
1870	James Thomas [son of Perry Thomas]	Medley District (No. 3), Montgomery County, MD	14	Maryland	"Laborer in Quarry"
1870	Perry Thomas	Medley District (No. 3), Montgomery County, MD	40	Maryland	"Laborer in Quarry"
1870	George Washington	Medley District (No. 3), Montgomery County, MD	-	Maryland	"Laborer in Quarry"
1900	Arthur Bell	Rockville, Montgomery County, MD	20	Maryland	"Laborer Stone Quarry"
1900	George Carter	Darnestown, Montgomery County, MD	48	Maryland	"Laborer in Quarry"
1900	William Cole	Reeds Court, Washington, DC	60	Virginia	"Quarry Laborer"
1900	Henry R. Fish	St. Phillips Hill, Washington, DC	56	Washington, DC	"Laborer in Quarry"
1900	Arthur Harlop [presumed brother of Bert Harlop]	Canal Road, Washington, DC	25	Virginia	"Laborer Quarry"
1900	Bert Harlop	Canal Road, Washington, DC	21	Virginia	"Laborer Quarry"
1900	John Jackson	Canal Road, Washington, DC	54	Maryland	"Laborer Quarry"
1900	Tom Jones	Darnestown, Montgomery County, MD	26	Maryland	"Laborer in Stone Quarry"
1900	Clem Martin, Jr.	Darnestown, Montgomery County, MD	42	Maryland	"Laborer in Quarry"
1900	John Masterson	Westley Heights, Washington, DC	44	Virginia	"Laborer Quarry"
1900	Charles Meekins	Darnestown, Montgomery County, MD	42	Washington, DC	"Service Quarry"
1900	Iza Randall	Virginia Avenue, Washington, DC	26	Virginia	"Laborer – Stone Quarry"
1900	William Warren	Bethesda, Maryland	17	Maryland	"Laborer Stone Quarry"
1910	James Beckwith	Medley District (No. 3), Montgomery County, MD	54	Maryland	"Laborer" in "Stone Quarry"
1910	Tobias Beck[w]ith	Medley District (No. 3), Montgomery County, MD	41	Maryland	"Laborer" in "Stone Quarry"

CENSUS YEAR	NAME	RESIDENCE	AGE	BIRTHPLACE	OCCUPATION and INDUSTRY
1910	James Coleman	Barnesville, Montgomery County, MD	30	Maryland	“Laborer” in “Stone Quarry”
1910	Richard Coleman	Barnesville, Montgomery County, MD	40	Virginia	“Laborer” in “Stone Quarry”
1910	Jasper Crawley	Barnesville, Montgomery County, MD	30	Virginia	“Laborer” in “Stone Quarry”
1910	Levi Hall	Medley District (No. 3), Montgomery County, MD	65	Maryland	“Laborer” in “Stone Quarry”
1910	Will Hood	Poolesville, Montgomery County, MD	48	Maryland	“Quarry” in “Public Work”
1910	Lloyd Jackson	Potomac, Montgomery County, MD	45	Maryland	“Laborer” in “Stone Quarry”
1910	Robert Jones	Potomac, Montgomery County, MD	55	Maryland	“Stone Quarry”
1910	Henry Scott	Poolesville, Montgomery County, MD	52	Virginia	“Laborer” in “Stone Quarry”
1910	Charley Thompson	Poolesville, Montgomery County, MD	58	Maryland	“Blaster” in “Stone Quarry”
1910	John Turman	Poolesville, Montgomery County, MD	29	Maryland	“Laborer” in “Stone Quarry”
1920	William Bowen	Bethesda, Maryland	55	Maryland	“Laborer Stone Quarry”
1920	Curtis Brown [son of James H. Brown]	Barnesville, Montgomery County, MD	17	Maryland	“Laborer” in “Stone Quarry”
1920	James H. Brown	Barnesville, Montgomery County, MD	48	Maryland	“Engineer” in “Stone Quarry”
1920	Gilbert Cook [son of Luther Cook]	Canal Road, Washington, DC	18	Virginia	“Laborer” in “Stone Quarry”
1920	Luther Cook	Canal Road, Washington, DC	38	Virginia	“Laborer” in “Stone Quarry”
1920	John S. Hollman	Barnesville, Montgomery County, MD	31	Maryland	“Laborer” in “Stone Quarry”
1920	Charles Johnson	Barnesville, Montgomery County, MD	36	Maryland	“Laborer” in “Stone Quarry”
1920	Paul Lawrence	Dennison Place, Washington, DC	28	Maryland	“Laborer” in “Stone Quarry”
1920	Charley Plummer	Wisconsin Avenue, Washington, DC	35	Maryland	“Laborer” in “Quarry”
1920	Garfield Scott	First Street, SE, Washington, DC	39	Washington, DC	“Laborer” in “Rock Quarry”
1920	George Washington	Barnesville, Montgomery County, MD	50	Maryland	“Laborer” in “Stone Quarry”
1920	Richard Wilson	Jefferson Street, Washington, DC	17	Virginia	“Laborer” in “Stone Quarry”
1930	Robert Bradford	Bethesda, Maryland	40	Virginia	“Laborer Stone Quarry”
1930	William F. Herbert	Potomac, Montgomery County, MD	42	Virginia	“Laborer” in “Stone Quarry”
1930	William Johnson	Eighth Street, NW, Washington, DC	39	Maryland	“Laborer” in “Quarry”
1930	Edward E. Jones	Bethesda, Maryland	36	Maryland	“Laborer Stone Quarry”

CENSUS YEAR	NAME	RESIDENCE	AGE	BIRTHPLACE	OCCUPATION and INDUSTRY
1930	William Lawrence	41st Street, Washington, DC	49	Maryland	“Laborer” in “Stone Quarry”
1930	Charles Plummer	Dennison Place, Washington, DC	53	Maryland	“Laborer” in “Stone Quarry”
1930	John Terry	F Street, Washington, DC	25	Maryland	“Laborer” in “Stone Quarry”
1930	Frank Twyman	Potomac, Montgomery County, MD	70	Virginia	“Laborer” in “Stone Quarry”
1930	Eugene Welch	Kenyon Street, Washington, DC	33	North Carolina	“Laborer” in “Stone Quarry”

US Census, via Ancestry.com

XV. APPENDIX F: Sample of African American Mill Workers, 1850-1930 US Censuses

CENSUS YEAR	NAME	RESIDENCE	AGE	BIRTHPLACE	OCCUPATION and INDUSTRY
1850	Remus Hill	Berry District (No. 5), Montgomery County, MD	34	Maryland	“Shingle Maker” in “Sawmills, Planing Mills, and Mill Work”
1850	Luke Lee	Georgetown, Ward 4, Washington, DC	24	Washington, DC	“Miller” in “Grain-Mill Products”
1870	Robert Brown	Georgetown, Ward 3, Washington, DC	29	Maryland	“Works in Saw Mill”
1870	Robert Carroll	Georgetown, Ward 3, Washington, DC	29	Maryland	“Works in Saw Mill”
1870	Vernon Duff	Georgetown, Ward 3, Washington, DC	40	Virginia	“Works in Flour Mill”
1870	Nathan Gant	Ward 2, Washington, DC	35	Maryland	“Works in Saw Mill”
1870	Gilbert Gordon	Foggy Bottom, Ward 5, Washington, DC	32	Maryland	“Works at Saw Mill”
1870	Charles Jones	Georgetown, Ward 3, Washington, DC	46	Maryland	“Works in Mill”
1870	Henry Kiler	Ward 2, Washington, DC	26	Virginia	“Works in Saw Mill”
1870	William Lee	Ward 2, Washington, DC	45	Maryland	“Works in Saw Mill”
1870	Jerry Miller	Ward 2, Washington, DC	27	Virginia	“Works in Flour Mill”
1870	Clara Ricks	Medley District (No. 3), Montgomery County, MD	18	Maryland	“Laborer in Mill”
1870	Richard Thornton	Georgetown, Ward 3, Washington, DC	40	Virginia	“Works in Saw Mill”
1880	Robert Evans	D Street, NW, Washington, DC	39	Virginia	“Works Lumber Mill”
1900	Thomas Brown	3522 P Street, Georgetown, Washington, DC	30	Maryland	“Driver Flour Mill”
1900	William Harrod	1038 Jefferson Street, Georgetown, Washington, DC	35	Washington, DC	“Drives Mill Wagon”
1900	James H. Hunter	2320 M Street, Washington, DC	23	Washington, DC	“Laborer Flour Mill”
1900	Henry Jackson	1343 27th Street, Washington, DC	45	Washington, DC	“Laborer (Grain Mill)”
1900	John Lacy	1034 33rd Street, Georgetown, Washington, DC	45	Virginia	“Mill laborer”
1900	David S. Tolar	1410 34th Street, Georgetown, Washington, DC	36	Washington, DC	“Packer Mill”
1910	Berton Howard	Rockville District (No. 4), Montgomery County, MD	50	Maryland	“Engineer” in “Flour Mill”
1910	Garfield Jackson	Potomac, Montgomery County, MD	38	Maryland	“Laborer” in “Saw Mill”
1910	Henry Magruder	Avery Road, Rockville District (No. 4), Montgomery County, MD	49	Maryland	“Laborer” in “Saw Mill”

CENSUS YEAR	NAME	RESIDENCE	AGE	BIRTHPLACE	OCCUPATION and INDUSTRY
1910	Fred Thomas	Montgomery Avenue, Rockville District (No. 4), Montgomery County, MD	32	Virginia	"Laborer" in "Flour Mill"
1910	Henry Young	Bethesda District (No. 7), Montgomery County, MD	28	Maryland	"Laborer" in "Saw Mill"
1920	Vincent Beason	3606 N Street, Georgetown, Washington, DC	15	Washington, DC	"Driver" of "Mill Wagon"
1920	Henson Briggs	1070 30th Street, Georgetown, Washington, DC	39	Virginia	"Laborer" in "Paper Mill"
1920	Anna Bruce	3207 Cherry Hill, Georgetown, Washington, DC	40	Virginia	"Mill laborer"
1920	Aaron Carpenter	1665 32nd Street, Georgetown, Washington, DC	51	Virginia	"Laborer" in "Paper Mill"
1920	Robert C. Davis	1606 33rd Street, Georgetown, Washington, DC	34	Maryland	"Laborer" at "Mill"
1920	George Dixon	3213 Prospect Street, Georgetown, Washington, DC	30	Virginia	"Laborer" in "Paper Mill"
1920	Mary Elliott	3217 Cherry Hill, Georgetown, Washington, DC	-	Virginia	"Mill hand" at "Paper [Mill]"
1920	John H. Frye	2108 35th Street, NW, Georgetown, Washington, DC	45	Maryland	"Laborer" in "Paper Mill"
1920	Harry George	1525 Belle Court, Georgetown, Washington, DC	52	Virginia	[Watchman] at "Flour Mill"
1920	Bill Groves	1061 Potomac Street, Georgetown, Washington, DC	60	Virginia	"Laborer" in "Paper Mill"
1920	Horace Hicks	Lincoln Park Road, Rockville, Montgomery County, MD	28	Maryland	"Janitor" at "Paper Mill"
1920	John T. Jenkins	Black Rock Mill Road, Darnestown District (No. 6), Montgomery County, MD	39	Maryland	"Laborer" in "Saw Mill"
1920	Abby Johnson	Frederick Road, Rockville, Montgomery County, MD	44	Maryland	"Cheff [sic]" at "DC Paper Mill"
1920	Charles Johnson	Frederick Road, Rockville, Montgomery County, MD	63	Maryland	"Laborer" in "First mill"
1920	Joseph Knapp	1409 35th Street, Georgetown, Washington, DC	19	Massachusetts	"Laborer" in "Paper Mill"
1920	Frank Maw	1416 36th Street, Georgetown, Washington, DC	41	Virginia	"Paper Mill"
1920	Edward Moorman	3607 N Street, Georgetown, Washington, DC	31	Virginia	"Filterer" at "Paper Mill"
1920	John Nelson	3714 Prospect Avenue, Georgetown, Washington, DC	25	Washington, DC	"Labor Mill" and "Dray"
1920	John Sherman	3326 Volta Place, Georgetown, Washington, DC	42	Virginia	"Laborer" in "Flour Mill"
1920	Ed Spencer	1229 37th Street, Georgetown, Washington, DC	27	Virginia	"Laborer" in "Paper Mill"
1920	Jason Thomas	3160 Scott Street, Washington DC	33	Virginia	"Laborer" in "[Saw] Mill"
1920	Nathaniel Warren	Lincoln Park Road, Rockville, Montgomery County, MD	22	Maryland	"Labor" in "mill, steel"

CENSUS YEAR	NAME	RESIDENCE	AGE	BIRTHPLACE	OCCUPATION and INDUSTRY
1920	Thomas Williams	1068 30th Street, Georgetown, Washington, DC	38	Washington, DC	“Laborer” in “Paper Mill”
1930	Arthur T. Benson	Poolesville, Montgomery County, MD	70	Maryland	“Laborer” in “Lumber Mill”
1930	George Dixon, Sr.	2718 N Street, Georgetown, Washington, DC	50	Washington, DC	“Fireman” in “Paper Mill”
1930	George Dixon, Jr.	2718 N Street, Georgetown, Washington, DC	32	Washington, DC	“Laborer” in “Paper Mill”
1930	Willis Ellis	3613 N Street, Georgetown, Washington, DC	25	Virginia	“Fireman” in “Paper Mill”
1930	James Gallaway	1032 33rd Street, NW, Georgetown, Washington, DC	45	Virginia	“Laborer” in “Paper Mill”
1930	William Hood	Poolesville, Montgomery County, MD	58	Maryland	“Fireman” in “Lumber Mill”
1930	Sam Hose	Germantown Road, Darnestown District (No. 6), Montgomery County, MD	44	Maryland	“Laborer” in “Saw Mill”
1930	Lawny Leggis	2712 N Street, Georgetown, Washington, DC	26	North Carolina	“Helper” in “Lime Mill”
1930	Herbert Lucas	3018 M Street, Georgetown, Washington, DC	26	Virginia	“Laborer” in “Paper Mill”
1930	Roger Prather	Brown Town, Darnestown District (No. 6), Montgomery County, MD	37	Maryland	“Laborer” in “Saw Mill”
1930	Hezkil Stalk	3226 O Street, Georgetown, Washington, DC	40	South Carolina	“Laborer” in “Paper Mill”
1930	Fred Thomas	1528 Bells Court, Georgetown, Washington, DC	42	Virginia	“Laborer” in “Flour Mill”
1930	William Turner	3277 Prospect Avenue, NW, Georgetown, Washington, DC	48	Virginia	“Laborer” in “Flour Mill”
1930	Nathaniel Webster	Frederick Pike, Rockville, Montgomery County, MD	43	Maryland	“Machinist” in “Paper Mill”

US Census, via Ancestry.com

XVI. APPENDIX G: Sample of African American Coal Workers, 1870-1930 US Censuses

CENSUS YEAR	NAME	RESIDENCE	AGE	BIRTHPLACE	OCCUPATION and INDUSTRY
1870	Charles Fishbaugh	Ward 2, Washington, DC	29	New York	"Wood and Coal Dealer"
1870	Benjamin Shields	Georgetown, Ward 3, Washington, DC	29	Maryland	"Works in Coal Yard"
1870	Chas Thompson	Georgetown, Ward 4, Washington, DC	26	Virginia	"Coal Trimmer"
1870	George Walker	Georgetown, Ward 4, Washington, DC	47	Maryland	"Wood & Coal Sealer"
1900	Perry Barnes	1043 30th Street, Washington, DC	60	Maryland	"Foreman Coal Co."
1900	Henrietta Dove	Rockville, Montgomery County, MD	23	Maryland	"Coal"
1900	Julious K. Jones	Bethesda, Montgomery County, MD	26	Maryland	"Coal Yard DC"
1900	Jennie Matthew	3320 Q Street, Washington, DC	36	Virginia	"Coal"
1900	Augustus Mullin	1041 31st Street, Washington, DC	27	Washington, DC	"in coal yard"
1900	Joseph Perry	2530 P Street, Washington, DC	24	Virginia	"Boss of coal heavers"
1910	James Butler [son of William Butler]	Bethesda, Montgomery County, MD	21	Maryland	"Driver" in "Coal Wood"
1910	William Butler	Bethesda, Montgomery County, MD	42	Maryland	"Driver" in "Coal Wood"
1910	John Luckett	Rockville District (No. 4), Montgomery County, MD	43	Maryland	"Driver" of "Coal Wagon"
1920	John Boardley	2527 P Street, Washington, DC	47	Washington, DC	"Laborer" in "coal yard"
1920	Richard Brooks	1353 28th Street, Washington, DC	49	Virginia	"Teamster" of "Coal Wagon"
1920	John Brown	Rockville Pike, Bethesda, Montgomery County, MD	17	Maryland	"Laborer" in "coal yard"
1920	Henry Chetem	1013 Jefferson Street, Washington, DC	50	Ohio	"Laborer" for "coal co."
1920	Samuel Dees	1041 31st Street, Washington, DC	46	Georgia	"Coal Hunter" for "M Dove Co."
1920	Charlie Dorsey [brother of James]	Bethesda, Montgomery County, MD	24	Maryland	"Laborer" in "coal yard"
1920	James Dorsey	Bethesda, Montgomery County, MD	22	Maryland	"Laborer" in "coal yard"
1920	James H. Eisby	3411 Volta Street, Washington, DC	48	Washington, DC	"Team[st]er" at "Coal Yard"
1920	Theodore Hamlet	Rock Court, Washington, DC	16	Washington, DC	"Driver" of "Coal Wagon"
1920	Benjamin Harris	Bethesda, Montgomery County, MD	39	South Carolina	"Laborer" in "coal yard"

CENSUS YEAR	NAME	RESIDENCE	AGE	BIRTHPLACE	OCCUPATION and INDUSTRY
1920	John Luckett [father of William]	Rockville District (No. 4), Montgomery County, MD	44	Maryland	“Laborer” in “coal yard”
1920	William Luckett	Rockville District (No. 4), Montgomery County, MD	23	Maryland	“chore office” at “coal yard”
1920	Llewellyn Matherson	Rockville District (No. 4), Montgomery County, MD	19	Maryland	“Laborer” in “coal yard”
1920	Henry Nelson	3210 O Street, Washington, DC	19	Virginia	“Laborer” “Coal Delivery”
1920	John Proctor	Rockville District (No. 4), Montgomery County, MD	38	Maryland	“Chauffeur” at “coal yard”
1920	James Rector	Dumbarton Ave., NW, Washington, DC	29	Virginia	“Laborer” in “coal yard”
1920	Earnest Stuart	Bethesda, Montgomery County, MD	35	Maryland	“Laborer” for “coal co.”
1930	Herman Adams	Bethesda, Montgomery County, MD	30	Maryland	“Laborer” in “coal yard”
1930	Ernest Bagler	Bethesda, Montgomery County, MD	35	North Carolina	“Laborer” in “coal yard”
1930	Theodore Brown	Unnamed Street, NW, Precinct 7 [Georgetown], Washington, DC	32	North Carolina	“Laborer” in “coal yard”
1930	Norman Carter	Potomac Street, NW, Washington, DC	44	Virginia	“Laborer” in “coal yard”
1930	Robert Carter	Seven Lock’s Road, Bethesda, MD	44	Maryland	“Hauling” “Coal and wood”
1930	John Davis	33rd Street NW, Washington, DC	60	-	“Laborer” in “coal yard”
1930	Bill Diggs	3008 M Street, Washington, DC	55	Washington, DC	“Laborer” in “coal yard”
1930	David Dove	2815 Dumbarton Ave., Washington, DC	40	Virginia	“Truck Driver” at “Coal Yard”
1930	Reuben Dove	Rockville, Montgomery County, MD	42	Maryland	“Laborer” in “coal yard”
1930	Henry Franklin	2711 O Street, NW, Washington, DC	65	Virginia	“Coal Storer” at “Coal Yard”
1930	Hillard Guthrie	3246 Prospect Street, NW, Washington, DC	45	Virginia	“Ice and Coal” on “Own Account” (i.e. self-employed)
1930	Frank Israel	Rockville, Montgomery County, MD	44	Georgia	“Laborer” in “coal yard”
1930	James Jackson	Seneca Road, Darnestown, Montgomery County, MD	22	Maryland	“Laborer” at “coal yard”
1930	Bud Jamison	3008 M Street, Washington, DC	50	Washington, DC	“Laborer” at “coal yard”
1930	Preston Johnson	Rockville, Montgomery County, MD	29	Maryland	“Laborer” in “coal yard”
1930	Samuel Lincoln	Dumbarton Ave., Washington, DC	48	Virginia	“Truck driver” “coal co.”

CENSUS YEAR	NAME	RESIDENCE	AGE	BIRTHPLACE	OCCUPATION and INDUSTRY
1930	Floyd Lucas	Bethesda, Montgomery County, MD	30	North Carolina	"Laborer" in "coal yard"
1930	Raymond Mason	Upper River Road, Darnestown, MD	27	Maryland	"Truck Driver" for "Coal Dealer"
1930	Clyde McKenny	2709[?] N Street, NW, Washington, DC	33	North Carolina	"Miner" "Coal Mine"
1930	John R. Moore	Rockville, Montgomery County, MD	25	Maryland	"Truck Driver" at "Coal Yard"
1930	Pulney Payne	Bethesda, Montgomery County, MD	32	Virginia	"Laborer" for "Coal Company"
1930	Lewis Pelham	3228 Grace Street, NW, Washington, DC	38	Virginia	"Laborer" at "coal yard"
1930	James Russel	Bethesda, Montgomery County, MD	26	Maryland	"Laborer" at "coal yard"
1930	Melvin Sickles	Rockville, Montgomery County, MD	53	Maryland	"Laborer" at "coal yard"
1930	Dan Smith [brother-in-law to Melvin Sickles]	Rockville, Montgomery County, MD	42	Maryland	"Laborer" at "coal yard"
1930	Lawrence Smith	Rockville, Montgomery County, MD	53	Maryland	"Truck Driver" at "Coal Yard"
1930	Harry J. Wise	3275 Prospect Ave., NW, Washington, DC	37	Washington, DC	"Manager" "Coal and Ice Business"

United States Census, via Ancestry.com

XVII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Figures 1.1, 1.2, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 2.13, 2.14, 2.15, 3.3, and Appendix B.1

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Figures 2.3 and 6.1

Martenet, Simon J., Martenet & Bond, and Schmidt & Trowe. *Martenet and Bond's map of Montgomery County, Maryland*. Baltimore: Simon J. Martenet, 1865. Map. Library of Congress, www.loc.gov/item/2002620533/.

Figures 2.4, 4.1, 5.1, 6.2, and 7.1

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Figure 2.5

United States Bureau Of Topographical Engineers, and United States Coast Survey. *Map of Montgomery County, Maryland*. Washington, DC: Bureau of Topographical Engineers, 1863. Map. Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2014585161/>.

Figure 2.10

Ross, Willard R. "The Canal Beautiful." Photograph. Willard R. Ross Postcard Collection, DC Public Library. DigDC, https://digdc.dclibrary.org/islandora/object/dcplislandora%3A47975?solr_nav%5Bid%5D=fd26f0274f9f73f073b2&solr_nav%5Bpage%5D=0&solr_nav%5Boffset%5D=0.

Figure 2.11

Ross, Willard R. "Chesapeake & Ohio Canal, Washington, DC." Ca. 1909. Photograph. Willard R. Ross Postcard Collection, DCPL. DigDC: https://digdc.dclibrary.org/islandora/object/dcplislandora%3A47289?solr_nav%5Bid%5D=fd26f0274f9f73f073b2&solr_nav%5Bpage%5D=0&solr_nav%5Boffset%5D=7.

Figure 2.12

"C&O Canal: Mules along the Canal." Photograph. Public Domain. Rockville, MD: Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Day Collection, Montgomery History, Jane C. Sween Research Library and Special Collections, Rockville, MD, catalog 015-014M. <https://montgomeryhistory.pastperfectonline.com/photo/E5D15EC0-F13E-466D-AE01-334713777829>.

Figure 2.16

Addison Scurlock, "Waterfront." 1915. Photograph. Scurlock Studio Records, Archive Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution. <https://ids.si.edu/ids/deliveryService?id=NMAH-AC0618ps0178748-01ms>.

Figure 2.17

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Figure 2.18

Ross, Willard R. "Chain Bridge Hike, June 24, 1916." Photograph. Washington, DC: Willard R. Ross Postcard Collection, DC Public Library. DigDC, https://digdc.dclibrary.org/islandora/object/dcplislandora%3A47922?solr_nav%5Bid%5D=d1847c7e81f3e43a10ef&solr_nav%5Bpage%5D=1&solr_nav%5Boffset%5D=0.

Figure 2.19

Ross, Willard R. "Receiving Reservoir Hike, January 16, 1916." Photograph. Washington, DC: Willard R. Ross Postcard Collection, DC Public Library. DigDC, https://digdc.dclibrary.org/islandora/object/dcplislandora%3A47770?solr_nav%5Bid%5D=0023286b1e80d076743c&solr_nav%5Bpage%5D=0&solr_nav%5Boffset%5D=0.

Figure 2.20

Advertisement, *The Colored American*, 8 September 1900, p.13. Washington, DC: Library of Congress, Chronicling America. <https://www.loc.gov/item/sn83027091/1900-09-08/ed-1/>.

Figure 2.21

Ross, Willard R. "Church on towpath in Georgetown." Photograph. Washington, DC: Willard R. Ross Postcard Collection, DC Public Library. DigDC, https://digdc.dclibrary.org/islandora/object/dcplislandora%3A101171?solr_nav%5Bid%5D=ec0191377f6431471ca6&solr_nav%5Bpage%5D=0&solr_nav%5Boffset%5D=0.

Figure 3.1

E. Sachse & Co. View of Georgetown D.C. / lith. and printed in colors by E. Sachse & Co. Washington D.C. Georgetown Washington United States District of Columbia Georgetown Washington Potomac River, 1855. [Baltimore: Published and sold by E. Sachse & Co] Photograph. <https://www.loc.gov/item/98515954/>.

Figure 3.2

"C&O Canal: Canalboats at Georgetown" Postcard. York, PA: J.B. Leib Photo Co. Rockville, MD: Houston Hancock collection, Montgomery History, Jane C. Sween Research Library and Special Collections, catalog 015-014V. <https://montgomeryhistory.pastperfectonline.com/photo/D71A394F-846D-4D0E-94B7-822003173852>.

Figure 3.4

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Figure 3.5

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Figure 4.2

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Figure 4.3

Miller, C.M. *Map of Potomac Heights, Washington, D.C.* Map and brochure. Public Domain. Washington, DC: Washingtoniana Map Collection, DC Public Library. DigDC, https://digdc.dclibrary.org/islandora/object/dcplislandora%3A166?solr_nav%5Bid%5D=15661aa63fdb5886b26&solr_nav%5Bpage%5D=0&solr_nav%5Boffset%5D=2.

Figures 5.2, 6.3, and 7.2

Hopkins, Griffith Morgan, Jr. *The vicinity of Washington, D.C.* Philadelphia: Griffith M. Hopkins, C.E, 1894. Map. Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/88693364/>.

Figure 7.3

Deets, Edward H. and Charles J. Maddox. *A Real Estate Atlas of the Part of Montgomery County Adjacent to the District of Columbia*. Rockville, MD: 1917. Map. Courtesy of Special Collections, The Sheridan Libraries, Johns Hopkins University.
<https://jscholarship.library.jhu.edu/handle/1774.2/35333>.

Figure 7.4

Ross, Willard R. "Canal Lock, Great Falls." Ca. 1910. Photograph. Washington, DC: Willard R. Ross Postcard Collection, DC Public Library. DigDC,
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XVIII. INDEX

- Addison, Alice, 25, 61
Addison, Theodore, 26, 62
African American farmers, fishermen and merchants
 Green, Carville, 78, 111
African American farmers, fishermen, and merchants
 Carey, George, 81, 111
 Claggett, John, 78, 111
 Claiburne, Charles, 79, 111
 Cox, James, 79, 111
 Dover, Francis D., 80, 111
 Guthrie, Hillard, 81, 111
 Harris, Alfred Felton, 80, 111
 Hebron, Henry, 78, 111
 Holmes, Robert J., 80, 111
 Lee, Alfred, 80, 111
 Lee, John, 80, 111
 Lee, William, 80, 111
 Moor, Joseph, 80, 111
 Norris, John, 78, 111
 Pope, Alfred, 80, 111
 Ricks, James, 78, 111
 Ricks, James W., 78, 111
 Ricks, John T., 80, 111
 Williams, Sweetie, 80, 111
 Wise, Harry J., 81, 111
 Wood, Margaret, 78, 111
African American historical newspapers
 The Colored American, 7, 100, 120, 126, 170, 171, 172
 The Washington Bee, 7, 101, 105, 106, 170, 171
African American hoteliers, waiters, and domestics
 Arezbo, Julia A., 96, 113
 Baker, Archie, 96, 113
 Boston, Daniel, 97, 113
 Bowles, Matilda, 96, 113
 Brown, Lena, 96, 113, 189, 225
 Diggs, Charles H., 97, 113
 Franklin, James, 97, 113
 Fry, Hattie, 96, 113
 Gray, Mariah M., 96, 113, 163, 165, 171, 182
 Green, Sarah, 97, 113
 Jackson, Philop O., 97, 113
 Johnson, Adelaide, 97, 113
 Lewis, John W., 97, 113
 Mason, Charles, 97, 113
 Simpson, Della, 96, 113
 Smith, Cordelia, 97, 113
 Stratton, Edna M., 97, 113
 Warren, Manual, 97, 113
 Waugh, James H., 97, 113
 Waugh, Katie J., 97, 113
African American quarriers, millers, miners, and factory workers
 Barnes, Perry, 89, 112
 Boothe, Rebecca, 92, 112
 Brown, James H., 85, 111
 Bruce, Anna, 87, 112
 Davis, Isaac, 92, 112
 Dent, James C., 84, 112
 Dove, Henrietta, 89, 112
 Elliot, Mary, 87, 112
 Harris, Jack, 91, 112
 Hedgman, Cajetan, 93, 112
 Howard, Berton, 87, 112
 Johnson, Abby, 87, 112
 Mason, Henry, 91, 112
 Mason, Robert, 92, 112
 Matthew, Jennie, 89, 112
 Moorman, Edward, 87, 112
 Perry, Joseph, 112
 Perry, Joseph, 89
 Plummer, Charles, 85, 111
 Powell, Hillary, 89, 112
 Ricks, Clara, 87, 112
 Scott, Henry, 92, 112
 Shields, Benjamin, 84, 112
 Shields, Henry, 90, 112, 203
 Smallwood, Ernest, 90, 112, 203
 Smith, Robert, 84, 112
 Smithers, Lydia, 92, 112
 Taylor, Jonathan, 89, 112
 Thomason, Henry, 86, 111
 Thompson, Charley, 85, 111
 Tupper, Hellen, 92, 112
 Warren, Robert, 90, 112, 203
 Webster, James, 92, 112
African Americans from Rockville District who served in the Civil War
 Barber, James, 28
 Brooke, Lewis, 28
 Hill, Reuben, 28
 Jordan, George, 28
 Lyles, Thomas, 28
 Peter, Henry, 28
 Preston, William, 28
 Rhodes, Henson, 28
 Scotland, Warren, 28
 Scott, John, 28
 Spriggs, Benedict, 28
 Walker, Frank, 28
 Warren, James, 28
 White, James, 28

- Alexander, Archibald, 144
- Alexandria, Virginia, 73, 74, 77, 78, 80, 88, 90, 111, 122, 132, 134, 149
- Alleghany County, Maryland, 84, 88
- American Red Cross headquarters. See Glen Echo, Maryland, Clara Barton House National Historic Site, See Glen Echo, Maryland, Clara Barton House National Historic Site
- Anacostia River, 19, 64, 130, 154, 228
- Anacostia, DC, 101
- Analostan Island, DC
Camp Greene, 26
- Analostan Island, DC, 26
- Analostan Island, DC, 28
- Analostan Island, DC, 29
- Analostan Island, DC, 91
- Anderson, John Wallace, 194, 196
Crawford's Lodge, 194, 196
Davis, Benjamin, free farmhand, 195
Homer, Alfred, self-liberator, 195
- Andrew Johnson, canal boat, 77, 110
- Ball, Charles, 19, 61, 119, 126, 132
- Baltimore and Ohio (B&O) Railroad, 22, 36, 64, 108, 109, 114, 134, 151, 152, 165, 172, 174, 229, 230
- Baltzley, Edward and Edwin, 166, 167, 172, 185
- Banneker, Benjamin, 130, 132
- Barton, Clara, 166, 185, 186, 191
- Beall, Brooke, 131
- Belt, Ignatius, 148, 162
- Belt, John, 148
- Belt, Joseph, 26, 62
- Benevolent societies and Social Halls
Love and Charity Hall, Jerusalem, Maryland, 57
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
Bankhead, Judi, 54
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
Loving Charity Hall, Jerusalem, Maryland, 36
Loving Charity Hall, Martinsburg, Maryland, 38
Moses Hall, Gibson Grove, Maryland, 6, 52
Sisters of Mary, Georgetown, DC, 48
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
Moses Hall, Gibson Grove, Maryland, 54
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls, 54
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
Bell, George, 55
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
Blessed Peter Claver Burial Association, Georgetown, DC, 55
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
Female Union Band Society Cemetery, Georgetown, DC, 55
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
Grand United Order of Odd Fellows, 55
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
Monticello House Social Club, Georgetown, DC, 56
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
Grand United Order of Odd Fellows, 56
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
Grand United Order of Odd Fellows Hall, Georgetown, DC, 56
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
Sisters of Mary, Georgetown, DC, 56
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
Moses Hall, Gibson Grove, Maryland, 57
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
Loving Charity Hall, Martinsburg, Maryland, 57
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
Independent Order of Odd Fellows Hall, Sandy Spring, Maryland, 57
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
Bell, George, 63
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
Blessed Peter Claver Burial Association, Georgetown, DC, 63
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
Female Union Band Society Cemetery, Georgetown, DC, 63
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
Monticello House Social Club, Georgetown, DC, 63
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
Grand United Order of Odd Fellows Hall, Georgetown, DC, 63
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
Moses Hall, Gibson Grove, Maryland, 64
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
Bankhead, Judi, 64
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
Loving Charity Hall, Martinsburg, Maryland, 64
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
Independent Order of Odd Fellows Hall, Sandy Spring, Maryland, 64
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
Grant-Colfax Club, Georgetown, DC, 137
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
Female Union Band Society Cemetery, Georgetown, DC, 146
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
Blessed Peter Claver Burial Association, Georgetown, DC, 148
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
Ancient United Order of the Sons and Daughters of Moses, Georgetown, DC, 149
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
Union Burial Society of Georgetown Cemetery, Palisades, DC, 155
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
Union Burial Society of Georgetown Cemetery, Palisades, DC, 161

- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
White's Tabernacle, Reno City, DC, 163
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
White's Tabernacle No. 39, Graysville, Maryland, 172
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
Ancient United Order of the Sons and Daughters of
Moses, Reno City, DC, 172
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
Ancient United Order of the Sons and Daughters of
Moses, Graysville, Maryland, 172
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
Ancient United Order of the Sons and Daughters of
Moses, Gibson Grove, Maryland, 172
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
White's Tabernacle No. 39, Graysville, Maryland, 176
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
Ancient United Order of the Sons and Daughters of
Moses, Graysville, Maryland, 176
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
Ancient United Order of the Sons and Daughters of
Moses, Gibson Grove, Maryland, 184
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
Moses Hall, Gibson Grove, Maryland, 185
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
Moses Hall, Gibson Grove, Maryland, 187
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
Moses Hall, Gibson Grove, Maryland, 189
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
Moses Hall, Gibson Grove, Maryland, 189
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
Moses Hall, Gibson Grove, Maryland, 192
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
Ancient United Order of the Sons and Daughters of
Moses, Gibson Grove, Maryland, 224
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
Ancient United Order of the Sons and Daughters of
Moses, Reno City, DC, 224
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
Ancient United Order of the Sons and Daughters of
Moses, Graysville, Maryland, 224
- Benevolent Societies and Social Halls
Female Union Band Society Cemetery, Georgetown, DC,
227
- Berkley, DC, 1, 151
- Boyd's, Maryland, 36, 51, 62
Boyd's Negro School, 51, 63
St. Mark's Church, 51
- Brickyard, Maryland, ix, x, 1, 5, 8, 40, 51, 52, 194, 197, 198,
199, 200, 201, 204, 205, 222, 223, 227
- Blair, Elizabeth, 198
- Bowman, Jarrett, 198
- Cooper, Edward A., 198
- Davis, James M., 198
- Diggs, Horace, 198
- Garner, Lawton, 197
- Gibbs, William, 197, 198
- Grey, Tobias, 198
- Hinkle, Lewis, 198
- Randall, Henry, 198
- Robinson, John, 198
- Sims, Reuben, 198
- Spriggs, John H., 198
- Toney, Alsey, 198
- Toney, Joseph, 197, 198, 200
- Brill, Charles Arthur, 96, 163, 172
- Broad Branch and Rock Creek Ford Roads community, DC,
163
- Brookmont, 96
- Brookmont, Maryland, x, 1, 5, 31, 157, 162, 163, 165, 177,
186, 222, 224
- Battery Bailey, 175
- Belt family, 162, 165
- Green, Samuel, 162
- Harper family, 162, 165, 185
- Lake View Park, viii, 8, 120, 126, 171
- Miner, Thomas, 162
- Riverview Hotel, 167
- Sycamore Island Club, 103, 113
- Williams, George, 162
- Busey, Samuel Clagett, 17, 167, 179, 180
- C&O Canal, viii, ix, 1, 4, 5, 7, 10, 17, 18, 21, 22, 30, 31, 32,
33, 34, 37, 59, 61, 62, 64, 65, 66, 69, 75, 77, 78, 81, 82,
83, 88, 90, 94, 99, 102, 106, 110, 112, 114, 115, 116,
121, 125, 126, 127, 134, 136, 139, 144, 151, 152, 157,
160, 162, 167, 179, 181, 188, 194, 196, 200, 201, 202,
206, 211, 217, 222, 226, 228, 230, 231, 232
- labor riots, 76, 77
- C&O Canal boatmen and captains
- Arnold, Henry, 73, 111
- Bain, Joseph, 106, 113
- Canada brothers, 74, 111
- Cooper, Frank, 74, 110
- Fields, Kirk, 73, 111
- Green, Gertie, 74, 111
- Gustus brothers., 74, 111
- Jenkins, Andrew, 74, 111
- Johnson, J.M., 73, 111
- King, David, 123, 126
- Middleton, Wilson, 73, 111
- Roberson, Louis, 73, 111
- Thomas, John, 73, 111
- Waugh, Joseph, 123, 126
- Whiting, Benjamin, 77, 110
- Williams, Henry, 74, 111
- C&O Canal Company, 6, 10, 17, 23, 31, 32, 39, 64, 66, 67,
70, 72, 73, 78, 81, 86, 95, 99, 107, 108, 109, 110, 112,
113, 114, 122, 126, 194, 195, 228, 229, 230
- C&O Canal laborers

- Garner, George H., 75, 110
Godfrey, John, 67, 110
Koots, Adam, 70, 110
Regin, an axeman, 68, 110
Robert, an axeman, 68, 110
Soloman, George, 67, 110
Soloman, William, 67, 110
Stubblefield, John, 69, 110
Vowell, Joseph, 67, 110
William, an axeman, 67, 110
- C&O Canal Lockkeepers
Ben, 75, 110
Busey, Henry, 95
Davis, Thomas, 208
Pennyfield, George, 33, 62, 78, 211, 218
Selby, Arthur, 211
Violette, Alfred, 86
Ward, Edward L., 33, 207
Waters, Thomas, 208
Wiles, John M., 33
- C&O Canal mule drivers
Fletcher, William, 71, 111
Johnson, Henry, 71, 110
Johnson, James, 71, 110
Turner, Frank, 71, 111
- Cabin John, 170
- Cabin John, Maryland, x, 1, 5, 17, 52, 57, 59, 60, 61, 64, 89, 99, 100, 102, 104, 107, 110, 121, 156, 167, 170, 179, 182, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 192, 196, 203, 223, 226, 231
Bobinger family, 96, 167, 186, 188
Cabin John Aqueduct Bridge, 96, 98, 99, 100, 101, 105, 113, 167, 172, 179, 181
Cabin John Creek, 102, 184
Cabin John Creek, 11
Cabin John Creek, 162
Cabin John Creek, 166
Cabin John Creek, 179
Cabin John Hotel, 96, 97, 100, 105, 113, 163, 167, 186, 188, 189, 190
Cabin John Parkway, 179
Cabin John School. See Seven Locks School, Cabin John
See Seven Locks School, Cabin John
Carver Road, 121, 188, 189, 225
Crab Feast, 121
Seven Locks, 51, 75, 83, 103, 179
Seven Locks Road, 45, 121, 179, 182, 183, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 191, 222, 223
Stoneyhurst Quarry, 83, 111, 186
- Calvert County, Maryland, 21, 119
Capital Beltway, 110
Carderock, Maryland, x, 1, 5, 59, 60, 61, 64, 108, 109, 179, 188, 194, 196, 197, 200, 201, 202, 225, 229, 230, 231
"Camp Carderock", 200
David Taylor Model Basin, 104, 188, 189, 194, 199, 200, 201, 225
Woodside Homes Corporation, 200
Caroline of Williamsport, canal boat, 66, 68, 80, 95, 110, 115, 124, 125
Butler, Henry, 66, 95, 110, 115, 116, 125
Butler, John W., 66, 95, 110, 115, 116, 125
Charles County, Maryland, 23, 26
Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park, viii, 1, 59, 89, 106, 109, 110, 111, 160, 202, 203, 204, 205, 226, 231
Churches, 41
A.M.E. Church of Washington, DC, 42
Alexander Memorial Baptist Church, Georgetown, DC, 43
Alexander Memorial Church, Georgetown, DC, 62
Alexander, Sandy, Reverend, 43, 62, 147
Ball, Chester, Father, 44, 62
Brooke Grove United Methodist Episcopal Church, Pratherstown, Maryland, 36
Ebenezer A.M.E. Church, Georgetown, DC, 137, 147, 161
Ebenezer A.M.E. Church, Georgetown, DC, 42
Elijah Rest Methodist Episcopal Church, Jerusalem, Maryland, 36, 45, 63
Epiphany Catholic Church, Georgetown, DC, 43, 62, 148, 149
First Baptist Church, Georgetown, DC, 43, 62, 147, 161
Gibbon, William, Reverend, 62
Gibbon, William, Reverend, 43
Gibbon, William, Reverend, 147
Gibson Grove A.M.E. Zion Church, 6
Gibson Grove A.M.E. Zion Church, Gibson Grove, Maryland, 184, 186, 189, 191, 192
Grace Episcopal Church, Georgetown, DC, 122, 126, 138, 149
Holy Trinity Catholic Church, Georgetown, DC, 43, 55, 63, 148, 149
Jerusalem Baptist Church, Georgetown, DC, 43, 62, 147
John Wesley A.M.E. Zion Church, DC, 42
Jones, William A., Reverend, 177, 189
Macedonia Baptist Church, Graysville, Maryland, 172, 174, 177
Montgomery Street Methodist Church, Georgetown, DC, 41, 62
Mount Calvary Church, Rockville, Maryland, 177
Mount Glory Baptist Church, Cropley, Maryland, 201, 204
Mount Zion Community House, Georgetown, DC, 141
Mount Zion United Methodist Church, Georgetown, DC, 42, 62, 134, 144, 146, 147, 161
Pleasant View Methodist Episcopal Church, Pleasant View, Maryland, 38, 45, 62

- Poplar Grove Baptist Church, Poplar Grove, Maryland, 39, 45, 63
- Refugee Church of the Lord Jesus Christ Baptist Church, Tobytown, Maryland, 210
- Rock Creek Baptist Church, Reno City, DC, 163
- Scotland A.M.E. Zion Church, Scotland, Maryland, 45, 63
- Sharp Street Church, Sandy Spring, Maryland, 35
- Slade, Robert, Reverend, 40, 62
- St. Mark's Church, Boyds, Maryland, 51
- St. Phillips Church, St. Phillips Hill, DC, 155
- Sugarland Forest Methodist Episcopal Church. See Sugarland, St. Paul's Community Church, Sugarland, Maryland, See Sugarland, St. Paul's Community Church
- Union Wesley A.M.E. Zion Church, DC, 42
- Warren Methodist Episcopal Church, Martinsburg, Maryland, 44, 57, 62
- Civilian Conservation Corps, 59, 60, 61, 64, 106, 109, 188, 199, 201, 230
- Carey, James, 59, 64
- CCC Camp 325, 59, 60, 61, 201
- CCC Camp 333, 59, 60, 61, 201
- Custis, Amos, 60, 64
- Gordon, Edward, 60, 64
- Halsey, Sidney, 60, 64
- Hayman, Bercher Scott, 60, 64
- Johnson, Augustus Buster, 60, 64
- Lewis, Sylvester Neal, 60, 64
- Long, Charles Rushton, 60, 64
- Paige, Nelson Richard, 60, 64
- Quisenbury, Allen Conrad, 61, 64
- Thorpe, Marion A., 60, 64
- White, Charles Augustus, 60, 64
- Williams, Pansy L., 60, 64
- Wilson, Charles Walter, 60
- Claggett, John, 33, 62
- Clara Barton Parkway, 108, 109, 162, 179, 201, 229, 231
- Clarke, Nina Honemond, 6, 12, 27, 34, 57
- Cloud, Abner, 151, 160
- Amey, enslaved, 151
- Betty, enslaved, 151
- Jacob, enslaved, 151
- James, enslaved, 151
- Lydia, enslaved, 152
- Nan, enslaved, 151
- Ned, enslaved, 151
- Rose, enslaved, 151
- Stakes, Jacob, enslaved, 152
- Columbian Foundry. See Foxall Foundry, Palisades, DC, See Foxall Foundry, Palisades, DC
- Conduit Road, 52, 96, 99, 105, 107, 109, 151, 155, 156, 157, 162, 163, 165, 167, 171, 172, 179, 181, 182, 183, 186, 187, 188, 194, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 222, 231
- Contraband Camps, 28, 136, 153, 154, 223
- Duff Green's Row, 29
- Crommelin House. See Great Falls Tavern, See Great Falls Tavern, See Great Falls Tavern, See Great Falls Tavern, See Great Falls Tavern
- Cropley, Maryland, 107, 188, 194, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 224
- Cropley, Arthur Bird, 197, 198
- Cropley, Richard Lambert, 196
- Cropley, Samuel, 196
- Davis, Beverly, 201
- Frye, C., 199
- Haley, John, 201
- Harris, James, 201
- Mount Glory Baptist Church, 201, 204
- Potomac Brick & Tile Company, 197, 198, 199, 201
- Cumberland, Maryland, viii, 18, 84, 94, 109, 122, 123, 126, 228, 231
- Curry, James, 21, 61
- Dorsey, John, 209
- Dr. F.M. Davis, canal boat, 73
- Duffies, Theresa, 29, 62
- E. Madison Hall, excursion boat
- Holmes, J.O., 101, 113
- E. Madison Hall, excursion boat, 101
- E. Madison Hall, excursion boat, 113
- E. Madison Hall, excursion boat, 123
- E. Madison Hall, excursion boat, 126
- Eastern Branch. See Anacostia River, See Anacostia River, See Anacostia River
- Edmondson Family, 24
- Edmondson, Amelia, 61
- Edmondson, Paul, 24, 35, 61
- Educators and Schools
- Becraft, Maria, 63
- Green, Pearl, 47
- Educators and Schools
- Quince Orchard School, Pleasant View, Maryland, 38
- Educators and Schools
- Mason, Joseph T., 47
- Educators and Schools
- Billings, Mary, 47
- Educators and Schools
- Smothers, Henry, 47
- Educators and Schools
- Becraft, Maria, 47
- Educators and Schools
- Fleet, James H., 48
- Educators and Schools
- Brown, Emma V., 48
- Educators and Schools
- Dow, Jesse E., 48

- Educators and Schools
Chain Bridge Road School, Palisades, DC, 48
- Educators and Schools
Chamberlain School, Georgetown, DC, 48
- Educators and Schools
Wormley School, Georgetown, DC, 48
- Educators and Schools
Wormley, James, 48
- Educators and Schools
Phillips School, Georgetown, DC, 49
- Educators and Schools
Fair Hill Seminary, Sandy Spring, Maryland, 49
- Educators and Schools
Martinsburg Negro School, Martinsburg, Maryland, 50
- Educators and Schools
Quince Orchard School, Pleasant View, Maryland, 50
- Educators and Schools
Boyds Negro School, Boyds, Maryland, 51
- Educators and Schools
Seven Locks School, Gibson Grove, Maryland, 51
- Educators and Schools
Rockville Colored High School, Rockville, Maryland, 52
- Educators and Schools
Francis Junior High School, DC, 52
- Educators and Schools
Dunbar High School, DC, 52
- Educators and Schools
Armstrong Vocational School, DC, 52
- Educators and Schools
National Training School for Girls, Palisades, DC, 53
- Educators and Schools
Phillips-Wormley consolidated school, Georgetown, DC, 53
- Educators and Schools
Martinsburg Negro School, Martinsburg, Maryland, 57
- Educators and Schools
Mason, Joseph T., 63
- Educators and Schools
Smothers, Henry, 63
- Educators and Schools
Fleet, James H., 63
- Educators and Schools
Chain Bridge Road School, Palisades, DC, 63
- Educators and Schools
Chamberlain School, Georgetown, DC, 63
- Educators and Schools
Wormley School, Georgetown, DC, 63
- Educators and Schools
Wormley, James, 63
- Educators and Schools
Phillips School, Georgetown, DC, 63
- Educators and Schools
Fair Hill Seminary, Sandy Spring, Maryland, 63
- Educators and Schools
Martinsburg Negro School, Martinsburg, Maryland, 63
- Educators and Schools
Boyds Negro School, Boyds, Maryland, 63
- Educators and Schools
Seven Locks School, Gibson Grove, Maryland, 63
- Educators and Schools
Green, Pearl, 63
- Educators and Schools
Quince Orchard School, Pleasant View, Maryland, 63
- Educators and Schools
Rockville Colored High School, Rockville, Maryland, 63
- Educators and Schools
Francis Junior High School, DC, 63
- Educators and Schools
Dunbar High School, DC, 63
- Educators and Schools
Armstrong Vocational School, DC, 63
- Educators and Schools
National Training School for Girls, Palisades, DC, 63
- Educators and Schools
Chamberlain School, Georgetown, DC, 140
- Educators and Schools
Chain Bridge Road School, Palisades, DC, 155
- Educators and Schools
Chain Bridge Road School, Palisades, DC, 155
- Educators and Schools
Chain Bridge Road School, Palisades, DC, 158
- Educators and Schools
Chain Bridge Road School, Palisades, DC, 161
- Educators and Schools
Phillips-Wormley consolidated school, Georgetown, DC, 161
- Educators and Schools
National Training School for Girls, Palisades, DC, 171
- Educators and Schools
Seven Locks School, Gibson Grove, Maryland, 183
- Educators and Schools
Seven Locks School, Gibson Grove, Maryland, 187
- Educators and Schools
Seven Locks School, Gibson Grove, Maryland, 189
- Edward's Ferry, Maryland, 1, 18, 32, 76
- Ellington, Duke, 141
- Fauquier County, Virginia, 102
- Federal Housing Administration (FHA), 142, 165
- Fleetwood, Christian A., 26, 62
- Foundry Branch, 61, 109, 156, 230
- Foxhall Village, DC, 1, 151, 156, 157
- Frederick County, Maryland, 10, 60, 74, 111, 195
- Catoctin Iron Furnace, 90, 112
- Freedmen's Bureau, 29, 48, 153, 161
- Freedman's Village at Arlington, 29, 223
- Garrett County, Maryland, 88
- George Washington Memorial Parkway, viii, 59, 108, 109, 229, 231

- Georgetown, 8, 42, 90, 92, 113
Herring Hill, 125, 137
- Georgetown, DC, viii, ix, x, 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 11, 18, 20, 26, 32, 33, 41, 43, 47, 48, 52, 55, 56, 62, 63, 64, 65, 68, 71, 74, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 84, 86, 87, 88, 89, 91, 92, 96, 97, 99, 102, 103, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 117, 121, 123, 124, 126, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 139, 140, 141, 142, 144, 150, 151, 153, 156, 157, 160, 161, 180, 182, 190, 194, 196, 217, 222, 225, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231
- Alexander Memorial Baptist Church, 43
Alexander Memorial Church, 62
Beattie's Auction House and Slave Pen, 132
Bell's Court, now Pomander Walk, 137, 140, 143, 222
Blue Mouse Theater, 141
Boston, 137, 138, 223
Brickyard Hill, 138, 149
Brinetown, 137, 141, 222
Cecil (or Cissel) Alley, 140, 142
Chamberlain School, 48, 63, 140
Cherry Street, now Grace Street, 135, 138, 223
Ebenezer A.M.E. Church, 137, 147, 161
Epiphany Catholic Church, 43, 62, 148, 149
Female Union Band Society Cemetery, 63, 146, 227
Female Union Band Society Cemetery, 55
First Baptist Church, 43, 62, 147, 161
Grace Episcopal Church, 122, 126, 138, 149
Grand United Order of Odd Fellows Hall, 56
Grant-Colfax Club, 137
Herring Hill, ix, 2, 8, 48, 49, 79, 135, 137, 141, 222
Holy Trinity Catholic Church, 43, 55, 63, 148, 149
Jerusalem Baptist Church, 43, 62, 147
Lee Feed & Grain, 80, 111
Market House, 56, 79, 111, 124, 133, 135, 223
Marshall, Charles, III, 107, 113
Montgomery Street Methodist Church, 41, 62
Montgomery Tavern, 132
Mount Zion Community House, 141
Mount Zion United Methodist Church, 42, 62, 134, 144, 146, 147, 161
Phillips School, 49, 63
Poplar Alley, now Street, 137, 140, 143, 222
Potomac Street, 135, 223
Potomac Street, 143
Pride's Pharmacy, 141
Rock Court, 140, 143
Rose Park Playground, 141, 143, 149
Semmes' Tavern, 132
Sugar Hill, ix, 8, 33, 34, 62, 223, 225
Volta Place, 140
Volta Place, 133, 135
Volta Place, 143
Volta Place, 222
- waterfront, 29, 62, 78, 79, 93, 112, 124, 126, 132, 135, 137, 138, 144
Waterfront Park, 34
Wormley School, 48, 63
- Gibson Grove, Maryland, ix, x, 1, 5, 6, 8, 40, 51, 52, 64, 121, 176, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 222, 223, 224, 226, 227
- Carter, Henry, 182, 185
Carter, Peter, 182
Carter, Robert, 186
Charles H. Brown, 176, 182, 185, 188, 189
Coats, Dennis, 182
Coats, James, 182, 185, 192
Crawford, James, 185
Franklin, Anna, 185
Franklin, James, 185
Gibson Grove A.M.E. Zion Church, 6, 184, 186, 189, 191, 192
Gibson, Louis, 192
Gibson, Robert, 182, 183, 192
Gibson, Sarah, 182, 183, 184, 185, 192
Harper, Frank, 185
Harper, Matilda, 185
Harris, Charles, 182, 185
Holmes, Peter, 182
Jackson, Lloyd, 182, 185
Jackson, Philip, 182, 185
Jones, Dorcas, 185
Jones, Edward Earnest, 188
Jones, Emma, 185, 188, 192
Jones, Irene V., 188
Jones, Odelia, 186
Jones, Peter, 182, 185
Jones, Robert, 185, 188
Mason, Eugene, 186
Mason, Jennie, 185
Moses Hall, 6, 52, 54, 57, 64, 185, 187, 189, 192
Richards, Lucy, 185, 186
Richards, Silas, 182, 185, 186
Scott, George, 182, 185
Seven Locks School, 51, 63, 183, 187, 189
Smith, Joseph W., 186
Smith, Louise Magruder, 186
Smith, Panya Caryl, 186
Steward, Henry, 185
Walker, Frances, 185
Washington, Lewis, 185
- Glen Echo, 169
Glen Echo Heights, 164
- Glen Echo, Maryland, viii, x, 1, 5, 8, 97, 99, 100, 101, 103, 109, 113, 120, 157, 162, 163, 165, 166, 167, 170, 171, 172, 177, 179, 185, 188, 231
- Amusement Park, 167, 168, 169, 176, 227
Chautauqua Assembly, 97, 165, 166, 167, 169, 176

- Clara Barton House National Historic Site, 185, 191
Glen Echo Heights, ix, 8, 165, 166, 167, 177, 222, 224
Jones Hotel, viii, 8, 171, 172
Jones Park, 120, 172
Jones, Moses, hotel proprietor, 163, 171
Nonviolent Action Group (NAG), 168, 169
Watson's Park, 170
Graysville, Maryland, ix, x, 5, 8, 162, 163, 165, 172, 173,
174, 176, 177, 187, 222, 223, 224, 227
Boswell, Dennis, 163
Brown, Richard, 163
Burley, John, 163, 177
Clipper, Isaac, 173
Coleman, George F., 173
Dotson, Frank, 176
Dotson, Katie, 176
Frye, George, 163, 177, 182, 185
Gray, Charlotte, 163
Gray, Daniel, 163, 182
Gray, Frank, 163
Hall, John, 163
Hardesty, Thomas, 163
Jackson, Henry, 163
Kinslow, George, 163
Lancaster, Frank, 173
Macedonia Baptist Church, 172, 174, 177
Matthews, Harvey M., 107, 113, 173
Noland, James, 163
Rivers, Jane, 163
Smothers, Moses, 163
Turner, Martin, 163
Warren, Nelson, 163
Warren, William, 163
Watkins, Ella, 174
White's Tabernacle No. 39, 172, 176
Wood, Andrew A., 173
Wood, Daniel W., 173
Wood, Frank W., 173
Wood, Nelson, 163
Great Falls, 28, 106, 124, 203
Great Falls, Maryland, x, 1, 5, 11, 16, 30, 61, 78, 83, 89, 90,
93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 101, 106, 107, 109, 112, 113,
132, 157, 181, 188, 190, 194, 196, 201, 202, 203, 205,
224, 228, 230, 231
Angler's Inn, 107, 113
Blaubock, Carl, 97, 120
Falls Road, 194, 196, 203
Great Falls Ice Company, 80, 111, 196
Great Falls Tavern, 81, 95, 96, 98, 113, 120, 196, 202,
204
Six Locks, 194
Stonington, 16
Hagerstown, Maryland, 22, 76, 95, 106
Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, 94, 228
Hebron Family
Hebron, Henry, 12, 78, 111
Hebron, Patrick, Jr., 44, 62, 77
Henson, Josiah, 15, 16, 17, 61
Holmes, Susan, 33, 62
Hotels and Resorts
Cabin John Hotel, Cabin John, Maryland, 96, 100, 105,
113, 163, 167
Glen Echo, Maryland, 97, 113
Great Falls Tavern, Great Falls, Maryland, 95, 98, 113,
196, 202, 204
Green Spring Pavilion, Palisades, DC, 97, 113, 156
Jones Hotel, Glen Echo, Maryland, viii, 8, 171, 172
Riverview Hotel, Brookmont, Maryland, 167
Rock Spring Club, Rock Spring, Maryland, 96, 113, 163,
167
Howard County, Maryland, 27
Jersusalem, Maryland, 36
Jerusalem, Maryland, 62
Elijah Rest Methodist Episcopal Church, 36, 45, 63
Love and Charity Hall, 57
Loving Charity Hall, 36
Johnson, Benjamin, 123, 126
Johnson, Philip, 41
Johnson, Phillip, 18, 30, 44, 61
Johnstown Flood, 39, 64, 74, 114, 139, 229
Jones, Moses, 163, 171
Jones, William, 33, 62
Katherine Jackson, slave ship, 134
Leisure and Social Clubs
Angler's Inn, Great Falls, Maryland, 107, 113
Capital Bicycle Club, DC, 105
Capital Pleasure Club, DC, 120, 126
Century Cycle Club, DC, 105
Clark, Capt. S.M., 106, 113
Columbia Association, DC, 171
Columbia Boat Club, Georgetown, DC, 113
Columbia Boat Club, Georgetown, DC, 103
Crab Feast, Cabin John, Maryland, 121
Crescent Fishing Club, DC, 107
Cross Country Cycle Club, DC, 105, 113
Hotel Cycle, Montgomery County, Maryland, 105, 113
Potomac Boat Club, Georgetown, DC, 103, 113
Sycamore Island Club, Brookmont, Maryland, 103, 113
Washington Canoe Club, Georgetown, DC, 103, 113
Washington Wanderlusters, DC, 103
Lewis, Jesse W., Jr., 213, 215
Lock 0. See Tide Lock, See Tide Lock, See Tide Lock, See
Tide Lock
Lock 10, 61
Lock 12, 95
Lock 13, 109, 231
Lock 14, 81, 179, 200
Lock 15, 61, 81, 194

- Lock 16, 61, 195
Lock 17, 195
Lock 19, 95
Lock 20, 95, 194
Lock 21. See Swain's Lock, See Swain's Lock, See Swain's Lock
Lock 22. See Pennyfield's Lock, See Pennyfield's Lock, See Pennyfield's Lock, See Pennyfield's Lock, See Pennyfield's Lock, See Pennyfield's Lock
Lock 23. See Violette's Lock, See Violette's Lock
Lock 24, 18, See Riley's Lock
Lock 25, 18, 32
Lock 26, 83
Lock 29, 109, 230
Lock 5, 61, 64, 108, 109, 162, 228, 229, 231, See Palisades, DC, Little Falls
Lock 6, 31, 162
Lock 7, 61, 109, 162, 231
Lock 8, 179
Loudoun County, Virginia, 23, 73
Louisa County, Virginia, 23
MacArthur Boulevard. See Conduit Road, See Conduit Road, See Conduit Road, See Conduit Road, See Conduit Road, See Conduit Road, See Conduit Road
Maddox Branch, 86, 103
Maddox, William A.T., 152, 153
Mamout, Aquilla, 131
Mamout, Yarrow, 131, 132, 134
Martin Family
 Martin, Adeline, 207
 Martin, Ailsie/Elsie, 206
 Martin, Alfred, 180
 Martin, Artelia, 207
 Martin, Charity, 180
 Martin, Charles, 209, 211
 Martin, Clem, 209, 211
 Martin, Clem, Jr., 211, 213, 214
 Martin, Cliff, 211
 Martin, David W., 211
 Martin, George B., 209
 Martin, Hanson, 207
 Martin, Jesse, 207
 Martin, Julia, 208
 Martin, Lavinia, 207
 Martin, Leonard, 211
 Martin, Mary, 207
 Martin, Massey, 207
 Martin, Melvin, 216
 Martin, Michael, 207
 Martin, Michael, Jr., 207
 Martin, Molly, 207
 Martin, Nathan, 12, 207
 Martin, Octavia, 207
 Martin, Polly, 207
 Martin, Robert A., 211, 212
 Martin, Samuel, 12, 206, 207
 Martin, Samuel, Jr., 207, 208
 Martin, Scott, 211
 Martin, Thomas, 33, 62, 207
 Martin, Tobias, 206, 208, 209
 Martin, Virginia, 207
 Martin, William, 207
 Martin, William Clarence, 211
Martinsburg, Maryland, 36, 38, 44, 57, 62
 Bell, Scott, carpenter, 44, 57
 Loving Charity Hall, 38, 57, 64
 Martinsburg Negro School, 50, 57, 63
 Naylor, Nathan, 62
 Naylor, Nathan, 38
 Warren Historic Site, 38
 Warren Methodist Episcopal Church, 44, 57, 62
 Warren, Isaac, 44, 62
Maryland Gold Mine, 89, 112, 196, 203
Mason's Island. See Analostan Island
McCandless' Tavern. See Semmes' Tavern, Georgetown, DC
McKinney, Frank Dalvert, 102, 163, 187
Michaux, Solomon Lightfoot, Elder, 123, 126
Millers
 Darby, Upton, 78, 82, 87
 DuFief, John L., 78, 208, 217, 218
Mills and Kilns
 Bell's Old Mill, Montgomery County, Maryland, 86, 112, 208
 Bomford Mill, Georgetown, DC, 87, 112
 Castleman Lime Kiln, Rock Creek, DC, 84, 112
 DuFief's Mill, Travilah, Maryland, 208, 217, 218
 Edes Mill, Palisades, DC, 86, 112, 151
 Gambrells Grist and Saw Mill, Montgomery County, Maryland, 86, 112
 Godey Lime Kilns, Rock Creek, DC, 84, 112
 Old Paper Mill, Potomac, Maryland, 86, 112
 Potomac Mill, Shepherdstown, West Virginia, 84, 112
 R.E. Duvall's Mill, Georgetown, DC, 87, 112
 Seneca Columbia Flouring Mill, Georgetown, DC, 86, 112
 Seneca Stone Cutting Mill, Seneca, Maryland, 85, 86, 112, 217
 Shafer's Cement, Washington County, Maryland, 84, 112
 Thomas Brown's Gristmill, Georgetown, DC, 87, 112
 Thomas J. Davis's Flour Mill, Georgetown, DC, 87, 112
Mines, Foundries, and Coal or Ice Companies
 Antietam Iron Works, Washington County, Maryland, 19, 90, 112
 Catoctin Iron Furnace, Frederick County, Maryland, 90, 112

- Cumberland Coal and Iron Company, Georgetown, DC, 89, 112
Duvall Foundry, Georgetown, DC, 91
Ford Gold Mine, Potomac, Maryland, 90, 112
Foxall Foundry, Palisades, DC, 81, 90, 91, 112, 122, 126, 151, 160
Great Falls Ice Company, Great Falls, Maryland, 80, 111, 196
Maryland Gold Mine, Potomac, Maryland, 89, 112, 196, 203
Potomac Cotton Foundry, Georgetown, DC, 92, 112
Rock Run Gold Mines, Travilah, Maryland, 218
Swanton Coal and Ice Company, Georgetown, DC, 89, 112
Watson Gold Mine, Potomac, Maryland, 90, 112
Montgomery County Maryland
Rockville Electoral District, 89
Montgomery County, Early African American Property Owners
Bowen, Charles, 12
Bowen, Henry, 12
Bowen, Samuel, 12
Montgomery County, Early African American Property Owners
Freeman, John, 12
Montgomery County, Early African American Property Owners
Jones, James, 12
Montgomery County, Early African American Property Owners
Johnson, Benjamin, 12
Montgomery County, Early African American Property Owners
Johnson, Nancy, 12
Montgomery County, Early African American Property Owners
Lancaster, Charles, 12
Montgomery County, Early African American Property Owners
Martin, Samuel, 12
Montgomery County, Early African American Property Owners
Price, Thomas, 12
Montgomery County, Early African American Property Owners
Martin, Nathan, 12
Montgomery County, Early African American Property Owners
Bowman, Richard, 12
Montgomery County, Early African American Property Owners
Butler, Sarah, 12
Montgomery County, Early African American Property Owners
Butler, Henry, 12
Montgomery County, Early African American Property Owners
Hebron, Henry, 12
Montgomery County, Early African American Property Owners
Allen, Samuel, 12
Montgomery County, Early African American Property Owners
Johnson, William, 12
Montgomery County, Early African American Property Owners
Fowman, Glasco, 12
Montgomery County, Early African American Property Owners
Butler, Terry, 12
Montgomery County, Early African American Property Owners
Carroll, Kitty, 15
Montgomery County, Early African American Property Owners
Warren, Margaret, 15
Montgomery County, Early African American Property Owners
Martin, Samuel, 206
Montgomery County, Early African American Property Owners
Martin, Samuel, 206
Montgomery County, Early African American Property Owners
Martin, Samuel, 206
Montgomery County, Early African American Property Owners
Warren, Margaret, 207
Montgomery County, Early African American Property Owners
Martin, Samuel, 207
Montgomery County, Maryland, viii, 1, 4, 6, 11, 16, 17, 24, 26, 27, 34, 35, 36, 37, 39, 44, 45, 49, 50, 52, 53, 57, 59, 61, 62, 63, 65, 69, 77, 78, 80, 82, 83, 85, 86, 89, 91, 96, 97, 99, 100, 101, 107, 111, 113, 119, 120, 131, 134, 152, 157, 161, 162, 163, 165, 173, 175, 179, 181, 185, 189, 191, 194, 196, 206, 209, 210, 213, 217, 218, 219, 222, 223, 224, 226
Berry Electoral District, 11, 24, 27
Bethesda Electoral District, 11
Cracklin Electoral District, 11, 27
Darnestown Electoral District, 11, 78, 80, 111, 207, 209, 211, 213, 217
Medley Electoral District, 11, 27, 206, 208, 218
Potomac Electoral District, 11, 96, 198
Rockville Electoral District, 11, 12, 17, 27, 68, 78, 80, 180, 206, 207, 208, 218, 219
Moore, John D.W., 51, 83, 182, 183, 185, 187, 189, 223

- Randolph, Wesley, 36, 62
Ross, James, 35, 62
Prince George's County, Maryland, 23, 217
Proctor, Daniel, 27, 62
Quarries
Aquia Creek Quarry, Stafford County, Virginia, 69, 82, 111
Cedar Point Quarry, Montgomery County, Maryland, 83, 111
Little Falls, Palisades, DC, 82
Potomac Bluestone Quarry, Palisades, DC, 83, 111
Potomac Marble Quarry, White's Ferry, Maryland, 83, 111
Seneca Quarry, Seneca, Maryland, 11, 33, 37, 69, 82, 98, 111, 190, 204
Stoneyhurst Quarry, Cabin John, Maryland, 83, 111, 186
White Quarry, Frederick County, Maryland, 81, 111
Reno City, DC, ix, 173, 176, 223, 224, 226
Rock Creek Baptist Church, 163
White's Tabernacle, 163
Restrictive deed covenants, 141, 158, 166, 186, 200, 201, 224
Riley's Lock, 30
River Road, 2, 30, 45, 83, 86, 107, 162, 165, 172, 173, 174, 177, 179, 182, 183, 194, 196, 206, 208, 209, 219, 222
Robbins, Wayne, 107, 113
Rock Creek, 74, 84, 102, 112, 123, 149
Castleman Lime Kiln, 84, 112
Godey Lime Kilns, 84, 112
Rock Spring, Maryland, x, 5, 96, 113, 162, 163, 165, 167, 177, 222, 224
Anderson, William, 164, 165
Beckley, Andrew, 163, 165
Bock, Frank, 163
Carter, Charlotte, 164, 165
Carter, John H., 165
Clipper, William, 164, 165
Coates, Alice, 165
Coates, Jackson, 164, 165
Coates, John, 163
Crawford, John, 165
Ford, Rose, 163
Fry, William, 163
Harris, George, 165
Harris, James A., 164, 165
Harris, Lewis, 165
Harris, Peter C., 164, 165
Harrod, Robert, 163
Hopkins, Elizabeth, 164, 165
Kinslow, Frank, 164, 165
Kinslow, George, 165
Kinslow, Lewis, 164, 165
Lewis, Rolly, 163
Miner, Thomas, 165
Neal, John, 165
Peter, Major H., 165
Prior, Richard W., 165
Pryor, Richard W., 164
Randall, William, 163
Rock Spring Club, 96, 113, 163, 167
Smothers, Victoria, 164, 165
Spotford, Edward, 165
Stewart, Walter, 165
Stiner, Conroy, 164, 165
Toney, Charles, 164, 165
Toney, George, 163
Warren, Susan, 164, 165
Webster, Joseph, 165
Williams, Douglas L., 164, 165
Rosenwald Schools, 50, 52, 63, 172
Rushville. See Seneca, Maryland, Berryville, See Seneca, Maryland, Berryville, See Seneca, Maryland, Berryville
Sandy Spring, Maryland, 35, 49, 52, 57, 62, 63, 119, 172
Fair Hill Seminary, 49, 63
Independent Order of Odd Fellows Hall, 57
Independent Order of Odd Fellows Hall, 64
Schools, 47
Scotland, Maryland, 6, 39, 52, 62, 80, 191
Scotland A.M.E. Zion Church, 45, 63
Scurlock, Addison, 93, 112
Scurlock, George Clay, 93, 112
Scurlock, Mamie Fearing, 93, 112
Selden Island, 18
Self-liberators on the C&O Canal
Addison, Ben, 22, 61
Bill, 23, 61
Dowling, Elias, 23, 61
Henry, 23, 61
Jackson, Rufus, 22, 61
Simmes, Robert, 23, 61
Seneca, Maryland, viii, 18, 30, 33, 51, 62, 78, 82, 86, 87, 95, 109, 110, 196, 228, 230, 231
Berryville, 32, 62
Seneca Creek, 11, 32, 35, 37, 68, 69, 82, 89, 119, 207, 209
Seneca Quarry, 11, 33, 37, 69, 82, 98, 111, 190, 204
Seneca Stone Cutting Mill, 85, 86, 112, 217
Shap Spring Island, 31
Sharpsburg, Maryland, 73
Tolson Chapel, Sharpsburg, 73, 111
Shepherdstown, West Virginia, 84
Potomac Mill, 84, 112
Skedaddler, canal boat
Dorsey, J.C., 99
Skedaddler, canal boat, 99
Skedaddler, canal boat, 101
St. Phillips Hill, DC, 161

- St. Phillips Hill, DC, ix, x, 2, 5, 8, 153, 155, 158, 159, 161
Barnes, G. Henry, 155
Blackwell family, 153, 154, 155
Cusberd, Daniel, 153, 155
Edwards family, 153
Hayes, Jacob, 153, 154, 155
Honesty, Daniel, 155, 159
Jones family, 153
Lee family, 155
Nero, George, 155
Peters, William, 153, 154, 155
Sephes/Cephus, John, 153, 155, 161
St. Phillips Church, 155
Williams, Silvy, 155
- St. Phillips Hill, DC, 222
- St. Phillips Hill, DC, 223
- St. Phillips Hill, DC
Sephes/Cephus, John, 223
- St. Phillips Hill, DC
Blackwell family, 223
- St. Phillips Hill, DC, 223
- St. Phillips Hill, DC, 226
- St. Phillips Hill, DC, 227
- Stafford County, Virginia, 69
- Still, William, 195
- Stone, Lilly Moore, 83, 186, 189
- Stowe, Harriet Beecher, 16
- Stuart, Rex, 141
- Sugarland, Maryland, 31, 36, 37, 38, 39, 44, 50, 52, 62, 77, 124
Bell, Scott, carpenter, 44
Diggs, John H., 44, 62
Hebron, Patrick, Jr., 44, 62, 77
St. Paul's Community Church, 44, 62
Taylor, William, 44, 62
- Swain, Otho, 114, 115
- Swain's Lock, 1, 115, 206
- Swedenburg, Celeste, 121, 174
- Sycamore Island, 102
- Tenleytown, DC, 31, 176
- Terrell, Mary Church, 99, 113
- the Palisades, 97, 171
- Theodore Roosevelt Island. See Analostan Island
- Tibbs, Lillian Evans, 99, 113
- Tiber Creek, 64, 228
- Tide Lock, 1, 68, 109
- Tobytown, 113
- Tobytown, Maryland, ix, x, 1, 5, 6, 8, 39, 40, 51, 52, 63, 107, 174, 189, 206, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 222, 224, 226, 227
Beckett, Jack, 209
Butler, Robert, 207
Carroll, Nancy, 207
Cemetery, 215, 219
- Chambers, Albert, 213
- Chambers, Ethel, 213
- Claggett, John, 208
- Davis, Beavley, 209
- Davis, Carrie, 211
- Davis, Charles, 211, 219
- Davis, Ernest, 211, 213
- Davis, Henson, 211, 213, 214, 219
- Davis, Maggie, 213
- Davis, Marion, 213
- Davis, William, 206, 208, 211
- Davis, William McKinley, III, 213
- Genies/Genus, Emory, 206, 208, 209
- Genies/Genus, Ida, 211
- Genies/Genus, Richard, 211
- Humes, Ben L., 211
- Jackson, George, 211
- Jackson, Hall, 208, 209
- Jackson, Matilda, 211
- Johnson, Alice, 211
- Johnson, James, 209
- Johnson, William, 213
- Jones, Tom, 211
- Lynch, Andrew, 211
- Martin, Ailsie/Elsie, 206
- Martin, Charles, 209, 211
- Martin, Clem, 209, 211
- Martin, Clem, Jr., 211, 213, 214
- Martin, Cliff, 211
- Martin, George B., 209
- Martin, Julia, 208
- Martin, Leonard, 211
- Martin, Melvin, 216
- Martin, Robert A., 211, 212
- Martin, Scott, 211
- Martin, Tobias, 206, 208, 209
- Martin, William Clarence, 211
- Norris, John, 207
- Refugee Church of the Lord Jesus Christ Baptist Church, 210
- Shaw, Phyllis, 213
- Smackum, Jesse, 209
- Smith, Ann, 207
- Smith, Katy, 207
- Spelman, Lewis, 207
- Stewart, Eliza, 208
- Stewart, Frank, 211
- Stewart, Hamilton, 208
- Thomas, Henson, 209
- Thomas, John, 209
- Thomas, Perry, 209
- Turner, John, 211
- Turner, Reason, 211
- Waters, Thomas, 208

- Williams, Clarice, 213
Williams, Kink, 213
Travilah, Maryland, x, 1, 5, 35, 38, 86, 206, 208, 209, 210,
211, 214, 217, 218
Lair, Will F., 211
Martin, David W., 211
McDonald, Clarence J., 211
Palmer, Edward, 213
Palmer, Harry, 211
Rock Run Gold Mines, 218
Thomas, Herman, 213
Trollope, Frances, 16, 120
Underground Railroad, 21, 134, 146, 195
United States Colored Troops, 26, 73
Violette's Lock, 83
Waldo Hutchins, canal boat, 76
Walker, Roumania Peters, 141, 150
Washington & Great Falls Electric Railway, 99, 101, 105,
156, 171, 172, 176, 186
Washington Aqueduct, 113, 152, 156, 179, 181, 182, 186,
188, 190, 196, 198, 204, 224
Gatehouse, 196, 204
Washington City Canal, 64, 228
Washington County, DC, 156
Washington County, Maryland, 19, 72, 76, 84, 90, 131
Antietam Iron Works, 19, 90, 112
Ferry Hill Plantation, 72, 111
Shafer's Cement, 84, 112
Watt's Branch, 86, 131, 206, 218
Weyand Doerner, canal boat, 73, 111
White Ground. See Boyds, See Boyds
White, Bill, 96, 113, 121, 186, 188, 189
White, Joseph Gustavus, 96, 179, 223
Aunt Hannah, enslaved, 179
Cato, enslaved, 180
Frank, enslaved, 180
Lewis, enslaved, 180
Martin, Alfred, enslaved, 180, 181
Martin, Charity, enslaved, 180
Stony Lonesome, 179, 180, 181
Tom, enslaved, 180
Uncle Will, enslaved, 179
Yi, enslaved, 180
White, Joseph Gustavus, 180
White, Samuel Chiswell, 30
White, Stephen Newton Chiswell, 18
White's Ferry, Maryland, 2, 38
Wilkins-Rogers Milling Company. See Mills and Kilns,
Bomford Mill, Georgetown, DC, See Mills and Kilns,
Bomford Mill, Georgetown, DC, See Mills and Kilns,
Bomford Mill, Georgetown, DC
Williamsport, Maryland, 21, 69, 71, 76, 88, 106, 115