Although African-American genealogy can be difficult to trace, it is no longer considered impossible. Most blacks came to America during the period of legal slavery, a time when documentation of blacks as individuals was often lacking. However, even then there were some free blacks, and by 1863, one-seventh of all blacks in the United States were free. This means that there are many blacks now living in the United States who have free black ancestry. Almost every black family can be traced back until at least 1825.

The St. Mary’s County Historical Society, Leonardtown, Maryland, holds early vital records, census records, military records and other items of interest to those researching African-Americans who lived in St. Mary’s County. To best utilize these resources, one needs basic genealogical research skills, a broad understanding of black American history, and an awareness of the County’s slave system.

The following records are available at the St. Mary’s County Historical Society. The Society’s Research Center and Library uses the Dewey Decimal Classification System to classify its collections.

**Background Materials**


But now when I look back; remembering St. Mary’s County through Farm Security Administration Photographs. Andrea Hammer. Westminster, MD: Opera House Printing, 1988. 96p. [305.4 HAM]


The conquerors of the New World and their bondsmen; being a narrative of the principal events which led to Negro slavery in the West Indies and America. London: William Pickering, 1848. 2 vols. [326 ANO]


The final report and recommendations of the Maryland Commission on Negro History and Culture. Baltimore, MD: General Assembly of Maryland, April 1971. 110p. [301.451 FIN]


The Negro in Maryland; a study of the institution of slavery. Jeffrey R. Brackett. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University, 1889. 268p. [301.451 BRA]


BIRTH RECORDS


CEMETERY RECORDS

Burials from Tombstones, Grave Markers and Church Registers of St. Mary’s. Janet Tice. various pg. [929.3 TIC]

CENSUS RECORDS (FEDERAL)

The [_____] census of St. Mary’s County Maryland: 1790 through 1930, except 1830 and 1880. various pg. [C-7 MD SM…]

The [_____] census of Charles County Maryland: 1790 through 1930, except 1830 and 1880. various pg. [C-7 MD CH…]

Mortality schedules: 1850-1880.


CHURCH RECORDS

St. Joseph’s Church (Morganza, MD) Colored pew rent collected by Charles I. Russell, Years 1870-1871. [consult Research Center Director]

DEATH RECORDS
Death index of St. Mary’s, Charles, and Calvert Counties, Maryland 1898 through 1927. 
Barbara Bassford Higgs. Leonardtown, MD: St. Mary’s County Historical Society. [929.3 HIG]

Death notices from the St. Mary’s Beacon 1900-1930. various pg. [929.37523 HAM and 929.37241 NEL]

**FAMILY HISTORIES**

The Black Dents of Charles and St. Mary’s County and Baltimore City (1790-1992). 

Free African Americans of Maryland and Delaware from the Colonial Period to 1810. 

Holly Mason Tree: six generations. Mary Gladys Hanson McIntyre et al. [VF – Family Files]

Kane-Butler genealogy: history of a black family. Baltimore, MD: Agnes Kane Callum, 1979. [929.2 CAL]


Some memoirs of the life of Job, the son of Solomon the high priest of Boonda in Africa. 

**FINANCIAL RECORDS**


**MARRIAGE RECORDS**

Black marriages of St. Mary’s County, Maryland 1800-1900. Agnes Kane Callum. 

St. Mary’s County marriage records (1865-1949). Richard N. Nelson, Jr. California, MD. Five volumes. [929.375241 NEL]
MILITARY RECORDS

Colored volunteers of Maryland Civil War; 7th Regiment United States Colored Troops 1863-1866. Baltimore, MD: Agnes Kane Callum. various pg. [973.7 CAL]

St. Mary’s County Civil War records. various pg. [929.3 BEI]


OBITUARY RECORDS


NOTE: Obituary records gleaned from the St. Mary’s County newspapers and other newspapers can be found in several places in the Research Center.

SLAVERY STATISTICS


Maryland slave owners and superintendents. 1798 volume II. Betttie Stirling Carothers. Lutherville, MD, Carothers Publishing, 1975. [929.3 CAR]


St. Mary’s County Certificates of Freedom, 1806-1851. [on CD]

Slave statistics of St. Mary’s County Maryland 1864. Agnes Kane Callum. Baltimore, MD: 1993. [929.3 CAL]

NEWSPAPERS

St. Mary’s Beacon. 1852-1960 [microfilm]
The Enterprise / St. Mary’s Enterprise. 1883-1989 [microfilm]
St. Mary’s Journal. 1958-1960 [microfilm]
NOTE: Many issues are missing but there is an inventory of issues for each newspaper.


RESEARCH CENTER SUBJECT FILES

Materials relating to history, government, geography, culture and customs of St. Mary’s County. 16 file drawers.

RESEARCH CENTER SURNAME CASE FILES

Records relating to specific families. 16 file drawers.

For further information on African-American genealogy resources available at the St. Mary’s County Historical Society, contact the Society at 301-475-2467 or by email at smchs@md.metrocast.net.

The Society’s website is at www.stmaryshistory.org.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE SOCIETY DOES NOT LOAN ITS MATERIALS.

January 2008