Montgomery County, Maryland's
Historic African-American Communities

LISTING

MAP

IMAGES

BENEVOLENT SOCIETIES

BASEBALL TEAMS

Compiled by
Ralph Buglass

February 2025

Montgomery County's Historic African-American Communities

	Church	School	Community Hall	Cemetery	Business Area
Alabama					
Alta Vista					
Avery Road				x	
Batson/Brogden/Oak Hill Roads	x			x	
Berryville	x				
Bethesda/Miller's Flats	x				
Big Woods/Sellman	x	x	x	x[1]	
Blocktown					
Blue Mash/Jackson City	x			x	
Boyds/White Grounds	x	x	x	x	
Brickyard/Cropley	x	x[2]		x[3]	
Brighton	x	x	x		
Brook Grove	x	x	x	x	x[4]
Brookmont					
Brownstown	x	x		x	
Cabin John/Gibson Grove	x	x[2,5]	x	x[1]	
Cincinnati/Brinklow		x		x	
Davis Corner					
Dimes Road				x	x
Dogtown					
Ebenezer	x			x	
Emory Grove	x	x	x	x[1]	x
Etchison/Fairview	x	x			
Friendship/Damascus	x	x		x	
Good Hope	x			x	
Great Falls Road					
Haiti				x	
Hawkins Lane					
Hines Road					
Holly Grove/Norwood					
Hyattstown	x	x[2]			
Jerusalem	x	x		x	
Jonesville					
Ken Gar	x (2)	x			
Lincoln Park	x (2)	x		x[1]	x
Lyttonsville/Linden	x	x	x	x[3]	x
Martinsburg	x	x	x	x	x
Metropolitan Grove		x			
Montrose					
Mount Ephraim[6]	x	x		x	
Mount Pleasant/Norbeck	x	x	x		

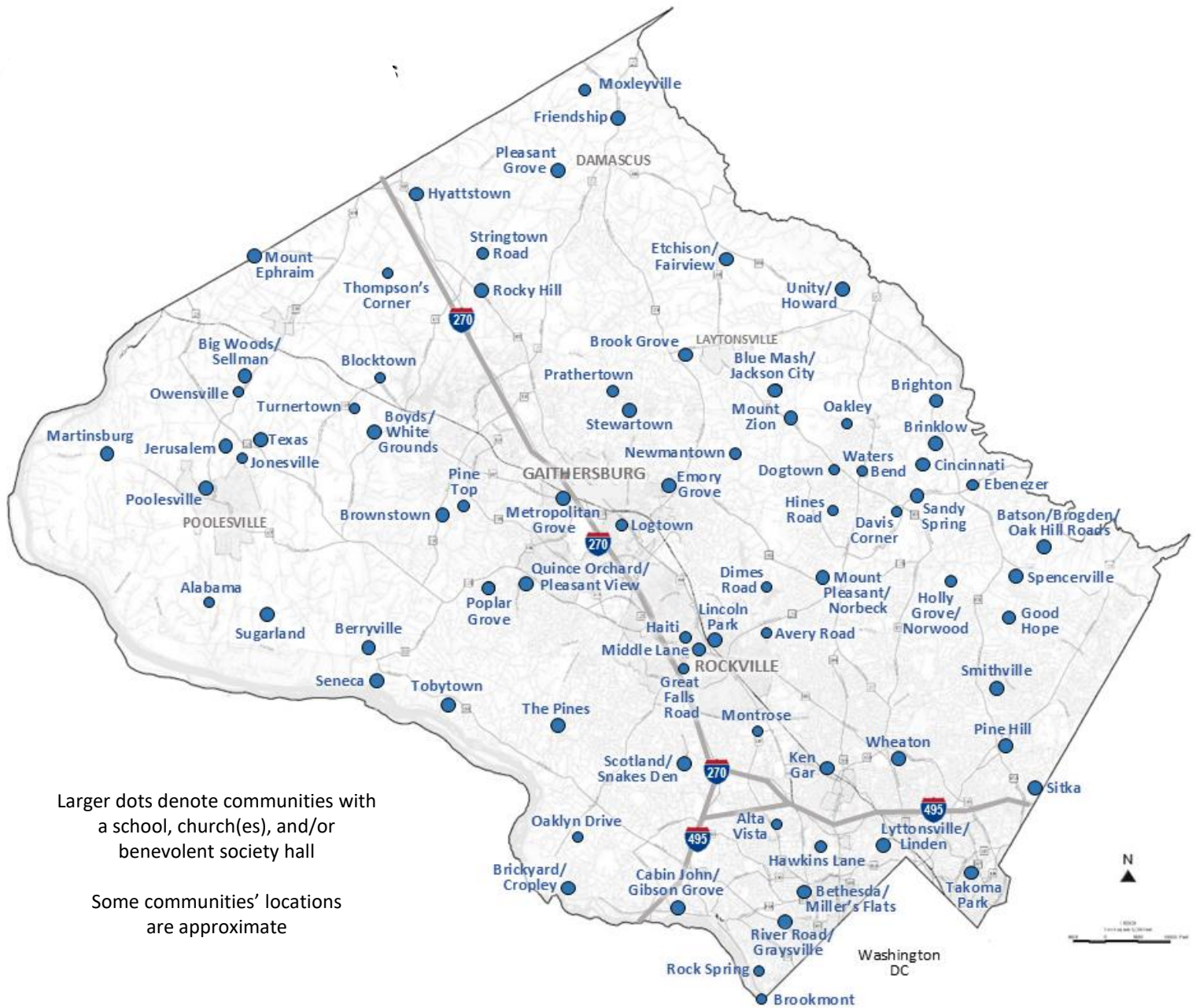|	Church	School	Community Hall	Cemetery	Business Area
Mount Zion	x	x	x	x	x[4]
Moxleyville/Claggettsville					
Newmantown					
Oakley					
Oaklyn Drive					
Owensville					
Pine Hill	x	x			
Pine Top					
The Pines	x	x[2]		x	
Pleasant Grove	x	x[2]			
Poolesville	x	x[5]	x	x	
Poplar Grove	x			x	
Prathertown					x[7]
Quince Orchard	x	x		x	
River Road/Graysville	x	x	x	x	
Rock Spring					
Rockville/Middle Lane	x (2)	x	x		x
Rocky Hill	x	x		x	
Sandy Spring	x	x	x	x[1] (2)	
Scotland/Snakes Den	x (2)	x	x	x	
Seneca	x	x		x	
Sitka	x			x[3]	
Smithville		x			
Spencerville	x	x	x	x	x[4]
Stewardtown	x	x	x		
Stringtown Road					
Sugarland	x	x		x	
Takoma Park	x	x			
Texas/Old Union		x[5]	x		
Thompson's Corner					
Tobytown	x (2)	x[2]		x	
Turnertown					
Unity/Howard	x	x		x	
Waters Bend				x	
Wheaton	x	x		x	

Communities with no x's are residential only

1. Cemetery not adjacent to church
2. School met in church
3. Cemetery unmarked or graves relocated
4. Mostly one small general store—a convenience store, in today's terminology
5. School met in community hall
6. Institutions located in Frederick County; community extended slightly into Montgomery County
7. Black and White Inn located at 20611 Goshen Rd. (considered part of Prathertown community; only overnight accommodations in Montgomery County for Black travelers until mid-20th century)

Montgomery County's Historic African-American Communities

Moxleyville

Friendship

Pleasant Grove   DAMASCUS

Hyattstown

Stringtown Road

Etchison/ Fairview

Mount Ephraim

Thompson's Corner

Rocky Hill

Unity/ Howard

Big Woods/ Sellman

Blocktown

Brook Grove   LAYTONSVILLE

Blue Mash/ Jackson City

Prathertown

Brighton

Owensville

Turnertown

Boyds/ White Grounds

Stewartown

Mount Zion

Oakley

Brinklow

Martinsburg   Jerusalem

Texas

Jonesville

Newmantown

Dogtown

Waters Bend

Cincinnati

Ebenezer

Poolesville

POOLESVILLE

Pine Top

Brownstown

GAITHERSBURG

Emory Grove

Hines Road

Davis Corner

Sandy Spring

Batson/Brogden/ Oak Hill Roads

Metropolitan Grove

Logtown

Alabama

Poplar Grove

Quince Orchard/ Pleasant View

Dimes Road

Mount Pleasant/ Norbeck

Holly Grove/ Norwood

Spencerville

Good Hope

Sugarland

Berryville

Haiti

Middle Lane

Lincoln Park

Avery Road

Seneca

Tobytown

Great Falls Road

ROCKVILLE

Montrose

Smithville

The Pines

Pine Hill

Wheaton

Scotland/ Snakes Den

Ken Gar

Sitka

Oaklyn Drive

Alta Vista

Lyttonsville/ Linden

Brickyard/ Cropley

Hawkins Lane

Cabin John/ Gibson Grove

Bethesda/ Miller's Flats

Takoma Park

River Road/ Graysville

Washington DC

Rock Spring

Brookmont

Larger dots denote communities with a school, church(es), and/or benevolent society hall

Some communities' locations are approximate

N

### Montgomery County's Black population - percentage

|			
1800	44%	1950	6%
1860	38%	1960	4%
1900	33%	1970	6%
1920	24%	1990	12%
1930	17%	2010	17%
1940	11%	2020	18%

Montgomery County's Historic African-American Communities

This 1919 photo shows the West Willard Road home of Bill and Leatha Summerville and their six children (posing with their mother), part of a small community known as **Alabama**, south of Poolesville. (Reprinted from *Montgomery County: A Pictorial History* by Margaret Coleman)

Rt. 355 today

Rockville-Bethesda trolley line

Old Georgetown Road
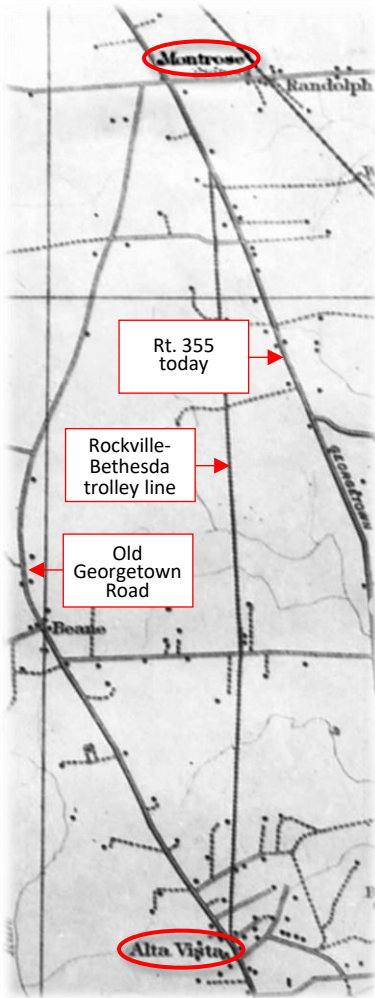
Little is known of small Black enclaves in **Alta Vista** (north of Bethesda) and **Montrose** (south of Rockville), except that in the early 1900s school authorities paid the fare for the communities' children to ride the trolley to the segregated school in Rockville. In 1905, Maryland law required a separate seating area for Blacks in trolleys. (1917 U.S. Geologic Survey map)

A small enclave—perhaps comprising one extended family only—was located along a section of **Avery Road** that is now part of Rockville's John Hayes Forest Preserve. Benjamin Franklin Smith (right) acquired the land from his former enslaver, Judge Richard Johns Bowie, after Emancipation in Maryland in 1864. The foundation of his house exists; a cemetery devoid of markers is nearby. (Montgomery Planning photo)
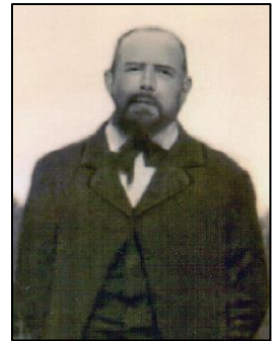
Mount Calvary AUMP (African Union Methodist Protestant) Church on **Batson Road** in the eastern part of the county marks a community north of Spencerville which also included residents on **Brogden** and **Oak Hill Roads**. (2019 Google Maps image)


Unattributed photos taken by the author

Seneca Community Church, the center of a small community on **Berryville** Road, was originally Potomac Grove CME (Colored Methodist Episcopal) Church on Violettes Lock Road; it relocated to this site around 1940, changed its name, and built this structure in 1999. (2022 Microsoft Maps image)

This 1930s photo shows a small black enclave called Miller's Flats that once existed in the heart of **Bethesda** along a side street west of Wisconsin Avenue near an industrial area—also gone—by the railroad, now the Capital Crescent Trail. (Reprinted from *Images of America: Montgomery County* by Michael Dwyer)

Big Woods, one of the largest and oldest up-county Black communities, was founded before the Civil War by a free African American, Rev. Elijah Awkard. Researcher George McDaniel, who as a Duke University PhD student in 1978 documented in great detail numerous up-county Black communities, is pictured at Mount Zion M.E. (Methodist Episcopal) Church cemetery, which is still used for burials but not easily accessible. The present-day church is West Montgomery Methodist on Rt. 109, a merger of Mount Zion and two other historic Black churches, in Poolesville and Martinsburg. (Maryland Historical Trust, left)
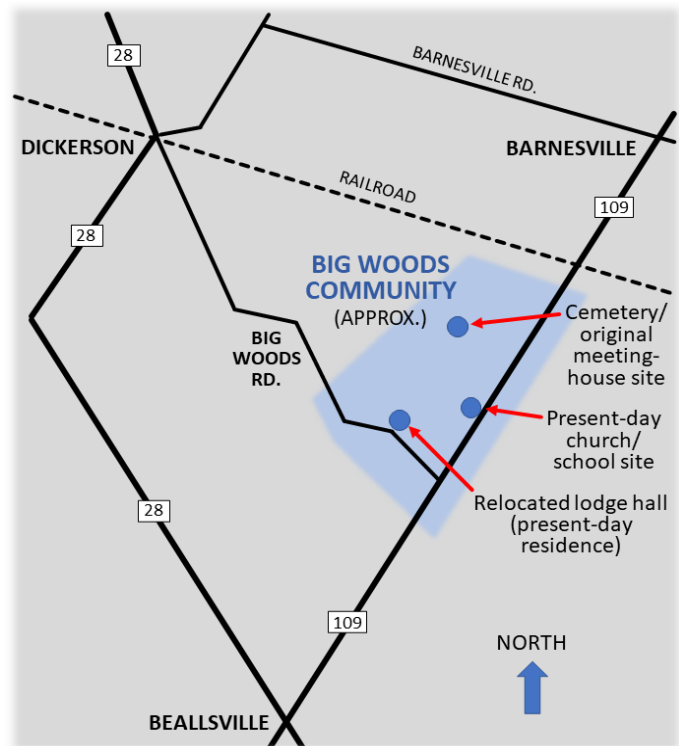
The modern Oak Grove AME (African Methodist Episcopal) Zion Church, founded in 1878 as Zion Wesley AME, and an adjacent cemetery on Zion Road are all that remains of the **Blue Mash/Jackson City** community, founded by freed slaves prior to the Civil War. The community, much of which was destroyed by a fire of unknown origin in the 1930s, derived its name from the blue-clayed, thickly wooded, marshy area—believed to have hidden escaping slaves—and an early settler named Jackson. (2019 Google Maps image)
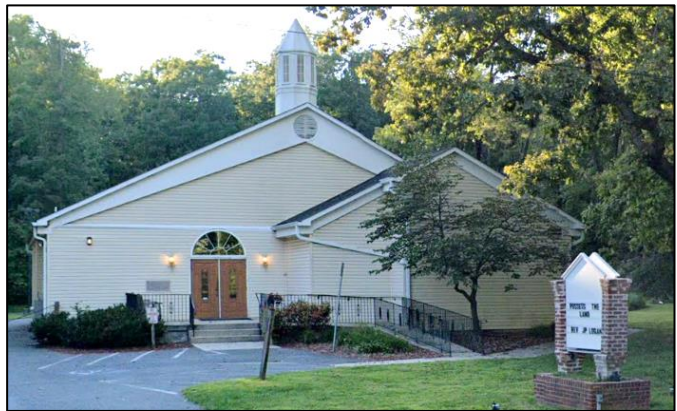
Boyds' Black community included a school, church, cemetery, and lodge hall, centered along White Ground Road south of Boyds; in fact, the community was sometimes called White Grounds. Children from nearby **Blocktown** and **Turnertown** also attended the school, which is a museum today. Boyds' St. Mark's Methodist Church was founded in 1879; the current church shown below was built in 1893.


The community's Odd Fellows Lodge, seen at left in 1979, once stood south of the school. (2019 Google Maps images, school and church; Joseph J. Davis photo, lodge)

The center portion of the stonework of this house on MacArthur Boulevard, east of **Brickyard** Road, was the foundation of Mount Glory Baptist Church, which also housed a school for a nearby small Black community associated with a brick manufacturing company on the site of the David Taylor Model Basin. (Multiple Listing Service real estate image)

Centennial Methodist Church, no longer extant, was the center of an early post-Civil War community in **Brighton**. In 1867, 13 men in the community submitted a petition to the U.S. Freedmen's Bureau Rockville office pledging their support for a school for their children. One opened about six months later. (Maryland Historical Trust, 1973)
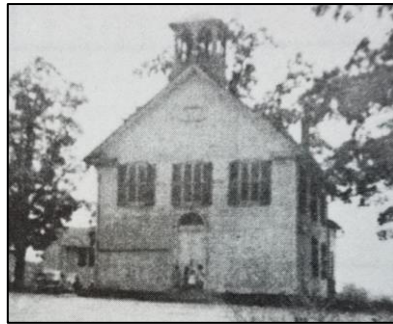
Brook Grove, a large Black community west of Laytonsville, is now marked only by a later church—Agape AME (above left)—and a cemetery behind it. The church is on the site of the 1879 Brook Grove M.E. Church (above middle), a community institution which started in an 1871 structure that burned within a few years of being built. Among gravestones are some for individuals born in slavery, including Sarah Ann Washington, born in 1818. (Find a Grave, left and right; middle photo reprinted from *Northeastern Montgomery County Black Oral History Study* by Everett and La Barbara Wigfall Fly)

Three Black families lived on the edge of **Brookmont** in the southeast tip of Montgomery County beginning in the 1920s. Descendants of one of the original residents still live there in a newer home; the other two houses have been razed. (1956 U.S. Geologic Survey map)


Dating to 1885, Asbury Methodist Church on Black Rock Road memorializes the **Brownstown** African-American community, named for one of its first landowners. Its school, nearby on Germantown Road, had been a white school until no longer needed as such. A separate residential area, **Pine Top**, was about a mile away off Riffle Ford Road. (2014 Microsoft Maps image)

A Black community in **Cabin John**, often called Gibson Grove, dates to 1877 when Sarah and Robert Gibson (above left), once enslaved in Virginia, bought land on what is now Seven Locks Road. Sarah later donated portions for a church, school, and cemetery; a benevolent society lodge (pictured on page 28) was later built on the cemetery grounds. A 1923 replacement church is pictured above right ca. 1970; only the front façade survives. In the 1940s, the federal government built a segregated housing complex for Black employees of a nearby naval facility (below right). In 2021, the National Trust for Historic Preservation named the cemetery as one of the most endangered places in America in 2021 due to Beltway expansion plans. (Friends of Moses Hall, above left; www.legacyofgibsongrove.com image, above right; Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, below)

Cincinnati, about a mile north of Sandy Spring, was a large mainly residential area along Brooke Road—and often considered part of the Sandy Spring Black community; indeed, boundaries were not distinct as two Black schools, taking the name Sandy Spring, were built there in 1927 and 1952. Blacks also lived—among whites—around the intersection with what is Rt. 650/New Hampshire Avenue, a spot later named **Brinklow**. Among those who lived there was Remus Hill (below right), a large landowner whose name appeared

on this 1879 map—a rare distinction for an African American. Hill was an important figure in the wider Sandy Spring community; he was an early trustee of Sharp Street Methodist Church (see page 22) and the *Annals of Sandy Spring*, records kept by the white Quaker community, called him one of Sandy Spring's "valued citizens" on his death in 1902. (Hill photo reprinted from *Sandy Spring Legacy*, edited by Thomas Canby)

The area around Rt. 108 and Dr. Bird Road in Sandy Spring was once a Black community known as **Davis Corner**. This home on Dr. Bird Road was one of many built around the county in the 1900s by noted African-American builder Robert Hill, who also financed their purchase by Blacks when many banks would not do so. (Sandy Spring Museum)

Dimes Road off Avery Road was the location of a residential community that also had a few businesses. The only apparent remnant is this now-vacant modest home amid larger, newer residences. (Microsoft Maps image)
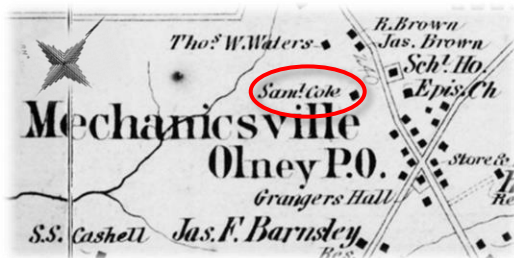
Several small residential communities existed on the outskirts of Olney, once known as Mechanicsville. **Dogtown** was just west of town, forming around a farm owned by Samuel Cole (shown in the 1879 G.M. Hopkins map at left). North of town was another community, **Waters Bend** (see listing on page 27), and south of town, just north of what is **Hines Road** today, was a third enclave. No trace of Dogtown or Hines Road remains.

Ebenezer M.E. Church (shown on the 1879 county map below and pictured in 1931 when it was a century old) was the center of an antebellum Black enclave just east of Sandy Spring. The church was founded by the son of the community's original 1801 landowner. All that remains is a small unmarked cemetery, with some headstones visible, on Ashton Road. (Baltimore *Afro-American* newspaper photo)
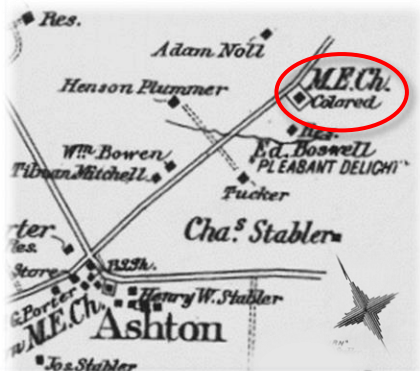
Emory Grove Methodist Church, a 1903 replacement of the original 1874 community institution, is the most prominent reminder of a large, multifaceted community east of Gaithersburg, largely eliminated by a 1970s urban renewal project, the hopeful groundbreaking for which is pictured below. (2019 Google Maps image, left; Montgomery History, below)

Emory Grove's business district included the Du-Drop Inn (left; run by William Duvall), which often hosted top Black musicians after DC performances, and Tyler's Market (below; run by another community leader). (Montgomery History, left; Montgomery Planning, below)
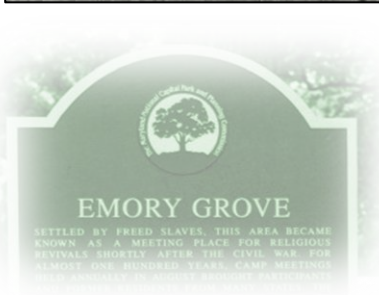
From 1877 to 1967 Emory Grove was the site of a large annual Black camp meeting—a summer spiritual and social gathering—that drew participants wearing their finest from a wide area. (Reprinted from *Washington Grove* by Philip Edwards)

The campgrounds later became one of the few lighted baseball fields in the county, hosting the local team as well as "Negro League" teams. (Montgomery Planning)
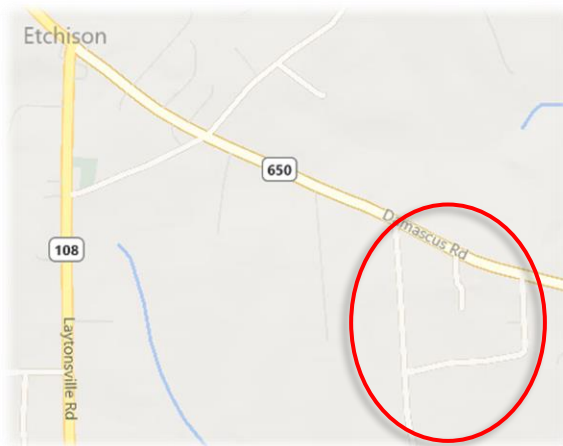
The **Etchison** Black community, which included Fairview M.E. Church and a school, was clustered along unnamed side roads southeast of the main part of Etchison at the intersection of Rts. 650 and 108. (Microsoft Maps screenshot)

Friendship Methodist Church, on Rt. 27 north of Damascus, was founded in the late 1800s; it was the center of a Black community that also included a school. The congregation remains strong; the adjacent cemetery still accepts burials. (2021 Microsoft Maps image)
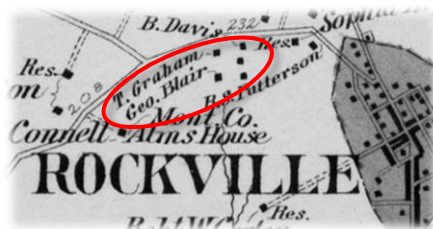

This is the oldest extant church for the **Good Hope** community, between Spencerville and Colesville; the original Methodist church was built ca. 1880 and was replaced by this one in 1914, since remodeled. The congregation moved to a new church across the road in 1999; this building is now used by another congregation. A cemetery dating to the mid-1800s is in back. (2019 Google Maps image)

Just outside the then–small town of Rockville, an antebellum residential community along **Great Falls Road** (north of today's Maryland Avenue) formed in 1832 when Thomas Price, a free Black man, bought five acres. By 1845 two free Black women had purchased adjoining acreage—their enslaved husbands joining them after Emancipation. An 1865 map (at right) shows five "col'd

[colored]" homes in this area close together, and an 1879 map (at left) shows the names of the two formerly enslaved husbands, Tilghman Graham and George Blair, as the property owners. They were among signers of an 1867 petition to start a school in Rockville. Illiterate themselves, they could only sign with an "X."

Haiti Cemetery
Founded by freed slaves
and their descendants
who made this hallowed ground
their final resting place
Established 1803
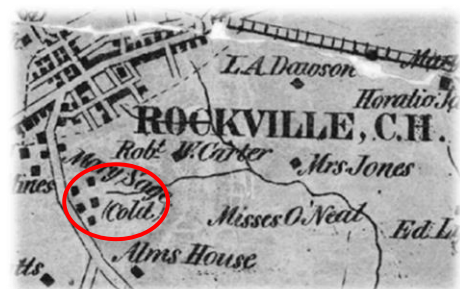
Centered on Martins Lane in Rockville, **Haiti** (pronounced HAY-tie) dates to before the Civil War. Samuel Martin, a free Black, was the first land-owner in the 1830s. The community grew significantly after Emancipation. This home was built by an emancipated family; descendants reside there today. The cemetery dates to 1803.


HAITI-
MARTIN'S LANE COMMUNITY

THIS NEIGHBORHOOD WAS ESTABLISHED IN THE 1830s BY SAMUEL MARTIN, A FREE BLACK MAN. BETWEEN 1864 & 1901, MARGARET BEALL DEEDED PARCELS OF LAND SOUTH OF MARTIN'S LANE TO HER FORMER SLAVES. DESCENDANTS OF THE ORIGINAL MARTIN, WOOD, ROSS, AND SMITH FAMILIES STILL LIVE HERE. HAITI, PRONOUNCED "HAY-TIE", WAS ANNEXED 1949.

ERECTED BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF ROCKVILLE
SPRING 2004

Hawkins Lane, off Jones Bridge Road north of Bethesda, began as a Hawkins family kinship community; it is now a historic district. This surviving 1916 dwelling is owned by a descendant of the founding family. Note the cluster of mail-boxes, situated at the base of the lane; mail delivery did not extend up the road. (2022 Microsoft Maps image)
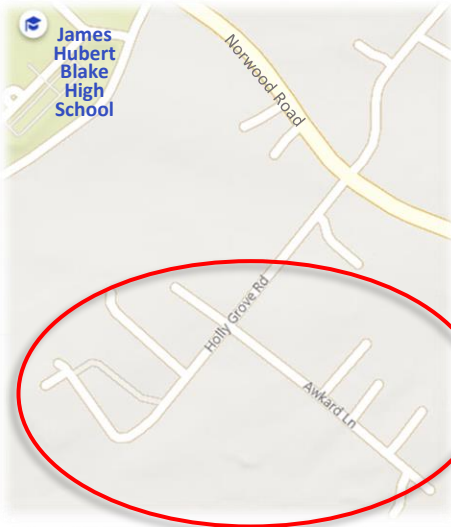
Along **Holly Grove** Road and Awkard Lane south of Blake High School and Norwood Road was a residential and farming enclave formed in 1879 when a prosperous white landowning family from Howard County partitioned some of their extensive Montgomery County holdings to create about two dozen lots; within a few years, the lots were being sold exclusively to Black families, many with other relatives already settled there. One resident, Charles T. Hill, eventually had a 150-acre farm and was known for holding a well-attended annual horse show in the early 1900s. (Microsoft Maps screenshot, left; photo reprinted from *Sandy Spring Legacy;*)
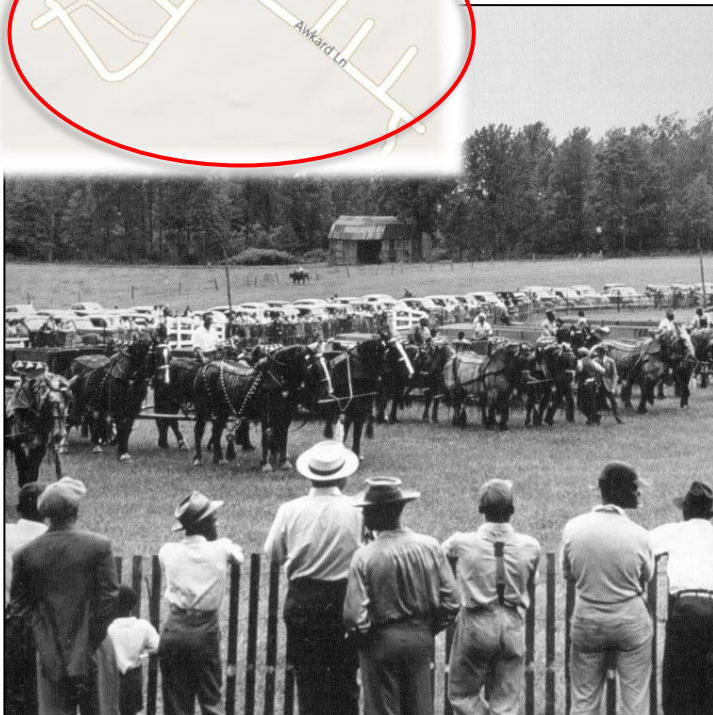
Montgomery Chapel, south of **Hyattstown**, also served as the only school for the Black community there until its closing in 1939; the chapel was later abandoned, then vandalized and demolished. A cemetery on Rt. 355 marks the site. (George McDaniel photo, 1979)
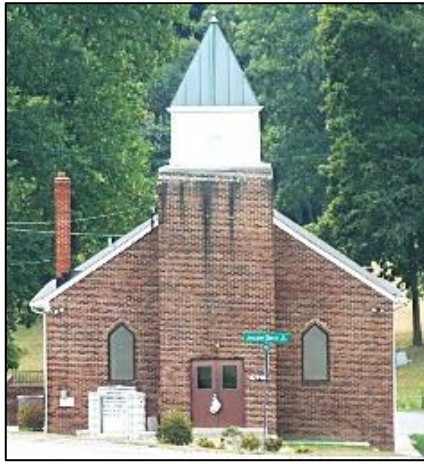
Among residents of **Jerusalem**, north of Poolesville, was Noah Clarke (right), who led a grassroots effort to have the county open a high school for Blacks, which finally came about in 1927. He is buried in the cemetery of Jerusalem Baptist Church (left). Some accounts date the community's founding to the winter of 1861–62 and establishment of a camp for enslaved people from Virginia seeking freedom. (Find a Grave images)
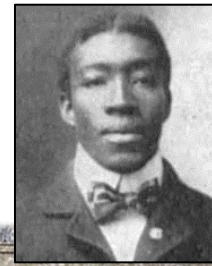

A post-Civil War log home (right) in nearby **Jonesville**, slated for demolition in the early 2000s, now resides in the Smithsonian Institution Museum of African-American History and Culture. Built by community founders Richard and Erasmus Jones, it has come to be known as the "most visited African-American house in America." An interpretative panel inside the house spotlights Black life in post-Civil War Montgomery County. (*The Atlantic* photo)

African American Life in Montgomery County

By 1900 there were at least eight African American communities in Montgomery County, Maryland. Unlike many rural African Americans, the residents were not tenant farmers—they owned their property and homes. This gave them greater control over the land and the crops they produced. They also directly benefited from improvements to their homes, which was an incentive to make additions and to stay in place. Descendants of these early settlers still live in these communities today.

A Maryland freedmen's cabin
Courtesy of the Maryland Historical

Another Jonesville cabin (right), built in 1870 by Thomas Harper, is preserved on the grounds of Brookside Nature Center in Wheaton. (Montgomery Planning)

The 2014 dedication and naming of a community center in **Ken Gar** for long-time activist Leonard D. Jackson featured his widow, Barbara, and then–County Executive Isiah Leggett (center). The building, a remodeled two-room school that served the community in the days of segregation, was one of 17 "Rosenwald schools" built with partial funding from Julius Rosenwald, then-president of Sears and a noted philanthropist who supported Black education throughout the South. (Montgomery County Media)
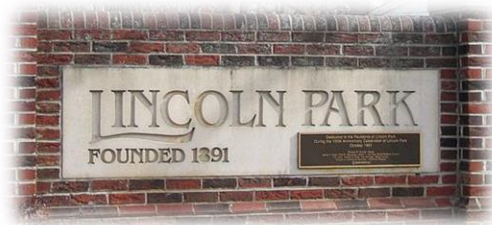
The first subdivision in Montgomery County marketed to Blacks, **Lincoln Park** in Rockville featured narrow lots, hence its most iconic landmark, a standalone townhome (right). Notable residents included Negro League player Clarence "Pint" Isreal (left), for whom a neighborhood park is named, and renowned linguist Lorenzo Dow Turner (below). The community dates to 1891,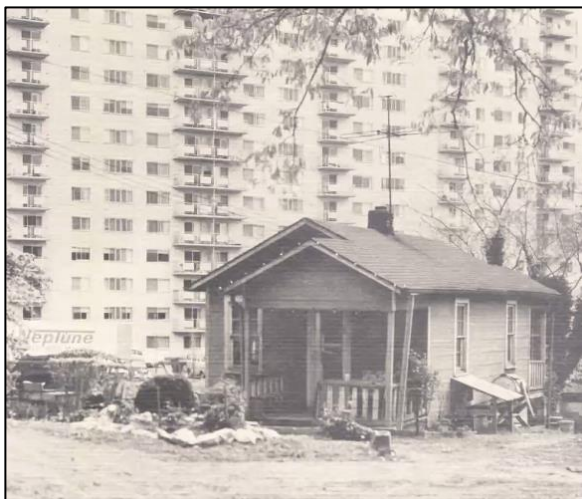 but it did not receive city services, such as utilities and paved roads, until the 1950s with its annexation by Rockville. The Lincoln Park History Project, a comprehensive history of the community is available on the county library website. An adjacent residential area along Dover Road was sometimes referred to as Janetta. (Isreal photo, Peerless Rockville; Turner photo, Smithsonian Institution)

Logtown was a small community just south of the center of Gaithersburg formed by antebellum free Blacks and those formerly enslaved at Summit Hall, the farm of John DeSellum. Now Bohrer Park, the site includes what is believed to be the oldest standing structure in Gaithersburg, a log smokehouse (left), and a ca. 1868 "tenant" house (right).

Lyttonsville, founded in 1853 by a free Black man named Samuel Lytton and sometimes later called Linden, was a tight-knit, largely isolated enclave west of Silver Spring that was situation just north of East-West Highway—but for decades accessible only by a one-lane bridge and lacking most county services until urban renewal in the late 1970s. Pilgrim Baptist Church (right) housed the community's school for t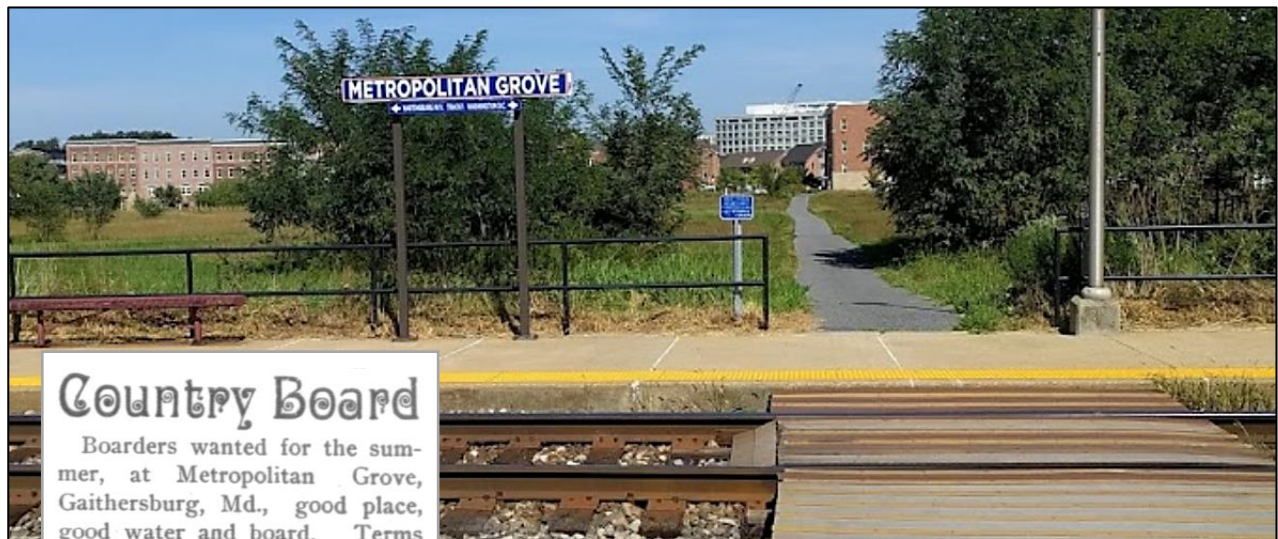wo decades; children were attending the oldest wooden schoolhouse still in use when desegregation began in 1955. (Lyttonsville Community Civic Association photos)

Three community institutions that were once pillars of Black communities during the days of segregation—a church, school, and benevolent society lodge—still stand in **Martinsburg**, the

only such site in Maryland. The lodge, seen in the rear, was restored in 2018 after nearly falling down. The site now takes the name of Warren church, no longer active.

There is nary a trace today of the African-American **Metropolitan Grove** community—where Black Washingtonians were known to have enjoyed summer respites from the city. Once large enough to have had a school, it is now only a stop on the MARC commuter line. (2019 Google Maps image)

Mount Ephraim, on the edge of Montgomery County near Sugarloaf Mountain, included a Black community that primarily lay within Frederick County and included a church, cemetery, and a one-room school built by Gordon Strong, the owner of the mountain. Strong, who was white, also supplemented funding for the school; it was heralded by outside examiners as superior to some of Frederick County's all-white one-room schools. (Portion of 1879 county map)

The photo at right, from a 1913 U.S. government report on Montgomery County's schools, shows the one-room school (left), church (right), and a benevolent society hall (rear) that anchored the **Mount Pleasant** community. A cemetery, the church (modernized), and a replacement school (now a community center) mark the spot today in Norbeck. Some homes that were located east of Georgia Avenue—along with the county's first lighted Black base-


BUREAU OF EDUCATION — BULLETIN, 1913. NO. 32 PLATE 4

COLORED SCHOOL, LODGE HALL, AND CHURCH, NORBECK.
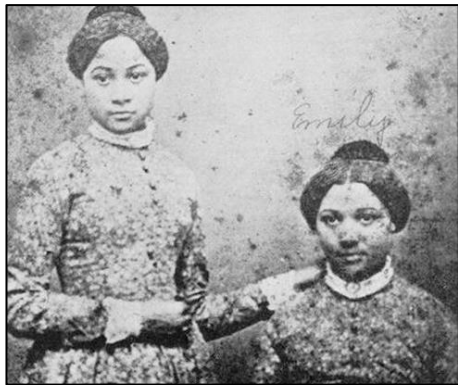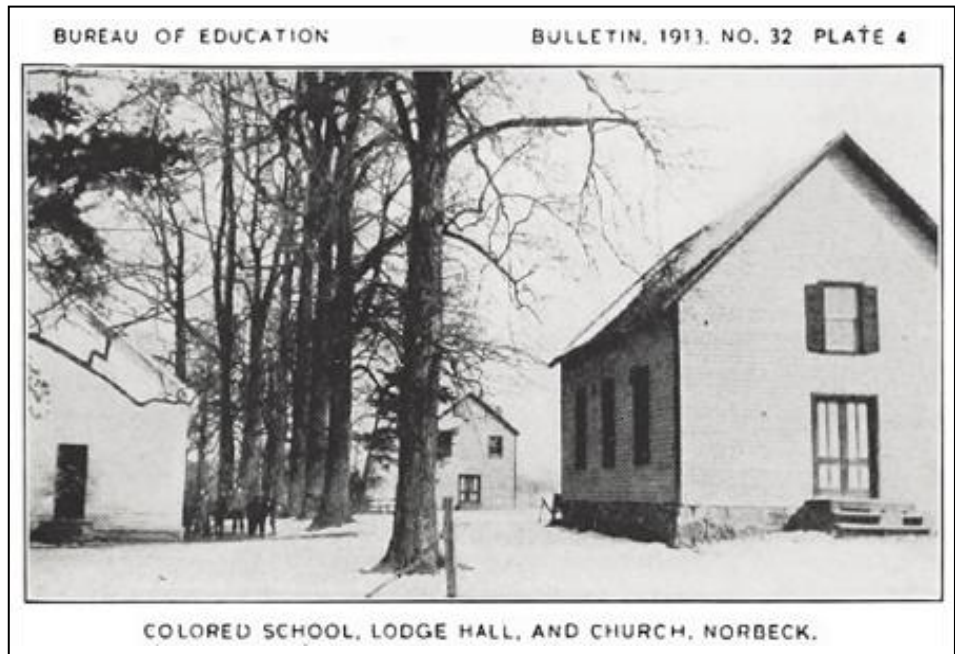
ball field—were also part of this community. Prior to the Civil War a free Black, Paul Edmonson, owned a farm where Leisure World stands today. Six of his enslaved children, including daughters Mary and Emily (left), tried to escape with 71 others from Washington aboard a ship in 1848 but all were recaptured; abolitionists rallied to the girls' aid. (The Pearl incident, as it was known for the name of the ship, was the largest mass escape attempt.) Emily later lived 12 years of her married life in Sandy Spring. (Top photo reprinted from *An Educational Survey of a Suburban and Rural County: Montgomery County, Md.;* Wikipedia photo, left)

MT ZION UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
5000
BROOKVILLE RD

A ca. 1873 building (shown above at the far left), now used by **Mount Zion** Church, is the oldest formerly all-Black school still standing in Montgomery County. The tower (far right above and shown front-on at left) houses the bell of the original 1867 church (no longer extant) that was built with materials supplied by the Freedmen's Bureau. The community, between Olney and Laytonsville, is largely intact although some residences have been abandoned. (2022 Google Maps images)
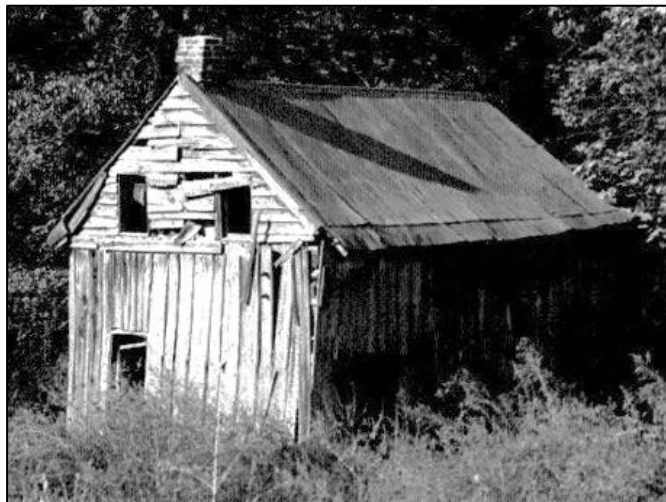
These two log cabins, no longer standing, were part of **Moxleyville**, an enclave once located north of Damascus along Moxley Road. (Montgomery Planning, left; Michael Dwyer, right)
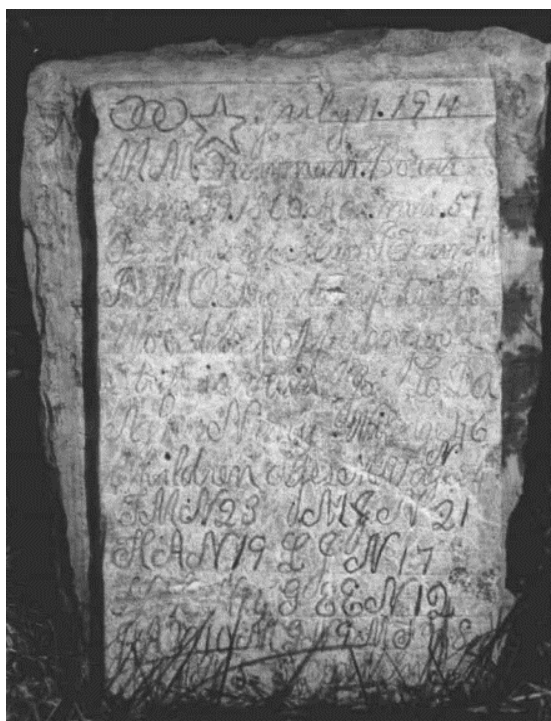

This soapstone carving was done by Albert Newman, patriarch of **Newmantown**, in 1914 to record family names and ages. A one-family kinship community with multiple dwellings (one of which is shown above), Newmantown stood on part of what is the county's Agricultural History Farm Park today. (Michael Dwyer, 1974, left; Montgomery Planning, top right; Montgomery Parks, center and lower right)

Once a slave dwelling, **Oakley** Cabin—a Montgomery Parks museum today—was one of three cabins grouped together near the east end of Brookeville Road that housed African-American families after Emancipation until the 1960s. Numerous Blacks lived around Brookeville prior to the Civil War after Quakers in town began freeing their enslaved people, but other areas are unknown. (Montgomery Parks, both images)

A small kinship community was located on **Oaklyn Drive** south of Potomac amid large, upscale homes; resident John Jackson was a noted horse breeder, trainer, and riding instructor. (Michael Dwyer photo)
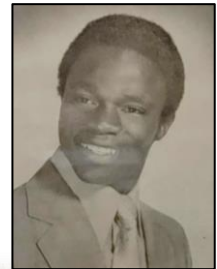
Just south of Big Woods along what is Rt. 109 today the African-American Owens family built a row of houses that came to be known as **Owensville**. A little further down the road near Beallsville is a county park is named for one of the family members, Gary L. Owens, who died in an accident at age 18. His portrait and the plaque at right are displayed in the park building in the background above. (2014 Microsoft Maps image, left; Jeff Sypeck photos, right)

An African-American community east of today's Columbia Pike in White Oak—known as **Pine Hill** (erroneously labeled Pine Ridge on the 1945 map at left)—included a chapel (shown on the map) named for Thomas Stewart, the resident who donated land for it and a community school called Burnt Mills; he was also the namesake of a nearby road that still exists today.
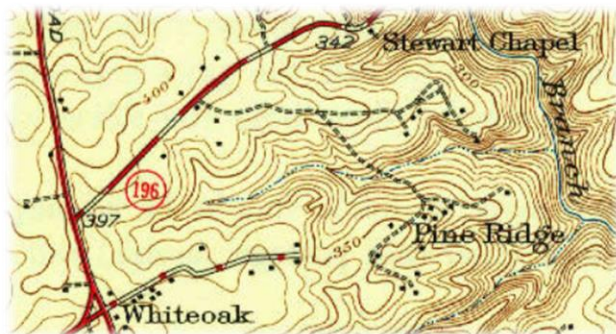
The unidentified building in this 1904 map (circled in red) is likely Wesley Union Methodist Church in **the Pines**, a small community northwest of Potomac. Blacks probably worked at the Glen mill and blacksmith shop ("B.S.S.") shown on the map. The only vestige is a cemetery near the intersection of Piney Meetinghouse and Glen Roads that is undergoing reclamation after being untended for decades.

Pleasant Grove Community Church near Damascus dates to 1869; it housed a school started with assistance of the Freedmen's Bureau. Later incorporated into the county system, the school never got a building of its own, meeting in the church until 1939. The original center portion of the church makes this the only extant building in the county associated with the Freedmen's Bureau. (*Frederick Post*, left)

Love and Charity Hall (below right) housed a school by 1869 for post-Civil War Black enclaves around **Poolesville**; it was located near where a historically African-American church (above) stands today on Rt. 109 just north of Poolesville (formerly Elijah Methodist, likely named for Rev. Elijah Awkard of Big Woods). In 1880, Poolesville resident George Peck was lynched within a quarter mile; his body was still hanging when churchgoers arrived the next morning, a Sunday. Accused of rape, he was never formally charged or tried. (George McDaniel photo, 1979, right; 2021 Google Maps image, below)

Poplar Grove Baptist Church, built in 1883 to replace an earlier house of worship in a log cabin, stands next to a newer building now used by the congregation. Located near Darnestown, it is one of the best preserved historically African-American Baptist churches of the 19th century; there were relatively few Baptist churches among those started in Montgomery County after the Civil War, making it all the more noteworthy today. (2023 Google Maps image)

Prathertown, just north of Montgomery Village, began with an 1883 land purchase by Tobias Prather. One of the original, now-gone houses along then-unpaved Prathertown Road is shown above left. Built ca. 1910, the Wrightman Road residence above right is one of the few remaining homes owned by a Black family. The former Black and White Inn (lower right), on Goshen Road (and considered part of the community), provided the only overnight accommodations in Montgomery County for Black travelers until the mid-20th century. (Michael Dwyer photo, top left; 2023 Google Maps image, top right; Montgomery Planning, lower right)

A church and school for the post-Civil War **Quince Orchard** community still stand on Rt. 28 opposite the county police headquarters. Typically, a church was the first institution to be established; here the community built a school first. However, the school burned under suspicious circumstances in 1901 and the school board replaced it with an 1875 one-room school for white children from across the road (building a new school for the white students); it is the rightmost portion of the building in the background. The Quince Orchard Project (www.thequinceorchardproject.com), a descendant group, maintains the site.


Macedonia Baptist Church, which began on Elm Street in Bethesda, is the sole survivor of the **River Road** community—sometimes called Graysville for its founder—that was located along straddling the Capital Crescent Trail. Remnants of a Black cemetery are believed to exist under a parking lot off Westbard Avenue. (Preservation Montgomery)

A small community existed near **Rock Spring** Club, one of several "resorts" for city dwellers along the Potomac River beyond the District line. Blacks living nearby most likely serviced the club. (Montgomery History)

The heart of **Rockville**, the county's seat, once had a large Black community. Before the Civil War, whites and African-Americans worshipped at Rockville's Methodist Church—though the latter sat in the balcony. Pro-slavery white congregants later left, and Blacks eventually came into possession of the church, dismantled it brick by brick, washed each one, rebuilt it, and named it Jerusalem (seen in a Peerless Rockville photo at right; the inset shows it today as Jerusalem–Mount Pleasant Church.) In time, the church anchored a bustling Black community centered on North Washington Street and Middle Lane.
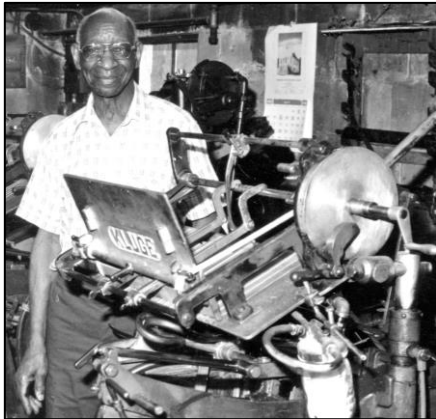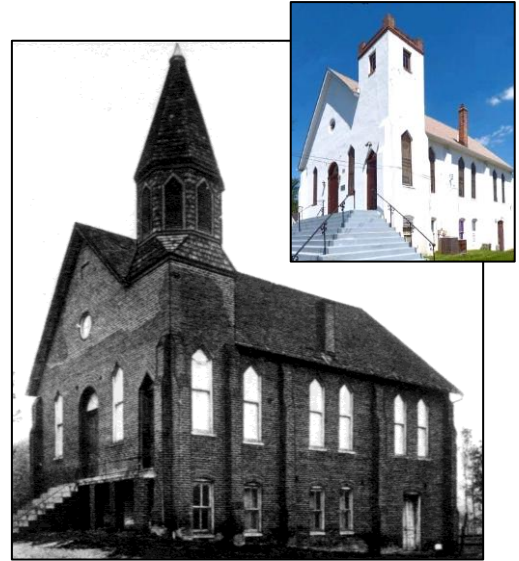
Businesses included Jesse Hebron's printing shop (left) and Mr. T's store/restaurant (center), run by George Johnson (right). (Peerless Rockville, left; Baltimore *Afro-American* newspaper, center and right)
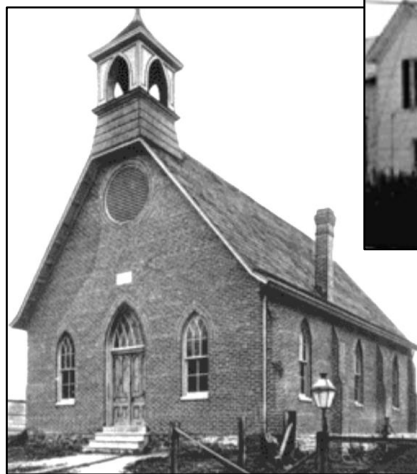

Community institutions included the Galilean Fishermen's Temple (left), a fraternal lodge hall, and Clinton AME Zion Church (center)—an off-shoot of Jerusalem, now in a large modern building in Lincoln Park. Blacks lived in homes of varied sizes and conditions on Middle Lane—the southern edge of Rockville Town Square today (right). (*Afro-American,* left; Peerless Rockville, center; City of Rockville, both photos at right)

In addition to Jerusalem–Mount Pleasant Church, two reminders of the **Rockville** Black community exist today: commemorative artwork (above left) dedicated to William B. Gibbs Jr. (left) and Snowden Funeral Home (right), a four-generation family enterprise. Gibbs was a Rockville teacher who, with his attorney Thurgood Marshall, won equal pay for the county's Black public school teachers in 1937. Gibbs taught at the "Rockville Colored School" shown below left; the only high school for Blacks (below right) was later built next to it. The buildings shared one bathroom. A high school for white Rockville youth had been built more than two decades earlier. (Peerless Rockville, Gibbs and two-story school photo; Montgomery History, below right)
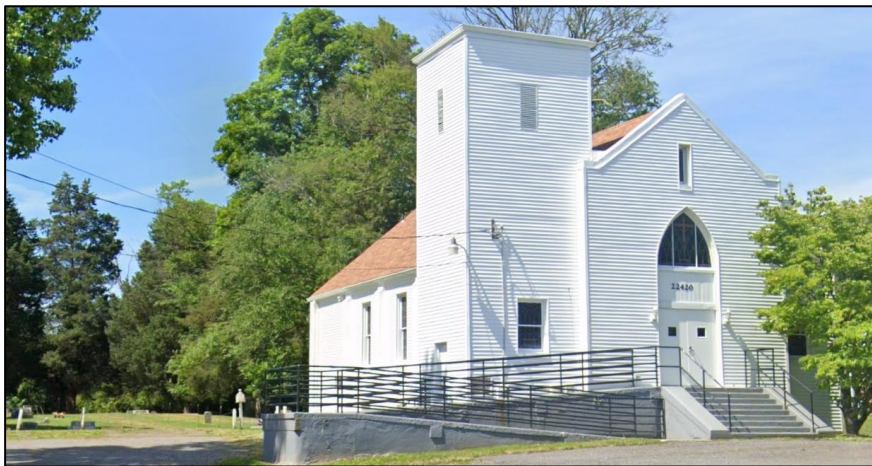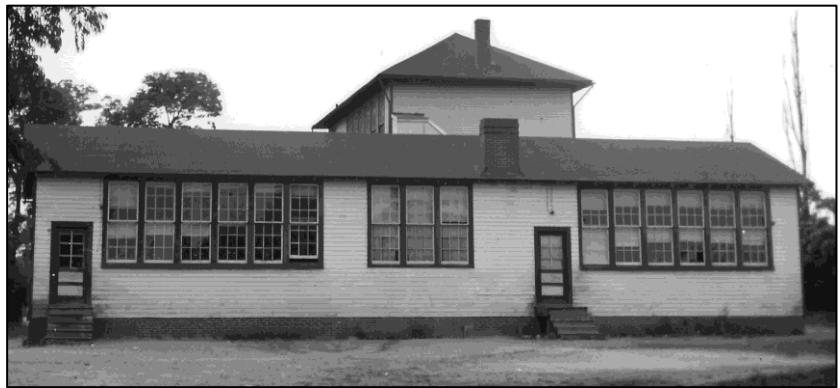
This church building and the cemetery behind it on Rt. 355 are the legacy of a Black community south of Clarksburg known as **Rocky Hill**—the name of a middle school today. Originally Pleasant View M.E., the congregation was later John Wesley Methodist (now inactive). Nearby Wilson Wims Elementary School is named in honor a leader of this community, pictured at right. (2021 Google Maps image, left; Clarksburg Historical Society, right)

A free Black community existed in **Sandy Spring** from the late 1700s—the oldest in the county and one of the earliest in the state—as the predominately white Quaker community emancipated their enslaved workers due to the dictates of their faith; post-Emancipation the community grew significantly. Its most important institution has long been Sharp Street Methodist Church, started in 1822 in a log cabin built

on land owned by Quakers as restrictions were placed on gatherings of Blacks; in 1889 the land was finally transferred to the church's Black trustees and a new church was constructed; at left is the third and present church constructed in 1923 after the second one burned.

The original log church also housed the first Black school in the county, perhaps by 1864; the school above was built next to the church a few years later with assistance from the Freedmen's Bureau. (*Community Cornerstones* video screenshot)

MUTUAL MEMORIAL CEMETERY
Established 1873 as
CEDAR MOUNT CEMETERY

The community's 1873 cemetery is the final resting place for more than 300 of those who lived in and around Sandy Spring. (Julianne Mangin photo)

THE NEGROES OF SANDY SPRING, MARYLAND: A SOCIAL STUDY.

BY WILLIAM TAYLOR THOM, PH. D.

The present study was made under the direction of the United States Commissioner of Labor as one "of a series of investigations of small well-defined groups of Negroes (a) in various parts of the country," as set forth in Bulletin No. 14 of the Department of Labor, January,

The unique history of Blacks in Sandy Spring was the focus of a 59-page U.S. Labor Department survey published in 1901.

An Odd Fellows Lodge, built in the 1920s and recently restored, served varied functions, including housing the school for several years after it burned down. (Montgomery Preservation)

Partly to commemorate the rich history of African Americans in Sandy Spring, a Howard University professor, Dr. Winston Anderson, opened a museum and art gallery in 1988. Exhibits include a cabin moved from Olney dating to slavery times.

SANDY SPRING SLAVE MUSEUM
AND AFRICAN ART GALLERY

Scotland, on Seven Locks Road between Cabin John and Rockville, continues to exist as a historic Black community—the most successful of several mid-20th century urban renewal projects, largely due to the active involvement of residents. Marking the start of the renewal project in 1968, a bulldozer razes an old home. (Montgomery History, left; 2019 Google Maps image, below)


Geneva Mason (above) was a founder of the grassroots Save Our Scotland committee. In 2021, a road and court nearby, originally named for Confederate General J.E.B. Stuart, were renamed for her; family members celebrate the occasion. Adjacent Jubal Early Court was renamed for Scotland founder William Dove. (Montgomery History, left; www.thesentinel.com, right)
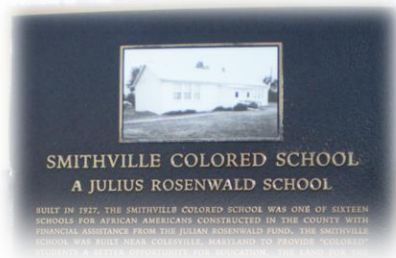

Indicating the community was once much larger than it is today, it once had two churches: Scotland AME Zion Church (above)—built in 1925, later expanded, and still active—and Evergreen M.E. (right), built in 1910 slightly north of where Cabin John shopping center is today. (Montgomery History, right)

A small church (Potomac Grove CME; see Berryville) and schoolhouse once stood along Violettes Lock Road—only a cemetery remains today, the remnant of a community mostly comprising families of workers at the nearby **Seneca** quarries and stone cutting mill, which provided Seneca sandstone for the Smithsonian castle and other Washington, DC buildings. (2012 Google Maps image)
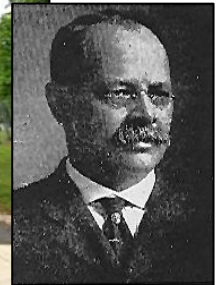
This small open space between 1923 and 1929 Powder Mill Road in Hillandale on the eastern edge of Montgomery County is the site of an unmarked cemetery associated with the historically Black **Sitka** Baptist Church, ca. 1882–late 1940s, and a small community of the same name. In 1883, the church's pastor, William M. Alexander, petitioned the county for school held initially in the church that later became Burnt Mills school in Pine Hill (see earlier listing); in 1889 he became the first editor of the influential *Afro-American* newspaper in Baltimore. (2019 Google Maps image; Maryland State Archives, Alexander photo; research by Eileen Flannigan)

The best restored Rosenwald school in the county marks the **Smithville** community. Located on Randolph Road east of New Hampshire Avenue, it was restored by an Alpha Phi Alpha chapter, some of whose members attended the school.

SMITHVILLE COLORED SCHOOL
A JULIUS ROSENWALD SCHOOL

BUILT IN 1927, THE SMITHVILLE COLORED SCHOOL WAS ONE OF SIXTEEN SCHOOLS FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS CONSTRUCTED IN THE COUNTY WITH FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE JULIAN ROSENWALD FUND. THE SMITHVILLE SCHOOL WAS BUILT NEAR COLESVILLE, MARYLAND TO PROVIDE EDUCATION TO PROVIDE A BETTER OPPORTUNITY FOR SCHOOLING...

The community extended from the school east along Randolph Road—originally Old Annapolis Road—to Smith Village Road—the original name of the community, for the many Smith family members who lived there.

These photos show the progression of Round Oak Baptist Church in **Spencerville** through the years from its founding in 1868, about the time the community formed; a school met in the first church (lower left) and was also followed by two others.

(All photos from the church's website, www.roundoak.org)

Centered around Stewartown and Goshen Roads, **Stewartown** formed some years after the other Black communities north of Gaithersburg shown on this 1944 U.S. Geological Survey map. Even so, little remains. A modern town-house complex marks its residential area along Stewartown Road; a school stood in what is Stewartown Park today. Goshen United Methodist Church is a "descendant" institution, the 1990s merger of Brook Grove and Stewartown Methodist churches. (Insets, Google Maps images)
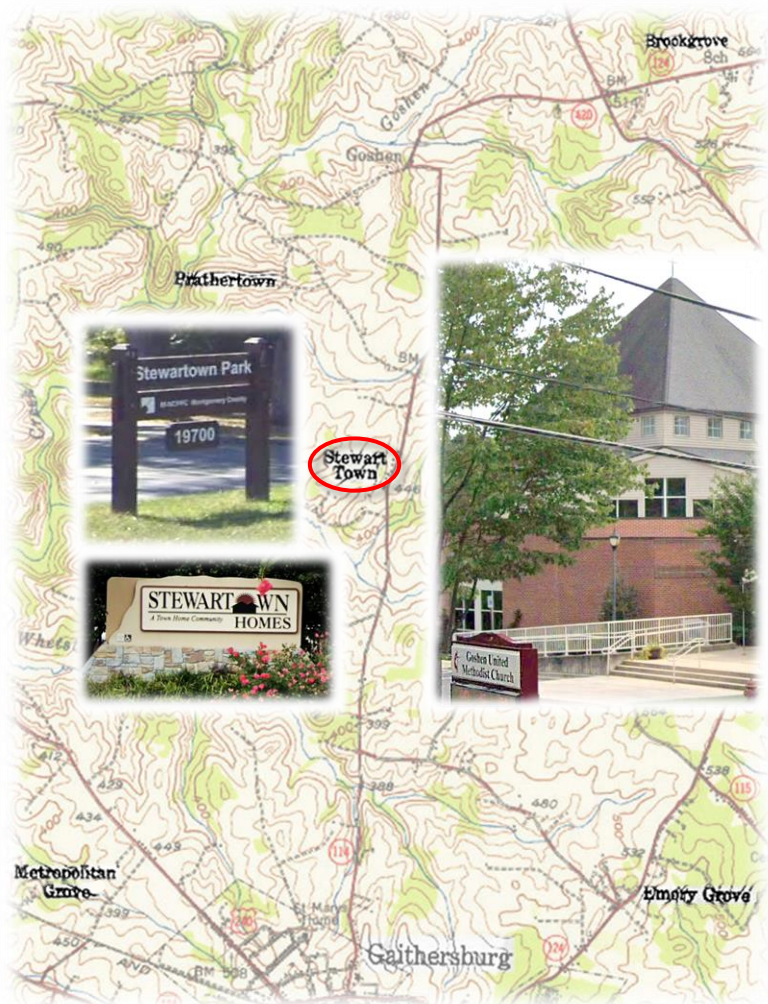
A cluster of homes on **Stringtown Road**, east of Clarksburg, included among its residents Martha Foreman, pictured ca. 1939. (Maryland Historical Trust)

St. Paul Community Church and cemetery in **Sugarland**, south-east of Poolesville, has been maintained by a dedicated group of descendants and volunteers who make up the Sugarland Ethno-History Project, www.sugarlandproject.org. A 2020 book, *I Have Started for Caanan*, documents the community's history. In 1967, one of the first interracial marriages in Maryland after the lifting of an 1884 ban took place here. (Montgomery Planning, 2021)

African-American families settled in **Takoma Park** beginning in the 1920s and '30s, most living in one of two neighborhoods—"the Hill," on Ritchie, Geneva, and Oswego Avenues, or "the Bottom," on Cherry and Colby Avenues off Sligo Creek Parkway. Children attended a segregated school on Geneva Avenue; Parker Memorial Baptist Church stood across from it. Today, the athletic field at nearby Takoma Park Middle School is named for Lee Jordan, founder of a local boys and girls sports club and longtime custodian at the school—who had such good rapport with all students he was often relied upon by the school principal to mediate issues. (Historic Takoma)

Texas was a small residential community near Jerusalem and Jonesville which also included an Odd Fellows lodge hall in which a school called Old Union was held for 15 years in the early 1900s. (1944 U.S. Geological Survey map)

Although a log house stands at Slidell and Comus Roads, it has been built since this spot—**Thompson's Corner**—was a small Black enclave. (2021 Google Maps image)
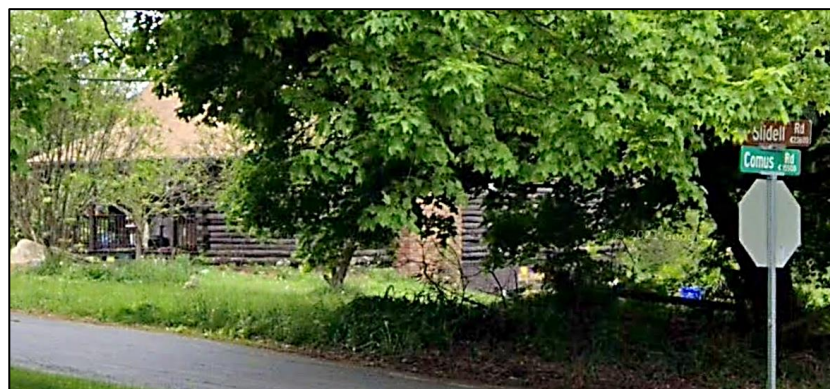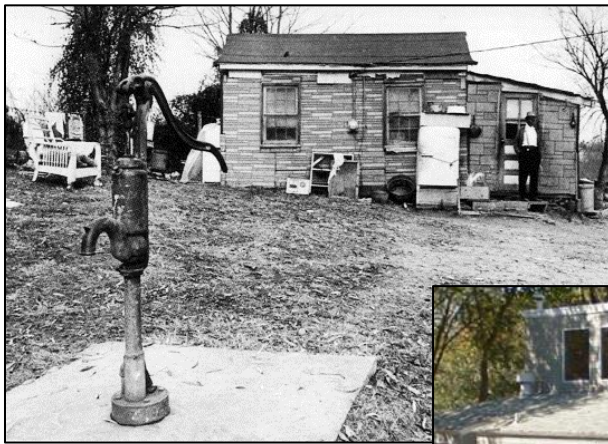
Established in 1871, **Tobytown**, west of Potomac, now features modest townhomes, the result of an urban renewal project in the 1970s to replace ramshackle homes lacking running water and electricity. But not all the previous residents were able to afford the new homes, and lack of bus service until recently continued to present hardships. During segregation, children attended school in a church building.

Above, a pre-urban renewal Tobytown home (pictured in a 1970 *Washington Post* article; 2012 Google Maps image, right).
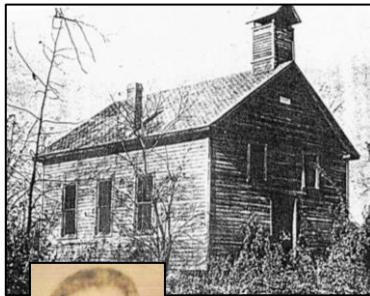
A Black community in **Unity** grew up around land bought by Enoch George Howard (left), who purchased his freedom from slavery in 1857. Howard Chapel (above left) is seen before it was destroyed by fire in the 1970s. The adjacent cemetery survives; a school built by Howard and used until 1939 does not. (Montgomery Preservation, top left; Find a Grave, others)
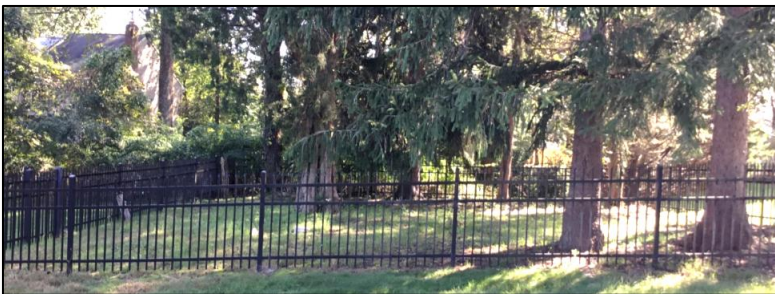
A small cemetery tucked away off Viburnum Way in an Olney neighborhood was associated with a Black community called **Waters Bend**. No other physical evidence survives. (Montgomery Preservation)

The original Allen Chapel AME Church (left), built in 1875 on the east side of **Wheaton**, also housed a school for children in the surrounding Black community, as well as children who walked from Ken Gar, until schools were built in both communities in the early 1900s. The church has relocated to Fairland; the remodeled building is used by New Creation Baptist today (right). (Left photo reprinted from *History of the Nineteenth-Century Black Churches in Maryland and Washington, D.C.* by Nina Clarke; Julianne Mangin photo, right)
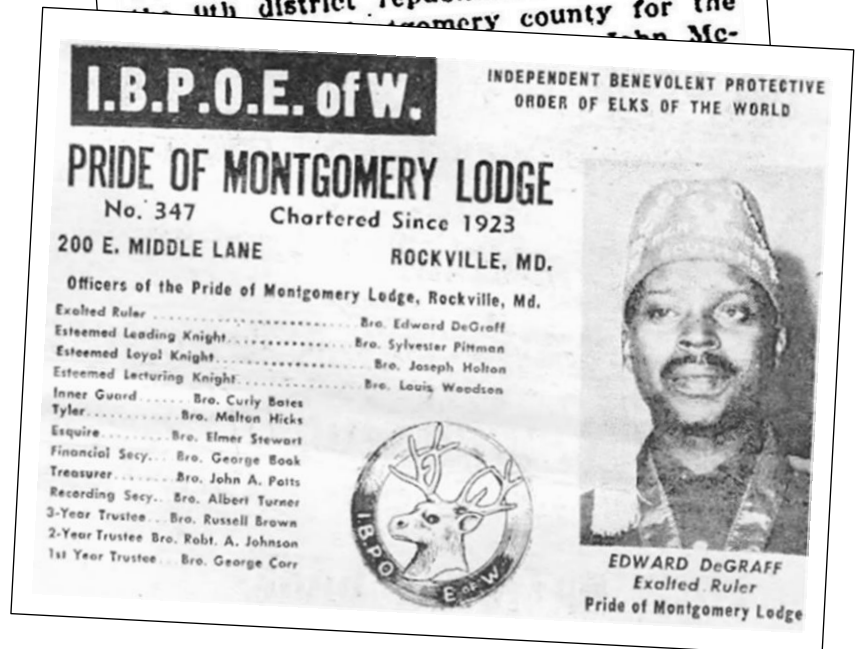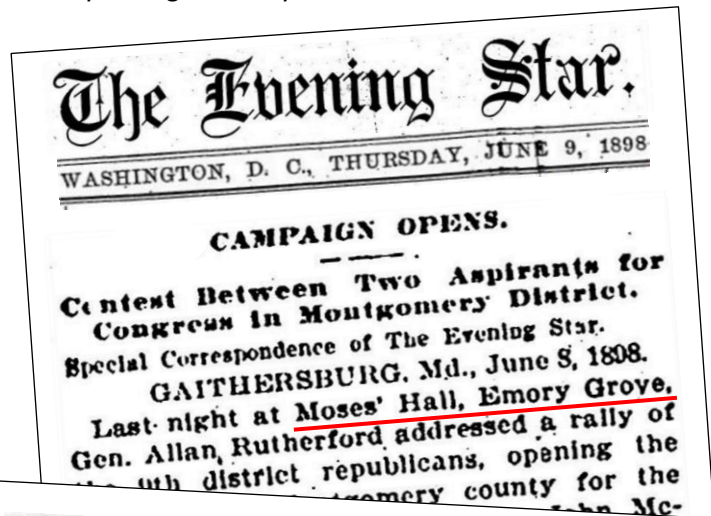
Montgomery County's Historic African-American Communities

From research by L. Paige Whitley

Big Woods	True Reformers
Boyds	Odd Fellows
Brighton	Odd Fellows
Brook Grove	Good Samaritans Odd Fellows
Cabin John	Moses
Emory Grove	Moses
Lyttonsville/ Linden	Progressive Union
Martinsburg	Love and Charity
Mount Zion	Good Samaritans
Mount Pleasant/ Norbeck	Moses
Poolesville	Love and Charity True Reformers
River Road	Moses
Rockville	Elks Galilean Fishermen Odd Fellows
Sandy Spring	Odd Fellows
Scotland	Mt. Lebanon
Spencerville	Truth and Light
Stewartown	Moses/Stewartown Literary, Social and Religious Society
Texas	Odd Fellows ("Jerusalem Lodge" located in Texas community on Peach Tree Road)

The Evening Star.

WASHINGTON, D. C., THURSDAY, JUNE 9, 1898

CAMPAIGN OPENS.

Contest Between Two Aspirants for Congress in Montgomery District.

Special Correspondence of The Evening Star.

GAITHERSBURG. Md., June 8, 1898.
Last night at Moses' Hall, Emory Grove, Gen. Allan Rutherford addressed a rally of the 6th district republicans, opening the Montgomery county for the John Mc-

I.B.P.O.E. of W.

INDEPENDENT BENEVOLENT PROTECTIVE ORDER OF ELKS OF THE WORLD

PRIDE OF MONTGOMERY LODGE

No. 347   Chartered Since 1923

200 E. MIDDLE LANE   ROCKVILLE, MD.

Officers of the Pride of Montgomery Lodge, Rockville, Md.

Exalted Ruler .... Bro. Edward DeGraff
Esteemed Leading Knight .... Bro. Sylvester Pittman
Esteemed Loyal Knight .... Bro. Joseph Holton
Esteemed Lecturing Knight .... Bro. Louis Woodson
Inner Guard .... Bro. Curly Bates
Tyler .... Bro. Melton Hicks
Esquire .... Bro. Elmer Stewart
Financial Secy. .... Bro. George Book
Treasurer .... Bro. John A. Potts
Recording Secy. .... Bro. Albert Turner
3-Year Trustee .. Bro. Russell Brown
2-Year Trustee Bro. Robt. A. Johnson
1st Year Trustee .. Bro. George Corr

EDWARD DeGRAFF
Exalted Ruler
Pride of Montgomery Lodge

A rare photograph of Moses Hall, no longer extant, in the Cabin John/Gibson Grove community found by the organization working to preserve the site, Friends of Moses Hall, www.friendsofmoseshall.org.

Montgomery County's Historic *in* African-American Communities

From research by Bruce Adams, Nina H. Clarke, Julianne Mangin, and Anita Powell

Many African-American communities fielded baseball teams and played each other, with the games serving as social occasions that drew crowds. The following had teams; others may have. The name of the playing field is noted if known, though most often an unnamed sandlot was used. Lighted fields existed in Emory Grove and Mount Pleasant.

Boyds: Oak Haven Park

Brighton

Cabin John

Emory Grove:
Johnson's Park

Friendship (Damascus)

Good Hope

Hyattstown/Rocky Hill (Clarksburg):
Wims Meadow

Ken Gar

Lyttonsville/Linden

Metropolitan Grove

Mount Pleasant (Norbeck):
Page's/Bailey's Ballfield

Mount Zion

Mount Zion

Pine Top (Germantown)

River Road

Rockville:
Lincoln Park

Scotland

Smithville

Spencerville
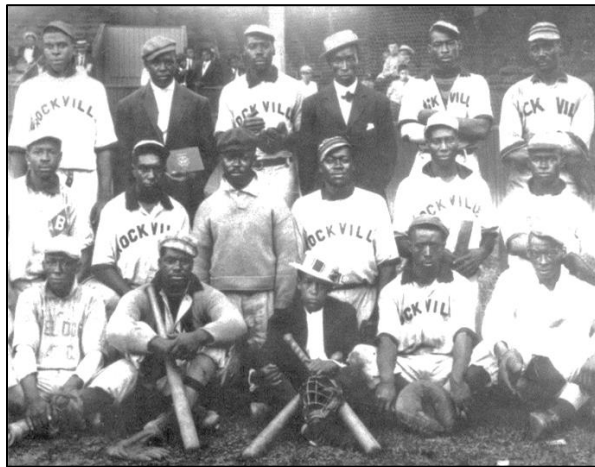
Stewartown:
Harris Meadow

Sugarland

Takoma Park

Wheaton

Members of the Scotland Eagles community baseball team. (County Cable Montgomery screenshot)

Left, Rockville's African-American baseball team, pictured at Washington, DC's Griffith Stadium in 1920; right, the Lyttonsville Black Socks team. (Peerless Rockville and Lyttonsville Community Civic Association photos, respectively)

S C H O O L S

Montgomery County's Historic *of* African-American Communities

For details about schools, see the publication *The Segregated Black Schools of Montgomery County* by Ralph Buglass, in collaboration with Sharyn R. Duffin.