



COMPILED BY
RALPH D. BUGLASS
IN COLLABORATION WITH
SHARYN R. DUFFIN

The
**Segregated
Black Schools
of
Montgomery County**



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OVERVIEW

THIS PACKET SEEKS TO DOCUMENT ALL of the mostly forgotten segregated Black schools in Montgomery County—but hopefully conveys much more. Reading between the lines, an important story emerges—one of community commitment and racial pride, struggling but dedicated teachers, and perseverance, resilience, and accomplishment in the face of a system that evidenced time and again that Black lives—in terms of educational opportunities—did not matter. How else to explain a century of glaring inequities in schooling and the basic building blocks it provides for self-sufficiency and prospering in later life?

As throughout the South—and mandated here by state law—schools were racially segregated from the system’s inception in the mid-1800s to the middle of the next century—one still fresh in the memory of many, the 20th. Justified as “separate but equal,” nearly every aspect put the lie to that—but one “reverse disparity” attests to African Americans’ high regard for education: 57.9 percent of school-age Black children were enrolled in 1910 compared to 50.9 percent of white children (school attendance was not then required). Otherwise, the differences were all to the detriment of the Black schools:

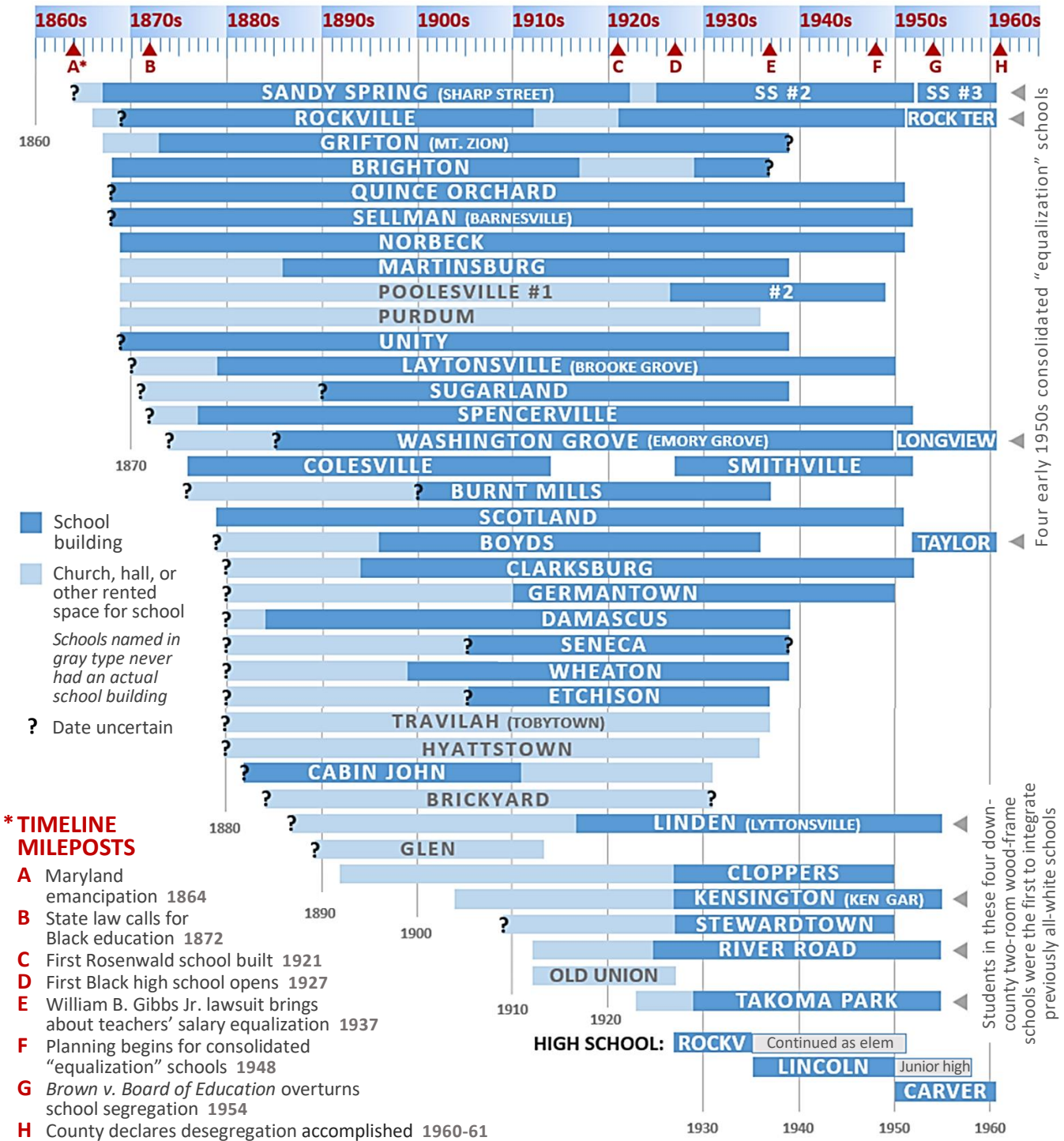
- Although a new state constitution in 1864 abolished slavery and established a county-by-county system of public education, it was only for white children; not until nearly a decade later—in 1872—did the state mandate public schools for African-American children—and then through entirely separate budgets with sparse tax dollars only from Black residents supporting those schools.
- Some Black schools existed beforehand, through grassroots efforts in Black enclaves that sprouted around the county after the Civil War, often with assistance from the Freedmen’s Bureau; education so long denied was so valued that land was often donated for a school—a practice that continued, and was sometimes expected, even after the county was legally obligated to provide schools.
- For decades after the 1872 law, various communities would ask the county board of education for a school, only to be put off or denied altogether; some Black schools met their entire existence in a rented church or a community hall that had been erected by residents pooling resources for mutual aid societies and getting together socially, countering shortcomings posed by a segregated society.
- Black teachers and students painfully remember hand-me-down books from the white schools with pages missing—and usually too few books to go around. Some of the buildings described herein themselves were even hand-me-downs, ones no longer used by white children but deemed fit for use by African-American students.
- For Black schools the school year was generally shorter to begin with, but they often closed much earlier than scheduled when funding ran out—in the most egregious case recorded, on March 4 in the 1903-04 term.
- Two outside assessments of the county system put the disparities in stark, hard numbers: in 1910-11, the county spent “\$37.83 per white pupil and \$7.77 per colored pupil,” according to a survey by the U.S. Bureau of Education; a quarter of a century later the Brookings Institution still found a gap—not as wide but nonetheless shameful: \$63 spent per pupil in the white elementary schools and \$106 in the white high schools compared to \$30 and \$43, respectively, in the Black schools.

- A high school for Black students finally opened—after much community pressure—in 1927 in a wood building with just two classrooms and a small library (but no bathroom—students used the one in the adjacent elementary school). Roughly a quarter century earlier a two-story, eight-room brick building had been built for white high school students; by 1927, 10 white high schools existed all around the county, with more to come. But this first Black high school (followed by two successors, all located in Rockville) was “it” for children of color, no matter how far away they lived—and no transportation was initially provided. What’s more, 12th grade was long in coming to the Black school.
- African-American teachers—employed only in Black schools—were generally paid half what white teachers earned. In the middle of the Depression a brave Black teacher challenged this discrepancy in court—with the help of Thurgood Marshall; the case, the first of its kind in the nation, succeeded in equalizing salaries—over a phased in, two-year period. But the teacher was fired a year later.
- Despite the pay disparity, the federal survey mentioned above generally found rough similarity in teachers’ educational backgrounds: 10 percent of white teachers had graduated college, 28 percent had gone to normal school (teacher training programs), and one-third (33 percent) were high school graduates; the comparable figures for Black teachers were 8, 34, and 26—all the more remarkable as higher education opportunities for African Americans were so limited.
- Much as the Freedmen’s Bureau gave an initial boost to early Black schools, philanthropist Julius Rosenwald provided funding for better buildings in the early 20th century throughout the segregated South; Montgomery County tapped this funding to construct 17 new Black school buildings but county and Rosenwald dollars were supplemented from contributions from African Americans, despite their already paying taxes for schools—nothing “extra” was similarly expected of white parents.
- By and large these buildings replaced “neglect[ed]” and “dilapidated” structures (as the federal survey put it); they were, however, still wood frame buildings erected when brick buildings for white students—often housing each grade in a separate classroom—were the standard; except in a few cases, Black children in grades 1-7 were still either in one room, or 3-4 grades would share a room and teacher.
- The number of Black schools the county had built entirely “on its own” (that is, excluding reused white buildings, Rosenwald schools, and those still in use that had been built by African-American communities themselves much earlier) were...well, it’s hard to determine precisely, but relatively few. The Brookings survey, done in 1941, found the value of the white school buildings to be \$4.8 million—or \$416 per pupil—versus \$129,450 for the Black schools, or \$68 per pupil; the report found the latter schools “insanitary, unsafe,” “crowded,” and “unsatisfactory.”

In the face of such inequities, in the late 1940s the county undertook to “equalize” its two systems—as the entire state of South Carolina would in the face of a court suit that became part of *Brown v. Board of Education*, the landmark 1954 Supreme Court decision overturning school segregation. But unlike much of the South, which met the decision with “massive resistance,” Montgomery County desegregated its schools relatively rapidly, starting in 1955 and closing the last of its all-Black schools by June 1960. The capsule descriptions of each presented here seek to pay them a measure of deserved tribute despite paltry resources supplied them and the little regard shown them by the wider society.

TIMELINE

Montgomery County's African-American schools by dates of operation and types of buildings



MAP # 1

Rand McNally Montgomery County map (1911) showing localities where Black schools existed

Red dots indicate center of named locality; its school often stood some distance away.

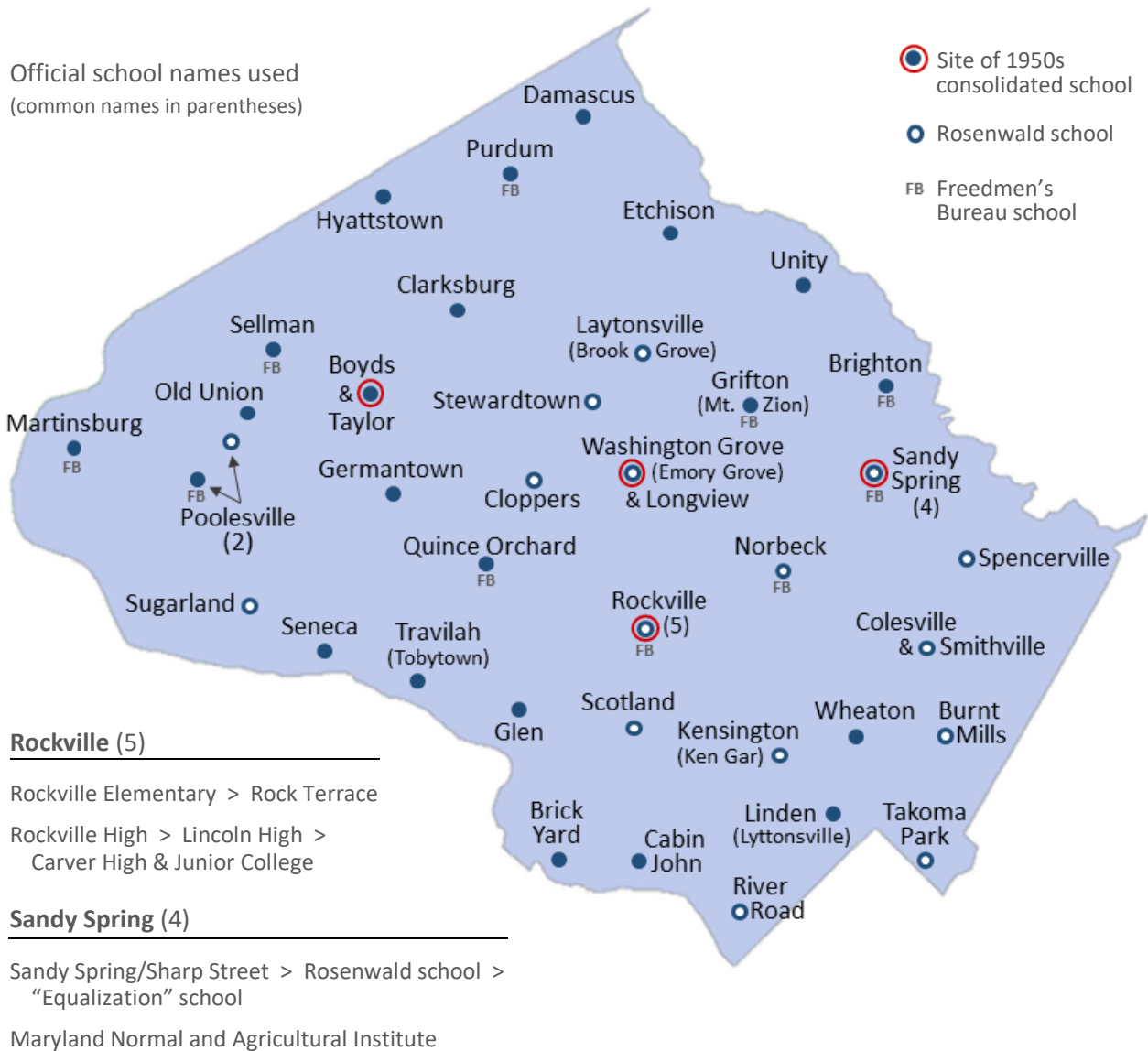
See **Map #2** for more precise distribution of Black schools.



Note the numerous localities that are no longer communities of significant size—over a century later.

MAP # 2

Geographic distribution of Montgomery County's African-American schools, 1864-1960



Freedmen’s Bureau: Fostering the First Schools

After the Civil War a new federal agency, the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands—usually shortened to the Freedmen’s Bureau—was set up to help the newly emancipated millions adjust to radically changed circumstances—moving from the horror of slavery to the rigor of self-sufficiency. While the bureau’s reach is usually associated with the former Confederacy, it also operated in Maryland and had an office in Rockville. Among other tasks, the one-man office worked throughout Montgomery County in helping to establish Black schools—which were sometimes met with white resistance.

“I am informed that a building put up by the colored people last year about five miles above Rockville for a church and schoolhouse was set fire to and destroyed shortly after its completion,” reported the bureau’s superintendent for the county, Army Lt. Col. R.G. Rutherford, in an October 1866 survey of efforts to set up schools. With “some few exceptions,” he wrote, whites in the county “will in no way assist the colored people and throw obstacles in the way of the establishment of schools and churches.”

Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands.

Office Superintendent, Montgomery County, Md.

The most notable exception was Sandy Spring. The pre-existing Black school—which the mainly Quaker community “encouraged,” Rutherford pointed out—was in a “flourishing condition” with as many as 80 “scholars” attending both day and evening classes. The Quakers had shown “every disposition...not only to deal justly by the colored people but to assist them in every way,” he added. Also on the positive side, he noted that “a commodious building is in the course of erection at ‘Blue Marsh’ [the identification he used for Mt. Zion] for school and church purposes,” adding “it is hoped that schools can be established at several other places in the County.” Sandy Spring was the lone Black school right after the Civil War.

But in addition to the school burning, he reported that “at Goshen the colored people have lately been excluded from the church which they have heretofore been permitted to use.” He summed up his overall view of race relations not quite two years after Maryland’s November 1864 abolition of slavery with this observation: “The colored people, as a general thing, manifest a desire to avoid trouble with the white people and frequently submit to imposition through fear of gaining their ill will by complaining.”

Two more communities soon sought to open schools. In early 1867 a group of 20 men in Rockville and then that summer 13 in Brighton signed Freedmen’s Bureau petitions pledging to support a school, agreeing in both cases to hold themselves “responsible for such sums as may be necessary” to provide for boarding a teacher and the “fuel and lights” for the school building. Although most could sign their names only with a X, the value they placed on educating their children was self-evident in their action.

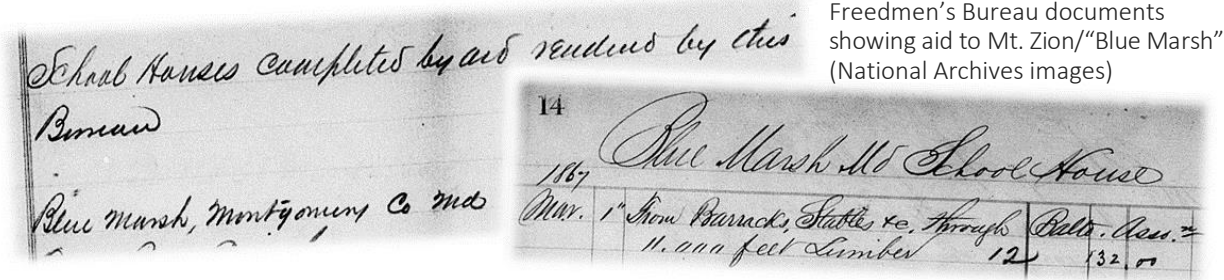
By the time of a follow-up report a year later, in October 1867, progress had occurred:

- The Sandy Spring school had moved from a church (Sharp Street) to a separate building with lumber and shingles contributed by the bureau
- School for Rockville children was being held in a church basement (what became Jerusalem church)
- The “Blue Marsh” (Mt. Zion) building had been completed—in part with lumber supplied by the bureau—and was “ready for occupancy” (thus bringing the number of schools to three)
- Ground had been broken for a school at Brighton with building supplies also to come from the bureau
- Land for a school in Norbeck had been given by a local white farmer
- The community denied use of the Goshen church was being urged by Rutherford to buy land and he “promised the assistance of the Bureau in putting up a school house”—the construction of Brook Grove Methodist Church and its use as a school was the eventual result, but there are no records of the bureau playing any further role

- The Black community in Purdum (referred to as Damascus by Rutherford) was in the process of buying an acre of land “for which they are to pay \$20” (\$16 of which had been raised)
- Efforts for a “school house back in the woods, about halfway between Barnesville and Beallsville” had begun—this would eventually become Sellman school
- In Poolesville “the colored people want a school, and...are endeavoring to buy ground upon which to build a church and school”—which also would come about in Love and Charity Hall

Rutherford also mentioned private schools taught by individuals in Clarksburg and Mechanicsville (as Olney was called then); a community school later formed in Clarksburg but one never came about in Olney, probably due to its proximity to Sandy Spring, Mt. Zion, and Norbeck.

Nearly two years later, an August 1869 report by the bureau’s superintendent of education for all of Maryland listed 10 Montgomery County Black schools. The three schools cited by Rutherford in 1867—Sandy Spring, Rockville, and Mt. Zion (now listed as Olney)—were joined by Brighton, Norbeck, Purdum (listed as Damascus), Barnesville, and Poolesville—the fruition of efforts detailed above. Also listed was Darnestown, referring to Quince Orchard, which may have been the site of the 1866 arson Rutherford cited; if so, the community rebounded as it built a school by 1868. Rounding out the list was “Oak Hill,” actually Martinsburg, dating a school there much earlier than had been documented heretofore.



All 10 schools were described as wood structures—sometimes built with bureau-supplied lumber—owned either by “school trustees” (community leaders) or “church and school trustees,” indicating roughly half these early schools were held in churches. For the most part, teachers were supplied by philanthropic and church organizations with which the bureau worked—frequently the Baltimore Association for the Moral and Educational Improvement of the Colored People; New York, Pennsylvania, Presbyterian, and Baptist aid societies are also included in the records as providing teachers. Records from 1870 generally put a teacher’s salary at \$20 a month, paid either by these organizations or the bureau.

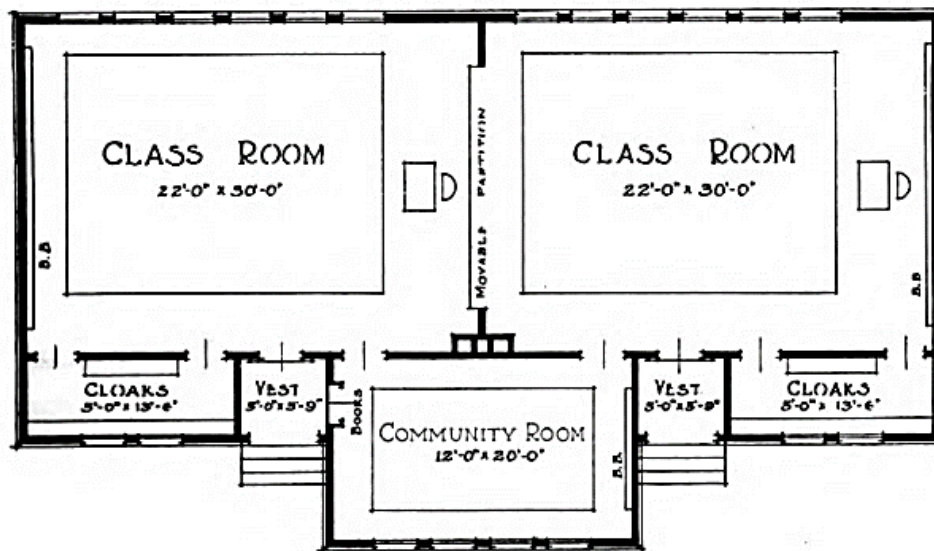
Teachers—nearly all of whom were Black—filled out monthly reports for the bureau, mostly providing attendance figures. On a line for comments, Nancy Jones at Purdum wrote, “Scholars are studious and learn very fast,” but in response to a question about “public sentiment towards Colored Schools,” she tersely wrote, “some what hostile”—five years into the remaking of society. In May 1870, the end of the school year, Sandy Spring teacher William James concluded his report by writing, “The people are desirous to have me return; will the Bureau employ me again?”

If he returned in the fall, it was likely through the Baltimore Association continuing on its own. At that point, all of the bureau’s state school superintendents were wrapping up their work; field offices had closed by January 1869—R.G. Rutherford’s tenure in Rockville, for example, ended with his October 1867 report. In July, he had noted some improvement from his initial report—whites by then showed “no disposition to interfere with [Black schools] when established.”

The 10 schools thus represent the culmination of the Freedmen’s Bureau work in Montgomery County. At its height, the bureau supported about 120 schools elsewhere around the state. Congress abolished the bureau in 1872—the very year, as it turned out, that Maryland required counties to expand public education to Black children, though that was slow in coming and, for the most part, on vastly unequal, inferior terms compared to schools for white children.

Montgomery County’s Rosenwald Schools

Depending on who’s counting, Montgomery County had 15 to 17 Rosenwald schools—public schools for African-American students constructed with financial assistance from a philanthropic fund established by Julius Rosenwald, president of Sears, Roebuck and Co. during its booming retail catalog era. Nearly 5,000 such schools were built throughout the segregated South from 1917 to 1932, with local governments, Rosenwald, and residents of Black communities where the buildings were located all providing funding of varying amounts. In Montgomery County, these one-, two-, and three-room buildings, all built in the 1920s, represented a welcomed improvement from inferior facilities in use for decades. The county provided the bulk of the funding, but community contributions (\$500 for each school except in one case) meant Blacks reaching further into pocketbooks despite already paying taxes for schools—woefully inadequate ones. Once all were built, roughly two of every three African-American children in the county attended a school partially funded with Rosenwald money, double the one-in-three proportion—astounding in and of itself—throughout the rest of the South.



A “two-teacher” school plan used for several Montgomery County Rosenwald schools. (Julius Rosenwald Fund image)

The main source of information on Rosenwald schools is a Fisk University database of Rosenwald Fund records, which lists 15 in our county; however, it counts the Rockville High School as an addition to the elementary school. While the two structures were adjacent to each other (and even shared one bathroom), they were two distinct schools in purpose and age grouping. Moreover, as the later construction project produced the county’s first high school for black students, it has tremendous historical significance all its own and deserves to be treated as a distinct building—indeed, one of distinction. This brings the number to 16, but there is yet another enumeration issue to be addressed.

The book relied upon heavily in this study, *History of the Black Public Schools of Montgomery County, Maryland, 1872-1961*, by Nina Clarke and Lillian Brown, differs from the Fisk list; Fisk lists Burnt Mills, a school not included by Clarke and Brown; instead they list Smithville school, based on Montgomery County school board records that apparently no longer exist.* Based on Clarke and Brown’s research, Smithville has been widely recognized as a Rosenwald school locally—most notably, a roadside marker

*In 2010, Susan G. Pearl, retired research and architectural historian for the Maryland–National Capital Park and Planning Commission–Prince George’s County, documented all Maryland Rosenwald schools for possible historic

for the school identifies it as such. Whether or not its construction was funded in part with money from the Rosenwald Fund, it is architecturally representative of such buildings and is now the best restored example in the county. As a result, it plays an important role in raising awareness of the historical significance of Rosenwald schools. Unable to resolve this discrepancy, this study lists both Burnt Mills and Smithville as possible Rosenwald schools, bringing the total here to 17.

C H A R T

Montgomery County's Rosenwald Schools

School	# of classrooms	Year constructed	County \$	Community \$	Rosenwald \$
1 Burnt Mills	2	1927-28	\$5,200	\$500	\$500
2 Cloppers	1	1927-28	\$2,300	\$500	\$200
3 Ken Gar	1	1927-28	\$2,300	\$500	\$200
4 Laytonsville	2	1924-25	\$4,800	\$500	\$700
5 Norbeck	2	1927-28	\$4,300	\$500	\$500
6 Poolesville	2	1927-28	\$4,800	\$500	\$500
7 River Road	3	1925-26	\$4,580	\$500	\$900
8 Rockville (Elementary)	2	1920-21	\$6,000	\$500	\$800
9 Rockville (High School)	2	1927-28	\$6,000	\$500	\$450
10 Sandy Spring	3	1924-25	\$7,180	\$500	\$900
11 Scotland	1	1927-28	\$2,300	\$500	\$200
12 Smithville	2	1927-28	U N K N O W N		
13 Spencerville	2	1927-28	\$4,500	\$500	\$500
14 Stewardtown	1	1927-28	\$2,300	\$500	\$200
15 Sugarland	1	1924-25	\$2,800	\$300	\$400
16 Takoma Park	2	1928-29	\$3,200	\$500	\$500
17 Washington Grove	2	1924-25	\$4,800	\$500	\$700

designation and did not include Smithville, relying on Rosenwald Fund records at Fisk (even traveling to the Nashville university to view them). In 2013, in preparing historic designation documentation for Norbeck school, Jamie Kuhns (now Ferguson), senior historian for Montgomery Parks, reported that a December 1928 *Education Report of the Board of Education*, cited by Clarke and Brown as including Smithville among schools receiving Rosenwald funding, "has not been preserved in the files of the Montgomery County Board of Education, so the discrepancy has not been resolved." Maryland Historical Trust has made no determination regarding Rosenwald status in its documentation of Smithville (M: 33-24).

A NOTE ON SOURCES

Documentation about Montgomery County's Black schools is, in a word, limited, but researchers are not at fault. Relatively few official records were kept and much of the documentation that does exist is lacking in detail and sometimes not clear and even contradictory. That Black schools were viewed as something of a stepchild by white administrators is reflected in cursory, incomplete recordkeeping.

Compiling the capsule descriptions of individual schools presented here is therefore akin to a detective process—gleaning and synthesizing from a variety of sources, subjectively giving greater weight to those deemed most reliable, trying to make sense of conflicting information, parsing uncertainties, connecting dots, and making reasonable, commonsense conclusions. Specific citations and detailed footnoting are thus not always possible or would be so extensive to be cumbersome. The school descriptions presented here are stitched-together summaries from among the sources mentioned below, which are listed roughly in order of importance and/or scope. Those providing information on only one school or area come last, but that in no way diminishes their usefulness. All these sources were beneficial in one way or another in piecing together this important aspect of our county's history.

The primary source for this work is *History of the Black Public Schools of Montgomery County, Maryland, 1872-1961* by Nina H. Clarke and Lillian B. Brown,

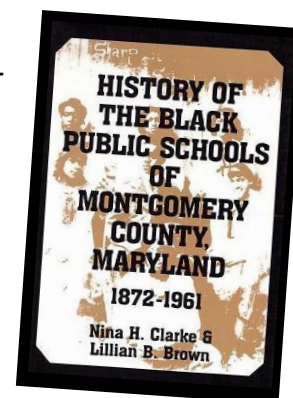


Nina Clarke



Lillian Brown

two former teachers in the segregated system and then principals in post-segregation years. Assisted by a team of volunteer researchers, they relied mainly on county school board minutes and other official archival information, newspapers, oral histories, and personal memories. As valuable and painstaking this 1975 research is, it inevitably leaves gaps in the history and suffers from some



inaccuracies and inconsistencies on dates—understandable given the magnitude of the task. (“Clarke & Brown” serves as the reference herein; mention is often made to a listing of teachers by year beginning in 1879—but, alas, containing many gaps—and to a listing of schools and their years—unfortunately sometimes contradicted by other information—presented in the book as Appendices D and E, respectively.)

Since its publication, information on many of the schools and their localities has been compiled for the **Maryland Historical Trust's Historic Sites Inventory**, providing valuable additional details but, again, sometimes conflicting information. Overall, however, this MHT documentation has been extremely helpful and thus relied upon heavily.* (Site-specific forms, available online at <https://apps.mht.maryland.gov/mihp>, are cited as MHT followed by M: [for Montgomery County] and a “hyphenated” number, e.g., M: 00-00; *note*: one space is needed after the colon for online retrieval.)

Other highly useful materials likely unavailable to Clarke and Brown include:

- **U.S. Freedmen's Bureau documents**, including reports of the Montgomery County field office (particularly ones dated October 27, 1866, July 19, 1867, and October 2, 1867) and the bureau's school superintendent (notably one dated August 1869 listing 10 schools in the county) as well as monthly forms completed by teachers, all archived by the National Archives and available online through the Smithsonian African-American museum
- a 1912 **report by the Presbyterian Church**, *A Rural Survey in Maryland*, that studied Montgomery County, and especially its schools, and included a valuable map of school locations
- a 1913 **U.S. Bureau of Education survey** of the county's schools (*An Educational Survey of a Rural and Suburban County*) that drew heavily on the schools portion of the above report
- limited extant annual **handbooks issued by the school system** (for four academic years, 1914-15 through 1917-18, the first three titled *Calendar* and the other *Yearbook*) which list all the MCPL schools—white

***George McDaniel** and **Eileen McGuckian** deserve additional acknowledgement as authors of much MHT documentation; wide-ranging local research by the latter is as authoritative as it is prodigious. Numerous MHT documents include photos by **Michael Dwyer** who, as the first Montgomery Parks historian, conducted the first comprehensive survey of historic sites in the county; his photos used here are credited by name as a richly deserved in-memoriam tribute.

and “colored;” school names used by the county as printed in these publications are used here, although some schools were more commonly referred to by other names and those are so noted

- a 1941 **Brookings Institution report** (*The Government of Montgomery County, Maryland*); a listing of 1939-40 schools provides a marker by which time a number of schools had closed

Although Black schools were not always shown, various **maps** were invaluable:

- 1865 Martenet and Bond county map
- 1879 G.M. Hopkins Atlas of the county
- 1894 Hopkins map of Washington and vicinity and the nearly identical 1904 G.W. Baist DC vicinity map, both of which show only the southeastern quadrant of county
- U.S. Geologic Survey maps, particularly the 1945 series which often show school locations
- 1976 Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites in Montgomery County, Maryland

Resources on Montgomery County as a whole (or either a significant portion or aspect) included:

- ***Before Us Lies the Timber*** by Warrick S. Hill (2003) – covering the county’s three Black high schools—Rockville, Lincoln, and Carver; the author was a former Carver teacher and Lincoln graduate
- ***Black Historical Resources in Upper Western Montgomery County, Maryland*** by George W. McDaniel (1979) – issued by Sugarloaf Mountain Trails; covering roughly the western third of the county
- ***Community Cornerstones: A Selection of Historic African American Churches in Montgomery County, Maryland*** (2012) – pamphlet published by Heritage Montgomery and written by Eileen S. McGuckian*
- ***From One Room to Open Space: A History of Montgomery County Schools from 1732 to 1965*** by E. Guy Jewell (1976) – extensive chronology by a former principal that largely focuses on the white schools but contains some useful information on the Black schools
- ***A Grateful Remembrance: The Story of Montgomery County, Maryland, 1776-1976*** by Richard K. MacMaster and Ray Eldon Hiebert (1976) – a broad historical overview sponsored by the county government and Montgomery History (then Montgomery County Historical Society) for the county’s bicentennial
- ***The History of Montgomery County, Maryland, from its Earliest Settlement in 1650 to 1879*** by T.H.S. Boyd (1879) – the first known historical account of the county; includes limited references to schools
- ***Northeastern Montgomery County Black Oral History Study*** by Everett Fly and La Barbara Wigfall Fly (1983)
- ***Places from the Past*** by Clare Lise Cavicchi (now Kelly; 2001) – extensive reference book/photographic album of the county’s historic buildings by a former county planning department architectural historian

In addition to site-specific MHT documents noted with particular school sketches, the following resources provided detailed information on one or several schools, as noted:

- **“Emory Grove: A Black Community of Yesteryear,”** article in *The Montgomery County Story*, journal of Montgomery History (1988; also feeder schools for Longview)
- **A History of Germantown** by Susan Cooke Soderberg (1988)
- **“The History of the Gibson Grove Community,”** paper by L. Paige Whitley (2020; Cabin John and Brickyard)
- ***I Have Started for Canaan*** by the Sugarland Ethno-History Project (2020)
- ***Kensington: A Picture History*** published by Kensington Business District Association and edited by William M. Maury (1994)
- ***Laytonsville: from Crossroads to Community*** by Anne Burke Wolf and Jane Griffith Evans (2013; Laytonsville area, including Brook Grove, Etchison, Mt. Zion, and Unity)
- ***Montgomery County: A Pictorial History*** by Margaret Marshall Coleman (1990; Boyds and Unity)
- ***Sandy Spring Legacy*** published by the Sandy Spring Museum and edited by Thomas Y. Canby (1999; Sandy Spring area, including Brighton, Laytonsville, Mt. Zion, Norbeck, Spencerville, and Unity)
- **“Tracing a Bethesda, Maryland, African American Community and Its Contested Cemetery,”** article by David Kathan, Amy Rispin, and L. Paige Whitley in *Washington History*, journal of the Historical Society of Washington, D.C. (2017; River Road)

Finally, although newspapers were of limited use as coverage of Black schools was sparse, three articles in the Baltimore ***Afro-American*** newspaper were especially helpful in listing schools at particular times:

- “11 Frame Schools for Montgomery Co.,” July 2, 1927,” p. 3
- “Montgomery Co. Md. Teachers,” September 19, 1931, p. 19
- “Teachers Chosen in Montgomery,” September 7, 1935, p. 10

Segregated Black Schools of Montgomery County

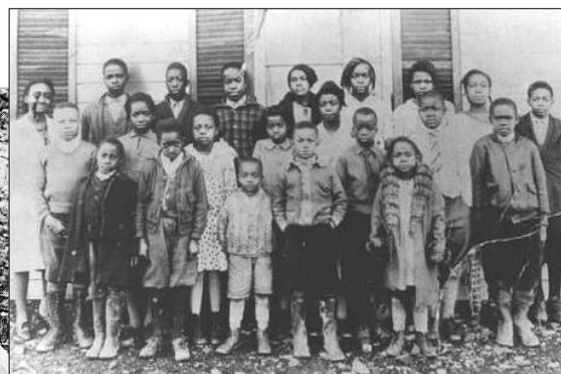
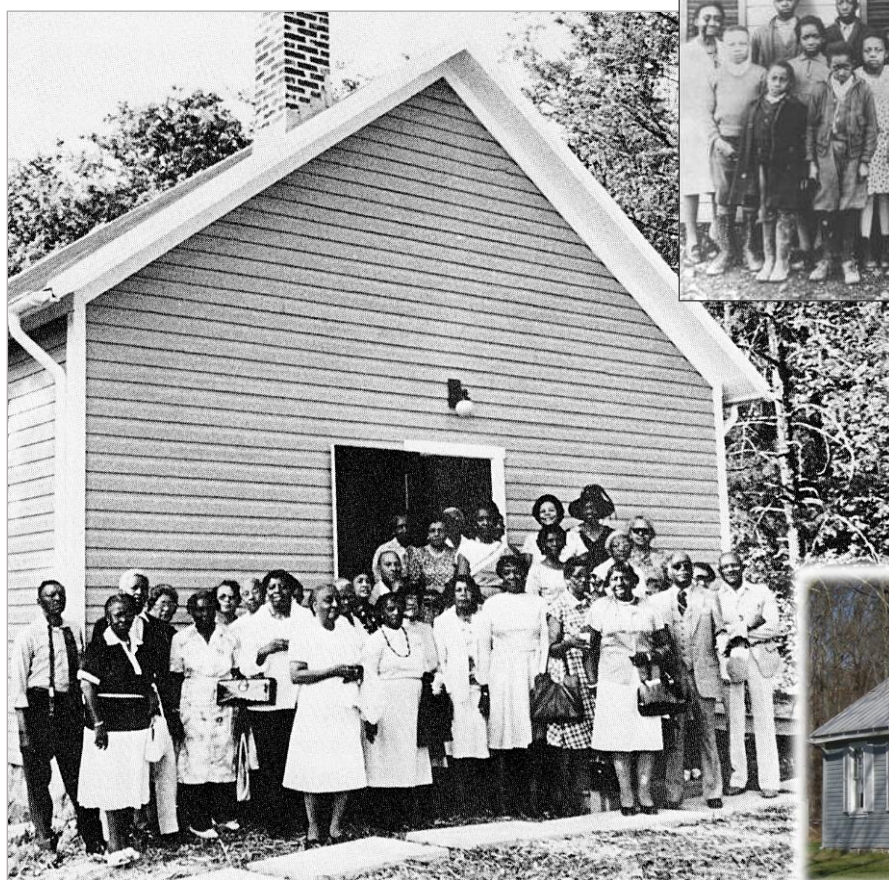
S N A P S H O T D E S C R I P T I O N S

■ school building existed □ met only in rented non-school space [?] uncertain if school building existed

Barnesville - see **Sellman**

■ **Boys** *One-room school museum today*

School building erected with county funding in 1896; classes previously held in nearby St. Mark's Methodist church (built in 1892) as well as in a predecessor chapel (likely as soon as it was built in 1879 for "the purpose of holding a public school and meeting for religious worship," as the deed put it), and perhaps even earlier in a small structure on what became the church property; it became a public school by 1880 when a teacher was assigned by the county; closed for a year in 1909 and again in 1920 because of low enrollment, and then closed permanently in 1936 (as part of the consolidation of a number of Black schools in the late 1930s) and the students—along with long-time teacher Lillian Giles—



Teacher Lillian Giles (above left) with her students ca. 1930. (Reprinted from G.W. McDaniel; see accompanying "A Note on Sources")



"Miss Giles" (front row, left, white dress) and former students celebrate the 1982 opening of the restored Boys school as a museum (shown as it exists today at right). The beloved teacher is remembered for leading her students in singing "Lift Every Voice and Sing" daily. (Above left reprinted from M.M. Coleman; author photo, above right)

were transferred to Clarksburg school; the building, standing in its original location at 19510 White Ground Road, has been restored and is now maintained by the Boyds Historical Society as school museum open to the public, <http://www.boydshistory.org/bns>.

As explained in the sidebar, “A Note on Sources,” the main source for most entries is *History of the Black Public Schools of Montgomery County, Maryland, 1872-1961*, by Nina H. Clarke and Lillian B. Brown. Additional sources may be cited for individual entries, in this case MHT M: 18-11-1 and M: 18-11-13 (notation also explained in the sidebar).

📍 Brick Yard (also called Cropley)

A school for a small Black community near a brick manufacturing company about three miles south of Potomac was held intermittently (opening and closing frequently) and it is unlikely a school building ever existed, even though land was bought by community school trustees in 1884 and sold 10 years later to the school board;* county

teachers are listed for 1888, 1894-95, and 1917-20; no school is shown on the 1894 Hopkins map but the 1904 Baist map (above) shows a “col. sch.” most likely was held in a rented church (Mount Glory Baptist, now much enlarged as a residence); it closed permanently in 1931 and students were bused to River Road school.

*Near what is today MacArthur Boulevard and Brickyard Road; deed research by L.P. Whitley (see “A Note on Sources” sidebar for citations of individual authors). Brick Yard, as two words, was the official name of the school, although the common spelling today is Brickyard.



■ Brighton

One of the earliest spots in the county to gain a schoolhouse with assistance—including building materials—from the Freedmen’s Bureau; in the summer of 1867 13 men signed a petition to the bureau pledging financial support for a school; a white farmer, Isaac Hartshorne, gave land, construction began several months later, and a school opened in January 1868; it became a county school by 1881; the original building burned down in 1917 and an adjacent hall and/or church was rented for 12 years; a portable room from the white Chevy Chase Elementary School was moved to Brighton in 1929 as a replacement

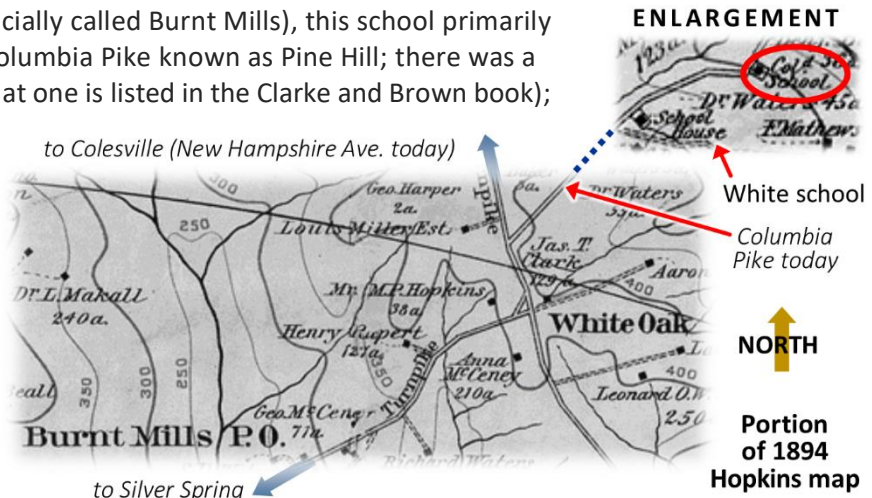


school at a cost of \$500; ca. 1937 this building also burned and the school closed permanently with students then attending Sandy Spring school.

Brook Grove - see **Laytonsville**

■ **Burnt Mills** (also called Pine Hill and White Oak)

Located in White Oak (but officially called Burnt Mills), this school primarily served a community east of Columbia Pike known as Pine Hill; there was a teacher in 1876 (the earliest that one is listed in the Clarke and Brown book); in 1883 the county approved monthly rent of \$20 for a “schoolhouse [that] would be supplied by the people”* (likely Hillendale’s Sitka Baptist Church about two miles away); in 1886 a school, 18x28 feet, was erected on a half-acre of land donated to the county by Thomas Stewart, for



Burnt Mills Rosenwald School as pictured in the Fisk database.

whom a community chapel is named (the school is shown on the map above; note the proximity to a white school); a student remembers more than 60 students in the school’s one room; Rosenwald Fund records at Fisk University show that the county built a two-room school in 1927-28; it closed just 10 years later in 1937 and the students moved to Smithville.

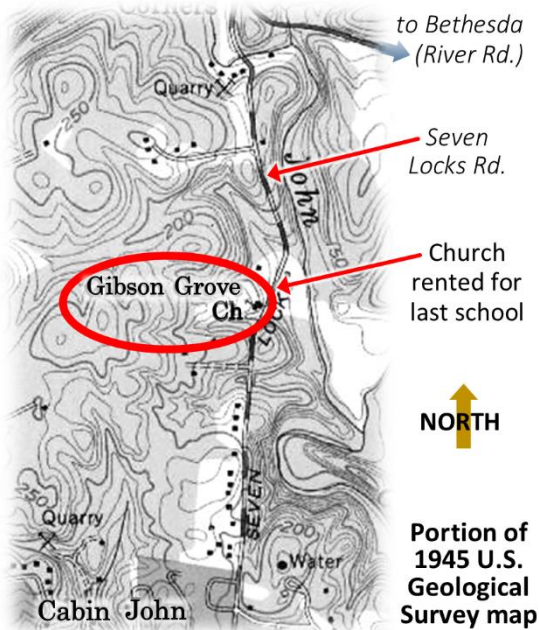
*Clarke & Brown, 1876 date and quotation

■ **Cabin John**

Like Brick Yard (relatively nearby), this school experienced interrupted years of operation and was held in several different buildings and in rented space for much of its existence; land was sold in 1881 by community founders Robert and Sarah Gibson to trustees for “a house thereupon as a school house and a house of worship, for the use of the colored people of this community;”* schooling began in a log cabin built soon thereafter; it became a county school in 1882. In 1911 the county moved the school into rented space in nearby Gibson Grove Church (then a log cabin also, built about a decade earlier— a replacement structure is in near ruins today); the county closed the school in 1922 for five years

*Deed research by L.P. Whitley.

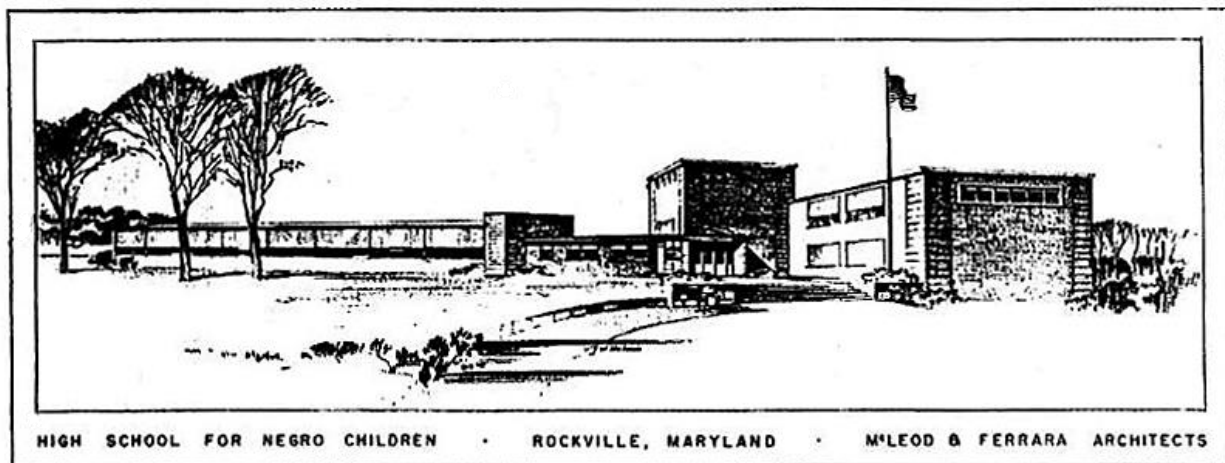
due to low enrollment, then reopened it in a nearby rented fraternal lodge (Moses Hall, no longer extant), then closing it permanently just four years later in 1931 and transferring the students to River Road school.



The only reminder of Cabin John school is this sign on Seven Locks Road. Installed in 2007 by the Cabin John Citizens Association, it gives an overview of the history of Gibson Grove church (mapped at left) and Moses Hall, where the school was last held. A trail on the left leads to the hall site and an abutting cemetery, listed among the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 2021 as one of 11 most endangered places in the U.S. (Author photo)

■ Carver High School and Junior College *Last of three segregated high schools, 1951-60*

In the face of increasing challenges to segregation and manifestly substandard Black school buildings, in the early 1950s the county built George Washington Carver High School and Junior College as one of five modern schools that were roughly on par with white schools in terms of physical facilities. (The other four were elementary schools: Longview in Gaithersburg, Rock Terrace on land abutting Carver, Sandy Spring, and Edward U. Taylor in Boyds.) Opened in 1950, Carver was located in Rockville like its two predecessors (see separate entries for Rockville and Lincoln high schools). A “symbol of triumph over educational injustice,” Carver and was a fully accredited “first-rate” facility,* offering



*First quotation from MHT M: 26-40 (written by Bessie Corbin, former Lincoln and Carver teacher, and historian Eileen S. McGuckian); second quotation, author Warrick Hill, a Lincoln graduate and former Peary High School teacher.

a range of academic, business, and vocational courses as well as college-level courses in its early years because Montgomery Junior College, then in Takoma Park, was segregated.

As a result of the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision, in 1956 some Carver students—selected for their good grades—began transferring to high schools nearer their homes, and the junior college was merged into Montgomery Junior College; Carver’s Class of 1960 comprised the last graduates. One of the school’s principals, Dr. Parlett Moore, went on to become president of Coppin State Teachers College in Baltimore; with desegregation, the school’s last principal, Silas Craft, was demoted to an assistant principal position at Montgomery Blair High. The building was converted for use as administrative offices for the school system and the Carver name was dropped but later restored following a community campaign. The lobby features an informative exhibit on the segregation and desegregation of the county’s school system.



Carver High School in the 1960s after its conversion to administrative offices as the Educational Services Center, before the Carver name was restored on the building. (Reprinted from Jewell).

■ Clarksburg (also called Rocky Hill)

A one-room school was built under county auspices for \$400 by 1894 on land donated by early settlers Lloyd and Sarah Gibbs (what today is Clarksburg Park just south of Clarksburg High School); classes had been meeting by 1880 (when the county assigned a teacher) in an unknown location and then in a wood-frame church built ca. 1880 on the site of the extant church building at 22420 Frederick Road; a second room was added onto to the school in 1936 and it took in students from the closed Boyds and Hyattstown schools, bringing the enrollment to 105 in 1939; it closed in 1952 and the students then went to Edward U. Taylor school.

MHT M: 13-34 and M: 13-48 provide some of this information. Wims Road was the nucleus of a Black community known as Rocky Hill, the name of a nearby middle school today; early landowners included three Wims



Clarksburg school stood about where this county park building is located today, on Wims Road opposite Clarksburg High School. (Author photo)

brothers; an elementary school is now named for descendant Wilson Wims, a bricklayer and 20th century community leader who helped construct the Clarksburg Park recreation building where the school described here once stood.



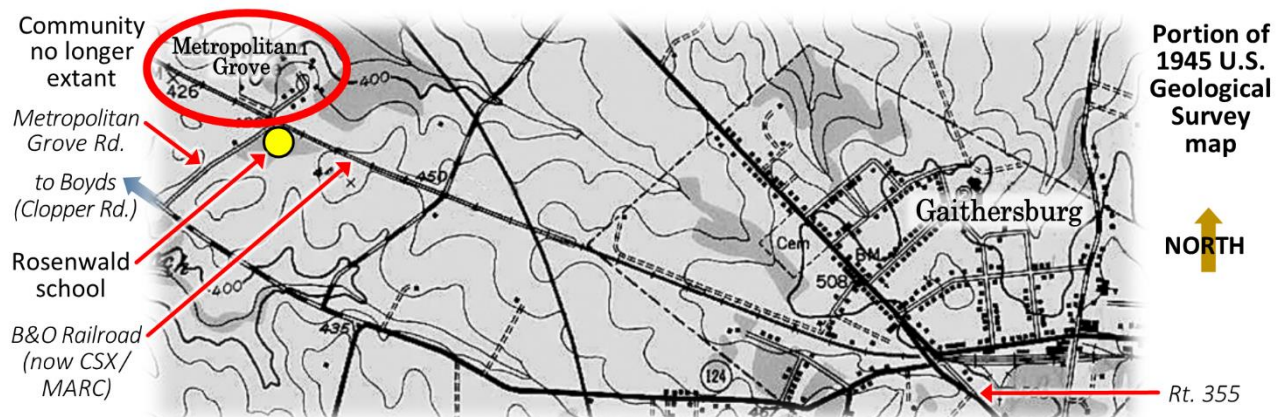
This ca. 1932 photo shows 45 students attending the one-room Clarksburg school; the one teacher, Inez Hallman (quoted below), is second from the right in the top row. (Reprinted from G.W. McDaniel)

“ The school board doesn’t send many resources our way, so we do the best we can, with help from parents and the community. Fortunately, my school parents and other adults in the community are very supportive—everyone makes sure the children get to school on time and have decent clothes to wear. And I always bring extra lunch to share so no one goes hungry. ”

—Inez Hallman, teacher at Clarksburg

■ Cloppers (also called Metropolitan Grove)

The first teacher for a school (in a rented building) serving a community known as Metropolitan Grove, west of Gaithersburg, is listed in 1892; in 1897 residents petitioned the school board for a schoolhouse but to no avail, the board insisting the community provide assistance in acquiring land and constructing a building, and in 1901 a hall was still being rented; in 1917 the school board directed that a vacant white school further away be used but the community successfully petitioned to keep the school where it was;



in 1927-28, with the community contributing the expected \$500, the county built a one-room Rosenwald school roughly at the entrance to what is a large state highway facility today (pictured at right); the school closed in 1950 and the students were transferred to the new Longview school.



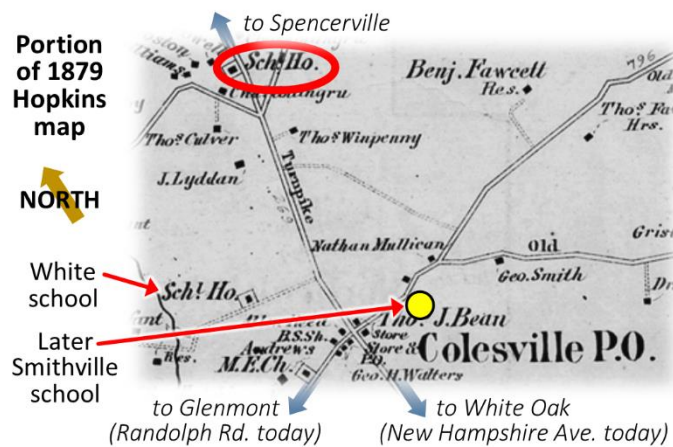
Google Maps image

“ The sound of trains constantly rumbling by made teaching a rather difficult task at times. The school practically sat on the railroad tracks. ”

—Florence Davis Snowden, teacher at Cloppers

■ Colesville

In 1876, the school board approved \$300 for land and a one-room school near Colesville; by 1879 a building had been erected just north of where New Hampshire Avenue intersects the Intercounty Connector today; the school periodically closed for lack of funding and closed permanently in 1914 with the students then going to Spencerville school; in 1927-28 a replacement of sorts—the two-room Smithville school (see later entry)—was built closer to Colesville.



■ Damascus (also called Claggettville and Razor Blade)

A teacher for a school near Damascus is first listed in 1880 and a building was constructed in 1884 (no longer standing but located north of Damascus opposite Friendship Methodist Church on what is Route 27 today); the school was closed occasionally in its early years for low enrollment; it closed permanently in 1939 and the students then went to Laytonsville school.

Former student Harvey Zeigler, interviewed at 100 years of age for this report, proudly recounted that his great grandfather Richard (also known as John) Holsey built the school; prior to the structure’s construction classes could have been held in Holsey’s house, no longer standing but located nearby on what is Holsey Road today (MHT M: 14-116), or an earlier building housing Friendship church (<https://friendshipmc.org/church-history>); Damascus is listed in Freedmen’s Bureau records but the references are to Purdum school (see later entry).



Damascus school stood opposite Friendship Methodist Church, 27001 Ridge Road. (Microsoft Maps image)

Emory Grove - see **Washington Grove**

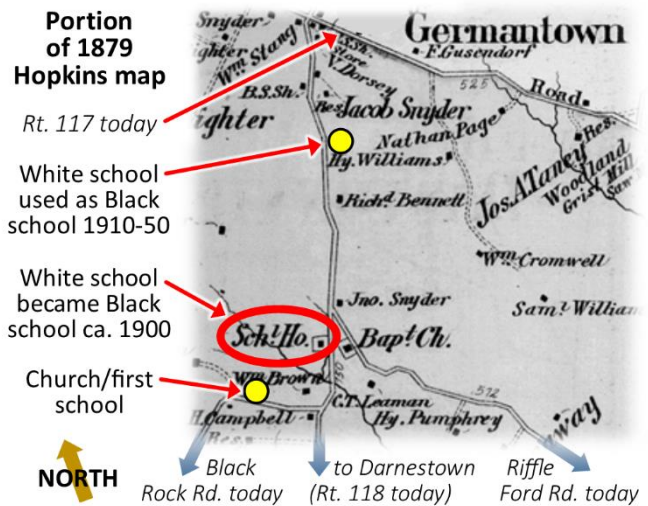
2 **Etchison** (also called Ragtown and Fairview)

Served a small community established by 1870 located about two miles north of Laytonsville off Damascus Road (about a mile southeast of the Route 108 intersection); met, at least initially, in Fairview Methodist Church (no longer extant), which dates to the community's start; a county-assigned teacher is listed in 1880; rental records suggest there may have been a county-owned school by 1915;* the school, always having only one teacher, closed in 1937 with the students then attending Laytonsville.

*Rents are listed in the 1915-16 handbook; no rent paid for Etchison. Community research by Anita Neal Powell.

■ **Germantown** (also called Brownstown)

The Germantown African-American community of Brownstown, at the northern end of Black Rock Road, was named for William Brown, who bought land there in 1868; public schooling at an unknown location began by 1880 when a teacher was appointed; in 1883 the county authorized \$160 for the purchase of land from Brown for a schoolhouse, but one was not built; instead school was held in Francis Asbury Methodist Church from when its original structure was built in 1885 (with the school board paying monthly rent of only \$2 in 1901); an abandoned white school, built ca. 1860, was then used until 1910 when a new four-room school for Germantown's white children opened nearer the B&O railroad station (to which the center of town gravitated) and a second abandoned white school, about a mile away, became the Black school; in 1939 this one-room building had 59 students enrolled; it was used until 1950 when the students were transferred to Longview.



MHT M: 18-29, M: 18-29-1, and when M: 18-29-2 are among sources for this description.



Two former white schools were subsequently used for Black children in the Germantown area; the first (at left) is seen in 1975 shortly before it was demolished; the second was used until 1950. (MHT/Michael Dwyer and Lillian B. Brown photos, respectively; latter reprinted from S.C. Soderberg)

“ There were so many cracks [in the wall] that the wind would blow over my head as I was writing on the blackboard. ”

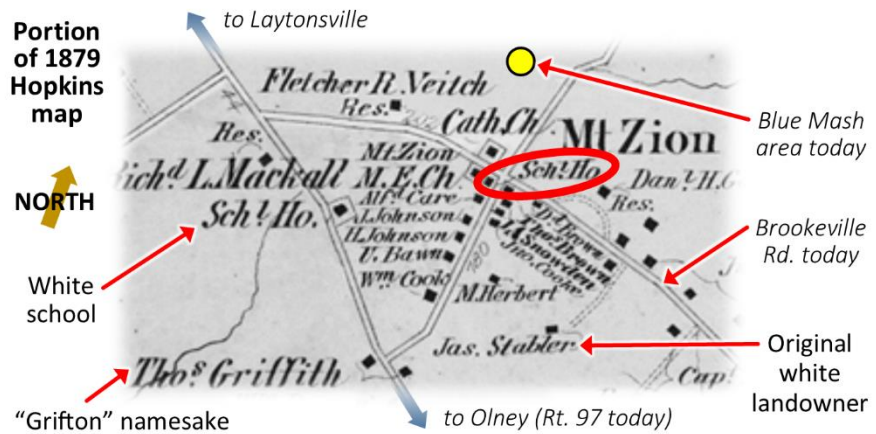
—Lillian B. Brown, teacher at Germantown

☐ **Glen** (also called Potomac)

Short-lived school located in a small community known as the Pines roughly two miles north of Potomac; opened ca. 1889; county school by 1901 when the school board paid rent for a church, likely Union Wesley Methodist Church that once stood on Piney Meetinghouse Road just north of Glen Road—an unmarked cemetery is the only remnant; closed in 1906-07 for insufficient enrollment and permanently by 1913.

■ **Grifton** *One of the oldest surviving school buildings* (commonly called Mt. Zion)

Mt. Zion, one of the county’s earliest post-Civil War Black communities, had one of the first Freedmen’s Bureau schools and then one of the first public schools; with assistance from religious/philanthropic groups and building supplies from the bureau, Mt. Zion Methodist Church was built in 1867 by previously free and newly emancipated Blacks on land



purchased for \$100 from a Quaker neighbor, James Stabler; school began in the church in December of that year; in 1873, largely through the efforts of resident Hamilton Snowden, the community received funding from the county made available as a result of the 1872 state law requiring at least one Black public school in each election district (five districts in the county at the time) and a one-room school was constructed adjacent to the church; it was later expanded with a second room sometime after 1910 and stands today at the 5000 Brookeville Road site, making it the oldest surviving county public school built for African-American students; it closed by 1939 and its students were bused to Laytonsville.



The former Grifton school (in the foreground) is used today by Mt. Zion Methodist Church; that structure (toward the back) replaced the original 1867 church destroyed by fire in 1968. The tower houses the original church bell salvaged from the fire. (Microsoft Maps image)

It is noteworthy that when the county school board was ready to sell this school in the early 1950s, it discovered it did not actually have a clear title—the community apparently was so eager for a public school in 1873 that formalities—and paperwork—of ownership were likely overlooked; the property ultimately “reverted” to the church, and the school is now used as a church annex/community building. As a public school it was officially called Grifton, but most often was known as Mt. Zion despite the religious connotation; “Grifton” derives from the name of a local white landowner, Thomas Griffith.

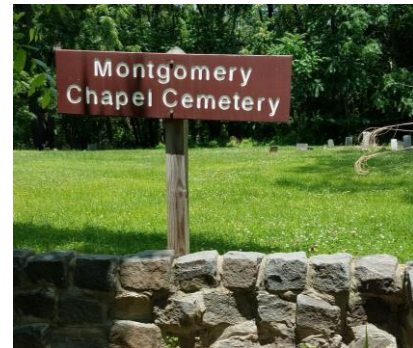
MHT M: 23-53 provides some of the above information. In Freedmen’s Bureau records this school is referred to as both Olney and “Blue Marsh”—the nearby area known today as Blue Mash (no “r”) is shown on the map on the preceding page. In addition to this community’s many Quaker neighbors, a white Catholic chapel (now St. Peter’s Parish in Olney) stood ca. 1860-1900 on the other side of Brookeville Road from the Black Mt. Zion church.

□ Hyattstown

A school for Black children in Hyattstown—once a thriving locality in upper Montgomery County along the all-important road connecting Rockville and Frederick (now Route 355)—met its entire existence in a church, the now-gone Montgomery Chapel located south of town along that road—a small cemetery marks the spot today; the school board provided a teacher by 1880; the school was closed periodically—sometimes for more than a year—due to low enrollment and budget shortfalls; in the 1914-15 school year the county spent a total of \$1 on books for the school—the least of any other; it was closed permanently in 1936 and the students then attended the newly enlarged Clarksburg school.



Montgomery Chapel (left) in 1972, eight years after its congregation disbanded and vacated the church; it was later vandalized and stood in deteriorating condition until razed in the 1980s, leaving only its cemetery (right). (MHT/Michael Dwyer and author photos, respectively)

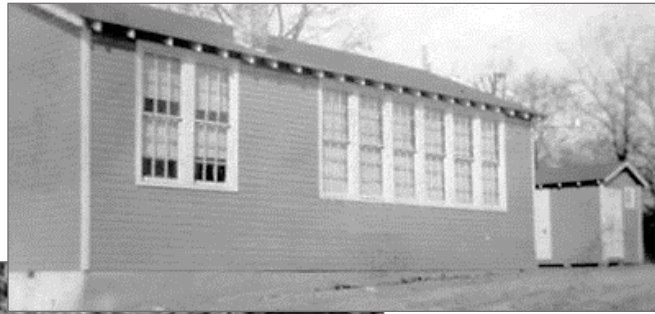


■ Kensington *One of five extant Rosenwald schools in the county* (commonly called Ken Gar)

Due to the lack of covenants restricting property sales to white buyers only—prevalent in the deeds for many downcounty properties until the middle of the 20th century—Ken Gar formed as a mainly Black community in the late 1890s on the western edge of Kensington (abutting Garrett Park, hence the name Ken Gar); it was without a school until 1904 when Lee AME Chapel—now Lee Memorial AME Church—was built and its pastor, Rev. John N. Still, began holding school in the church; it became a public school in 1912 with the county renting the building; in 1918 the school board purchased land next to the church and moved a one-room section of a former school building for white children in Chevy Chase to the site for use as the Black school; in 1927-28 a replacement one-room Rosenwald school was built and a second room was added onto the building in 1941; the school was one of four

wood-frame buildings (all downcounty) still being used in the mid-1950s when school segregation was ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court and Ken Gar students were among the first Black students in the county to integrate nearby white schools—Kensington, Glen Haven, North Chevy Chase, and Rock Creek Palisades Elementary Schools—in September 1955.

Sources for this description include MHT M: 31-52 and the Lee Memorial AME Church website, <https://www.leeame.org/church-history>.



The Ken Gar Rosenwald school as originally constructed with one classroom (above) and with its addition (lower portion of the building in the center of the photo at left). (Fisk and Montgomery History photos, respectively)

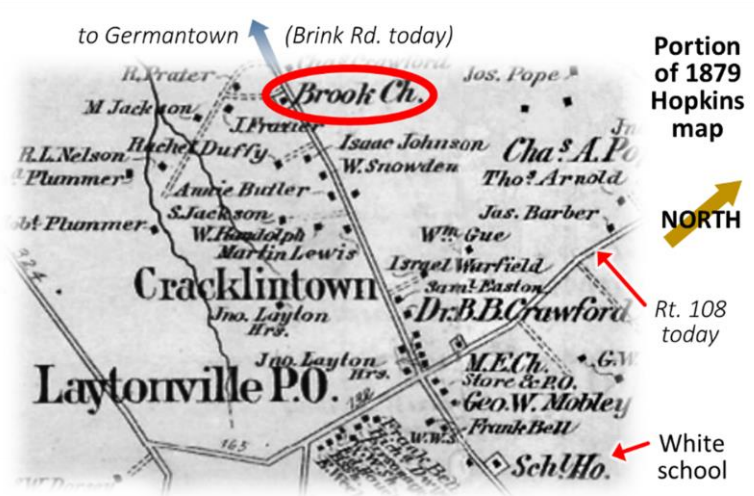
Lee Memorial AME Church, which gave rise to the school, can be seen at the far left in the above photo. At right is the remodeled school, at 4111 Plyers Mill Road; today it is the Leonard D. Jackson Ken Gar Center, maintained by the county’s Recreation Department. The church still abuts the former school. (Author photo)



■ Laytonville (commonly called Brook Grove)

In 1870, the post-Civil War African-American community of Brook Grove, about a mile west of Laytonville, purchased land to establish a Methodist church (now Agape AME in a newer building at the 7700 Brink Road site) that was also to be used “as a School House for the education of colored persons without distinction of sect or political party,”* and a building used for both purposes was erected the next year; in 1879 a one-room public

*Quoted in Wolf & Evans.

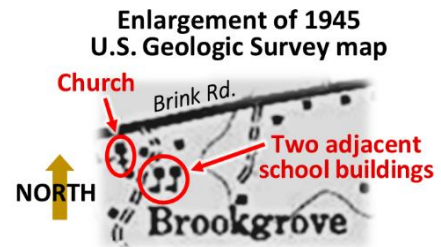


school was built behind the church in what today is Laytonsville Park; it was expanded to two rooms sometime after 1910; in 1924-25 a two-room Rosenwald building was erected next to the original structure, which continued in use as well, making Brook Grove's school an atypical four-room



Pictured above is Laytonsville/Brook Grove school ca. 1900 when it was still one room; at left is the two-room Laytonsville Rosenwald school soon after its construction in 1924-25. (Above photo reprinted from Wolf & Evans; Fisk photo, left)

“facility” for educating Black students; between 1937 and 1939, it became a “consolidated” school with students from closed schools in Damascus, Etchison, Purdum, and Unity attending, bringing its enrollment to 174—the highest of any Black grammar school at the time other than Rockville (also four rooms); it was closed in 1950 when Longview opened as the new consolidated Black school for the northeastern part of the county.



While the community's name is often written “Brooke Grove,” it is believed to be derived from a nearby stream and woods (note that “Brook,” without an “e,” is the spelling of the church's name on the 1879 map on the previous page). Moreover, the *Afro-American* newspaper most often uses “Brook Grove” or “Brookgrove,” as does the U.S. Geologic Survey map above, and there was a local Black Brook family. Brooke is a family name most often associated with Quakers in Sandy Spring/Brookeville and “Brooke Grove” was associated with a large colonial land patent that may originally extended to this area.

■ Lincoln High School *Second of three segregated high schools, 1935-51*

An abandoned wood-frame building moved to Lincoln Park in Rockville from Takoma Park and covered with brick to match white high schools then being built, Lincoln High was still the only secondary school in the county for Black students when it opened in September 1935 to replace the overcrowded first high school nearby, Rockville High (see later entry). Just four rooms initially, it received several additions, including a wood-frame Rosenwald-like structure built by an industrial arts class and, following World War II, old metal Quonset huts—both emblematic of inferior facilities and hardly adequate to meet enrollment. Although 12th grade was not provided until 1943 (long after it was added in white high schools), and many subjects taught in the white high schools were not offered,



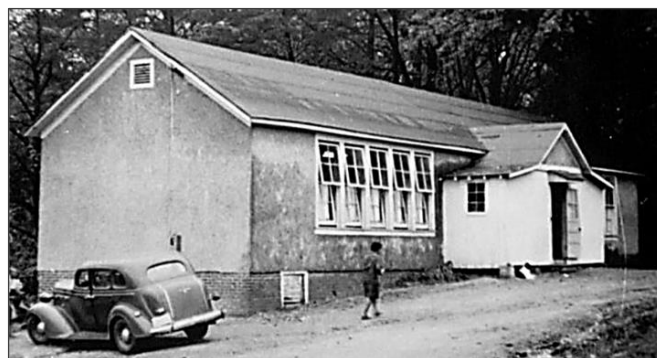
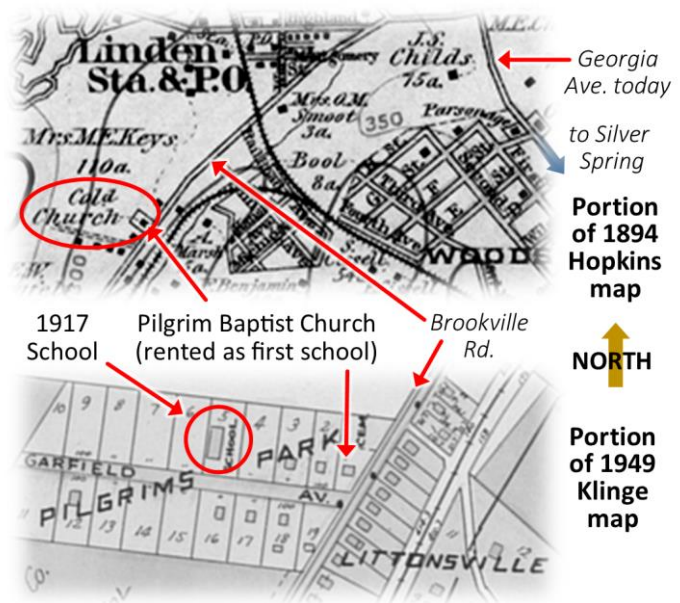
Black history was taught to bolster racial pride. Lincoln High was succeeded by Carver High in 1950, but this substandard building continued in use, serving as the county's only junior high school for Black students until it was closed with countywide desegregation in 1958.



Lincoln High School in the 1940s after the brick portion was expanded with two additional classrooms at the rear and a wood-frame addition was built by students. The old Quonset huts (above right) remain on the site today; the main building, located at 595 N. Stonestreet Avenue in Rockville's Lincoln Park, is currently used by a church. (Montgomery History and author photos, respectively)

■ **Linden** (commonly called Lyttonsville)

Served the African-American community known as Lyttonsville (named for the first Black property owner in 1853) that formed decades after the Civil War along a portion of Brookville Road northwest of Silver Spring; schooling was first provided in a room in a residence rented by the county beginning around 1887 and then in Pilgrim Baptist Church after it moved to the community in 1892; despite repeated community requests, a school was not built until 1917, three years after community trustees had purchased land; in 1931 a portable classroom was moved from Bethesda–Chevy Chase High School and attached to the Garfield Avenue school, making it a two-room building; it was one of four substandard downcounty schools closed in 1955 after school segregation was overturned and its 92 students integrated four area white schools—North Chevy Chase, Rock Creek Forest, Woodlin, and Woodside Elementary Schools.



Linden school in the 1940s after being expanded with a temporary structure moved from a white high school (and then used for more than two decades); it was one of four wood-frame school buildings still in use in the county when the U.S. Supreme Court declared school segregation unconstitutional in 1954. (Montgomery History photo)

■ **Longview** *First of four early 1950s consolidated “equalization” elementary schools*

By the late 1940s the substandard conditions of the Black schools were glaringly obvious, and the county began planning a large-scale building program to close the largely one- and two-room crowded wooden buildings in which African-American children were educated, replacing them with larger, “consolidated” modern brick buildings generally on par with white schools. Historical hindsight labels these buildings “equalization schools”—begun in some states to stymie legal challenges to segregation. Longview Elementary was the first one completed here, opening in 1950; for the first time each grade had its own classroom, and kindergarten, art, music, and special education classes finally were provided Black children. Named by a student,* it was built in Emory Grove and took in its students as well as those bused from



Edith Throckmorton

Clarksburg, Cloppers, Laytonsville, and Stewartown. Just a year after it opened a four-room addition needed to be built, even though 7th grade was moved to the former Lincoln High, converted to a junior high. Longview remained segregated until 1959 when some white students from Gaithersburg Elementary also attended while that building was being expanded; Longview’s Black students were integrated into other schools in 1960-61 and it then became an integrated special education school for children with disabilities. With desegregation, Edith Throckmorton, Longview’s principal since its opening, resigned from the school system rather than accept a position as assistant principal under a less experienced white principal, forfeiting her retirement; today a park in Ken Gar is named for her.

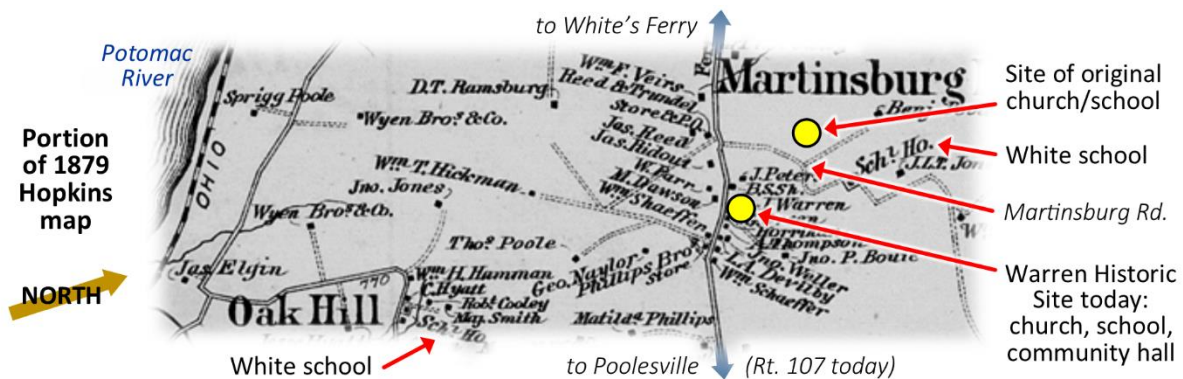
*Fourth-grader Shirley Duvall coined the name by taking into account the long bus ride many students had and the “beautiful” view outside its windows. The 18100 Washington Grove Road facility has seen various uses over the ensuing years; the name Longview is now assigned to a special education facility at a Germantown elementary.



Longview was the first Black school built to be on par with white elementary schools; it served as a consolidated school bringing in children from the northern part of the county. (Montgomery History photo)

■ **Martinsburg** *Part of the only site in Maryland with three main community institutions extant*

Martinsburg was once a thriving biracial community with two stores, a post office, blacksmith shop, and numerous homes clustered along a half-mile stretch of White’s Ferry Road west of Poolesville—



little is left today but what remains makes it a very significant spot; in 1867 one of the largest black landowners in the county, Nathan Nailor, joined with four other residents—Henry Johnson, George Gibbs, Isaac Warren, and W.J. Granderson—to build on a parcel of land Nailor sold for \$10 a “col’d School House” (as the deed put it); aided by Freedmen’s Bureau, it opened in January 1869 (referred to in bureau records as Oak Hill, a nearby locality that also no longer exists); the building, located about a half mile away on Martinsburg Road and also used as a church, was moved on rollers to the main road in 1879; the school was incorporated into the county system in 1880 and an adjacent one-room school building was constructed in 1886; it served until 1936 when the students were transferred to Sellman.

Standing today at 22625 White’s Ferry Road with the school and a 1903 replacement church building is Loving Charity Hall, rescued from near-collapse and restored in 2018, giving this spot historical significance as the last site in Maryland with all three of the structures that formed the pillars of many post–Civil War African-American communities—a church, school, and community mutual aid or benevolent society lodge.



The 1886 Martinsburg school (bottom left) stands next to the former Warren Methodist Church (in 1993 the congregation merged with Mt. Zion Methodist Church, now West Montgomery Methodist—see Sellman school entry); in the background and shown in full in the inset is the restored Loving Charity Hall, making this the only Maryland location with the three key institutions of many Black communities still standing together. The site is now maintained by the volunteer Warren Historic Site Committee, <https://warrenhistoricsite.org>; a roadside marker conveys the site’s historical significance. (Author photo)

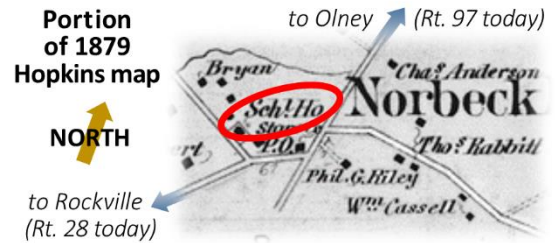
■ Maryland Normal and Agricultural Institute at Sandy Spring

This entity is something of an enigma—a short-lived educational institution of unknown grade level but most likely the county’s first upper-level school as it focused on teacher, agricultural, manual, and household training; primarily funded by a state appropriation allowing for students from other counties to attend as well local students; opened in September 1908 with one teacher and seven enrollees; by January 1909 it had rapidly grown to 177 students and five teachers; principal H.C. Williams resigned later that year, the county school board was unable to find a replacement, and the institute “declined rapidly,”* closing just two years later in 1911.

*MacMaster & Heibert. The school appears to have been modeled on the Maryland Industrial and Agricultural Institute for Colored Youth (note slight difference in name and focus) that was established several years earlier, in 1901, in Laurel—itsself inspired by the flourishing Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute in Alabama and Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute in Virginia that focused on vocational education, the best-remembered advocate for which was Tuskegee’s Booker T. Washington. In fact, Washington corresponded with those involved in the Sandy Spring endeavor. Adding to the uncertainty associated with this school, some sources seem to conflate it with the Sandy Spring Industrial School, the name sometimes used to refer to the Sandy Spring grade school (see later entry). Given the scarce documentation on this institute, any additional information that might come to light on this singular institution would be invaluable.

■ **Norbeck** *One of five extant Rosenwald schools in the county* (also called Mount Pleasant)

This was the first county-owned Black school and an earlier Freedmen’s Bureau school, serving the Mount Pleasant community, about three miles south of Olney, which had begun forming by the time of Maryland emancipation (1864); in 1868 white landowner Adrian Wadsworth transferred land for a school to himself and four Black trustees (Thomas Adams, John Wesley Johnson, Wilson Powell, and Richard Sedgwick); building materials were supplied by the Freedmen’s Bureau and a school opened by January 1869; three years later—when the state law mandating Black schooling took effect—the land, presumably with the school, was sold for \$5 to the school board; a new one-room school constructed by the county in 1895 was destroyed by fire in 1925—the *Afro-American* reported, “whites opposed to the location of the school are believed to have set fire to it;” school was then likely held in an adjacent church or lodge until a two-room Rosenwald school was constructed in 1927-28; it closed in 1951 and the students were then bused to the newly opened Rock Terrace school; Zelma Smith, a teacher at the school since 1929, transferred with the students to the new school in Rockville.



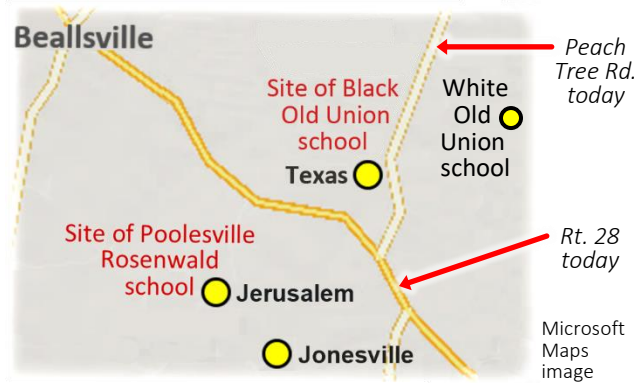
Students in front of the 1895 Norbeck school, which replaced the original building. (Reprinted from the 1913 U.S. Education Bureau survey; this image frequently has been misidentified as the Sandy Spring school but is specifically labeled as Norbeck in the 1913 survey)



Norbeck Rosenwald school, seen above in 1942, is a Montgomery Parks community center today (left), located at 4101 Muncaster Mill Road near the intersection with Norbeck Road/Route 28. (Montgomery History and Montgomery Parks photos, respectively)

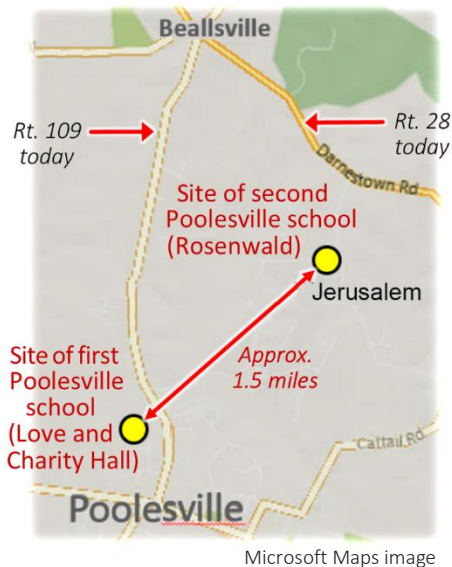
□ **Old Union**

In 1907 families in the Jerusalem, Jonesville, and Texas communities near Beallsville requested the closed Old Union white school (see map) be used as a Black school, as it was closer than the one held in the Love and Charity Hall just outside Poolesville (see the next entry), but that building was sold and in 1912 an Odd Fellows Hall on Peach Tree Road was rented for a Black school that was given the same name; it existed only until the Poolesville Rosenwald school opened in 1927-28.



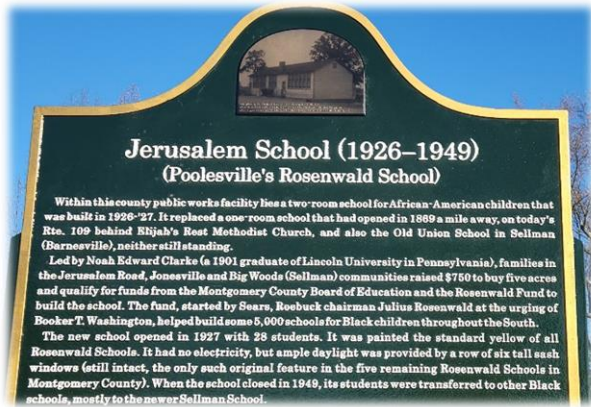
■ **Poolesville** *One of five extant Rosenwald schools in the county* (earlier school in different location)

In 1868 a group of five men—John Adams, Peter H. Davis, Alfred Dorsey, Bennett Lee, and William Taylor—bought land “as trustees for the purpose of erecting a School house thereon,” as the deed stated; with materials from the Freedmen’s Bureau a benevolent society building, Love and Charity Hall, was completed and school was held there by January 1869 with a teacher also supplied through the bureau’s assistance; it became a county school by 1880; in 1927-28 a two-room replacement Rosenwald school was built about a mile and a half away in the Black enclave of Jerusalem (also enrolling students from the closed Old Union school); it closed in 1949 and the students attended Sellman school;



This ca. 1901 photo shows students in front of the Love and Charity Hall which housed the first Poolesville school. The school’s one teacher and two of its three trustees stand in the rear. (Reprinted from G.W. McDaniel)

the Rosenwald building, at 19200 Jerusalem Road, has been converted for use as a county highway garage; it also serves as the Poolesville “beauty spot”—the town recycling center; a historic marker was added to the site in 2025.



Although now a highway garage, the building retains one bank of the original windows—a defining feature of such schools—and is the only surviving Rosenwald building in the county where they still exist. (Author photos)



Additional sources: MHT M: 17-18 and M: 17-51-19. Love and Charity Hall stood behind the former Elijah Methodist Church on Route 109 just north of Poolesville center, now merged with West Montgomery United Methodist Church.

“ With all the inequities and injustices, we did the best we could with what we had. The parents, pupils, and community, as a whole, were very cooperative. The children wanted to learn and the parents were very ambitious for them. ”
 —Elizabeth Cumbo, Poolesville teacher

□ **Purdum** Lone surviving Freedmen’s Bureau structure in the county (also called Pleasant Grove)

A small church near Damascus has a unique place of importance in this history as the only extant structure in the county associated with the Freedmen’s Bureau; however, the church building also served as the only home for the later county public school—one that frequently opened and closed, underscoring a “less than” status. Pleasant Grove Community Church at 11225 Mountain View Road dates to 1869, housing a Black Methodist congregation that had formed a year or so earlier and a school that commenced by November of that year through the efforts of community leaders Jeremiah Mason, Benjamin W. Davis, and Howard W. Gray, with a teacher supplied through the auspices of the Freedmen’s



The 1869 church and school as originally built (above) and today (right). (Frederick Post and author photos, respectively)



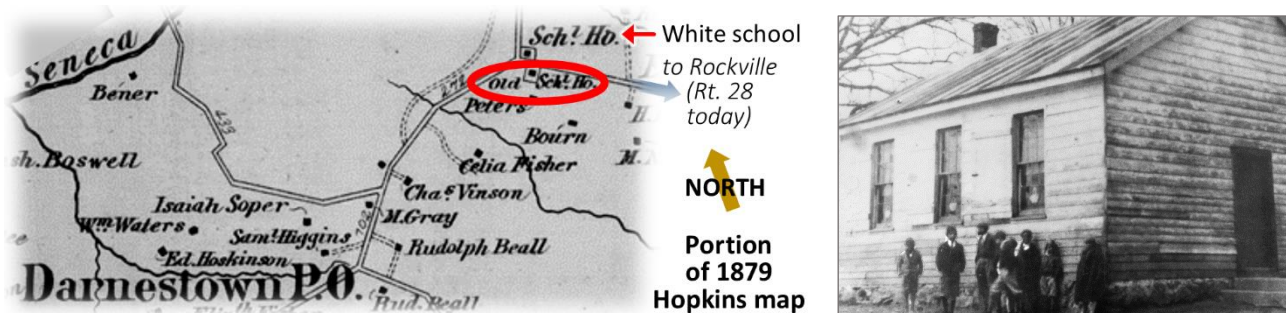
Bureau;* it is unknown when it became a public school, called Purdum, but the county closed it for a year in 1887, again for an unknown time period in the mid-1890s, and in 1908 for five years (at that time the school board agreed to pay \$30 for repairs to the church but took the amount out of rent due—\$15 per year—which had not been paid for a number of years); from 1913 to 1917 the church pastor, Rev. Bradley Johnson, also served as the school teacher; Purdum School—never getting an actual school building in all its time as a public school—closed permanently in 1936.

*A bit ironically, the school was first called “the White schoolhouse” for George White, seller of the land. Freedmen’s Bureau records for this description are supplemented by MHT M: 13-45, Pleasant Grove Community Church’s 150th anniversary brochure, and its website, <https://www.pleasantgrovechurch.org/about-us#our-pleasant-grove-history>.

■ Quince Orchard *Still-standing school; part of the Pleasant View Historical Site*

All that remains of the post–Civil War Quince Orchard Black community southwest of Gaithersburg is a church, cemetery, and three-room school comprising the Pleasant View Historical Site on Route 28; in early 1868, residents Thomas Neverson, George W. Johnson, and Charles Beander purchased land for a church but soon sold a portion for \$1 to fellow residents Gary Green, James Ricks, and Carlton Mason “for the purpose of erecting or allowing to be erected thereon a School house for the use, benefit, and education of the colored people of Montgomery County, forever;”^{*} a school was built late 1868–early 1869; in 1874, just two years after Black public education was mandated, it was sold to the county for \$5, making it one of the first incorporated into the nascent Black public school system; the one-room building burned down in 1901 under suspicious circumstances; instead of building a replacement, the school board moved an 1875 one-room white school from across the road and built a new school for the white students; still just one room in 1939 when its enrollment was 122 due to additional students from the closed Seneca and Travilah schools, it got two additional rooms in 1941 and then was closed in 1951 with the opening of Rock Terrace.

^{*}Wording from the deed, included in Freedmen’s Bureau records; the bureau supplied building materials in 1868, and in the school’s early years the teacher sent reports to the bureau. Somewhat atypically, a community church did not come about until 1888; the one standing on the site today is a 1914 replacement. Supplemental sources include MHT M: 24-13 and the website of the Quince Orchard Project, begun by descendants and others to commemorate this community, <https://www.facebook.com/thequinceorchardproject>.



The white school (above) moved from across the road to replace the Black school that burned is the rightmost portion of the enlarged Quince Orchard school (left) that stands today on Route 28 between Rockville and Darnestown. (Quince Orchard Project and author photos, respectively)

■ River Road

Today, Macedonia Baptist Church, about a mile from the DC line on River Road, is the only visible remnant of a thriving community that eventually warranted a three-room school, though it had to press the county for one repeatedly; the first school came in 1912 when



River Road school was nearly identical to several of the county's two-room Rosenwald schools except it had a third classroom in the basement. (Montgomery History and Fisk photos)

the county rented a room in the home of resident Frank Wood, whose daughter Margaret would later become one of the first Black teachers assigned to a previously all-white school. In 1925-26, the community got a three-room Rosenwald school after contributing both land and money; it got an indoor bathroom in 1944. It was one of four downcounty wood frame buildings closed in 1955 with its students

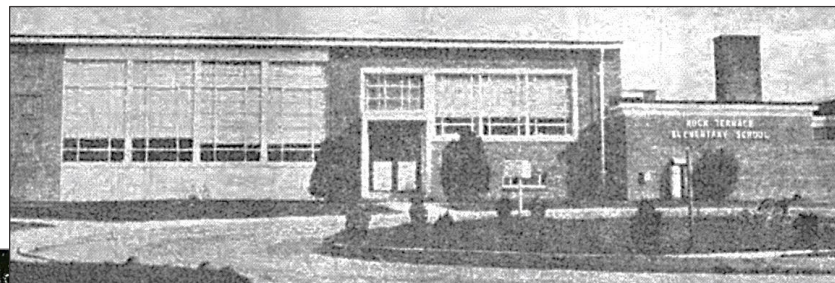
integrating previously all-white schools—Bethesda, Bradley, Brookmont, Clara Barton, and Westbrook; Margaret Wood, teaching at River Road at the time, transferred with some her students to Clara Barton.



River Road school stood near where a television tower rises behind a McDonald's restaurant on River Road (left). It is believed a parking lot near the apartment building seen in the background covers the remains of a Black cemetery. (Microsoft Maps image)

■ Rock Terrace *One of four early 1950s consolidated "equalization" elementary schools*

The second of the four modern elementary schools built to consolidate students from substandard buildings still in use in the mid-20th century, Rock Terrace opened in 1951; it was located at Martins Lane and Manakee Street and took in students from Rockville school (see next entry) as well as those from Norbeck, Quince Orchard, and Scotland schools; its last students integrated previously all-white schools in September 1960 and it then became a school for special needs students, but is vacant today.



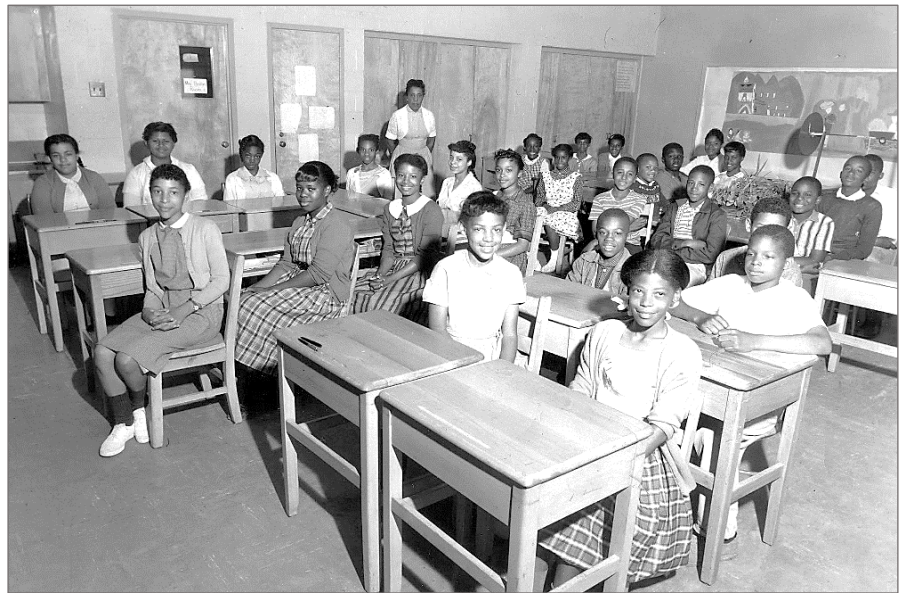
Rock Terrace school, pictured above in 1959 when it was still an all-Black elementary school, was little changed in appearance when used as a special education facility for more than six decades (left). (Afro-American and author photos, respectively)

Margaret Jones, Rock Terrace's principal when it was an all-Black school, later became the first African-American principal



Margaret Jones

of an integrated school, Bannockburn Elementary; while this was a definite distinction it was also a demotion of sorts as she also had held the higher-level position of countywide supervisor of Black education.



An all-Black Rock Terrace fourth grade class in 1957, two years after desegregation had begun; these students would be attending integrated schools by 1960. (Peerless Rockville photo, above; Montgomery History, left)

Rockville (Elementary) *Noteworthy series of schools in various respects*

Second oldest Black school in the county after Sandy Spring, dating to 1866; that June the Washington *Evening Star* reported "a colored school at Rockville...would be obliged to close...due to the inability of the people to support it;" early the next year 20 Rockville men signed a petition to the Freedmen's Bureau pledging to support a school; it opened within months, on April 24, 1867, in the basement of an earlier church building on the site of Jerusalem-Mount Pleasant Church on Wood Lane; bureau records indicate a one-room schoolhouse was erected by 1869 with building materials* supplied by the bureau, most likely at the north end of town on a half-acre plot of land sold a year earlier for just \$1 by an African-American woman, Mary Brashears; in 1876 the county appropriated \$600 for a Rockville school,

*An August 1868 bureau order for materials "to build a schoolhouse for freed children near Rockville" specified brick (presumably for a foundation), shingles and joists for the roof, pine and hemlock boards, windows, and a door.

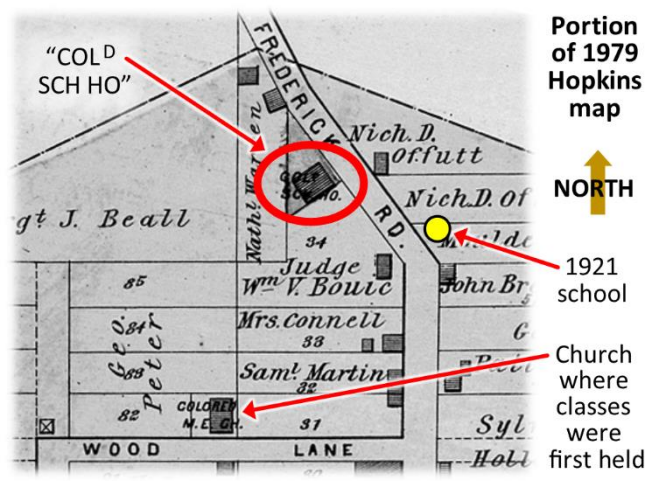
TEACHER'S MONTHLY SCHOOL REPORT.

For the Month of June 1867.

Kind of School (day or night),	<i>Night</i>
Location of School,	<i>State Maryland County New Jersey, Rockville</i>
When opened,	<i>April 24th 1867</i>
Societies, &c., Patrons,	<i>Baltimore Association</i>
Is the School sustained by freedmen?	<i>No.</i>
Is the School sustained in part by freedmen?	<i>Yes.</i>
Have you received Government transportation during the month?	<i>No</i>
Is the School-building owned by freedmen?	<i>No.</i>
Is the School-building supplied by Bureau?	<i>No.</i>
Whole number of teachers,	<i>1</i>
Whole number of pupils enrolled at end of month,	<i>38</i>
	White _____ Colored <i>Female</i>
	Male <i>21</i> Female <i>17</i>

A portion of teacher Henrietta Fletcher's June 1867 report to the Freedmen's Bureau of the school that began two months earlier in what would become Jerusalem church; it was also a night school with adults attending. The teacher was provided by the Baltimore Association for the Moral and Educational Improvement of the Colored People, through the auspices of the Freedmen's Bureau. (National Archives image)

paying a prominent local judge, William Veirs Bouic, \$200 for a parcel of land that may have included the school (if so, how he obtained it is unknown); with the remaining \$400 the county may have built a new school; whether it was the original building or a replacement, the school was later expanded with a second story and another classroom, then burned down in 1912; a two-story, two-room Rosenwald school (the county's first) was built in 1921 (during the nine-year interim classes were held in the church and the nearby Galilean Fishermen's fraternal organization hall); a two-room high school was added to the site in 1927-28 (see next entry); when it moved to Lincoln Park in 1935 the elementary school took over that building, making it and Laytonsville the county's only four-room Black grammar schools—Rockville's enrollment of 251 in 1939 was far more than any other Black school in the county; it closed in 1951 with the opening of Rock Terrace.



Undated photo, at left, of the Rockville elementary school for Black students that was destroyed by fire in 1912. Below, the two-story 1921 replacement Rosenwald school, pictured after the high school, the one-story structure seen in the background (shown also in the next entry), had been built next to it; they stood on what is the northeast corner of N. Washington Street and Beall Avenue today. (Peerless Rockville photos, including below left)

One of the most consequential events—locally and nationally—involving school segregation stemmed from a lawsuit filed by this school's acting principal/teacher William B. Gibbs Jr. in late 1936. Represented by a young Thurgood Marshall, Gibbs challenged the unequal pay he and



William B. Gibbs Jr.

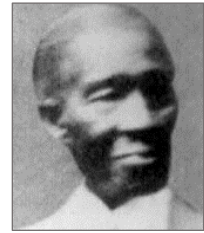
his Black colleagues received—about half that of white teachers

with the same academic credentials and teaching experience. The first such case in the nation, it was foundational to Marshall's legal challenge of school segregation culminating in the landmark 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* U.S. Supreme Court decision. Following a preliminary hearing in 1937 in the nearby Grey Courthouse, the case was settled with the school board agreeing to equalize salaries by the 1938-39 school year. However, Gibbs was fired in 1938, ostensibly because he did not have full academic credentials to be a principal.



■ **Rockville High School** *First of three successive segregated high schools, 1927-35*

As a result of a long advocacy campaign by the Black community, led by Noah Clarke, the school system finally opened a high school for African Americans in 1927 in the county seat, constructing a Rosenwald building adjacent to the elementary school (see preceding entry); the two buildings shared one bathroom; initially it offered only 7th and 8th grades—the highest grade offered was 11th beginning in 1930.



Noah Clarke

High schooling for white students had begun in 1892 and in 1905 the first high school building opened in Rockville—although “Rockville Colored High School” was not far away in distance, in time it didn’t come about until a quarter-century later. The white school, officially Montgomery County High School, came to be called Rockville High as other high schools were built around the county—10 by the time the sole Black high school opened. To avoid confusion—and end the duplication in names disfavored by some whites—“Richard Montgomery” was eventually adopted as the official name of the white high school (thus making it the county’s oldest high school).



“Rockville Colored High School” was a Rosenwald school built in 1927, with the Black community contributing \$500 toward the nearly \$7,000 cost. The two-story elementary school, also a Rosenwald building erected six years earlier, is seen behind it. (Montgomery History photos, left and above)

Although buses were starting to be used around the county as one-room white schools were consolidated into larger buildings, the county initially did not provide transportation to Black high students residing in far-flung areas of the county, so the Black community pooled resources to buy a used bus driven by a student.

Posing with fellow members of the first graduating class (1931), Solomon Hart sits on the hood of the bus he drove before and after school. At left is principal Robert Chase. When the school first opened, Edward U. Taylor, supervisor of Black education, served simultaneously as principal and a teacher at the school while also conducting his countywide administrative duties. (Peerless Rockville photo)

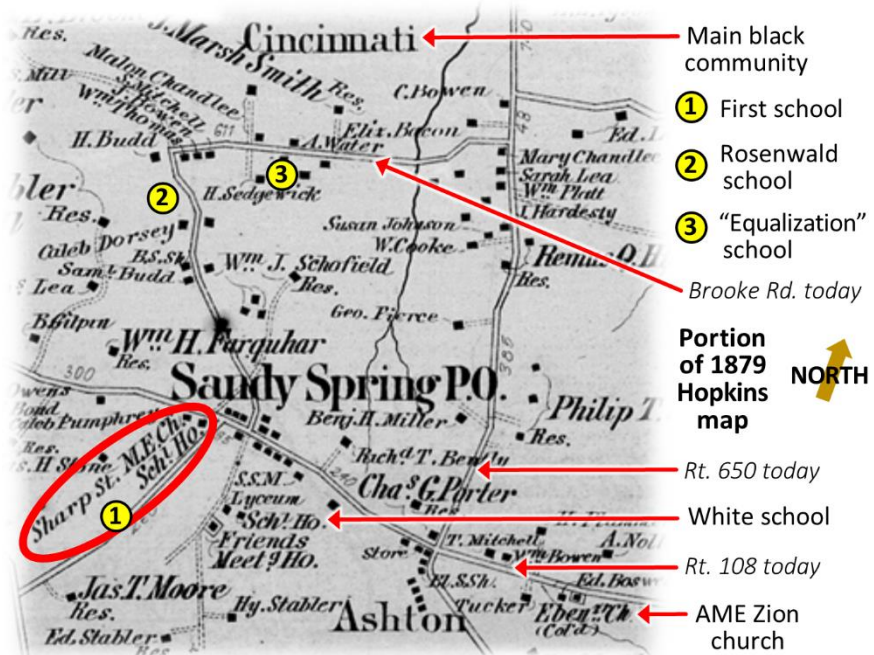


■ **Sandy Spring** *First Black school in the county* (three with same name; first also called Sharp Street)

The locality of Sandy Spring played a unique and important role in the history of the county’s segregated schools. Populated mainly by Quakers, it had a significant antebellum free Black community, beginning when most Quaker farmers emancipated their enslaved workers in the late 1700s. Sandy Spring consequently had the county’s first school for African Americans, succeeded by two other noteworthy schools—the county’s largest Rosenwald school and one of the four 1950s “equalization” schools.

Besides the short-lived Maryland Normal and Agricultural Institute (see earlier entry), the three Sandy Spring grammar schools, listed by their dates, are described below.

1. **ca. 1864-1925:** The first school dates at least to 1864 when white teachers from Quaker schools taught Black students in Sharp Street Methodist Church, then housed in a log cabin built by the Black community in 1822 on land still owned by whites (finally deeded to the Black congregation in 1886 and a new church built a year later; it burned down in 1920 and the present house of worship at 1310 Olney–Sandy Spring Road was constructed); in October 1866 a teacher supplied by a New England philanthropic organization reported she was conducting both day and night classes in the church for children and adults “very eager to learn”; the next year the Freedmen’s Bureau supplied lumber for a schoolhouse built next to the log church; by 1881 the county had assigned a teacher (perhaps as early as 1873); in 1888 an addition was authorized by the school board; by 1908 there were three teachers and four by 1914; the school was destroyed by fire in 1922 and then met in Odd Fellows Lodge (also adjacent to the church and restored today) until a successor school, a Rosenwald structure, was completed in 1925.

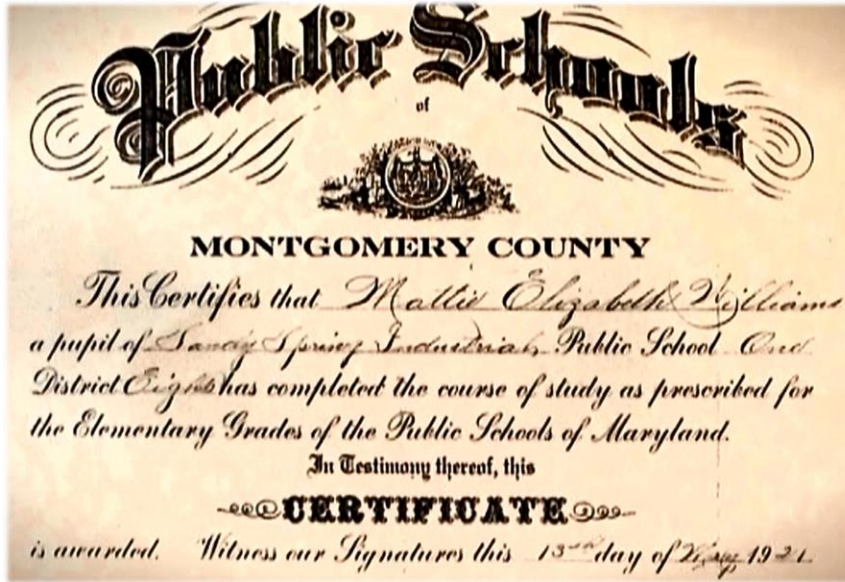


Sharp Street Methodist Church today stands about where the original log cabin—which served as the first school—was built; at left is the restored Odd Fellows Lodge where classes also met for a time. (Microsoft Maps image)

This school was variously called Sandy Spring and Sharp Street, with “Industrial School” often appended to the latter in the late 1800s and early 1900s (as seen in the diploma below), reflecting a greater emphasis on vocational education at that time. In 1908 the school enrolled 113 students, of which 59 were elementary students receiving “literary instruction” and, intriguingly, 54 were “secondary pupils” receiving “manual arts instruction.”* The 1913 federal survey provided this assessment:

Fair progress has been made in the work of introducing manual training and domestic science. The most interesting school in this respect is the Sharp Street Industrial School near Sandy Spring. This school offers complete courses in various forms of manual training work and domestic science. The need of these courses and their practical value for the colored children are readily seen.

*Reports of the Department of the Interior for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1910, vol. II, 1911.



Diploma from “Sandy Spring Industrial Public School” in 1921. (Sandy Spring Museum image)

Undated photo of students in front of what is believed to be the Sandy Spring school destroyed by a fire in 1922. (Community Cornerstones video screenshot)



2. **1925-1952:** The Sandy Spring Rosenwald school, built three years after fire destroyed the previous building, cost \$8,580—the most spent by the county on a Black school until at time; although it was the county’s largest Rosenwald school, its three rooms meant the school’s teaching staff was reduced by one; it was located on Brooke Road nearer the largest Black neighborhood in the Sandy Spring area (Cincinnati, shown on the map on the previous page); it was closed in 1952 with the opening of the

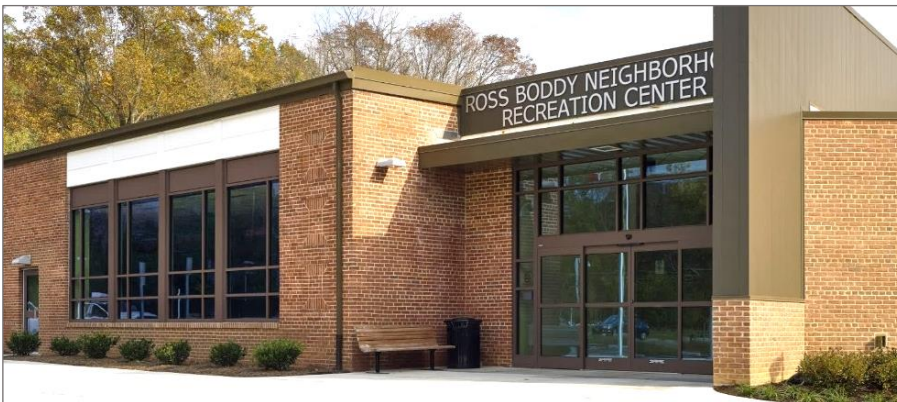
next and last African-American school in Sandy Spring; the building survives today in altered form as a house at 18210 Brooke Road—one of five former Rosenwald schools still standing in the county.



The Sandy Spring Rosenwald school (left), used between 1925 and 1952, was later converted into a residence. (Montgomery History and author photos, respectively)

- 1952-1960:** This school, along with Edward U. Taylor, was the last “equalization” elementary school built, both opening in 1952; it served as a consolidated school for Black students in the eastern part of the county; it closed as an all-Black school in June 1960, then used to house an overflow from Sherwood High School and as a special needs school; it later was converted into a community center named for longtime principal Ross Boddy, its use today, though since remodeled.

The last Sandy Spring school was built in 1952. (Author photo, right; aerial below reprinted from E.G. Jewell)



The remodeled building, at 18529 Brooke Road, is now a community center; a statue of its namesake graces the lobby. (Author photos)



“ Desegregation, or integration, of the schools was not easy. Many of our children were placed in special education classes without proper testing. They ‘seemed slow.’ ... Working with children and teachers in this situation made me realize all the more what an excellent group of Black teachers we had. ”

—Ross Boddy, Sandy Spring principal

■ **Scotland** (initially called Seven Locks and Snakes Den)

An October 1867 Freedmen’s Bureau report notes that land had been promised for a school for an estimated “50 or 60 colored children” in the area near what would become Scotland, on Seven Locks Road about two miles south of Rockville; however, no further record of a school can be found until 1878, when the county authorized the purchase of land for a school near where Tuckerman Lane intersects Seven Locks today—at that time and into the early 20th century the Black community it served extended along Seven Locks from present-day Scotland to just north of that school (as shown on the map below); this school was variously called Seven Locks or Snakes Den, as the community was known before being named “Scotland” around 1900 and then shrinking in size over the next several decades to what it is today; the original school was replaced in 1927-28 with a slightly larger one-room Rosenwald school built in the heart of what is Scotland today; it was used until 1951 when Rock Terrace opened; after closure, the building became a community center used until the early 1970s; a recreation facility built in 2014 stands on the site today.

Information also from “The Resurrection of Scotland” by Harvey A. Levine in *The Montgomery County Story*, May 2000, on the 1968-71 redevelopment of Scotland replacing sub-standard homes with townhouses residents were able to buy.



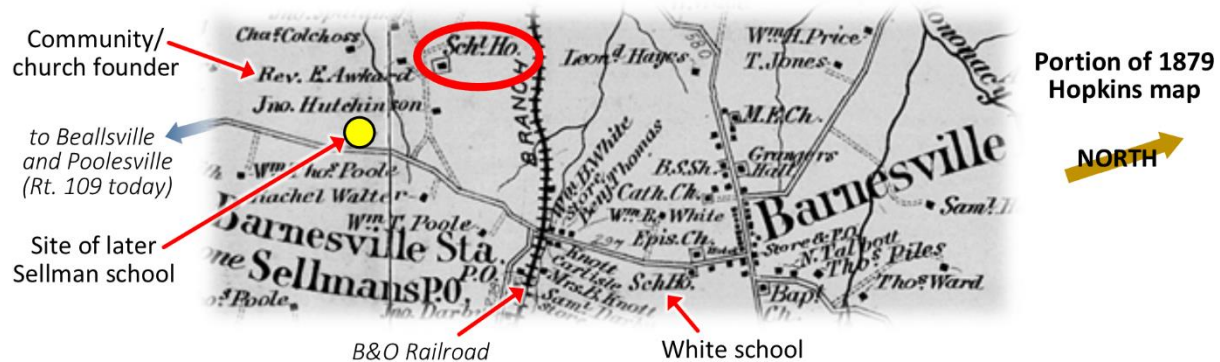
The Scotland Rosenwald school. (Montgomery History photo)



■ **Sellman** (also called Barnesville)

Served one of the county’s largest and earliest free Black communities after Sandy Spring—Big Woods, between Barnesville and Beallsville (the founding families having settled there between 1813 and 1846); a meetinghouse constructed ca. 1868 served as a church (Mt. Zion Methodist), community hall, and

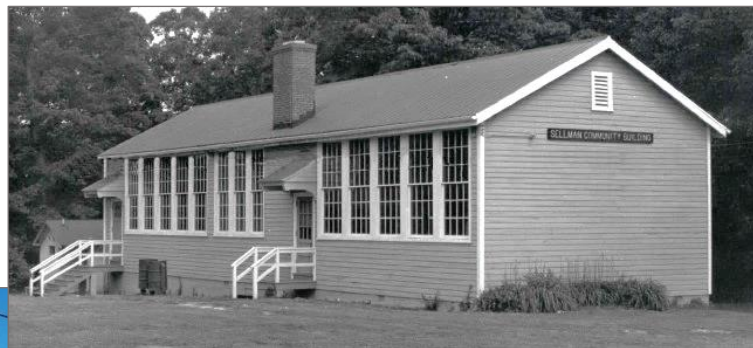
Freedmen’s Bureau school (shown as “Schl. Ho” on the map below) by 1869; the county provided a teacher by 1880; a new church was built ca. 1886 about a half mile further south and in 1894 it deeded an adjacent parcel of land to the county for construction of a one-room schoolhouse; in 1936 a Rosenwald-like building providing two additional classrooms was constructed adjacent to the 1894 school,



which remained in use, and Sellman school then took in students from the closed Martinsburg and Sugarland schools; it was permanently closed in 1952 with the opening of Edward U. Taylor as the new consolidated elementary school for African-American students in the western portion of the county.

Information from MHT M: 12-42-22 and M: 12-42-32 and West Montgomery United Methodist Church’s website, <http://westmontgomeryumc.org/index.php/about>. An October 27, 1866 Freedmen’s Bureau report mentions “a small private school for colored children established by a colored man near Barnesville [possibly church founder Rev. Elijah Awkard] and taught by his daughter.” In 1868, the bureau supplied building materials to Philip Spencer, resulting in the 1868 meetinghouse.

At right is the 1936 addition to the original Sellman school (just barely seen in the background). After the school closed, it was used as a community center in the 1950s and ’60s. Despite objections by the community, it was demolished in 1970. (Montgomery History photo)



Sellman school stood just beyond the parking lot of the church seen at left. Now known as West Montgomery United Methodist Church, it is the remodeled Mt. Zion Church, renamed following a merger with Warren and Elijah churches in Martinsburg and Poolesville, respectively. (Author photo)

■ Seneca

A small church 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 red Seneca sandstone for the Smithsonian castle and other Washington,

DC buildings); the first public school teacher is listed in 1880; a school building was erected by 1915;* it was closed periodically and then permanently in 1937 and the students moved to Quince Orchard.

*A school building was sought in 1895; no rent listed by the county in 1915-16 handbook. The church, Potomac Grove CME (Colored Methodist Episcopal) in which the school undoubtedly initially met, is today Seneca Community Church on nearby Berryville Road.



Microsoft Maps image

■ **Smithville** *One of five extant Rosenwald schools in the county; some school artifacts on display*

Regarded locally as a Rosenwald school (although not listed as such among the records of the Rosenwald Fund maintained by Fisk University), the two-room Smithville school, built in 1927-28 along with a number of other Rosenwald-funded schools and using Rosenwald architectural plans,* succeeded the Colesville school that was closed about a decade earlier; a second similar two-room structure was built perpendicular to it around 1939 and used for vocational training; the school closed in 1952 with the opening of the third modern, consolidated Sandy Spring school; it was later used as a school bus depot and then a county highway maintenance facility, and altered significantly; the original building, located at 811 East Randolph Road, was rehabilitated in 2003 by the Montgomery County chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity (www.iul1906.org/smithvilleschool) and is now used as a meeting space with school artifacts displayed and tours occasionally given.

*A roadside marker cites it as such as do several Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission documents; see the sidebar on Rosenwald schools for the primary justification of its status as a Rosenwald school.



Smithville school seen in the 1940s; the original building is on the right and a similar structure was built 12 years later for vocational training. (Montgomery History photo)



The building as it looked later as a highway maintenance facility (left) and as restored today. (MHT and author photos, respectively)

Spencerville

A school serving the early post–Civil War community of Good Hope, located south of Spencerville mainly along Good Hope Road between Round Oak Baptist Church and Good Hope Methodist Church (see map), as well as the nearby communities of Holly Grove to the west and Oak Hill to the north, was held initially in Round Oak Church, the first structure of which dates to 1872;* the county provided a teacher beginning in 1874 and appropriated \$274 in 1877 for a one-room school built next to the church; in 1895 a second classroom was added onto the school; when Colesville school, about two miles away, closed in 1914, its students then attended this school; a two-room Rosenwald school was built in 1927-28 across the road (where Spencerville Park is today); it closed in 1952 with the opening of the new Sandy Spring school.

*Church history from MHT M: 28-51.

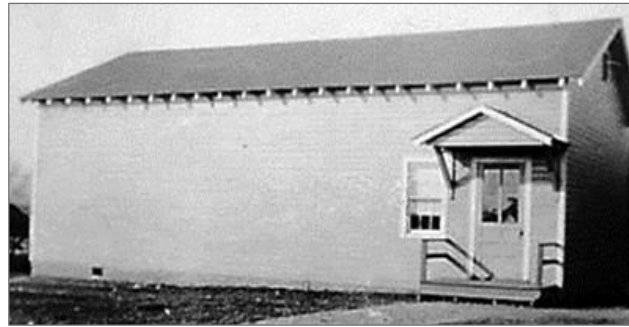


The Spencerville Rosenwald school was similar in design to others with two rooms built in 1927-28 but they were more often situated so the façade showing above was the back of the building. Note the two outhouses in the distance. The school stood in what is Spencerville Park today; the park's Mildred Pumphrey Center is named for a long-time teacher in both the segregated and desegregated systems. (Montgomery History photo and Google Maps image, respectively)



Stewartown

The Stewartown community, roughly midway between Gaithersburg and Laytonsville, formed ca. 1900, and a group of residents pooled funds and built the Stewartown Literary, Social, and Religious Society Hall by 1909 for use as a school, church, and civic meeting space; in 1927-28 a one-room Rosenwald school was constructed in what today is Stewartown Park on Goshen Road; a second room was added by 1935 when two teachers were employed and enrollment was 71 in 1939; it closed in 1950 and the students transferred to Longview.



Originally one room, the Stewarttown Rosenwald school stood in what is Stewarttown Park today. (Fisk and author photos, respectively)

Clarke and Brown list this school as “Stewardtown” and some maps show “Stewart Town.” Steward and Stewart both appear as local Black family names in census records. The school also served the Prathertown community, about a mile north. Most of the information for this description is from the Goshen United Methodist Church website, www.goshenunited.org/history.html.

“Tears [started] flowing...when I saw Stewarttown School [for the first time]. The school was in bad shape with very few books. Stewarttown got its first library as a gift from me on my first Christmas there.”

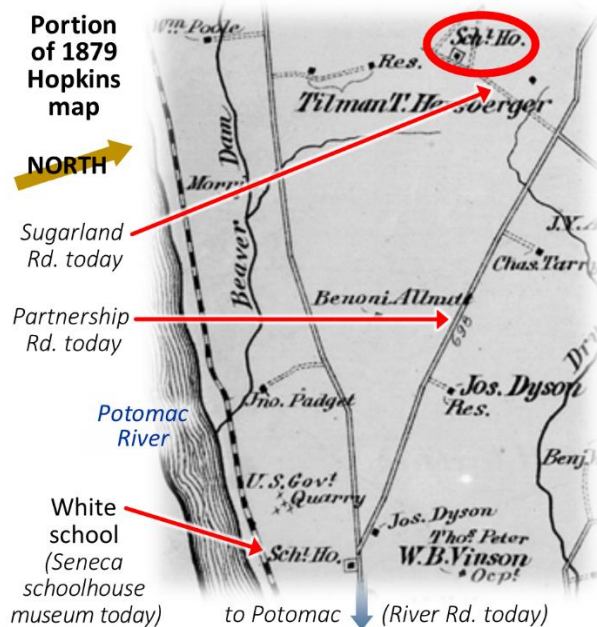
—Clara B. Carter, Stewarttown teacher

■ Sugarland

Located about three miles southeast of Poolesville, the Sugarland community was formed mainly by previously enslaved people in the early 1870s; land for a church that “may also be used as a School House”* was bought in 1871 (the extant St. Paul’s Community Church replaced the original structure in 1893); schooling soon began, the county assigned a teacher by 1880, and a one-room school was built by the community by the early 1880s; it was replaced by a one-room Rosenwald school in 1924-25 with residents contributing \$300 (in all other communities receiving Rosenwald schools



Sugarland Rosenwald school after its conversion into a residence. (Sugarland Ethno-History Project photo)



the county required that \$500 be raised); it closed in 1939 and students were sent to Sellman; later it became a residence that is no longer standing.

*MHT M: 17-41-30. The history of this community has been painstakingly documented and preserved by descendants Gwen Hebron Reese, Suzanne R. Johnson, and others through the Sugarland Ethno-History Project, www.sugarlandproject.org.

■ Takoma Park

African-American children in Takoma Park, just north of the DC line, attended school in Washington, if at all, prior to the 1920s; the community then began asking the county board of education for a school, offering a church—likely Parker Memorial Baptist—to house one, and a teacher was assigned ca. 1921; in 1924 funding was approved for building a school, but this did not occur until 1928-29, with the construction of the last Rosenwald school in the county. Although it was a two-room school, less was spent to construct it than any of the other two-room Rosenwald buildings and only \$200 of Rosenwald funding was still available—the community nonetheless contributed the standard \$500; indoor plumbing was not added until 1944. When the 1954 *Brown* decision was handed down this school, Ken Gar, Linden, and River Road were the only wood-frame buildings still in use, and it was decided that these downcounty schools would be closed and their students—representing 16 percent of the county’s Black children—were the first to integrate previously white schools nearest their homes, so beginning in 1955 students from this school transferred to Takoma Park, East Silver Spring, and Hillandale Elementary Schools; the building later burned down but a childcare center sits on its foundation today at 120 Geneva Avenue.



Takoma Park school (left) was the county’s last Rosenwald building constructed. The above childcare center stands on the site today. (Montgomery Parks photo and Google Maps image, respectively)

■ Edward U. Taylor *Only formerly Black school to become an integrated mainstream school*

This and the third Sandy Spring school were the last of four modern elementary schools constructed to consolidate all the county’s Black students (except for about 300 living downcounty still attending Ken Gar, Linden, River Road, and Takoma Park schools, for whom a building was planned but never built once the *Brown* decision was issued by the Supreme Court); it opened in September 1952, drawing Black students from closed schools in the western portion of the county; it was expanded just two years later and again



Edward U. Taylor school, located at 19501 White Ground Road, looks today much as it did when serving as the county’s only integrated mainstream elementary school beginning in 1960. (Author photo)

in 1960 when it became the first—and only—previously all-Black school to become a mainstream integrated facility, enrolling white students residing within its newly created district; it now serves as a science materials storage facility for the school system and was added to the county’s Master Plan for Historic Designation in 2023 due to its unique role as both a segregated and integrated school; it stands opposite the 1896 Boyds school, complementing the historical narrative these two buildings span.

The school’s namesake, long-time supervisor of Black education Edward U. Taylor, died just prior to the school’s



Edward U. Taylor

opening; a county native who attended Emory Grove school, he received a high school education by attending the highly-regarded Dunbar High School in Washington, DC, and graduated from Howard University;

as supervisor of all the county’s Black schools, he was instrumental in starting the county’s Black high school and for the first several years taught there half a day while conducting his administrative duties in the remaining time.

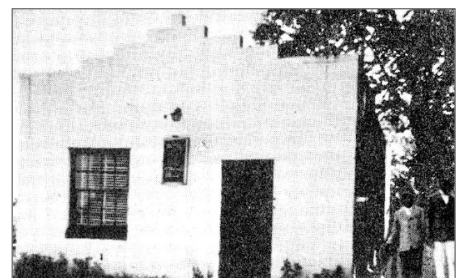


The family of Edward U. Taylor at the school’s 1952 dedication: from left, son-in-law John Kelly, daughter Joan Taylor Kelly, wife Maude Newman Taylor; daughter-in-law Sonia Tayler, and son Edward V. Taylor. (Montgomery History photos, above and left)

MHT M: 18-11-16 includes the 10-page program from the 1952 dedication of Edward U. Taylor school containing much valuable information about its namesake and feeder schools. Long-time Boyds teacher Lillian Giles played a big part in having this neighboring school—where she finished out her career—named for Taylor, the first African-American county resident/educator to be so honored. Taylor’s grave, in Emory Grove Cemetery, is appropriately within sight of the old Longview school, the first “equalization” school built under his tenure as supervisor.

Travilah (commonly called Tobytown)

Another school that met its entire existence in rented space, mostly in churches; served the community of Tobytown,* southwest of Travilah at River and Pennyfield Lock Roads, that was established ca. 1875; teacher assigned by 1880 but where classes were initially held is unknown; a ca. 1887 Baptist church then served also as the school; that building burned down in 1917 and a replacement church housed the school; although the community made many requests for an actual school building one was never constructed, despite Tobytown’s inclusion in a 1926 school board report estimating the costs of needed schools and the awarding of a contract to a builder in 1927; it closed in 1937 and the students sent to Quince Orchard.



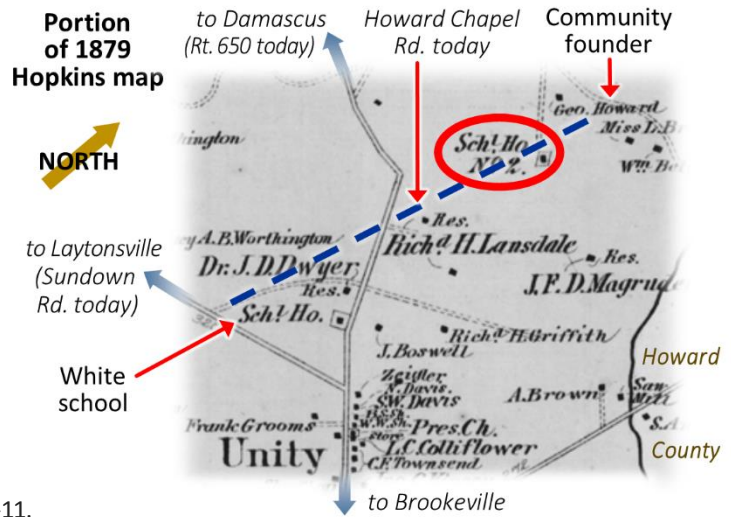
Tobytown’s Refuge Church of Lord Jesus Christ, built ca. 1917 and no longer standing, was one of two churches that served as Travilah school. (Reprinted from *History of Potomac*, edited by Margo McConihe)

*Like Scotland, Tobytown’s substandard housing was replaced with townhomes in 1972, some still owned by descendants of original residents, though a smaller proportion than in Scotland.

■ **Unity** (also called Howard)

In 1857 Enoch George Howard bought his freedom from slavery as well as that of his wife and their four enslaved children, and by 1862 he had purchased nearly 300 acres of land about a mile north of Unity in the northeastern part of the county; later “in the 1860s”* he built a one-room school on his property for his children and others in the community, even hiring the teacher; in 1878 he sold it to the county to be a public school; the one-room building continued to be used until 1939 when the students were transferred to Laytonsville school.

*M.M. Coleman; information also from MHT M: 23-11.

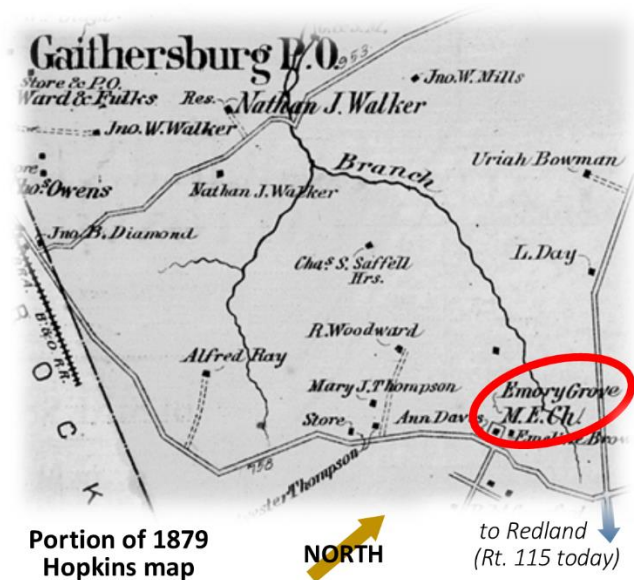


Unity school stood on what is today Howard Chapel Road roughly opposite this cemetery, the only remnant of an African-American community just north of Unity on the northeastern edge of the county. (M. Edwards/Find A Grave photo)

■ **Washington Grove** (commonly called Emory Grove)

This school—almost always referred to as Emory Grove for the community* about two miles east of Gaithersburg that it served—dates to the latter 1870s, meeting initially in the original 1874 structure of Emory Grove Methodist Church

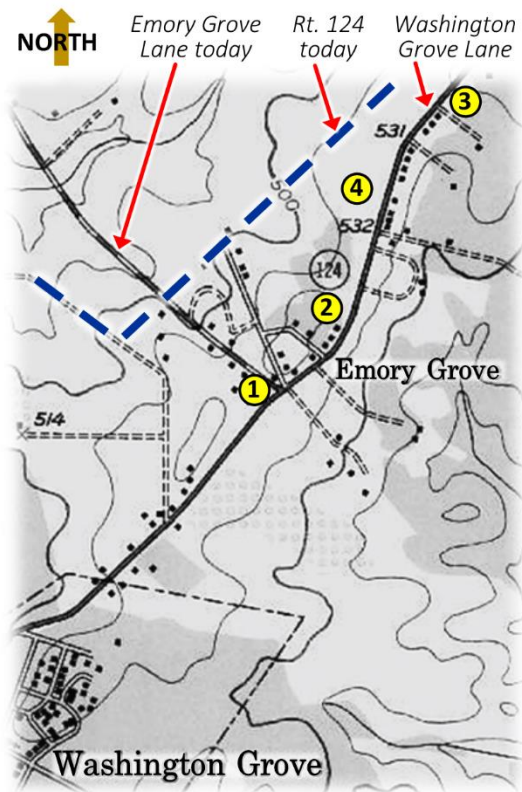
*A 1960-70s urban renewal project razed nearly all of the Emory Grove community, claiming some 100 homes, a ca. 1875 store, and a popular tavern that often attracted big-name Black performers after they gave shows in DC; only the church, 19 homes, and Longview school were spared, and few original residents could afford the replacement dwellings. The community also, importantly, was the site of a large annual Black camp meeting—a summer spiritual and social gathering—held from 1877 to 1967, and boasted the first lighted baseball field in the county that hosted Negro League teams besides ones from other communities.



(the present building at 8200 Emory Grove Road replaced it in 1903); it was a county school by 1881; a one-room school was built near the church in the early 1880s (see map); an addition was later sought— but never built; in 1925 a replacement two-room Rosenwald school was built about a half mile further north on Washington Grove Lane and continued in use until 1950 when Longview consolidated school opened nearby.

Portion of 1945 U.S. Geological Survey map

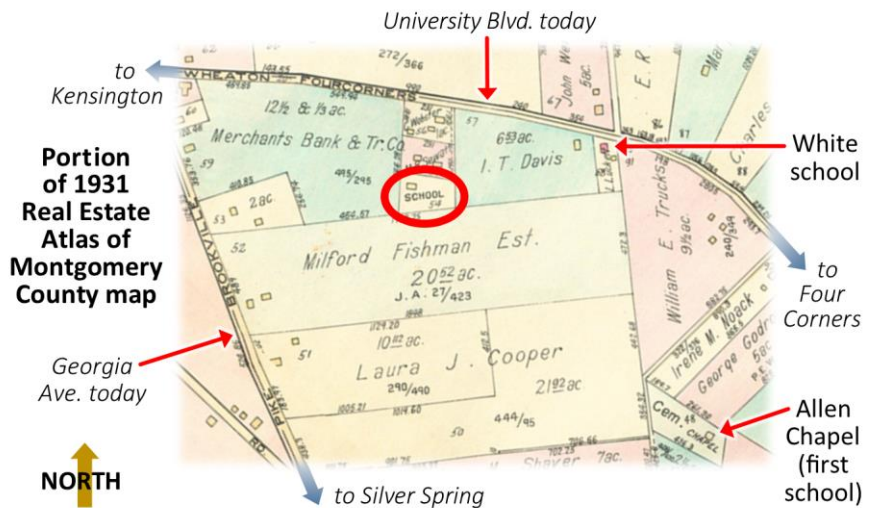
- ① Emory Grove Church
- ② First school building
- ③ Rosenwald school
- ④ Longview School



Washington Grove school, commonly called Emory Grove—a locality distinct from Washington Grove to its south (as shown on the map at right)—gained this Rosenwald building in 1925. (Fisk photo)

Wheaton

Allen Chapel AME Church, located today in Fairland but originally built in 1875 on the east side of Wheaton just south of what is now University Boulevard, housed the first school for Black children in that locality (and some who walked five miles daily from Kensington until a school opened in an off-shoot church there); it became a public school by 1880 when a teacher was assigned by the county; in 1898 residents petitioned the board of education for a school building and a year later the board approved \$450 for construction of a one-room wood-frame structure that was built within 800 feet of the existing two-room brick school for Wheaton’s white children—in only a few other spots around the county were segregated schools so close to each other; former student Dr. Webster Sewell, who was later one of the few Black physicians in the county, recalled that the proximity caused “no problems;”^{*} two teachers are



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^{*}MHT M: 31-11; Dr. Sewell also volunteered as medical officer for the county’s Black schools. Allen Chapel AME Church’s website, <https://allenchapelamesilverpring.org/about-us/our-history>, also provides some of the above information.

listed in 1931 but there is no indication an addition had been built; the Black school closed in 1939 and the students were bused to Kensington/Ken Gar school; it was later razed but the former white school stands today as a residence at 1920 West University Boulevard.



The Wheaton school for African-American children once stood next to the school for white students, which survives as a residence (above left); New Creation Baptist Church (center) on Dayton Street is the rebuilt Allen Chapel AME Church (right), which housed the first Black school. (Author photos, left and center; right reprinted from *History of the Nineteenth-Century Black Churches in Maryland and Washington, D.C.* by Nina Clarke)

And one that “never was”...

In the early 1900s, Black children in Alta Vista and Montrose between Bethesda and Rockville were far from a school; in 1920 parents asked for one without success; a year later the school system made available funding for tickets for the students, who lived near the Bethesda–Rockville trolley line, to ride it to attend school in Rockville; researchers Clarke and Brown note:

This arrangement was created as a temporary plan to provide immediate school facilities for the children. The record stated that this procedure was not to be construed as a plan or practice to be continued by the board. The children...were continually transported to a school outside of their community until integration.

It shall be the duty of the board of county school commissioners to establish one or more public schools in each election district for all colored youths.... The total amount of taxes paid for school purposes by the colored people...shall be devoted to the maintenance of the schools for colored children.

–1872 Maryland law

There is a feeling among many in the county that few of the negroes are taxpayers and that, consequently, the support of their schools by the county is more or less of a missionary enterprise.

–1913 U.S. Bureau of Education report

In view of the relatively small colored population of Montgomery County, large expansions of school plants throughout the county are not called for at this time.

–1941 Brookings Institution report

Segregation of white and colored children in public schools has a detrimental effect upon the colored children.... Separate education facilities are inherently unequal.

–1954 U.S. Supreme Court ruling

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

RALPH D. BUGLASS is a frequent speaker for Montgomery History, our county's historical society; his topics include not only the history of the county's segregated schools that is detailed in this packet, but also, among others, the Thurgood Marshall/William B. Gibbs Jr. teacher salary case, one-room schools still standing in the county, and a pictorial history of the county seat, Rockville, based on a 2020 book he co-authored with the city's historic preservation organization, Peerless Rockville, titled *Images of America: Rockville*. In 2025, he gave the keynote address at Montgomery History's annual conference, covering the county's 250-year history. In addition, he teaches at numerous area lifelong learning programs. A county native and graduate of its public schools, he has a bachelor's degree in American history and a master's in communications from Cornell and American universities, respectively. He became interested in the history of our county's schools from serving as a docent at Kingsley schoolhouse in Little Bennett Park. He has received various awards from the history organizations for which he volunteers.



WITH APPRECIATION TO COLLABORATOR SHARYN DUFFIN



SHARYN R. DUFFIN was a lifelong resident of Rockville's Lincoln Park and known as the community's historian. As an Antioch College student, she wrote "The Pioneer Teachers' Salary Discrepancy Case," combining research with reverent family stories of "Mr. Gibbs," and in 2020 co-authored "*Gibbs v. Broome: Rockville's Place on the Road to Brown v. Board of Education*" with the late Montgomery College history professor Alonzo N. Smith for *The Montgomery County Story*. She was instrumental in the naming of an elementary school for Gibbs in 2009 and the placement of art work honoring him in Rockville Town Square. She also wrote "Realizing a Dream: Providing Opportunity Through Education," published by Peerless Rockville, on the Rockville Black schools. Her work on Black history projects earned awards from the NAACP Montgomery County Chapter, Peerless Rockville, and a 2018 "Montgomery Serves" award for lifetime volunteer service. She passed away in 2021.