

**Report to the Governor and the General Assembly**

**FY21 Annual Report on the African American Heritage  
Preservation Program**

**The Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture**

**Mission Statement**

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

**Maryland Historical Trust**

**Mission Statement**

The Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) is dedicated to preserving and interpreting the legacy of Maryland's past. Through research, conservation and education, MHT assists the people of Maryland in understanding their historical and cultural heritage. MHT is a division of the Maryland Department of Planning.

**Program Overview**

The Maryland General Assembly created the African American Heritage Preservation Program (AAHPP) during the 2010 session and reauthorized it, with modifications, as a permanent program during the 2015 session. The AAHPP encourages the identification and preservation of buildings, sites, and communities of historical and cultural importance to the African American experience in Maryland. The program is administered as a partnership of the Commission and MHT.

Nonprofit organizations, government entities, business entities, and individuals may apply for AAHPP grants. Nonprofit organizations are not required to provide a match for grant funds but are encouraged to contribute to their project's success. All other grantees must provide a one to one match. Eligible activities include acquisition, construction, and pre-development associated with a construction project. Assisted properties must involve buildings, sites, or communities of historical or cultural importance to the African American experience in Maryland.

This report is submitted in accordance with the requirements of State Finance and Procurement Article § 5A-330(i), SB 601/Chapter 371, 2015.

## **AAHPP activity in FY21**

### **FY21 Grant Cycle**

In April 2020, MHT provided instructions, guidelines, and applications on the program webpage. In response to COVID-19, MHT staff held virtual grant workshops in May 2020, with *Application Requirement Basics* webinars offered on May 1, 4, and 8, and *Application Tips: How to Tell Your Heritage Story* offered on May 11. Applicants submitted 42 eligible project proposals by the July 1, 2020 deadline, requesting more than \$3.4 million for projects in 13 counties and Baltimore City.

The Commission recommended 13 projects for funding, which were approved by the MHT Board of Trustees and the Secretary of Planning and announced in December 2020.

### ***FY21 Grant Awards***

**Laurel Cemetery**, 2401 Belair Road, Baltimore City

**Sponsor:** Laurel Cemetery Memorial Project, Inc.

**Grant:** \$88,000

Incorporated in 1852 as Baltimore's first nondenominational cemetery for African Americans, Laurel Cemetery became known as one of the most beautiful and prominent African American cemeteries in the city. Descendants attempted to purchase the cemetery, but the owner prevailed against their legal challenges and leveled the cemetery for development in 1958. As a result, much of the cemetery currently lies beneath the parking lot of the Belair-Edison Crossing Shopping Center. Grant funds will support repairs to the retaining wall and construction of a pathway with interpretive signage in the unpaved portion of the cemetery, where recent archaeological investigations have identified undisturbed burials.

**Historic Oliver Community Firehouse**, 1220 East Oliver Street, Baltimore City

**Sponsor:** African American Firefighters Historical Society, Inc.

**Grant:** \$100,000

Baltimore's African American Firefighters Historical Society will use grant funds to acquire the historic firehouse, Truck House #5, through the City's *Vacants to Value* program. The project will rehabilitate the building and convert it into the International Black Firefighters Museum and Safety Education Center.

**African American Heritage Center**, 125 East All Saints Street, Frederick, Frederick County

**Sponsor:** The African American Resources – Cultural and Heritage Society Incorporated

**Grant:** \$100,000

Grant funds will support the creation of a new center for African American heritage in downtown Frederick. The project will reconfigure an existing commercial space and add accessibility improvements so that it can be used for exhibits, collections, and public programs to share Frederick County's African American heritage and present this history within a broader regional and national context.

**Carver School**, 340 Frederick Street, Cumberland, Allegany County

**Sponsor:** Mayor and City Council of Cumberland

**Grant:** \$100,000 (Grantee Contribution: \$100,000)

Built in 1921 to accommodate the growing African American population of Cumberland, Carver School (previously known as Cumberland High School and the Frederick Street School) soon attracted students from outside Allegany County, including attendees from nearby areas of West Virginia. The school was renamed in 1941, when Principal Bracey held an election and students voted to name the school after Dr. George Washington Carver, who consented by letter to having the school named after him. The grant will fund necessary repairs to the building so it can be rehabilitated for community use.

**Diggs-Johnson Museum**, 2426 Offutt Road, Granite, Baltimore County

**Sponsor:** Friends of Historical Cherry Hill A.U.M.P., Inc.

**Grant:** \$100,000

The Cherry Hill African United Methodist Church, now known as the Diggs-Johnson Museum, was built in the late 19th century and functioned as a church through the 1970s before its conversion to a museum in the 1990s. The museum documents the history of the African American community of Baltimore County, and in particular the enslaved and free African Americans of Granite, many of whom worked in the area's granite quarries. The grant project will fund repairs to the church's foundation and grave markers in its burial yard.

**Kennedy Farm/John Brown Raid Headquarters**, 2406 Chestnut Grove Road, Sharpsburg, Washington County

**Sponsor:** John Brown Historical Foundation, Inc.

**Grant:** \$99,000

This grant will fund repairs to the timber and chinking of the Kennedy Farmhouse, a log building used as the headquarters by John Brown and his band of abolitionists in planning their raid on the government armory in Harpers Ferry in 1859. As the raid was being planned, the farmhouse also served as living quarters for the five African American members of the band: Dangerfield Newby; Lewis Leary; Shields Green; John Copeland, Jr; and Osborn Anderson. The raid on Harpers Ferry was a pivotal event in the lead-up to the Civil War.

**Galesville Community Center**, 916 West Benning Road, Galesville, Anne Arundel County

**Sponsor:** Galesville Community Center Organization, Inc.

**Grant:** \$45,000

Of the fifteen schools in Anne Arundel County built using money provided by the Julius Rosenwald Fund, which supported the establishment of African American schools throughout the southern United States, only six survive today. The grant project will fund repairs to the roof, siding, and windows of the Galesville Rosenwald School, built in 1929, which now serves as a vibrant community center.

**Howard House**, Elton Farm Road, Brookeville, Montgomery County

**Sponsor:** Department of Natural Resources – Maryland Park Service

**Grant:** \$100,000

The Howard House, currently in ruins, is the last intact building associated with Enoch George Howard. Born enslaved, Howard purchased his freedom and eventually became a prosperous landowner, donating land to establish Howard Chapel and a community school. The grant project will restore the stone house's exterior to its original appearance for interpretive use.

**Bazzel Church**, 4136 Bestpitch Ferry Road, Cambridge, Dorchester County

**Sponsor:** Good Shepherd Association

**Grant:** \$100,000

In 1911, the Bazzel Church was established at its current site, replacing an 1876 chapel which had burned. The church, located in Bucktown, is best known for its association with Harriet Tubman, whose family members reportedly worshipped at the original church building. Initial stabilization of the church was completed in the summer of 2020, and the grant will fund the next phase of repairs, eventually leading to the rehabilitation of the building for use as an interpretive center.

**Mt. Zoar A.M.E. Church**, 440 Mt. Zoar Road, Conowingo, Cecil County

**Sponsor:** Mount Zoar African Methodist Episcopal Church

**Grant:** \$32,000

Mt. Zoar African Methodist Episcopal Church was built in 1881; the earliest known burial in the adjacent cemetery dates to 1848. More than 30 veterans are buried in the cemetery, including soldiers whose graves are marked with flag holders from the Grand Army of the Republic, a racially integrated social and fraternal organization for Union veterans of the Civil War. The grant project will fund repairs to the cemetery and grave markers.

**Prince George's African American Museum and Cultural Center**, 4519 Rhode Island Avenue, North Brentwood, Prince George's County

**Sponsor:** Prince George's African-American Museum and Cultural Center at North Brentwood, Inc.

**Grant:** \$20,000

Through exhibitions and educational programs, the Prince George's African American Museum and Cultural Center shares the county's untold stories of African Americans. The grant-funded pre-development project will involve the design of facility renovations and an addition to provide support space and affordable housing space for African American artists.

**Sergeant Alfred B. Hilton Monument**, David R. Craig Park, 553 Union Avenue, Havre de Grace, Harford County

**Sponsor:** The Sgt. Alfred B. Hilton Memorial Fund, Inc.

**Grant:** \$25,000

Established as Bayside Park in the late 1800s, Millard Tydings Memorial Park includes recreational amenities as well as memorials to those who served in World War I, World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. Grant funds will help construct a new monument dedicated to Sergeant Alfred B. Hilton, Harford County's only recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor. The monument will include permanent interpretive material about Sgt. Hilton and the role of his U.S. Colored Troops regiment in the Civil War.

**Union of Brothers and Sisters of Fords Asbury Lodge No. 1**, 11646 Philadelphia Road, White Marsh, Baltimore County

**Sponsor:** The Union of Brothers and Sisters of Ford Asbury, Inc.

**Grant:** \$91,000

In 1874, Dr. Walter T. Allender constructed and donated this building to the Baltimore County School Commissioners for use as an African American school, initially known as Colored School 2, District 11. The Union of Brothers and Sisters of Ford's Asbury Lodge No. 1, an African American benevolent society, held monthly meetings on the second floor of the school building, and in 1922 Baltimore County Public Schools donated it to the lodge. The grant project will fund repairs and accessibility improvements that allow the building to be used by the public again. Note: In spring 2021, additional funds became available and were allocated to fully fund this grant project at the originally requested amount of \$100,000.

**Ebenezer A.M.E. Church**, 20 West Montgomery Street, Baltimore City

**Sponsor:** Ebenezer Kingdom Builders Inc.

**Grant:** \$28,458.80

Built in 1865 for a congregation organized in 1836, Ebenezer A.M.E. Church is believed to be the oldest standing church in Baltimore erected by African Americans and continuously occupied by the descendants of the same congregation. This brick Gothic Revival church has a prominent bell tower and a parish house located in an adjoining rowhouse. Ebenezer A.M.E. Church previously received AAHPP and MHT Historic Preservation Capital grant funds to replace the failing slate roof. This grant project will assist in completion of the roof project by repairing the belltower and its roof. Note: This grant was awarded in FY21 using an available program fund balance from prior years.

### ***FY22 Grant Cycle***

Applications, instructions, and program guidelines for FY22 funding were made available in April 2021. In response to COVID-19, grant workshops were held as a series of three online webinars.

Online applications were accepted through July 1, 2021. Once applications are received, MHT staff conduct a threshold review of the project proposals and forward eligible applications to the Commission for review and ranking. The MHT Board of Trustees and the Secretary of Planning consider the recommendations for approval.

### ***Project Accomplishments & Updates***

**St. Paul Church**, 26086 Beauchamp Branch Road, Denton, Caroline County

**Sponsor:** St. Paul Church Historical, Revitalization, and Maintenance, Inc.

St. Paul Church is one of the earliest African American churches in Caroline County, and its grounds include a cemetery with burials dating back to at least the 1840s. Suffering from serious deterioration, the church received grants in FY18 and FY19 to support construction documents and initial stabilization. The first round of stabilization, which included the foundation and walls, was completed during the pandemic. During the stabilization, the church preserved and stored historic architectural elements, such as the original wood frame windows, doors, and pews, for future reuse. The next phase of work will re-roof the church now that the structure is stabilized. Once complete, the church will be used to promote community education and awareness of African American culture in the 19th and 20th centuries.

**Havre de Grace Colored School Museum & Cultural Center**, 555 Alliance Street, Havre de Grace, Harford County

**Sponsor:** The Havre de Grace Colored School Museum and Cultural Center, Inc.

The original Havre de Grace Colored School consisted of two rooms, constructed in 1910 by Harford County Public Schools to educate primary-school-age Black children. In 1930, the county built a four-room brick addition to serve as its first public high school for African American students. Prior to the construction of the high school, Harford County's African American students had to travel to Baltimore City, Cecil County, or Pennsylvania to receive a high school education. Today, the Havre de Grace Colored School Museum and Cultural Center showcases the history of African Americans in Harford County, from Langston Hughes' time at the school, to stories of the Underground Railroad, to the legacy of Alfred B. Hinton, recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor. The FY19 project, funded at \$100,000, included exterior and interior repairs to waterproof the basement, masonry repairs such as repointing, structural repairs, upgrades to electrical and plumbing systems, installation of HVAC and lighting, flooring installation, and painting to create an event space in the basement.

