

HISTORIC CHURCHES



12 Mt. Calvary
United Methodist Church
37345 New Market Road
Charlotte Hall, MD 20622
301-884-7320

The first recording of Mt. Calvary Methodist Episcopal Church was in 1880. The current church was built in 1912. Camp meetings and tent revivals were held here. In 1968, the church became Mt. Calvary United Methodist Church when the new United Methodist Church was formed in America.



12 Ebenezer African Methodist
Episcopal Church
37659 Ebenezer Way
Mechanicville, MD 20659
301-884-8879

This, the only A.M.E. congregation in St. Mary's County, is thought to be the oldest A.M.E. church in Southern Maryland. The congregation appears to have existed in the 1860s. A deteriorating log chapel used as a church and school into the 1940s, still stands. The present church was constructed in 1961.



13 Galilee United Methodist Church
Cemetery
(Route 247 in area of Oakville)
Mechanicville, MD 20659

The church was founded by U.S. Colored Troops soldiers and built in the 1880s on land donated by a white member of Mt. Zion Church. After 1945, membership gradually declined and Galilee was closed and in 1983, the church was officially burned in a "service of triumph." U.S. Colored Troops soldiers are buried in the cemetery at the site.



14 First Missionary Baptist Church
47359 Lincoln Avenue
Lexington Park, MD 20653
301-863-8388

In 1945, a growing home-based prayer band moved its worship services to the USO Building in Carver Heights. They then purchased an acre of land and in 1948, built the First Baptist Church of Carver Heights. In 1990, the church was given its current name.



16 Zion United Methodist Church
21291 Three Notch Road
Lexington Park, MD 20653
301-863-5161

Zion grew from Zion's Fair Methodist Episcopal Chapel, originally located on Hermannville Road. The current church was constructed on this site in 1963 and was renovated and expanded in 2001. The church cemetery is located at the site of the former Zion Fair Chapel.



16 Bethesda United Methodist Church
19309 St. George's Church Road
Valley Lee, MD 20692
301-994-9416

Founded as Bethesda Methodist Episcopal Church about 1830 by a white congregation, it passed into African American use and is the oldest African-American Methodist church in southern St. Mary's County. The church was erected on the site in 1870 and was replaced in 1911.



17 St. Mark Union American
Methodist Episcopal Church
45685 Happyland Road
Valley Lee, MD 20692
301-994-2090

In 1891, thirty members of Bethesda Church formed an independent church built on land across the road. Originally affiliated with the Baltimore Association of Independent Methodist Churches, later it united with the Union American Methodist Episcopal Church. A new church was built in 1968.



18 St. Luke United Methodist
Episcopal Church
45000 St. Lukes Court
Piney Point, MD 20674
301-994-9897

St. Luke, the sister church of St. Mark Union American Methodist Episcopal Church, was founded in 1852. It evolved from a religious group organized in 1813 as the First Independent Church of Negroes, later the Union Church of Africans.



19 St. Peter Claver Catholic Church
and McKenna Hall Museum
16922 St. Peter Claver Church Road
St. Iniges, MD 20684
301-872-5460

When the original 1918 church burned in 1934, Philip Fröhm, architect of the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., designed the new church. It is the only predominantly African-American Catholic parish in the county. St. Peter Claver School was founded in 1916. The school burned in 1928, was rebuilt, and remained open until 1965. The building, renamed McKenna Hall, serves as a museum. Tours by appointment.



20 Mt. Zion United Methodist
Church
27108 Mt. Zion Church Road
St. Iniges, MD 20684
301-872-4006

According to church lore, Mt. Zion had its beginning in the late 18th century when a slave named Issac Braxton became a Methodist and preached to his fellow slaves. In 1872, the church was constructed on an acre of donated land. It later burned and was replaced by the present church in 1908.



21 St. Luke United Methodist Church
12880 Point Lookout Road
Ridge, MD 20680
301-872-5142

Founded by U.S. Colored Troops veterans, church members met in their homes until 1886, when they purchased the old St. Mary's Chapel in Ridge. That church burned in 1887 and a new church was built. First known as the Lowtown congregation, they became St. Luke Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1968, they became part of the United Methodist Church.

RESOURCES

College of Southern Maryland 301-934-7626, ext. 7107
www.csmd.edu/library/SMSC/index.html smsc@csmd.edu
The Southern Maryland Studies Center, La Plata Campus.

St. Mary's College of Maryland 240-895-4264
www.smc.edu/library

The Maryland Collection, genealogical records and the SlackWater Journal which focuses on aspects of life in Southern Maryland.

St. Mary's County Historical Society 301-475-2467
www.stmaryshistory.org smchs@md.metrocast.net
County vital, census and military records; and other items pertaining to African Americans who lived in St. Mary's County.

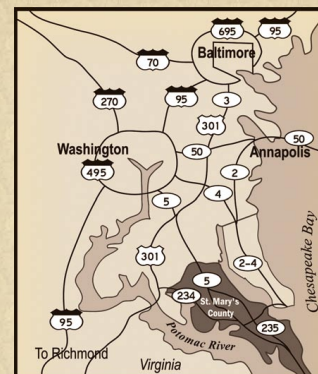
St. Mary's County Libraries 301-475-2846
www.stmailib.org

A variety of materials, from local newspapers to books, which portray the African-American experience in Southern Maryland. See the Maryland Collection at the Leonardtown and Lexington Park Libraries.

Unified Committee for Afro-American Contributions, Inc.
www.ucaonline.org ucac@ucaonline.org
Website features oral histories, plus information on events and UCAC exhibits and publications.



This celebration of African-American heritage, commemorating the full emancipation of slaves in the U.S., takes place every year on the Saturday closest to the date of June 19. The event features activities, demonstrations and performances, and an evening jazz concert. It is held at Freedom Park in downtown Lexington Park. For more information visit www.ucaonline.org.



St. Mary's County is just a short drive from Washington D.C., Baltimore and Annapolis, in Southern Maryland.



St. Mary's County Tourism
www.tourstmarysmd.com
1-800-327-9023

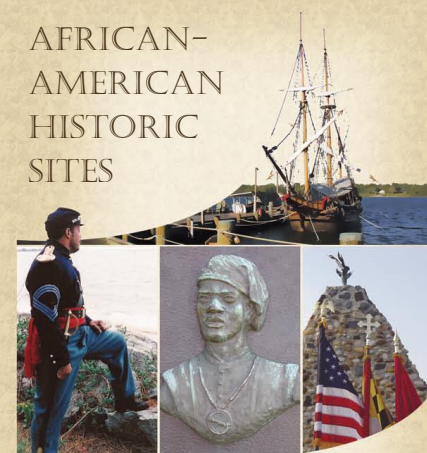


Unified Committee for Afro-American Contributions
www.ucaonline.org

Visitor Welcome Center
(Route 5 and Charlotte Hall School Road)
3757 Charlotte Hall School Road
Charlotte Hall, MD 20622
301-884-7059

This publication was made possible with the support of the Board of Commissioners and the citizens of St. Mary's County and was created in cooperation with the Unified Committee for Afro-American Contributions, Inc.

AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES



OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY

HISTORIC SITES



- 7 St. Clements Island Museum**
38370 Point Breeze Road
Colton's Point MD 20626
301-769-2222
www.stmarysmd.com/recreate/museums

Mathias de Sousa, cited as the first individual of African descent to settle in Maryland, was part of the first group of colonists who landed at St. Clements Island in 1634. The little that is known about de Sousa is included in the museum's exhibits, which relate the story of Maryland's founding. Open March 25 - Sept., weekdays 9 AM - 5 PM and weekends noon - 5 PM; Oct. 1 - March 24, Wed. - Sun., noon - 4 PM. Water taxi to the island, Memorial Day weekend - Sept.



- 2 Historic St. Mary's City**
(Route 5 and Roscroft Road)
St. Mary's City, MD 20686
240-895-4990
www.stmaryscity.org

When the first permanent English settlement in Maryland was established at St. Mary's City, Mathias de Sousa, an indentured servant of African descent, was there at its founding. After serving his indenture, he became a merchant and participated in the Maryland Assembly. A plaque memorializing de Sousa and brief information on early colonial African-American life may be found at this outdoor living history and archaeological museum on the site of the original colony. Open Wed. - Sun., 10 AM - 5 PM, access to some exhibits and amenities varies with season.



- 5 Sotterley Plantation**
34300 Sotterley Ln.
Hollywood MD 20636
301-373-2280
www.sotterley.org

National Park Service Underground Railroad Network to Freedom site. Sotterley's 1830s slave cabin exemplifies typical slave housing in the Tidewater region yet also features unique architectural elements. The plantation's interpretive program incorporates the story of the Kane Family's time at Sotterley which spanned the pre and post Civil War Eras. The site also features a main dwelling and numerous outbuildings dating from the early 18th through the early 20th centuries. Grounds open year round 10 AM - 4 PM, tours May - Oct., Tues. - Sun., 10 AM - 3 PM. Tours focusing on African-American life at Sotterley by advance arrangement.



- 4 Old Jail Museum and Visitor Information Center**
(Courthouse Drive next to the Courthouse)
Leonardtown MD 20650
301-475-2467
www.stmaryshistory.org

National Park Service Underground Railroad Network to Freedom site. The Old Jail was built in 1858 and was in use through the early 1940s. Runaway slaves were often held in public jails until their owners retrieved them or they were sold in compensation for the cost of care. Five stories of runaway slaves are connected with this jail. Today the building houses exhibits of the St. Mary's County Historical Society and serves as a county visitor information center. Open Wed. - Fri., 10 AM - 2PM. Special tours and additional hours by advance arrangement.



- 5 Point Lookout State Park**
11175 Point Lookout Road
Scotland MD 20687
301-872-5688
www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/southern/pointlookout.html

National Park Service Underground Railroad Network to Freedom site. During the Civil War Era, Point Lookout was first a hospital for wounded Union soldiers and then a Civil War prison camp for captured Confederate soldiers. The hospital staff is known to have assisted with the escape of several Maryland slaves while United States Colored Troops served as guards at the prison camp. Outside of Point Lookout stood a "contraband camp" where runaway slaves who crossed the Potomac River from Virginia took refuge under the protection of federal authorities. Now a state park, the site includes a Civil War museum (open seasonally). Park open year round, sunrise to sunset.



- 6 St. Jerome's Hall**
17763 Three Notch Road
Dameron, MD 20628
301-872-4566

The Hall was built in 1885 by the local chapter of the Knights of St. Jerome, the oldest Catholic fraternal organization in the Archdiocese of Washington. In the late 1880s, the hall served as the first parochial school for black children in St. Mary's County. View from street. Tours by advance arrangement.



- 7 Drayden African-American Schoolhouse**
18287 Cherryfield Road
Drayden, MD 20630
301-769-2222
www.stmarysmd.com/recreate/museums

One of the best preserved African-American schoolhouses in the country, the one-room schoolhouse still occupies its original site and has not been significantly altered. Built in 1890, it was in use until 1944. The structure marks the era of segregated schools in St. Mary's County. Interpretive panels offer self-guided tours. Group tours by advance arrangement.



- 8 Cardinal Gibbons Monument Cardinal Gibbons Memorial Park**
16922 St Peter Claver Church Road
St. Iniges, MD 20684
(301) 475-4200 ext. 1800
www.stmarysmd.com/recreate/facilities

Established in 1924 by Jesuit Father John LaFarge as a vocational institute under the auspices of the Baltimore Diocese, and operated by educators from the Tuskegee Institute, the coeducational school for African-American students operated until 1967. It was named for Archbishop James Cardinal Gibbons of Baltimore who donated money for purchase of the land. A monument marks the site where the institute once stood. Hours: dawn to dusk.



- 9 Carver Community Center Formerly George Washington Carver School**
47450 Lincoln Avenue
Lexington Park, MD 20653

George Washington Carver School, built in 1958, and its predecessor, Jarboesville School, built in 1925, served African-Americans students in southern St. Mary's County. Carver graduated its last high school class in 1966, when county schools were desegregated. It became an integrated elementary school and then a community center. It is located in South Hampton (formerly Carver Heights) a housing development built in the 1940s exclusively for African-American civilian and military employees of the Patuxent River Naval Air Station. Next to the school is the old United Service Organization Hall which served as the community's social center. View from the street.



- 10 African-American Monument**
(Corner of Route 235 & Taliga Place)
21744 South Coral Dr.
Lexington Park, MD 20653
301-737-5447 www.ucaonline.org

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.

HISTORY

St. Mary's County
Welcome Center

The African-American presence in St. Mary's County began in 1634 with the arrival of mulatto indentured servant Mathias de Sousa. He was as one of the original 140 colonists who founded Maryland.

Slavery was introduced soon after. The Sotterley Plantation located in Hollywood, Maryland, depicts this era and is the site of a rare original slave cabin that provides a glimpse into the lives of African-Americans who worked the plantation both pre and post Civil War. While whites in the county aligned themselves with the Confederacy during the war, over 500 African Americans joined the Union Army and William H. Barnes and James H. Harris earned the Congressional Medal of Honor for their bravery.

From July 1863, until May 1865, United States Colored Troops units rotated from the front to serve as guards at the Point Lookout hospital complex and prisoner of war camp for Confederate soldiers. Instances of brutality or kindness are documented, depending on the nature of the relationships of the imprisoned masters with their former slaves prior to the war.

African Americans achieved a great deal through educational and religious institutions. Education was vital to the success of those who remained in the county after the war. Segregated one and two room schools such as the Drayden School were established for "colored" children in the 1870s with the help of the Freedmen's Bureau. The first Catholic school for African-American children opened its doors in 1886 at the Knights of St. Jerome's Hall in Dameron. The site of Cardinal Gibbons Institute, the first black Catholic high school, is marked with a memorial in its honor. African-American protestant churches date back as far as 1813. The rich histories of these churches tell of camp meetings, revivals and gala homecomings.

Benjamin Bancker School and George Washington Carver School, formerly Jarboesville School, provided the first opportunities for African Americans to attend public high school in the county. Brown vs. the Board of Education in 1954, set the legal stage for desegregation, but it was not until 1967 that the county schools were fully desegregated. The African-American Monument with its surrounding pedestals tells the story of the contributions of African Americans to the history and development of the county. This story embraces the proud heritage of African Americans in St. Mary's County.