



## AFRICAN ARRIVAL



Since the arrival of settlers and enslaved people to Maryland in 1634, Africans and their descendants have formed a powerful presence shaping the land, its economy, and its culture.

Arriving from the Gold Coast and Senegambia regions of Africa, and later from the Caribbean, a mélange of cultures merged in Maryland bringing skills in agriculture, animal husbandry,



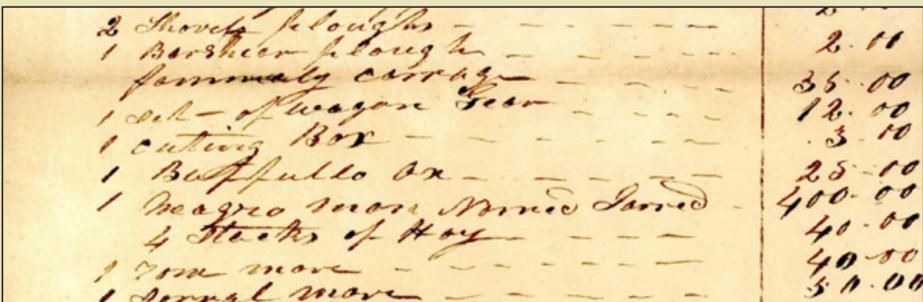
Cowrie shell bags

metalworking, and domestic trades from their homelands.

While forming nearly half of the colony's population on the eve of the American Revolution, many contributions of black Marylanders would go largely unrecognized until the emergence of figures such as Benjamin Banneker, Frederick Douglass, and Harriet Tubman in the 1800s.

Today, visitors can walk in the footsteps of Montgomery County ancestors, tracing their lives and stories from bondage to freedom, from segregation to civil rights when visiting the county's museums, parks, sites, and historic communities.

## DAYS OF ENSLAVEMENT



A close-up of an inventory or list of property from December 1837. Image: Montgomery History

Montgomery County was founded in the mid 1700s with a diversified economy based on small-scale farming and manufacturing. Enslaved people labored here, but in smaller numbers than in counties surrounding the Chesapeake Bay that were involved in large-scale transcontinental trade.

Skilled laborers worked as blacksmiths, millers, and stone cutters, while other workers toiled in the fields and did domestic work. As farming changed from labor-intensive tobacco to grains, the use of enslaved labor diminished here while the demand for workers to drive the plantation economy of the South increased. In the decades leading up to the Civil War, many Montgomery County slaves were shipped off to Mobile, Natchez, and New Orleans. Here they were sold to the formidable indigo, cane, rice, and cotton plantations of the Gulf Coast states. The threat of being "sold down the river" was a powerful tool used to dissuade escape, as most who went south were never seen again.



Outbuildings in Brookeville

fish, and plant and tend their own gardens to supplement food allowances and make extra money. Traditional African American crops such as sesame, peanuts, rice, squash, pumpkins, and yams were among garden crops. Cooks blended African cooking styles with Native American and European created a unique Mid-Atlantic cuisine enjoyed today.

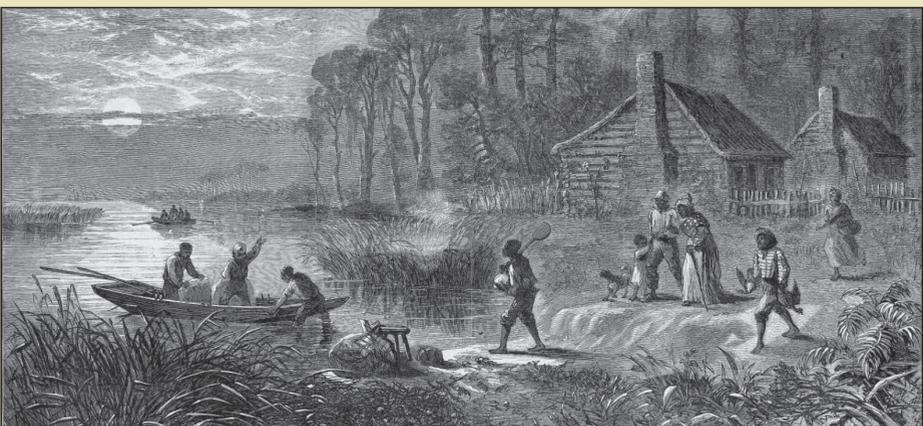
The enslaved also faced many physical hardships that included separation from family members, injury, and even death. Despite this, many African American traditions - music, celebrations, church, community, and a strong sense of history - were kept alive and thrive today.



An early cabin

Living in small cabins and spaces in the main houses and outbuildings, people worked long days, year-round. On Sundays, a day of rest, they could usually worship and/or visit with neighbors or family. Many people often had the latitude to hunt,

## SOWING THE SEEDS OF FREEDOM



Enslaved families fleeing. Image: Harper's Weekly, 1864

The Quaker (Religious Society of Friends) villages of Sandy Spring and Brookeville became the first settlements in the county where free-black populations took root. The Quakers openly questioned the practice of "owning" another person, and at the Maryland Yearly Meeting in 1777, they outlawed the holding of enslaved people. While some Quakers opposed slavery privately, others actively supported escaping to freedom and abolition.



Anna Maria Weems of Rockville disguised herself as a coachman and fled to join her family in Canada

By the 1820s, Sandy Spring had established the first church for newly emancipated slaves, the Sharp Street Church, which stands today with its Odd Fellows Lodge. In the second half of the 1800s, greater mobility,

of Georgetown, Washington, D.C. and Baltimore offered opportunities for escape. The "stations" offered on the UGRR are still scattered throughout the county, and visitors can experience an UGRR escape hike at Button Farm Living History Center in Germantown and at Woodlawn Museum in Sandy Spring.

Josiah Henson was enslaved on the Riley plantation in what is now N. Bethesda. After nearly 40 years as a slave, Reverend Henson made the dangerous journey from bondage to freedom, ultimately founding the Dawn Settlement in Ontario, Canada. His published life story provides a startling look inside the life of an enslaved man and inspired Harriet Beecher Stowe's landmark novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. A visit to the Josiah Henson Museum and Park reveals Henson's story through archaeological explorations and is a reminder of the times and trials that ignited the War Between the States.

**100 DOLLARS REWARD.**  
**ABSCONDED** from the farm of the subscriber near the night of the 16th inst. a negro man named Davy, aged about twenty five years, about five feet 11 inches high, likely and well made, and of a light black complexion. He was lately purchased, at his own request, by the subscriber, of Mr. Edward W. Coleman, then living near Seneca. Davy, it is believed, went off with several other slaves living in his neighborhood; and will endeavor no doubt to get to Pennsylvania.  
 The subscriber will give fifty dollars for his apprehension and delivery to him, if taken in the State of Maryland; if taken out of the State and secured, he will give one hundred dollars.  
 ROBERT DICK  
 July 29--3taw2w

Runaway advertisement

self-reliance, and the formation of kinship communities such as Holly Grove along Norwood Road and Cincinnati along Brooke Road laid the foundation for a greater autonomy. While many of the farms and cabins known to the enslaved have vanished from the landscape, visitors can still see a few surviving examples, such as Oakley Cabin in Olney and Harper Cabin in Wheaton, and can take a walking tour of Brookeville to learn about enslaved and free-black life and work.

Pictured on Front: Patrick Warren, formerly enslaved in Poolesville, served in the 4th United States Colored Infantry (pictured), an African American unit that took part in Sherman's Carolinas Campaign. Photo: Library of Congress  
 Pictured on Back: Hand-wrought farm tools

## FAITH, FAMILY AND FREEDOM

In November 1864, Maryland abolished slavery and delivered the promise of freedom as heralded in Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. Shortly thereafter, newly freed people emerged with surnames different from those of their former owners, revealing long-held kinship ties previously unacknowledged during times of enslavement. They settled on lands deeded or purchased from former owners, like the Haiti community along Martin's Lane in Rockville that was carved from acreage of the Beall-Dawson farm. Other communities such as Prathertown, Brownstown, and Howard Chapel took their names from former bondsmen who settled there.

fringes of the county, with Warren United Methodist Church, the Loving Charity Hall, and its "Negro School" survive as the last African American community in Maryland where this important architectural grouping remains.

These tightly-knit enclaves promoted social advancement, self-reliance, and civic engagement amongst their members while serving as a buffer to the censoring effects of the Jim Crow era of separate and but unequal. By the early 1900s, nearly 40 African American communities had been established in Montgomery County.



Local schoolchildren

Families often purchased and settled land side by side, creating communities with shared labor and resources. One feature unique to these post-emancipation settlements was the establishment of a church-school-benefit hall complex. The church provided spiritual strength and values, the school offered education, and the benefit hall offered insurance, loans, and other support. Today Martinsburg, on the western

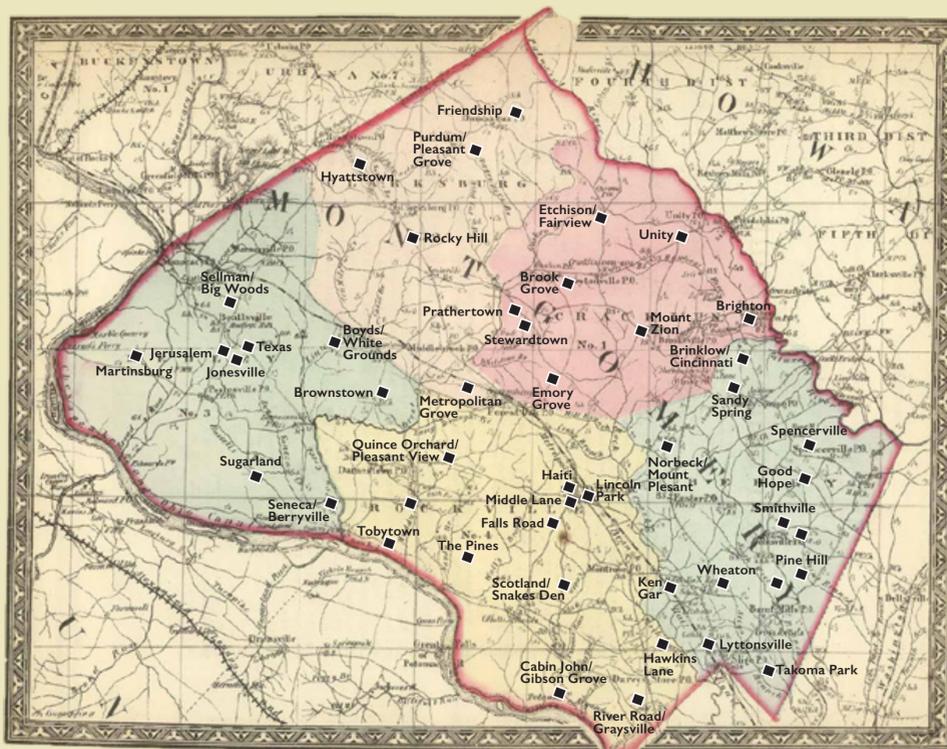


Historic cemeteries can be found throughout the county.

While many of the historic African American churches remain, most are seeing declining membership and aging infrastructure. These communities are, in a way, victims of their own success. Children raised in close knit communities, learning shared values and attending the community schools, developed broader skills and moved away to areas that could provide better job opportunities.

These children grew to be among the organizers who would defeat Jim Crow and segregation and help launch the Civil Rights Movement - all legacies that can be traced back to the beliefs and values of these historic African American communities.

Visit St. Paul Community Church in Poolesville and Pleasant View Historic Site in Quince Orchard to explore the historic churches and cemeteries and learn more about these communities. Heritage Montgomery's *African American Heritage Cookbook*, *Community Cornerstones* video, and booklet feature in-depth histories of many local churches.

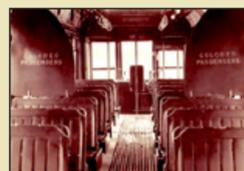


The map above shows many of Montgomery County Maryland's African American communities. Original map: Martenet's Atlas 1865

## SCHOOLS AND HOUSING

In the mid 1900s, the county was quickly transforming itself into a gateway to the nation's capital. In addition to jobs in the trades and services industries, blacks found employment with the federal government, which made the region attractive to newcomers during the "field to factory" era.

Yet, discrimination in housing, employment, and public accommodation was ever-present, and limited the opportunities for many African Americans throughout Montgomery County. Black schools in the county received less funding than their white counterparts, and African American teachers received unequal pay. It was not until 1958 that county schools were desegregated. Today, several historic schools are open for tours, among them are Boyd's Negro School and Smithfield Rosenwald School.



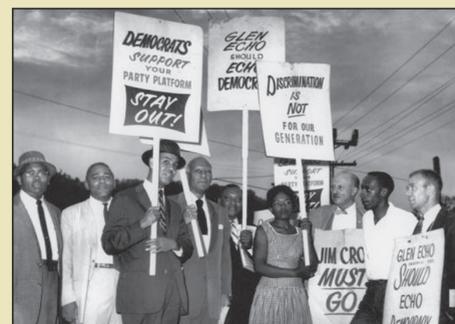
Discrimination was common, as shown on this streetcar's signage.

In 1939, *Gibbs vs. Board of Education*, which was argued by Thurgood Marshall here in Rockville, overturned wage disparities between black and white teachers in the county and marked an early victory on the march to equality. A new generation of activists began to take on the status quo of the Jim Crow era in a series of local civil actions running up to the start of the tumultuous 1960s.

Follow the City of Rockville's "Lost Rockville" walking tour that features the 1930s Grey Courthouse where the Gibbs case was argued or visit Glen Echo Park, the former amusement park where activists boycotted segregation policies that denied African Americans access until 1961.

Outdated infrastructure, including limited access to public water; open sewage; and unpaved roads contributed to the decline of traditional African American communities. Still, Blacks were sequestered by housing covenants which kept them from living in White-only areas.

With the establishment of a new charter government in the 1940s, followed by urban renewal and fair housing policies of the 1960s, the county doubled its efforts to improve the quality of life in its most impacted communities. Historically Black enclaves such as Scotland and Tobytown won much-needed public utilities but suffered the loss of family-owned landholdings to make way for public housing and other development.



Civil Rights protesters at Glen Echo. Photo: National Park Service

## PROGRESS AND PRIDE



Singers at the Warren Historic Site's annual Gospel Jubilee

Over the last half-century, the roles of African Americans in Montgomery County have seen great advancement. Blacks have served in the roles of county executive, county councilmember, police chief, and superintendent of public schools. Today, African Americans make up nearly 20 percent of the population in a county with a median household income of \$100,000. Regionally, the number of minority-owned firms tops 50,000.

The stories of African American faith, family, and freedom can be explored through the historic sites and structures that stand proudly as the result of the spirits of the founders and ongoing preservation efforts throughout Montgomery County.

- **Brookeville Walking Tour**  
Townofbrookevillemd.org/about-our-town/history/Brookeville-walking-tour/
- **Rockville African American History Walking Tour**  
Rockvillemd.gov/DocumentCenter/View/978/Historic-Rockville-African-American-Walking-Tour-Brochure?bidId=
- **Underground Railroad Experience Trail**  
Montgomeryparks.org/parks-and-trails/woodlawn-manor-cultural-park/underground-railroad-experience-trail/
- **Heritage Montgomery African American Heritage Self-Guided Tour**  
Heritagemontgomery.org/places-to-go/tours/

ANNUAL EVENTS

- Black History Month (February)
- Homecoming/Juneteenth (June)
- Heritage Days (June)
- Emancipation Day (November)
- Many county museums and parks also feature exhibits and programs on African American history.

PLACES TO VISIT

**1 Warren Historic Site**  
Dating from the 1860s, this unique site with its church, school, and benefit hall were the center of the post-emanicipation community of Martinsburg.  
WarrenHistoricSite.weebly.com  
(301)972-7263  
22625 Whites Ferry Road, Dickerson

**2 Button Farm Living History Center**  
Restored 1850s farm depicting plantation life with heritage breed animals, heirloom gardens and slave cemetery.  
ButtonFarm.org (240)570-5112  
16820 Blackrock Road, Germantown

**3 Oakley Cabin African American Museum & Park**  
Restored log cabin and grounds, home to African American tenant families in the late 1800s.  
HistoryintheParks.org (301)650-4373  
5130 Brookeville Road, Brookeville

**4 Sandy Spring Slave Museum**  
Exhibits display an extensive collection of African and African American art and artifacts.  
SandySpringSlaveMuseum.org  
(301)774-4066  
18524 Brooke Road, Sandy Spring

**5 St. Paul Community Church/Sugarland**  
Dating from the 1890s, the historic church and cemetery were the heart of the post-emanicipation community of Sugarland.  
SugarlandProject.org (301)717-9304  
14730 Sugarland Lane, Poolesville

**6 Odd Fellows Lodge**  
Built in the 1920s, the lodge served as a religious, social, and education center for the community.  
SandySpringSlaveMuseum.org  
1308 Olney-Sandy Spring Road, Sandy Spring

**7 Sandy Spring Museum**  
A community center with gallery and archive containing historic African American research documents and information.  
SandySpringMuseum.org. (301)774-0022  
17901 Bentley Road, Sandy Spring

**8 Boyds Negro School**  
An historic one-room schoolhouse that served African American children from 1895 - 1936.  
BoydHistory.org  
19510 White Ground Road, Boyds

**9 Pleasant View Historic Site**  
This post-emanicipation church, school, and cemetery were the center of the historic African American Quince Orchard community.  
PleasantViewSite.org  
11810 Darnestown Road, Gaithersburg

**10 Scotland A.M.E. Zion Chapel**  
The area known as Scotland was settled in the late 1900s and the church opened in 1924.  
(301)299-5226  
10902 Seven Locks Road, Potomac

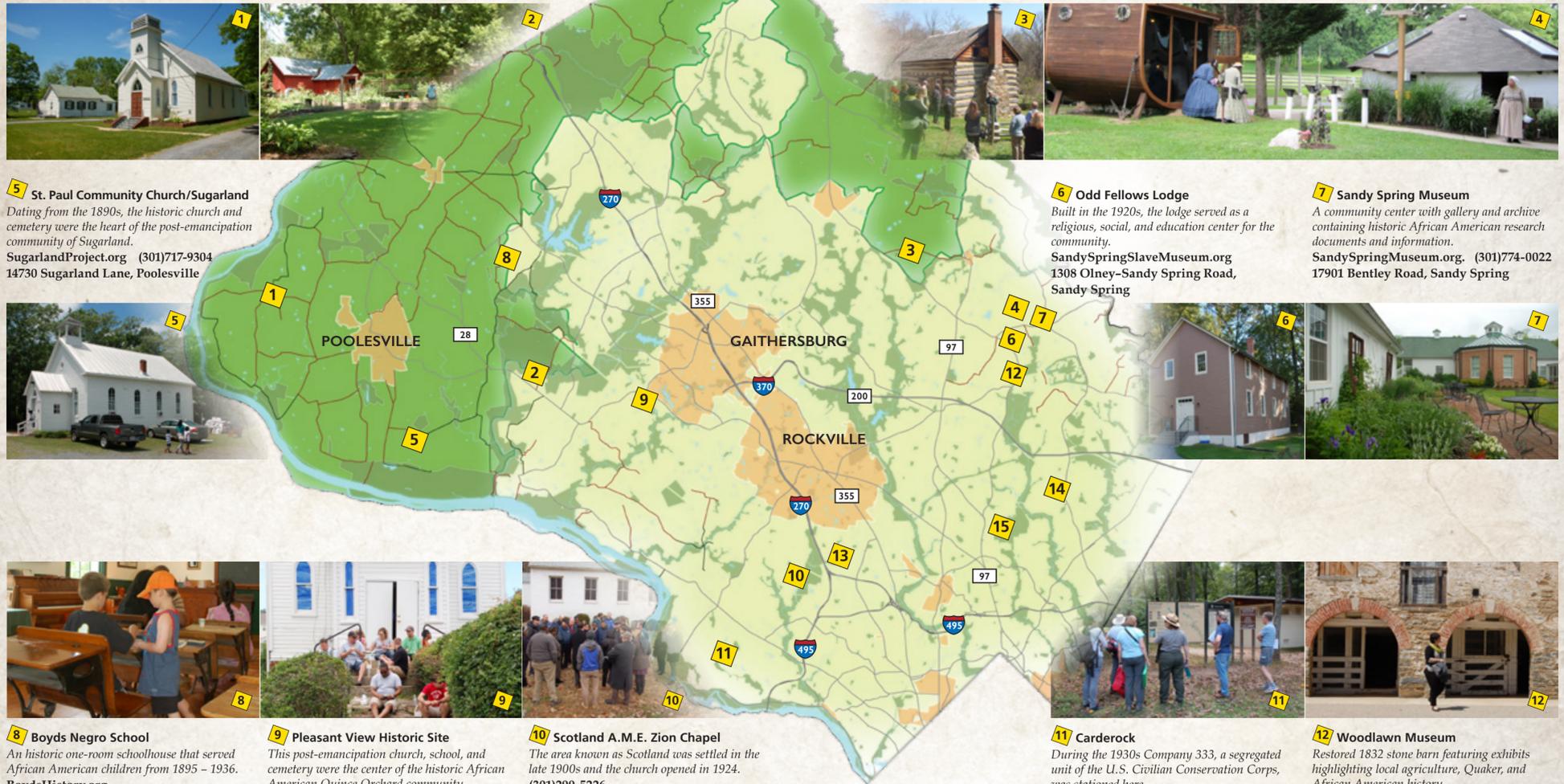
**11 Carderock**  
During the 1930s Company 333, a segregated unit of the U.S. Civilian Conservation Corps, was stationed here.  
CanalTrust.org  
Carderock Recreation Area, Potomac

**12 Woodlawn Museum**  
Restored 1832 stone barn featuring exhibits highlighting local agriculture, Quaker, and African American history.  
WoodlawnManor.org (301)929-5989  
16501 Norwood Road, Sandy Spring

**13 Josiah Henson Museum and Park**  
The new visitor center, historic house and grounds focus on the life of Rev. Josiah Henson, inspiration for Harriet Beecher Stowe's landmark novel, Uncle Tom's Cabin.  
HistoryintheParks.org (301)650-4373

**14 Smithville School**  
This Rosenwald school was built in the 1920s to serve African American children from the area. Today, it is used as a community center.  
811 East Randolph Road, Silver Spring

**15 Harper Cabin at Brookside Nature Center**  
An 1880s log cabin portraying daily life of newly emancipated African American families.  
MontgomeryParks.org (301)962-1480  
1400 Glenallan Avenue, Wheaton



MAP KEY

- Agricultural Reserve and Parks
- Towns
- Rustic Roads
- African American Heritage Sites



HERITAGE AREA THEMES

Over 160 parks, sites, and museums are represented by Heritage Montgomery and tell the county's stories using the following themes:

**Crossroads & Cultures: African American & Quaker Heritage** represents Montgomery County's many rich and diverse cultural histories. These include the long-standing Quaker communities of Sandy Spring and Brookeville and the many early free black communities represented by local churches and preservation groups, community buildings, and cemeteries.

The **Agricultural Reserve: Farms, Markets & Scenic Byways** encompasses 93,000 acres of protected farmland - one of the most successful countryside preservation programs in the U.S. The "Ag Reserve" showcases beautiful vistas, winding country roads, historic buildings, pick-your-own farms, and farmers markets.

**Rivers, Roads, & Rails: Transportation Trails** highlights the C&O Canal along the Potomac River and the Metropolitan Branch of the B&O Railroad that runs through communities dating back to the 1800s. Discover historic lockhouses and aqueducts along the canal towpath. Travel scenic byways and rustic roads to enjoy hiking, biking, canoeing, sightseeing, and more!

**Heritage Gems: Montgomery County's Past** features sites scattered throughout the heritage area representing the unique stories of history, culture, and nature found in Montgomery County, from historic houses to Civil War sites to parks, theatres, and historical societies.

AGRICULTURAL RESERVE

- Agricultural History Farm Park
- Black Rock Mill
- Blockhouse Point Conservation Park
- Clarksburg Historic District
- Damascus Heritage Museum
- Dickerson Conservation Park
- Grusendorf Log House
- Hyattstown Mill
- John Poole House and Arboretum
- King Barn Dairy MOOuseum
- Linden Farm
- Little Bennett and Black Hills Regional Parks
- Montgomery County Parks
- Poolesville Historic District
- Poolesville Old Town Hall Bank Museum
- Potomac and Patuxent Rivers
- Rachel Carson Conservation Park
- Seneca Historic District
- Seneca Schoolhouse Museum
- Seneca and Pautuxent State Parks

RIVERS, ROADS AND RAILS

- Boyds Historic District
- Brookeville Historic District
- C&O Canal National Historical Park
- Dickerson Historic District
- Gaithersburg Community Museum
- Germantown Historic District
- National Capital Trolley Museum
- Rustic Roads
- Scenic Byways
- Silver Spring B&O Railroad Station

HERITAGE GEMS

- Beall-Dawson Historical Park
- Brookeville Historic District
- Clara Barton National Historic Site
- Gaithersburg International Latitude Observatory
- Glen Echo Park
- Kingsley Schoolhouse
- Olney Theatre Center
- Red Brick Courthouse
- Rockville Historic District
- Woodend Nature Sanctuary

HERITAGE MONTGOMERY

**Heritage Montgomery** is one of thirteen certified heritage areas in the state of Maryland - areas where public and private partners make commitments to preserving resources for sustainable economic development through heritage tourism.

HM is a non-profit organization supported primarily through State and County grant funding and is dedicated to the mission of preserving and promoting local history, culture, and natural resources.

Each year, Heritage Montgomery awards State grants of up to \$100k each to local parks, museums, and sites as well as \$25k in HM Mini Grants. A 2019 Economic Impact Report shows a total of \$376 million contributed to the County economy through heritage tourism, 5,327 jobs supported, and \$50.4 million in State and local tax revenue.

Visit [HeritageMontgomery.org](http://HeritageMontgomery.org) to learn more about our organization and plan your next trip exploring the Montgomery County Heritage Area.

Heritage Montgomery  
P.O. Box 10237, Gaithersburg, MD 20898  
(301) 515-0753

We thank our contributing editors, and content experts - Anthony Cohen, Eileen McGuckien, Shiril Spicer, and Joy Turner.

While there are many significant African American heritage sites in the county, this guide focuses on those regularly open to the public.

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