

Your Guide to African American History in Southern Maryland

— DESTINATION — Southern Maryland

Discover History



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.



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.



More than 700 African Americans that served as soldiers in the Civil War were from St. Mary's County?

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.



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.

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 repurposed as a community development center.

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 "Freeman" (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 Freemen. This makes Mathias de Sousa the first man of African descent to participate in an Assembly or Legislature in America.



Key

- FEATURED SITE
- VISITOR CENTER
- SHOP, DINE & STAY
- NETWORK TO FREEDOM SITE

Trail path for visual representation only.



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.

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.

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.

CONTRIBUTING HISTORY Sukeek's Cabin

Pieces of history can be traced back to Sukeek's Cabin, an enslaved person on the plantation who lived there for 100 years.

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



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.

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

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.

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.

1450 Dares Beach Rd., Prince Frederick, MD Calvert Elementary School grounds. Tours by appointment only. 410-474-3868 • oldwallvilleschool.org

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.

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.

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 Infantry 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 (historic marker sign only).

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.

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

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.

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 (historic marker sign only).

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.

It is estimated that nearly 31 slaves escaped during the scuffle. Both Wheeler and Caesar faced trial at the Port Tobacco Courthouse.

8430 Commerce St., Port Tobacco, MD 301-934-4313 • porttobaccocourthouse.com

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 site has a grave/interpretative marker and is maintained with native grasses and wildflowers to remain true to the period.

6932 Serenity Farm Rd., Benedict, MD • 301-399-1634 serenityfarminc.com

WASHINGTON BURCH HOUSE

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

The home was originally built in the mid-to-late 18th century and is one of the last remaining colonial buildings in the area.

8430 Commerce St., Port Tobacco, MD 301-934-4313 • porttobaccocourthouse.com

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 • ucaonline.org

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.

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.

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

HISTORIC ST. MARY'S CITY

Mathias de Sousa, an indentured servant of African descent, was present at the founding of St. Mary's City.

history and archaeological museum on the site of the original colony. Route 5/Rosecroft Rd., St. Mary's City, MD • 240-895-4990 hsmcdighistory.org

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 center houses exhibits and is open for special events including the Annual Juneteenth Celebration. John G. Lancaster Park, 21550 Willows Rd., Lexington Park, MD

HISTORIC SOTTERLEY

A historic plantation circa 1703, Sotterley has built itself into a premier location for exploring the complicated past of the region.

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.

44300 Sotterley Ln., Howard Wood M • 301-373-2280 • sotterley.org

COMMEMORATIVE TO ENSLAVED PEOPLES OF SOUTHERN MARYLAND

Through historical documents, archaeological research, and slave folklore, the Commemorative to Enslaved Peoples of Southern Maryland acknowledges the past while honoring the enslaved people who lived on this land.

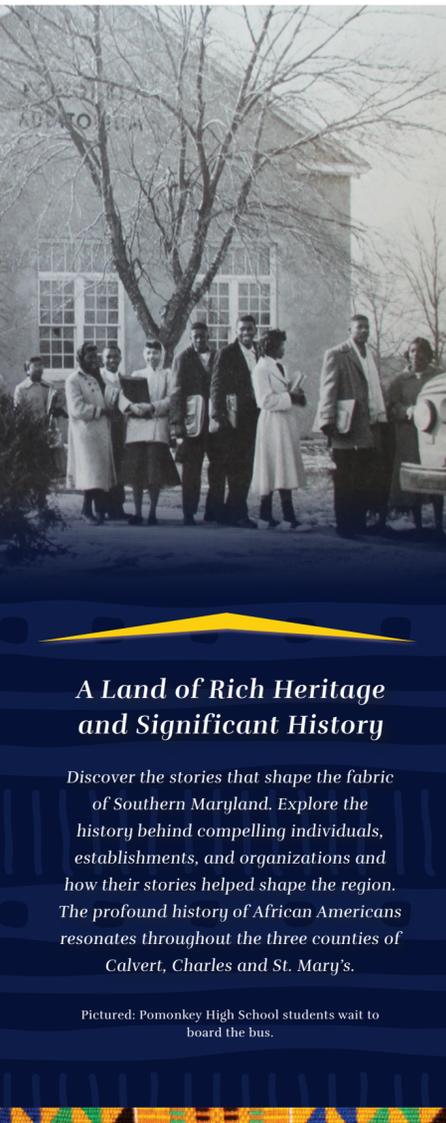
The inclusion of erasure poetry on a structure inspired by the "ghost frame" architecture at Historic St. Mary's City provides an opportunity to change the dialogue around slavery in Southern Maryland.

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

CONTRIBUTING HISTORY Josiah Henson

Josiah Henson was born into slavery in Port Tobacco but spent most of his early years on a plantation in Canada.

found settlement in Canada where he established a school and helped nearly 300 slaves escape using the Underground Railroad. Josiah Henson's autobiography inspired Harriet Beecher Stowe's landmark novel, Uncle Tom's Cabin.



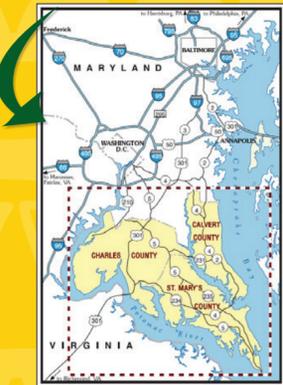
A Land of Rich Heritage and Significant History

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.

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

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

Southern Maryland is a short drive from the cities of Baltimore, Washington, D.C., Annapolis and Richmond.



DestinationSouthernMaryland.com

Calvert County MARYLAND

410.535.4583 • ChooseCalvert.com

Charles County MARYLAND

800.766.3386 • ExploreCharlesCounty.com

VISIT ST. MARY'S

800.766.3385 • VisitStMarysMD.com

For more information about Network to Freedom sites, visit nps.gov.

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

CALVERT | CHARLES | ST. MARY'S

AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE GUIDE



DESTINATION Southern Maryland

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.

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.

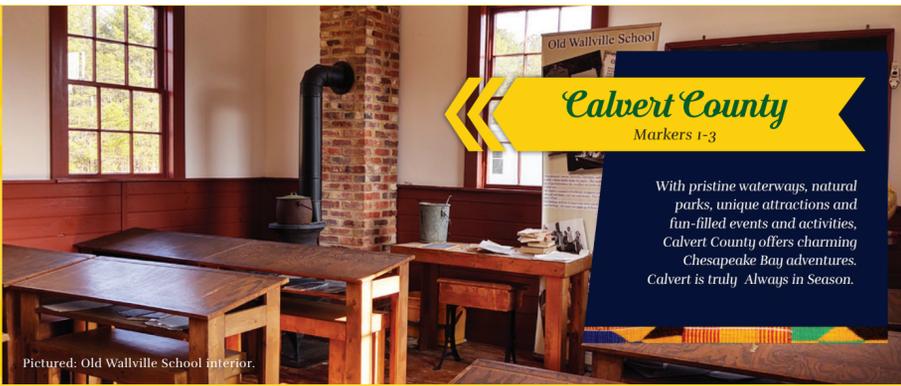
ucaonline.org



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 • 410-535-2452



Calvert County Markers 1-3

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.

Pictured: Old Wallville School interior.



Charles County Markers 4-9

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."

Pictured: Historic McConchie One-Room School interior.



St. Mary's County Markers 10-14

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.

Pictured: Historic Sotterley.