

*Report to the Governor and the General Assembly*

**2017 Annual Report**  
on the  
**African American Heritage  
Preservation Program**

Submitted in accordance with the requirements of  
State Finance & Procurement Article § 5A-330(i), SB 601/Chapter 371, 2015  
(MSAR # 10537)



*Asbury United Methodist Church, Easton, Talbot County*

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**Larry Hogan, Governor**  
**Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor**

## THE MARYLAND COMMISSION ON AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE MISSION STATEMENT



*The mission of the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture is to interpret, document, preserve, and promote Maryland's African American heritage; to provide technical assistance to institutions and groups with similar objectives; and to educate Maryland's citizens and visitors about the significance of the African American experience in Maryland and the nation.*



*The Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture is housed within the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives.*



## MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST MISSION STATEMENT

*The Maryland Historical Trust is dedicated to preserving and interpreting the legacy of Maryland's past. Through research, conservation and education, the Maryland Historical Trust assists the people of Maryland in understanding their historical and cultural heritage.*



*The Maryland Historical Trust is a unit of the Maryland Department of Planning.*

## Background

The African American Heritage Preservation Grant Program (AAHPP) was created during the 2010 session of the Maryland General Assembly and reauthorized, with modifications, as a permanent program during the 2015 session. The AAHPP is administered as a partnership of the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture (Commission), a unit of the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives, and the Maryland Historical Trust (Trust), a unit of the Maryland Department of Planning (Planning). The purpose of this program is to encourage the identification and preservation of buildings, sites, and communities of historical and cultural importance to the African American experience in Maryland.

Eligible applicants for AAHPP funding include non-profit organizations and local jurisdictions. Business entities and individuals may also apply for AAHPP grants when seeking funds for preservation or development projects that serve a high public purpose. Eligible activities include acquisition, construction, and capital improvement of buildings, sites, or communities of historical or cultural importance to the African American experience in Maryland as well as pre-development costs directly associated with an acquisition or construction project. Such pre-development costs may cover historic structures reports and studies, the preparation of plans and specifications, necessary archeological investigations, and reasonable fees for architectural, design, engineering and other special services.

## Activity of the African American Heritage Preservation Program in FY 2017

### *Fiscal Year 2017 Grant Awards*

Applications, instructions, and Program guidelines for FY 2017 funding were made available in early February 2016 via the Trust’s website. A press release on February 8, 2016 announced the availability of the applications and gave details on a series of workshops across the state for potential applicants. Thirty-seven eligible applications were received by the July 15, 2016 deadline, representing a total request of \$3.151 million. Applications represented fifteen counties and Baltimore City.

Based on recommendations from the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture and the Maryland Historical Trust’s Board of Trustees, the following twelve projects were approved by the Secretary of Planning in late 2016:

County	Project & Sponsor	Description	Grant Award	Total AAHPP Project Costs
Harford	<p><b>Project Title:</b> <b>McComas Institute</b></p> <p><b>Project Address:</b> <b>1911 Singer Road,</b> <b>Joppa, MD 21085</b></p> <p><b>Project Sponsor: THE</b> <b>HOSANNA</b> <b>COMMUNITY HOUSE,</b> <b>INCORPORATED</b></p>	<p>The McComas Institute (HA-307, individually NR listed) stands as the most important landmark in the history of black education in Harford County. Constructed in 1867, this building is one of three schools erected in the area for the Freedmen's Bureau after the Civil War. McComas Institute is the only one, however, to remain intact. This one-story frame structure with a gable roof is five bays long and three bays wide, stands on a raised stone foundation, and has a modest belfry over the north gable. MHT holds an easement on this property.</p> <p><i>Project work includes interior and exterior rehabilitation of school and outbuildings, including carpentry repairs; repair/replacement of utilities, plumbing, HVAC system, windows, doors, shutters, steps, handrail, ramp, exterior siding, and interior and exterior finishes; installation of UV protective measures for windows; fabrication and installation of permanent exhibit and cabinetry; and associated architectural, engineering, and consulting services</i></p>	\$100,000	\$123,000

Allegany	<p><b>Project Title:</b> <b>Jane Gates House</b></p> <p><b>Project Address:</b> <b>515 Greene Street, Cumberland, MD 21502</b></p> <p><b>Project Sponsor:</b> <b>JANE GATES HERITAGE HOUSE, INC.</b></p>	<p>This property derives its name from Jane Gates, a former slave, who was able to purchase the property in 1871. She lived here with her 5 children, including Edward Gates, the great-grandfather of Dr. Henry Louis Gates Jr., a prominent scholar of African American culture at Harvard University. Dr. Gates showcased this property, 515 Greene Street, on his TV program "Finding your Roots" as a significant landmark for the Gates family. The property is still in Gates family ownership; it will be rehabilitated as a community center.</p> <p><i>Project work includes interior and exterior rehabilitation, including repair / replacement of roof, siding, trim, windows, doors, flooring, finishes, utilities, and mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems; repair of foundation; lifting building as required for foundation work; carpentry and masonry repairs; installation of shutters; and associated architectural and engineering services</i></p>	\$100,000	\$100,000
Baltimore City	<p><b>Project Title: Morgan State University: Carnegie Hall, University Memorial Chapel, and Holmes Hall</b></p> <p><b>Project Address:</b> <b>1700 East Cold Spring Lane, Baltimore, MD 21251</b></p> <p><b>Project Sponsor:</b> <b>NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN THE UNITED STATES</b></p>	<p>Founded in 1867, Morgan State University is one of 105 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in the nation, and one of four in the State of Maryland. The University is an urban, 143-acre campus with a diverse collection of structures; Carnegie Hall, University Memorial Chapel, and Holmes Hall are to be assessed in preparation of impending construction. In 1917 industrialist and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie funded the campus relocation to its current site in northeast Baltimore, and the construction of Carnegie Hall (B-1407, constructed 1919) - the oldest extant building on campus. Carnegie Hall was designed by Carnegie's New York architect Edward Tilden. University Memorial Chapel (B-5250, constructed 1941) is the only National Register-listed building on campus, and honors the University's founding as the Biblical Centenary Institute. It was designed by African American architect Albert I. Cassell. Holmes Hall (B-5285, constructed 1949) holds the University's signature clock tower - a classic symbol modeled after Philadelphia's Independence Hall. Designed by the Baltimore architectural firm Taylor &amp; Fisher, the building was named in honor of the University's first African American President Dwight O. W. Holmes.</p> <p><i>Project work includes architectural, engineering, and consulting services</i></p>	\$100,000	\$100,000

Frederick	<p><b>Project Title: Catoctin Furnace Iron Master's House Ruins</b></p> <p><b>Project Address:</b> 12651 Catoctin Furnace Road, Thurmont, MD 21788</p> <p><b>Project Sponsor:</b> FRIENDS OF CUNNINGHAM FALLS STATE PARK AND GAMBRILL STATE PARK, INC.</p>	<p>The Catoctin Furnace complex (F-6-45, Catoctin Furnace NRHD), is significant to American industrial history and industrial archeology; the industrial site and its related living quarters illustrate the growth and development of the iron industry between 1774 and 1904. Slaves labored in the village in various capacities including iron production, charcoal making, and domestic services. There are documented cases of enslaved persons leaving this site to seek freedom; this site is included in NPS's National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Gateway program. While the 1781 Iron Master's House is in ruins, it is open for public viewing year round. The Iron Master would have had house slaves, who may have resided in the basement under the kitchen. A new interpretive panel will explain the role the Iron Master played in the community and the importance of this structure. The Iron Master's House is owned by the State of Maryland.</p> <p><i>Project work includes exterior rehabilitation, including masonry repairs and repointing</i></p>	\$5,000	\$10,000
Montgomery	<p><b>Project Title: Mutual Memorial Cemetery</b></p> <p><b>Project Address:</b> 18291 Brooke Road, Sandy Spring, MD 20860</p> <p><b>Project Sponsor:</b> MUTUAL MEMORIAL CEMETERY FOUNDATION OF SANDY SPRING, INC.</p>	<p>Mutual Memorial Cemetery was officially established in 1873 as part of the historic Freedman's Village of Sandy Spring, one of the oldest free black communities in Maryland. The Quakers, who founded Sandy Spring, freed their slaves by 1800 -- well before federal or state emancipation. These pioneering black families chose to remain within the borders of Sandy Spring in an area which became known as Freedman's Village. They purchased homes, founded houses of worship, created small businesses and established the Mutual Memorial Cemetery.</p> <p><i>Project work includes architectural, engineering, archeological, and consulting services, including ground penetrating radar survey, mapping, and preservation assessment and treatment recommendations; conservation of grave markers; and permanent signage</i></p>	\$78,000	\$78,000

Somerset	<p><b>Project Title: John Wesley M.E. Church</b></p> <p><b>Project Address: 9571 Deal Island Road, Deal Island, MD 21821</b></p> <p><b>Project Sponsor: JOHN WESLEY COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION, INC.</b></p>	<p>John Wesley UM Church (S-372; S-371, Deal Island NRHD) is a late Victorian tee-plan Gothic Revival church, dating from 1914. It is a prominent landmark in the low, marshy landscape between the settlements of Deal Island and Wenona. A black congregation has continuously worshipped on this site since at least the third quarter of the 19th century. The building will be used as a heritage-focused cultural and interpretive center.</p> <p><i>Project work includes interior and exterior rehabilitation, including repair / replacement of windows; carpentry repairs / replacement; removal of existing foundation and construction of new foundation; lifting building as required for foundation work; and associated architectural, engineering, and archeological services</i></p>	\$100,000	\$100,000
Charles	<p><b>Project Title: Old Pomonkey High School</b></p> <p><b>Project Address: 3395 Metropolitan Church Road, Bryans Road, MD 20616</b></p> <p><b>Project Sponsor: POMONKEY HIGH SCHOOL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION, INC.</b></p>	<p>Old Pomonkey High School (CH-503) served as the first African American public high school in Charles County. Established in 1922, the original frame building was replaced in the 1930s by a one-story structure with high ceilings, large windows, and Colonial Revival styling. In the 1950s a one-story gymnasium wing was added; this is currently the only portion of the building that remains after a fire in the 1980s destroyed the 1930s portion. The building will become a cultural center and museum, with the 1950s wing rehabilitated and the 1930s portion ultimately rebuilt.</p> <p><i>Project work includes interior and exterior rehabilitation, including site work; repair / replacement of utilities, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems; doors, floors, walls, and finishes; and painting</i></p>	\$100,000	\$100,000

Anne Arundel	<p><b>Project Title: Wiley H. Bates Legacy Center (within former Wiley H. Bates High School)</b></p> <p><b>Project Address: 1103 Smithville Street, Annapolis, MD 21401</b></p> <p><b>Project Sponsor: COMMUNITY PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION</b></p>	<p>The Wiley H. Bates High School (AA-12, individually NR listed) is of exceptional significance in the history of the development of public education for African Americans in Anne Arundel County. From the time the school was built in 1932 until 1966 when the county public school system was finally desegregated, Bates was the only public school in the county which African-American students could attend for a secondary level education. The 1932 building was expanded in 1937, 1945, and 1950 to accommodate increasing enrollment. In each building campaign, facilities which equaled or exceeded those available to white students were provided. These expansions represent the response of the county to the "separate but equal" doctrine which was applied to public facilities in the first half of the 20th century. MHT holds an easement on this property.</p> <p><i>Project work includes interior and exterior upgrades to the Wiley H. Bates Legacy Center, including repair / replacement of doors; installation of signage, lighting, and canopy; installation of UV protective measures for windows; structural assessment; and associated architectural, engineering, and consulting services</i></p>	\$100,000	\$130,000
Caroline	<p><b>Project Title: Denton Colored School</b></p> <p><b>Project Address: 408 Lincoln Street, Denton, MD 21629</b></p> <p><b>Project Sponsor: ROSS AME CHURCH</b></p>	<p>Probably constructed in the late 19th or early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Denton Colored School (CAR-126) is a 'T' plan building which stands above a tall basement made of rough-cast concrete block. The half-acre of land which the school occupies was purchased by African American school trustees in 1867. The structure has been used as a masonic hall since 1969. The project will restore the structure to its historic appearance.</p> <p><i>Project work includes interior and exterior rehabilitation, including repair / replacement of roof, siding, doors, windows, woodwork, shutters, interior walls, floors, steps, foundation, utilities, and HVAC, plumbing, and electrical systems; installation of new restroom and kitchen; painting; and associated architectural, engineering, and consulting services</i></p>	\$100,000	\$100,000

Prince George's	<p><b>Project Title:</b> Sis's Tavern / Baby Dee's</p> <p><b>Project Address:</b> 4516 41st Avenue, North Brentwood, MD 20722</p> <p><b>Project Sponsor:</b> HYATTSVILLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION</p>	<p>Initially operated as a grocery, then as a tavern and music hall, the building at 4516 41st Avenue (PG:68-61-21; PG:68-61, North Brentwood NRHD) has been owned and operated by residents of North Brentwood, the first African-American incorporated community in the county, and served town residents for over eighty years. It became known as "Sis' Tavern" during the 1960s, when owned by Marie "Sis" Walls; and later "Baby Dee's" after Deloris R. Spriggs. It was a central social hub for the Town, attracting famous acts like Duke Ellington and Pearl Bailey during its heyday, who would come to perform after hours when visiting the Howard Theatre in D.C. The building also housed a barbershop, in an addition c. 1920, which was operational until Baby Dee's closed in 1996. In addition to being the first commercial building built in the Town, it was owned at one time by the Town's first Mayor, Jeremiah Hawkins. When rehabilitation is completed, the building is planned for community use and will be managed by the Town.</p> <p><i>Project work includes interior rehabilitation, including repair / replacement of electrical, plumbing, and HVAC systems, finishes, and flooring</i></p>	\$50,000	\$85,000
Talbot	<p><b>Project Title:</b> Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church</p> <p><b>Project Address:</b> 110 South Hanson Street Easton MD 21601</p> <p><b>Project Sponsor:</b> BETHEL A.M.E. CHURCH, INC.</p>	<p>Bethel AME Church (T-412; T-410 (Easton NRHD), built in 1877, houses a congregation that has been in existence since 1818. The Hill neighborhood, established by freed slaves in Easton, grew up around Bethel and the nearby Asbury AME Church. The church building may be the first structure for public use owned and operated by African Americans on the Eastern Shore. The building is still in use as a church. MHT currently holds an easement on this property.</p> <p><i>Project work includes exterior rehabilitation, including repair / replacement of roof and windows; installation of storm windows; electrical repairs and upgrades; and site work</i></p>	\$100,000	\$100,000



Talbot	<b>Project Title: Asbury M.E. Church</b>  <b>Project Address: 18 South Higgins Street, Easton, MD 21601</b>  <b>Project Sponsor: HISTORIC EASTON, INCORPORATED</b>	Asbury M.E. Church (T-421; T-410 (Easton NRHD) is the oldest African American church structure in Easton, and the second oldest African American church structure in Talbot County. The church was dedicated by Frederick Douglass in 1878. Asbury was a temporary high school for colored students in the 1930's and is now a community center for a historically African American enclave known as the "Hill." The lower-level "fellowship hall" will become an education and research center for the public. The upper-level sanctuary is still used for worship. MHT holds an easement on this property.  <i>Project work includes exterior rehabilitation, including roof repair / replacement; exterior carpentry repairs; repairs to windows; and associated architectural, engineering, and consulting services</i>	\$67,000	\$67,000
<b>TOTAL</b>			\$1,000,000	

These grantees were notified of their awards in December 2016. An award announcement event, hosted by Lieutenant Governor Rutherford, was held at the State House on December 16, 2016, and a press release describing the Program and detailing the grant awards was distributed in late June 2015.



*Representatives of the Pomonkey High School Alumni Association and the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture join Lieutenant Governor Boyd Rutherford and Secretary of Planning Wendi Peters in celebrating their grant award.*

## ***Fiscal Year 2018 Grant Applications***

Applications, instructions, and program guidelines for FY 2018 funding were made available in February 2017 via the Trust's website. A press release on February 28, 2017 announced the availability of the applications and gave details on a series of workshops for potential applicants as follows:

<p>Anne Arundel County Thursday, March 9, 11:30a - 1:30p Galesville Community Center 916 West Benning Road Galesville, MD 20765 (14 attendees)</p>	<p>Baltimore City Monday, March 20, 11:30a - 1:30p Union Baptist Church 1219 Druid Hill Avenue Baltimore, MD 21217 (36 attendees)</p>
<p>Washington County Wednesday, March 22, 11:30a - 1:30p Robert W. Johnson Community Center 109 W. North Avenue Hagerstown MD 21740 (6 attendees)</p>	<p>Calvert County Wednesday, March 29, 11:30a - 1:30p Melvin's Place (formerly known as Duke's) 1155 Hallowing Point Road Prince Frederick, MD 20678 (13 attendees)</p>
<p>Dorchester County Thursday, April 6, 11:30a - 1:30p Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Visitor Center 4608 Golden Hill Road Church Creek, MD 21622 (40 attendees)</p>	<p>Prince George's County Tuesday, April 11, 11:30a - 1:30p Oxon Hill Library 6200 Oxon Hill Road Oxon Hill, MD 20745 (39 attendees)</p>

A total of 148 people attended the workshops. The workshop at Union Baptist Church highlighted the use of AAHPP grant funds to create an archive and research room within the undercroft, and allowed this past grant awardee to provide insight into the grant application and administration process for potential applicants.

Grant applications are accepted through the Trust's online application, powered by MicroEdge's GIFTS system. The grant application deadline was July 15, 2017. After a threshold review of the applications by Trust staff, the Commission evaluates eligible applications and forwards recommendations to the Maryland Historical Trust's Board of Trustees. Once the Board reviews the Commission's recommendations, it makes a final recommendation that is sent to the Secretary of Planning for approval.

## Notable Accomplishments & Project Updates



Above: The exterior rehabilitation of the church nears completion.



Right: The project team meets in the sanctuary during restoration.

### Christ Rock Church, Cambridge, Dorchester County:

*Christ Rock Church, along with the Stanley Institute school, is the focus of the African-American community that arose at Christ Rock, outside of Cambridge, just after the Civil War. The church was constructed in 1875 and altered in 1889 and 1911; the present structure is gable-ended with a square entrance tower. The church will be rehabilitated as a cultural center and museum focusing on the African American experience in Dorchester County. Since the church is currently owned by a nonprofit and not used for worship, the Maryland Historical Trust holds an easement on both the interior and the exterior of this property. Grant funds awarded through the AAHPP in FYs 2012-2016 are assisting the restoration of the church to its ca. 1911 appearance. A paint analysis revealed that the historic finish of the interior woodwork and pews was faux graining, which was often used to allow a commonly available wood species to mimic a more exotic wood; this finish is currently being professionally restored.*



Above left and center: Restoration of the faux grained surfaces. Above right: Careful removal of layers of paint revealed the original treatment to be faux graining.

## Samuel and Ida Torsell Mini-Museum, Catonsville, Baltimore County:



The Torsell Mini-Museum during (above) and after (left) rehabilitation.

*The Winters Lane Historic District is the largest and most intact mid-19th century African American neighborhood in Baltimore County. 79 Winters Lane is one of the older African American homes in the Winters Lane community. It was the home of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel and Ida Torsell. From the 1920s to the 1940s Mr. Torsell produced a newsletter that provided African American entrepreneurs with a means of advertising their goods and services, while Mrs. Torsell was the organist and pianist for the local church.*

*The Grace A.M.E. Community Development Corporation was awarded a FY 2014 AAHPP grant to make improvements to the house for its continued use as a local museum. After engaging an architect to perform a conditions and needs assessment, the CDC used the grant funds to make structural repairs, replace the roof, replace wood shingles on exterior walls, repair windows and replace rotted sills, and complete interior finish work. The completed building will continue to serve as a repository for photographs, documents, and artifacts which will preserve the story of Winters Lane and its residents for future generations.*



Left: Structural repairs in progress.

Above: Deteriorated wall shingles, shown before replacement.

## **Ebenezer AME Church, Baltimore City:**

*Built in 1865 for a congregation organized in 1836, Ebenezer A.M.E. Church is thought to be the oldest standing church in Baltimore that was erected by African Americans and continuously occupied by the descendants of the same congregation. The church is designated as a Baltimore City landmark and is included in the Federal Hill National Register Historic District. This brick Gothic Revival church has a prominent bell tower; the parish house is located in an adjoining rowhouse.*

*The church-affiliated nonprofit, Ebenezer Kingdom Builders, Inc., received an AAHPP grant in FY 2016 which was used to address the replacement of windows in the parish house with appropriate wood windows and to replace deteriorated protective glazing on the stained glass windows on the front of the church. The old protective glazing was discolored and etched through years of exposure. The replacement glazing is not only more sympathetic to the patterns of the underlying windows, it is also clear, which vastly improves the appearance of the church from the street and allows visitors to fully appreciate the beauty of this significant landmark.*



Before, after, and close-up photographs of the church (top) and parish house (bottom).

**Asbury United Methodist Church, Georgetown, Kent County:**

*The original section of this church, a single-story frame structure with projecting chancel at the rear, was built in 1879 to serve a congregation that began holding services in 1863. A three-story bell tower and side wing were added around 1920. The Georgetown community and the congregation still include direct descendants of the founding families. The building, which will continue to be used as a church, is listed as a Kent County landmark. A previous phase of work provided temporary alignment and stabilization of the upper portion of the bell tower. By the beginning of this project, the church had already been stripped of most of its interior plasterwork and furnishings to expose and assess structural elements, and temporary wood shoring was still in place. An AAHPP grant was awarded in FY 2015 to assist with exterior and structural repairs, including, most noticeably, the realignment of the bell tower.*



Top: The steeple is obviously out of plumb. Above: The steeple after realignment.



Above: repairs to roof cricket above bell tower to prevent continued water intrusion.



Left and right: Necessary repairs were made to the interior framing to restore the building's structural integrity.



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