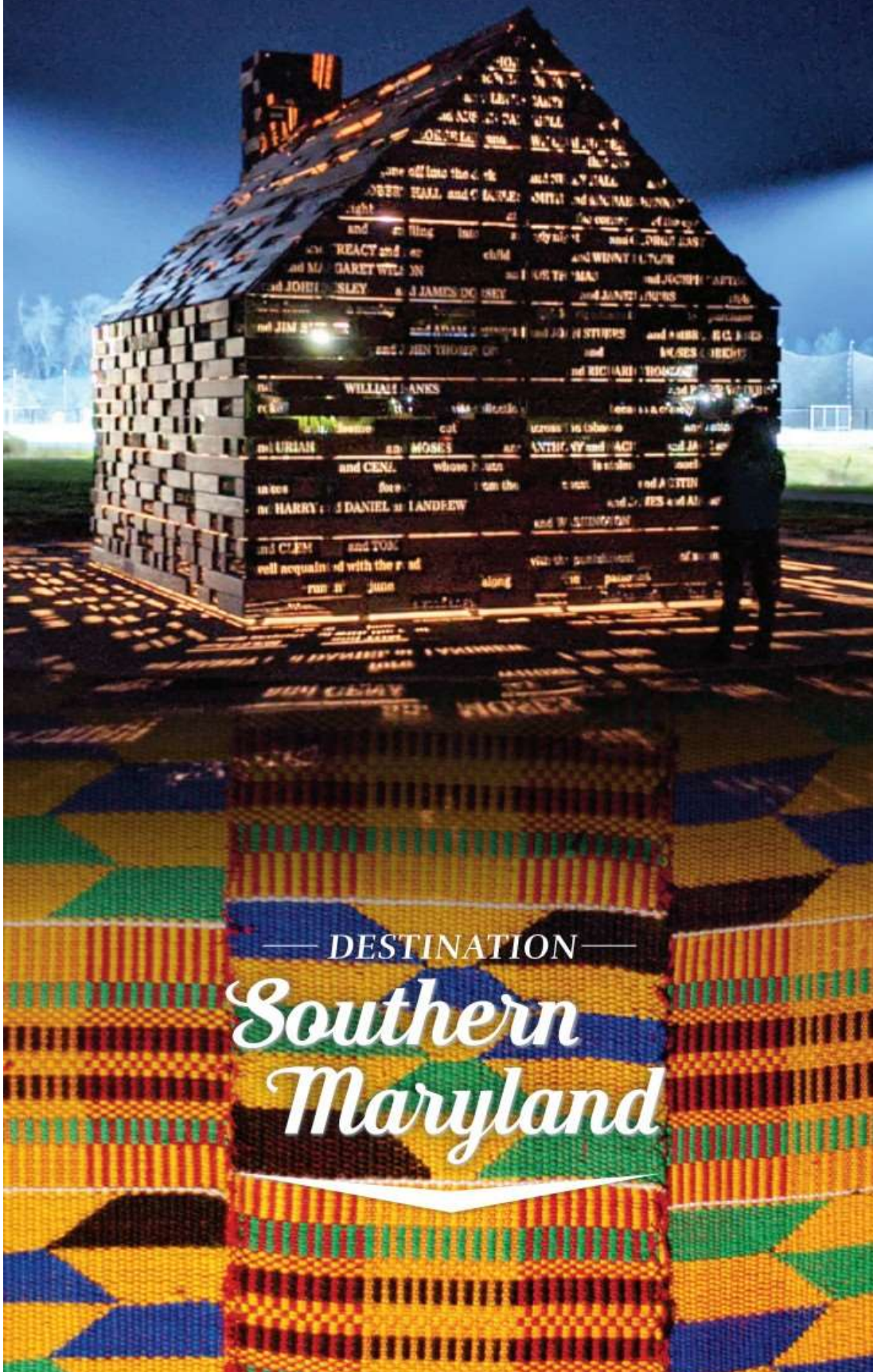


CALVERT | CHARLES | ST. MARY'S

# AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE GUIDE



— DESTINATION —  
*Southern  
Maryland*





Pictured: Old Wallville School interior.



Pictured: Historic McConchie One-Room School interior.



Pictured: Historic Sotterley.





## *Calvert County*

*With pristine waterways, natural parks, unique attractions and fun-filled events and activities, Calvert County offers charming Chesapeake Bay adventures. Calvert is truly “Always in Season.”*



## *Charles County*

*Historic, mysterious, romantic, courageous and, most definitely, larger than life — Charles County is a captivating escape to create your own adventures, memories, and stories in this land of “Legends, Lore and Room to Explore.”*



## *St. Mary's County*

*Discover the mid-Atlantic's best kept travel secret in St. Mary's County. This Chesapeake Bay destination is brimming with history, outdoor fun, vibrant culture — and passionate people eager to share it all with you.*



*A Land  
of Rich  
Heritage &  
Significant  
History*



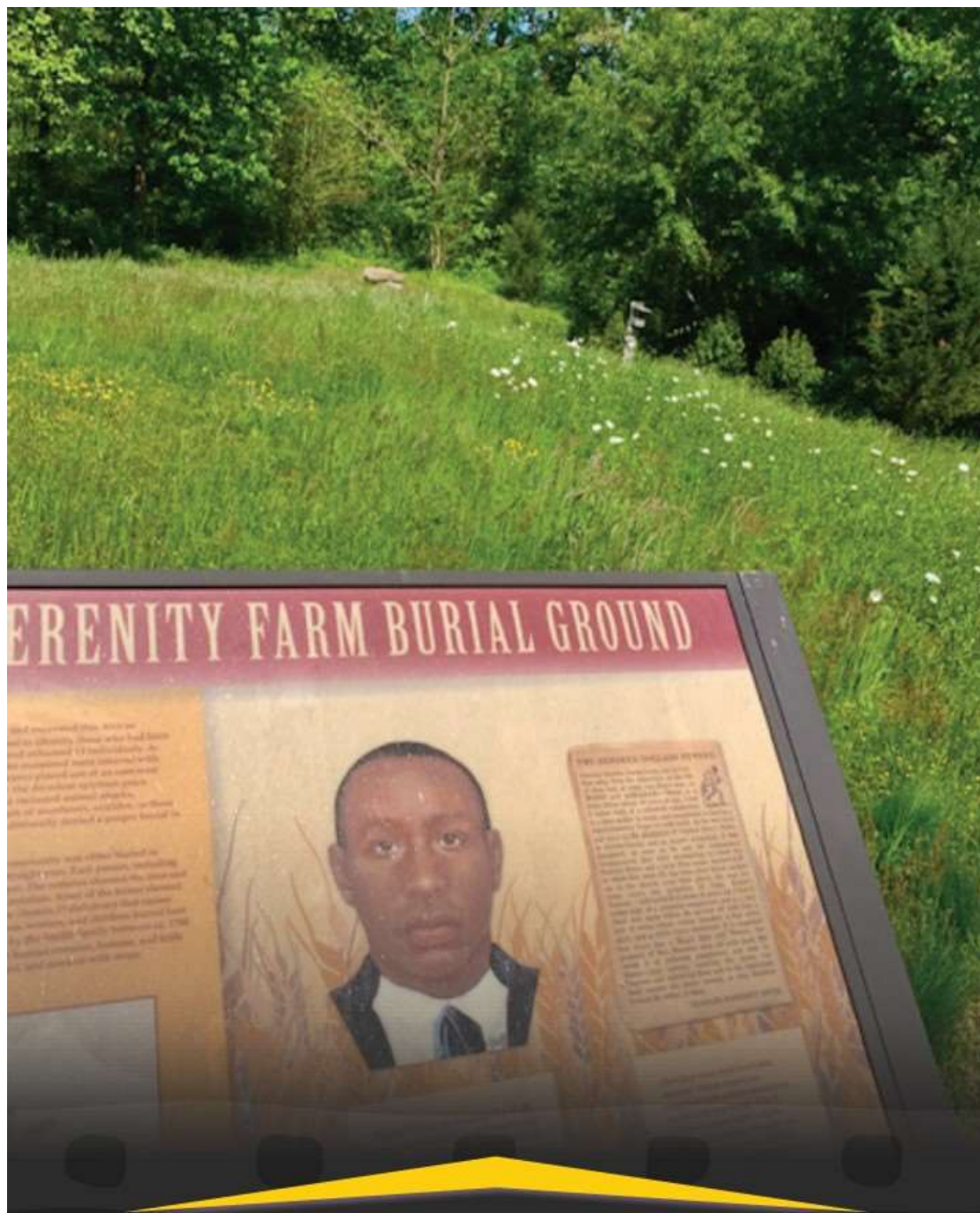




*Discover the stories that shape the fabric of Southern Maryland. Explore the history behind compelling individuals, establishments, and organizations and how their stories helped shape the region. The profound history of African Americans resonates throughout the three counties of Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's.*

**Pictured: Pomonkey High School students wait to board the bus.**





## *Enslavement, Resistance & Resilience*

*The 18th and 19th centuries denote the arrival of Africans in Southern Maryland during the Colonial era. Themes include enslavement, resistance, and emancipation as well as the stories of free people of color in Southern Maryland, before the Civil War.*

**Pictured: Serenity Farm Burial Ground.**



## HISTORIC LOWER MARLBORO



Lower Marlboro was one of many steamboat wharves located in Calvert County.

Research has revealed that at least 14 enslaved persons escaped to freedom from this

area, taking refuge on one of the British vessels that came into Lower Marlboro in July 1814. The British troops, accompanied by Colonial Marines, a unit made up of former slaves, burned the tobacco warehouses. Then, they went to the home of Elizabeth Ballard, from which they took the enslaved family of Adam Green to safety on their boats, including women and children.

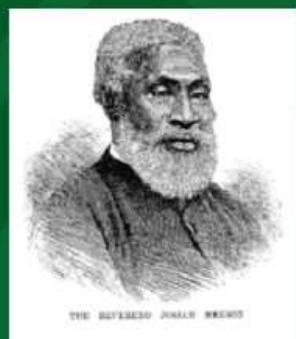
Most of those who escaped later showed up on documents as free people in Nova Scotia. Lower Marlboro Freedom Day, celebrated annually in the fall, commemorates the events of July 1814.

3955 Lower Marlboro Rd., Owings, MD  
(historic marker sign only).

[calvertparks.org/Lower-Marlboro](http://calvertparks.org/Lower-Marlboro)

### CONTRIBUTING HISTORY

## *Josiah Henson*



Josiah Henson was born into slavery in Port Tobacco but spent most of his early years on a plantation in Montgomery County. He and his family escaped and found settlement in Canada where he established a school and helped nearly 100 slaves escape using the Underground Railroad. Josiah Henson's autobiography inspired Harriet Beecher Stowe's landmark novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.



## JEFFERSON PATTERSON PARK & MUSEUM



The park encompasses 560 scenic acres along the Patuxent River, with more than 65 identified archaeological sites and 9,000 years of documented human occupation.

Interpreted sites of African American interest on the park's public trails include the site of enslaved quarters at the 18th-century Smith St. Leonard site and the Sukeek's Cabin site. Sukeek's Cabin is a postbellum tenant farm house excavated in the early 2000s and is also interpreted at the park's visitor center, including a display of artifacts from the site.

The park's collections also include objects, oral histories, photographs and archaeological artifacts associated with local African American history. These collections are available for access by appointment.

**10515 Mackall Rd., St. Leonard, MD**

**Park and grounds are open all year from 7:30 a.m. until dusk, except for New Year's Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas. Free park admission. 410-586-8501 • [jefpat.maryland.gov](http://jefpat.maryland.gov)**



*Network to Freedom Site*





CONTRIBUTING HISTORY  
*Sukeek's Cabin*

At Jefferson Patterson Park, numerous artifacts and pieces of history can be linked back to Sukeek, an enslaved person on the land. Discover the artifacts and history below.

1. An alphabet plate from the 1880s may have been used to help teach Sukeek's family how to read.
2. Reed stem tobacco pipe from Sukeek's Cabin site.
3. Porcelain doll parts from Sukeek's Cabin.
4. Archaeologist recovering parts of a cast iron stove at the Sukeek's Cabin site (left).
5. Sukeeks' great granddaughter Eliza Gross (middle) and her daughters Evelyn and Bessie.





## PORT TOBACCO COURTHOUSE (MARK CAESAR & BILL WHEELER TRIALS)



In July 1845, Mark Caesar and Bill Wheeler, two enslaved men from Charles County, led a slave rebellion in which 75

enslaved men set out toward freedom. The group of slaves were attacked by a white-led group of volunteers. The captured slaves were imprisoned in Montgomery County.

It is estimated that nearly 31 slaves escaped during the scuffle. Both Wheeler and Caesar faced trial at the Port Tobacco Courthouse. The courthouse is now operated by the Society for the Restoration of Port Tobacco and is open seasonally for public tours or by appointment.

**8430 Commerce St., Port Tobacco, MD**  
**301-934-4313 • [porttobaccocourthouse.com](http://porttobaccocourthouse.com)**



*Network to Freedom Site*

## CAMP STANTON



Camp Stanton was a site established in 1863 for recruiting and training Maryland African American men for the Union Army.

At this site, freedom seekers as well as free

blacks, were enlisted to form the 7th, 9th, 19th and 30th Colored Infantries of the United States Colored Troops.

Camp Stanton played a pivotal role in the quest for freedom for men in the lower Chesapeake Bay. Maryland ultimately raised six African American regiments totaling more than 8,700 soldiers.

**Benedict, Maryland (historical marker sign only).**



*Network to Freedom Site*



## SERENITY FARM BURIAL GROUND



The site was discovered in 2012 after a severe storm uprooted a tree on the Serenity Farm property. After careful consideration, the remains were exhumed

by archaeologists and their studies revealed clues about the burial customs of the enslaved population at the time. The remains date from 1790 to 1810 and have now been identified as the resting place for 23 individuals including men, women and children. The remains were reburied after the study was completed.

The site has a grave/interpretative marker and is maintained with native grasses and wildflowers to remain true to the period. The farm offers tours by appointment to present the history and story of the serene, sacred and recently discovered enslaved burial site.

**6932 Serenity Farm Rd., Benedict, MD**  
**301-399-1634 • [serenityfarminc.com](http://serenityfarminc.com)**

## HISTORIC ST. MARY'S CITY



Mathias de Sousa, an indentured servant of African descent, was present at the founding of St. Mary's City. After serving his indenture, he became a merchant

and participated in the Maryland Assembly. A plaque memorializing de Sousa and information on early Colonial African American life may be found at this outdoor living history and archaeological museum on the site of the original colony.

**Route 5/Rosecroft Rd., St. Mary's City, MD**  
**240-895-4990 • [hsmcdigshistory.org](http://hsmcdigshistory.org)**



## HISTORIC SOTTERLEY



A historic plantation circa 1703, Sotterley has built itself into a premier location for exploring the complicated past of the region. Their mission is “to preserve

our historic structures and natural environment and use the powerful stories of our land, lives, and labor to bring American history to life while serving as an educational and cultural resource.”

This unique historic setting has transformed its mission into one of inclusion and exploration. Sotterley’s 1830s slave cabin exemplifies typical slave housing in the Tidewater region. Visitors can learn about the lives of those who worked the land at Sotterley, both slave and free, by visiting the Land, Lives, and Labor exhibit, the Middle Passage marker, and Slave Cabin exhibit. Tours focusing on African American life at Sotterley by advance arrangement. National Park Service Underground Railroad Network to Freedom site. Through the Descendants Project and the UNESCO Slave Route Project, Historic Sotterley will continue to be a powerful place to visit in Southern Maryland.

44300 Sotterley Ln., Hollywood MD  
301-373-2280 • [sotterley.org](http://sotterley.org)



*Network to Freedom Site*



Pictured: Historic Sotterley.



Pictured: Maryland Dove.

CONTRIBUTING HISTORY

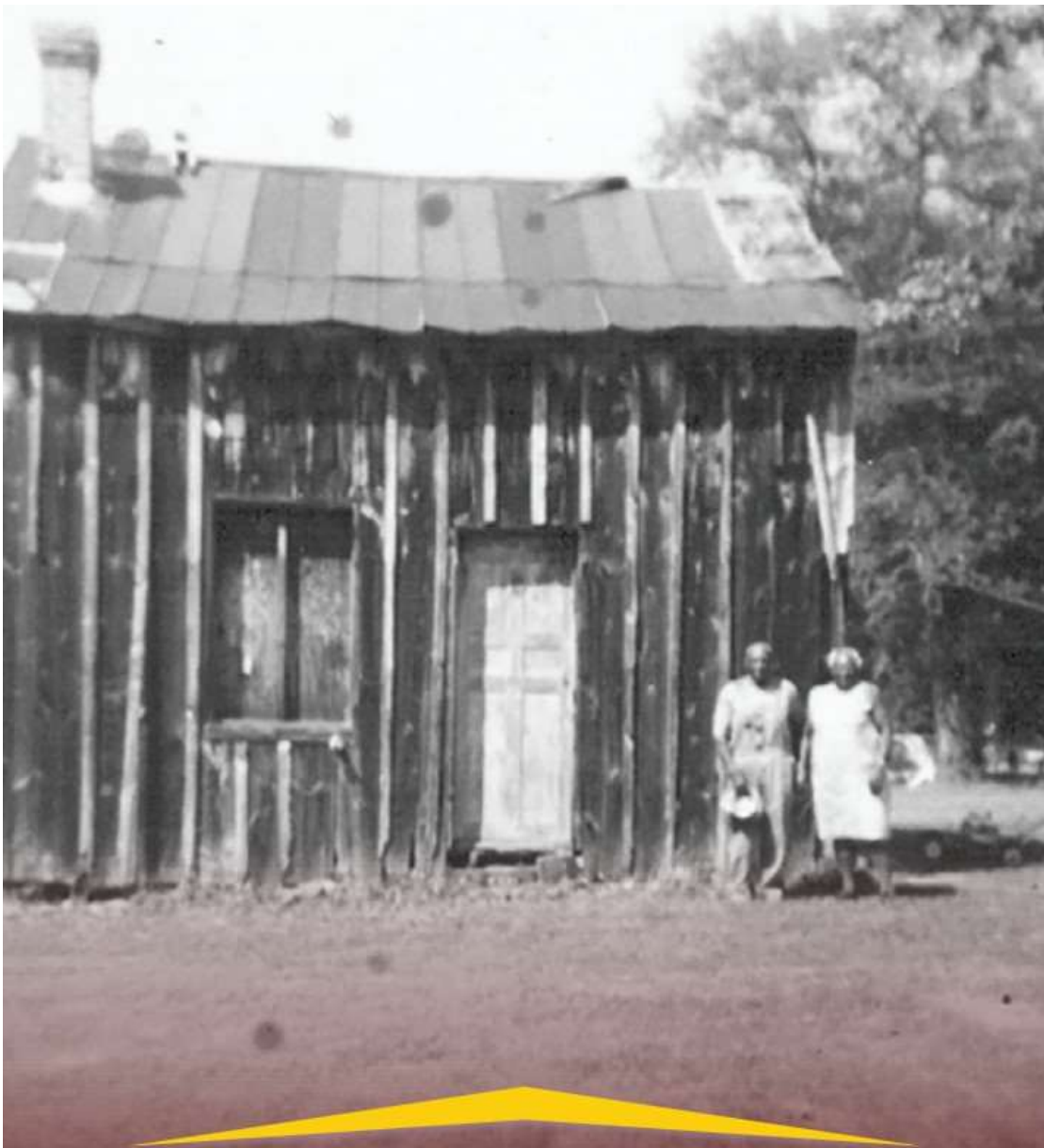
## *Mathias de Sousa*



Mathias de Sousa was one of the nine indentured servants brought to Maryland by Jesuit missionaries, and was on the Ark when Lord Baltimore's expedition arrived in the St. Mary's River in 1634.

He was one of the first individuals of African descent to settle in the Maryland colony. His indenture was finished by 1638, and he became a "Freemen" (a term for any man who was not a servant). Mathias became a mariner and fur trader. In 1641, he commanded a trading voyage to the Susquehannock Indians and in 1642 he was master of a small cargo vessel. Mathias was elected to and served in the 1642 legislative Assembly of Freeman. This makes Mathias de Sousa the first man of African descent to participate in an Assembly or Legislature in America.





## *War, Reconstruction & Community Building*

*This period in American History showcases what life was like after emancipation in Southern Maryland in African American communities. It is the story of many first-generation freedmen and the progress that was made with the development of local African American schools, churches, and other civic and social organizations.*

*Pictured: Old Wallville School.*



## OLD WALLVILLE SCHOOL



The one-room Wallville School building was utilized as a school for African American students from the late 1800s-1934. The building was a cramped 18'x18'.

Younger students were seated three to a desk, while older students would sit two to a desk. On overflow days, wood logs served as extra desks on students' laps as they sat in the middle aisle of the classroom. The school would sometimes service over 40 students in first to seventh grade.

After the school was closed, the building sat empty and in disrepair until portions of it were salvaged and brought to the grounds of Calvert Elementary School in 2006. The school was restored as a monument to the value African Americans placed on educating their children in the face of numerous challenges. It now serves as a center for learning for students and the community.

1450 Dares Beach Rd., Prince Frederick, MD  
Calvert Elementary School grounds.

Tours by appointment only.

410-474-3868 • [oldwallvilleschool.org](http://oldwallvilleschool.org)

### CONTRIBUTING HISTORY

## *Civil War Troops*



Many of the over 700 African Americans from St. Mary's County served as part of the larger United States Colored Troops (USCT). Sgt. James H. Harris, Co. B, and Pvt. William H. Barnes, Co. C, both from St. Mary's County, received the Medal of Honor for heroism during the Battle of New Market Heights in Virginia.



## WASHINGTON BURCH HOUSE



Burch was born a slave and became an emancipated citizen. He became a registered voter and purchased a home in 1874. In 1868, Burch

became a Delegate of the State for the District of Republicans Convention. He founded a school for African American children and served as the county jailer for about 12 years.

The home was originally built in the mid-to-late 18th century and is one of the last remaining colonial buildings in the area. His house is open for public tours (seasonally or by appointment). It is a look into what life was like in Port Tobacco in the post-Civil War.

**8430 Commerce St., Port Tobacco, MD**  
**301-934-4313 • [porttobaccocourthouse.com](http://porttobaccocourthouse.com)**

## HISTORIC MCCONCHIE ONE-ROOM SCHOOL



The Historic McConchie One-Room School is the only known school still in existence that exclusively served African American students in Charles County during racial

segregation and the Jim Crow era. In 1992 the Charles County Fair Board bought and moved the school from its original location along Route 6 to the fairgrounds. The building now serves as a living museum.

The school is truly a time capsule allowing guests to experience student life 100 years ago. It is open to the public for special programs. Private tours are available.

**8440 Fairground Rd., La Plata, MD • 301-932-1234**



CONTRIBUTING HISTORY

## *WWI Memorial*



The Calvert County World War I marker erected in 1920, sculpted by Edward Berge, is truly a metaphor for how our society commemorated contributions of our citizens during that period of time.

The names of soldiers from Calvert who died in that war are listed as such: the names of White soldiers are on the left, and the names of Black soldiers are listed separately, on the right.

CONTRIBUTING HISTORY

## *Matthew Henson*



American explorer and national hero Matthew Henson was from Charles County. In 23 years, Henson completed seven voyages to the North Pole. He is best known for his courage in the 1908-1909 expedition in

which he was the first member of the party to reach the North Pole. Hollywood actress Taraji P. Henson, notably recognized for her starring role in the movie, *Hidden Figures*, is the great-great niece of Matthew Henson.



## UNITED STATES COLORED TROOPS MEMORIAL



The United States Colored Troops Memorial Monument honors the United States Colored Troops and all Union soldiers and sailors from St. Mary's County who

fought during the Civil War. The "African American History Pathway" leads to the nearby United States Colored Troops Memorial Interpretive Center and is lined with signs that provide local history from 1865 through 1942. The center houses exhibits and is open for special events including the Annual Juneteenth Celebration.

**John G. Lancaster Park, 21550 Willows Rd.,  
Lexington Park, MD**

## DRAYDEN AFRICAN AMERICAN SCHOOLHOUSE



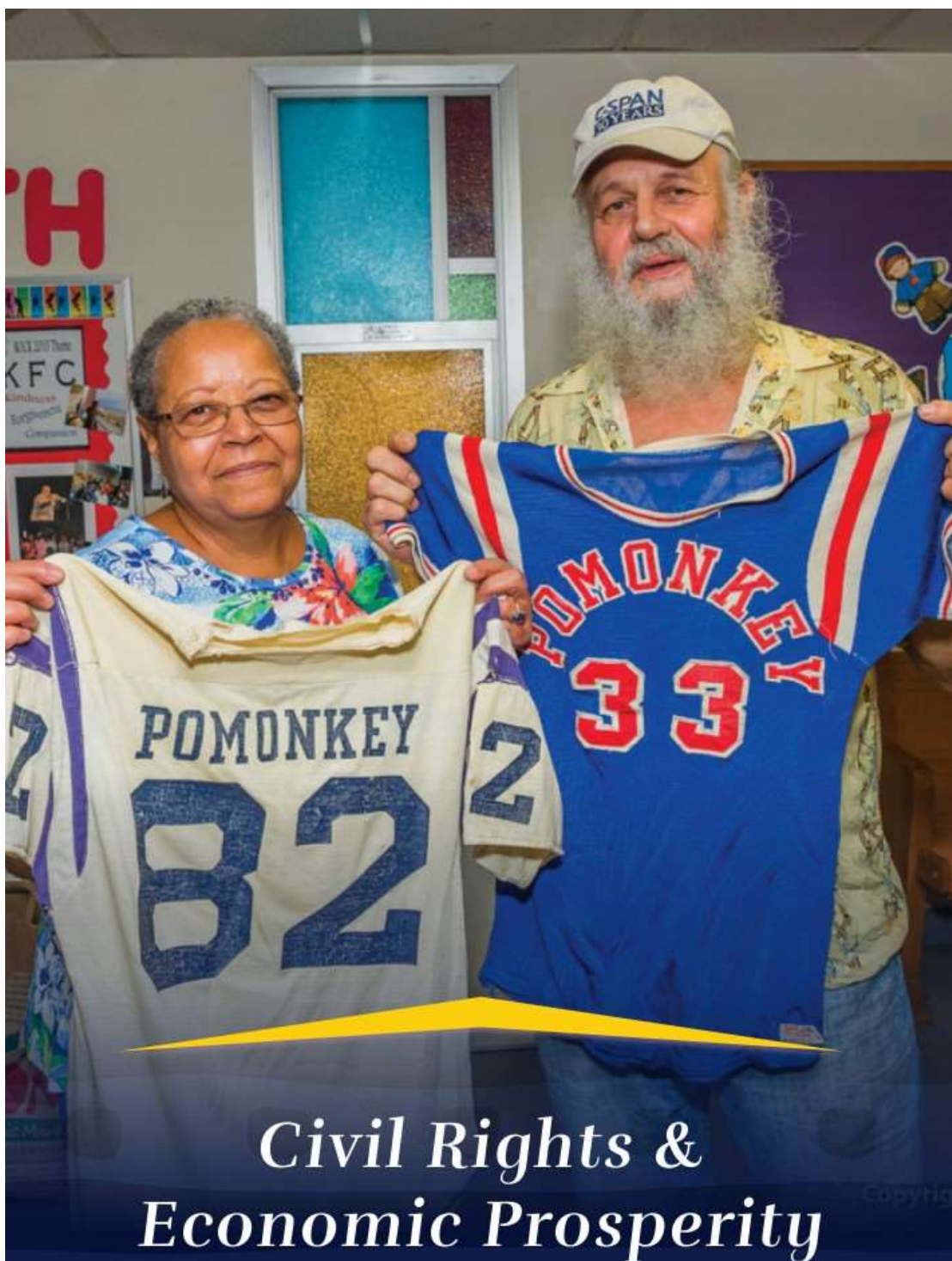
Explore the stories of struggle of the Southern Maryland African American community during an era of segregated education at

this authentically restored one-room schoolhouse. The Drayden African American Schoolhouse is a frame building with its foundation resting on tree trunks.

One of the best preserved African American schoolhouses in the country, this one-room schoolhouse still occupies its original site and has not been significantly altered. Built in 1890, it was in use until 1944. The structure marks the era of segregated schools in St. Mary's County. Interpretive panels offer self-guided tours. Group tours by advance arrangement.

**18287 Cherryfield Rd., Drayden, MD • 301-769-2222**





## *Civil Rights & Economic Prosperity*

*This segment will explore the era within living memory and touch on places of significance to the African American community in Southern Maryland today. It tells the story of segregation and the Jim Crow era, presenting the brunt truths of racism. It also commemorates the lives and impressive actions of prominent and distinguished local African Americans.*

*Pictured: Pomonkey High School alumni.*



## VILLAGE OF POMONKEY

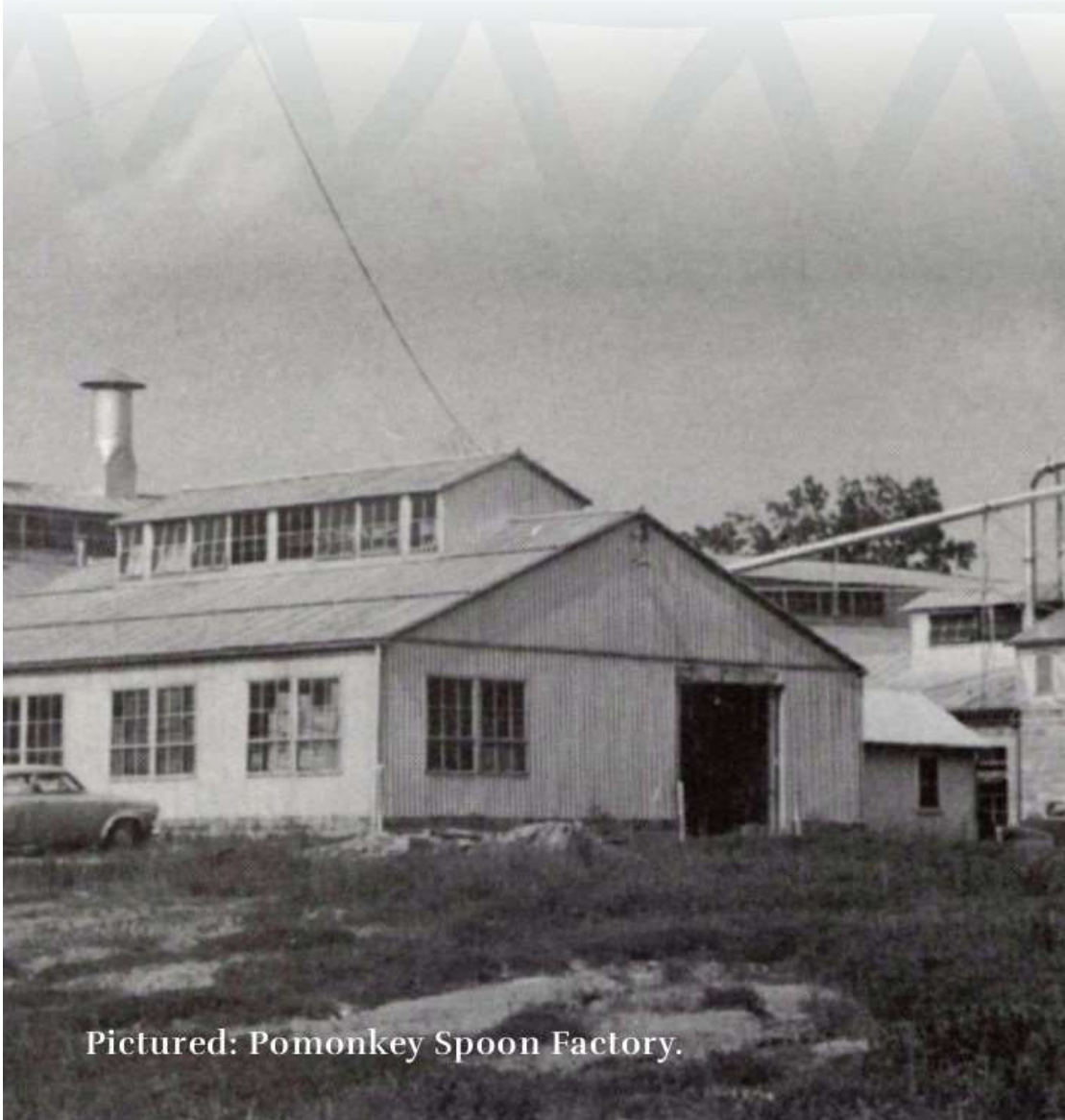


The Village of Pomonkey is a historic African American enclave which served that segment of the community when many institutions and establishments were segregated. The area included many

successful businesses, churches, schools and social halls. Pomonkey High School opened in 1933 and was the first secondary school for Blacks in the county and has an active alumni association.

Other landmarks include Walton's Market, Metropolitan United Methodist Church, The Pomonkey Elk Lodge #717 and Bee Hive Masonic Lodge #66, and W.P. Jameson Store among others.

**The village is located at the crossroads of Livingston & Pomfret Rd. in Charles County (historical marker sign only).**



Pictured: Pomonkey Spoon Factory.



#### CONTRIBUTING HISTORY

### *The Green Book*



After World War II, slot machines were legalized in Maryland and Charles County became known as Maryland's "Little Vegas." During this period, the

Green Book guide was created (1930 -1960s).

The Green Book identified safe and accepting amenities for African Americans travelers during segregation and Jim Crow practices. The Blue Jay Motel (pictured) once located in Waldorf was listed from 1956-1964. The African American owner, Arthur Farrar, also built a baseball stadium/team and gas station called B. B's (Big Boys). The Blue Star Motel, located in the predominantly African American community of Faulkner, was also listed in the Green Book. Nearby, Bel Alton was one of two all-black high schools that educated students until the desegregation of schools in 1965. The school has since been re-purposed as a community development center.

#### CONTRIBUTING HISTORY

### *Negro Minor League Baseball*



Did you know A member of a Calvert County Negro Minor League Baseball team made it to the Major Leagues? Gray's Field, located at 2962 Fowler Road in Owings, was the home of the Owings Eagles, a Negro Minor League Baseball

team from the 1930s to 1997. A member of the team, George H. Spriggs, made it to the major leagues in 1971 at age 30.



#### CONTRIBUTING HISTORY

### *Harriet E. Brown*



Harriet Elizabeth Brown was the catalyst in education in Maryland for equal pay, regardless of race. As a general rule, teachers of color worked in separate schools at salaries far below those of white teachers working in the same community, with the same training and qualifications, doing the same work. Disturbed by the inequality, Ms. Brown enlisted the services of NAACP attorney Thurgood Marshall and brought a suit against the county. Her case was settled December 27, 1937 with the Calvert County Board of Education agreeing to equalize salaries. Her case was the turning point of salary equalization in Maryland and eventually the whole country.

#### AFRICAN AMERICAN MONUMENT



The African American Monument is located on the grounds of Freedom Park. It was dedicated on July 29, 2000 and recognizes African Americans and African

American organizations that have made significant contributions to St. Mary's County.

21744 South Coral Dr., Lexington Park, MD  
[ucaconline.org](http://ucaconline.org)



Southern Maryland acknowledges the past while honoring the enslaved people who lived on this land, re-contextualizing how we examine our shared history.

47777 Mattapan Rd., Lexington Park, MD  
smcm.edu/commemorative



**Pictured: The Commemorative at sunset.**



# Your Guide to African American History in Southern Maryland



## Key



FEATURED SITE



VISITOR CENTER



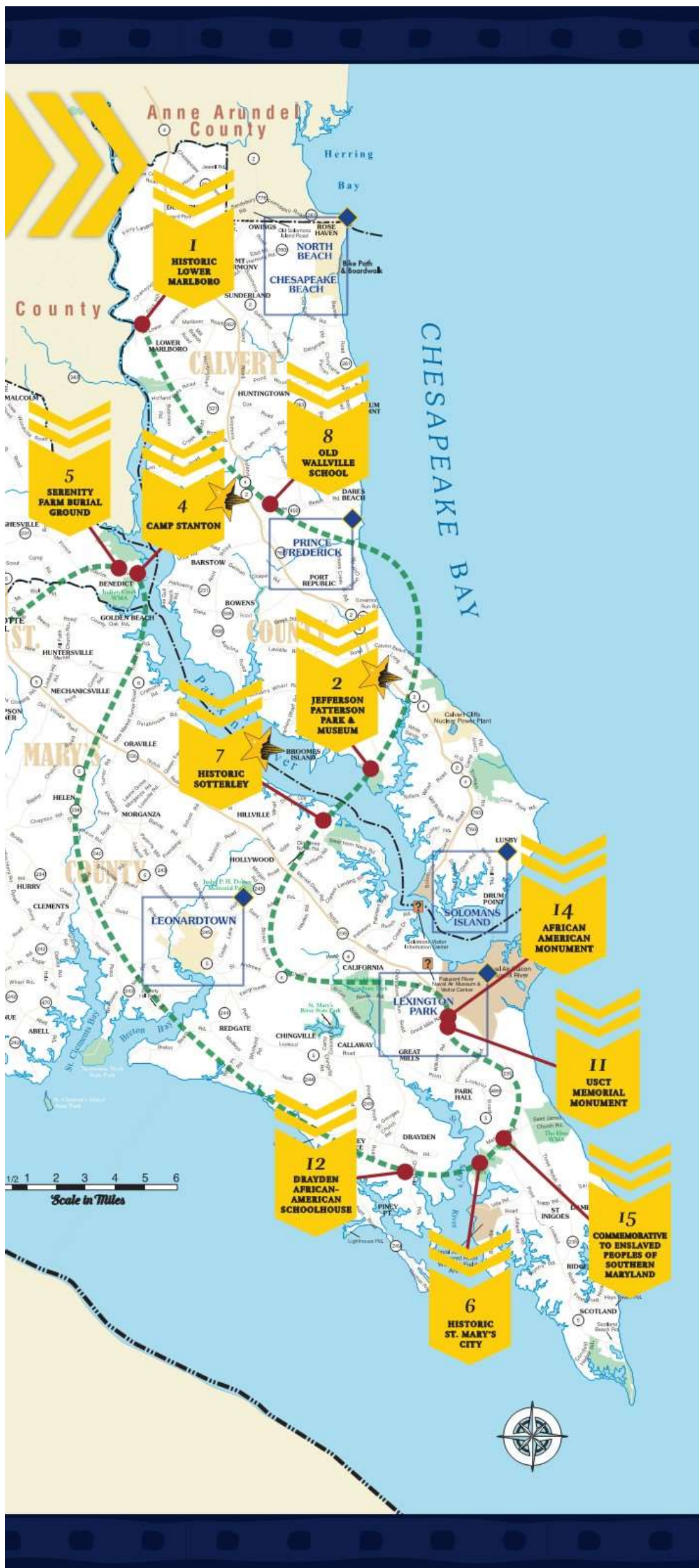
SHOP, DINE & STAY



NETWORK TO FREEDOM SITE

Trail path for visual representation only.









## *Resources for African American History*



### **AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE SOCIETY OF CHARLES COUNTY**

African American Heritage Society of Charles County, Inc. (1974) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with a mission to foster public awareness on the African American way of life contributions regionally and nationwide.

The "Heritage House" is a cultural center that contains artifacts and historical memorabilia depicting the African American experience. It is staffed by society volunteers and is open by appointment and for special events.

**7485 CRAIN HIGHWAY, LA PLATA, MD  
301-609-9099**





## **UNIFIED COMMITTEE FOR AFRO-AMERICAN CONTRIBUTIONS**

The United Committee for Afro-American Contributions' mission is to document, increase understanding of and foster African American contributions to the history and development of St. Mary's County while advocating for improvements in health, education, and community building for all citizens of St. Mary's County. The committee has no physical location but the website is an excellent resource for African American history.

[UCACONLINE.ORG](http://UCACONLINE.ORG)



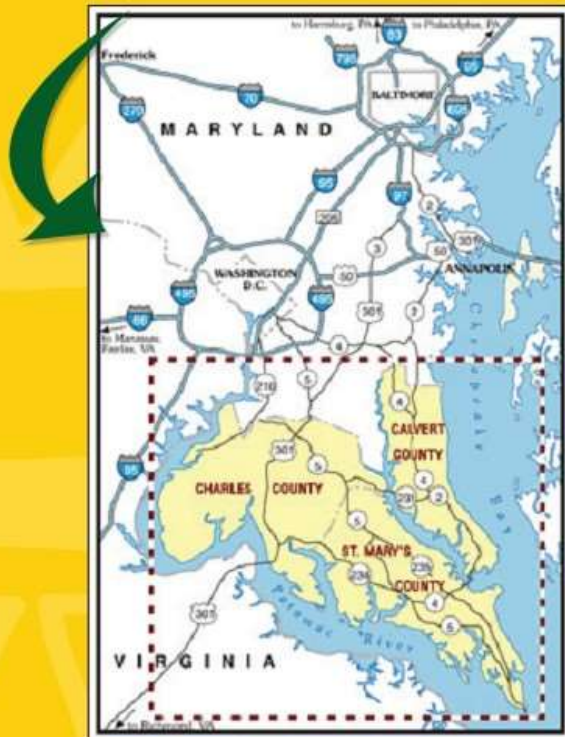
## **CALVERT HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Research Calvert County's diverse history through records, personal papers, memorabilia and other materials of enduring value that document the development of Calvert County and its citizens.

[CALVERTHISTORY.ORG](http://CALVERTHISTORY.ORG) • 410-535-2452



*We're just a hop, skip  
and jump away!*



[DestinationSouthernMaryland.com](http://DestinationSouthernMaryland.com)

*Calvert County*  
MARYLAND

410.535.4583 • [ChooseCalvert.com](http://ChooseCalvert.com)

*Charles County*  
MARYLAND

800.766.3386 • [ExploreCharlesCounty.com](http://ExploreCharlesCounty.com)

VISIT  
**ST MARY'S** 

800.766.3385 • [VisitStMarysMD.com](http://VisitStMarysMD.com)

Visit the [Network to Freedom](http://Network to Freedom) website to  
learn more about the Underground Railroad.

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Front cover: St. Mary's College Commemorative to  
Enslaved Peoples of Southern Maryland.