

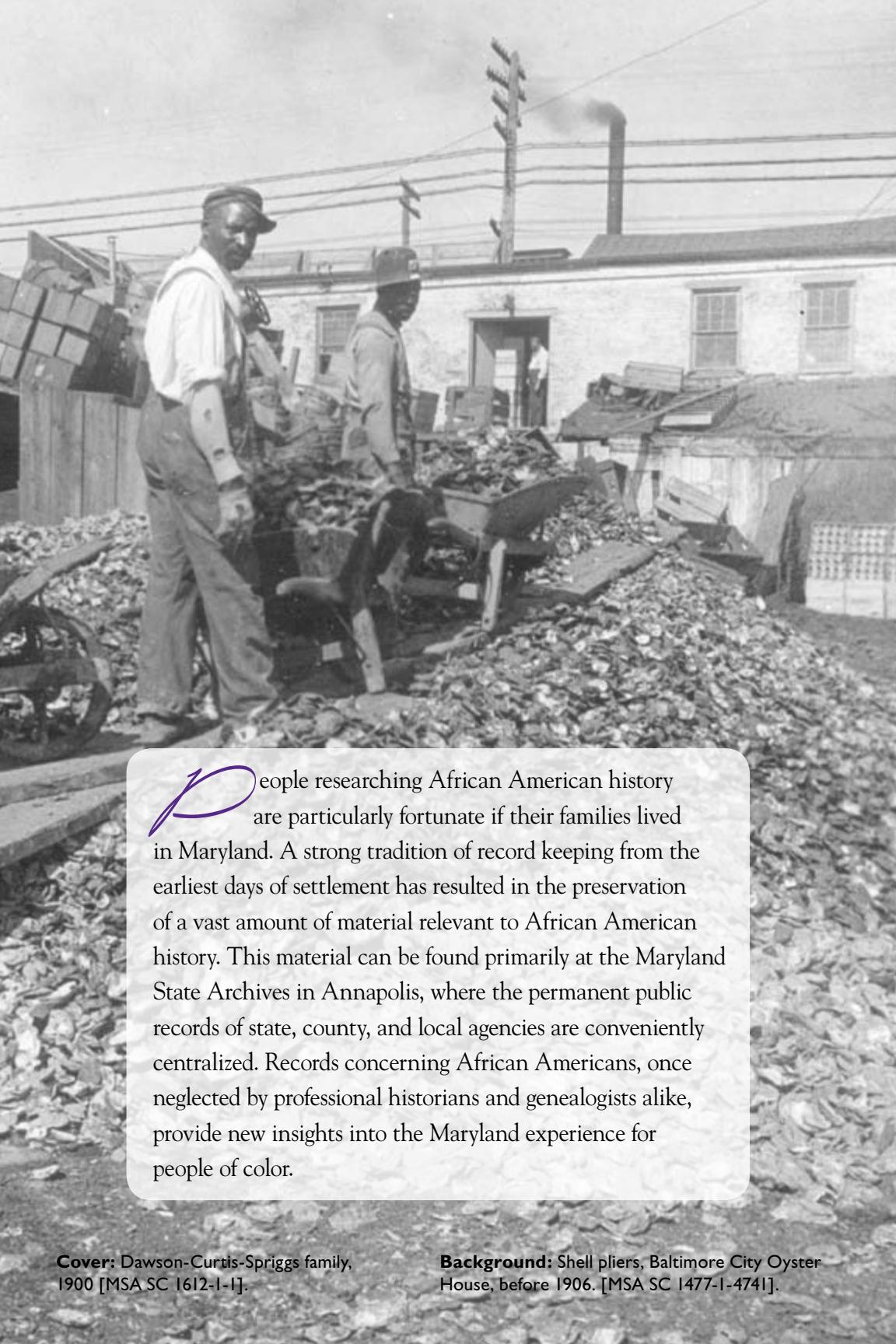
RESEARCHING

# African American *Families*

AT THE MARYLAND STATE ARCHIVES



BY PHEBE R. JACOBSEN & MARYLAND STATE ARCHIVES



People researching African American history are particularly fortunate if their families lived in Maryland. A strong tradition of record keeping from the earliest days of settlement has resulted in the preservation of a vast amount of material relevant to African American history. This material can be found primarily at the Maryland State Archives in Annapolis, where the permanent public records of state, county, and local agencies are conveniently centralized. Records concerning African Americans, once neglected by professional historians and genealogists alike, provide new insights into the Maryland experience for people of color.

**Cover:** Dawson-Curtis-Spriggs family, 1900 [MSA SC 1612-1-1].

**Background:** Shell pliers, Baltimore City Oyster House, before 1906. [MSA SC 1477-1-4741].

## HOW TO BEGIN

The genealogy of an African American family begins in the same manner as with a family of any race. Start with your immediate family and go backwards in your search, generation by generation, being certain at every step to document all written proof of family relationships discovered. Write down or record remembrances of older relatives. Even if no written record exists, oral tradition may provide valuable clues for continuing your search. Be sure, specifically, to document the source of all of your information as you find it.

Manumission of Molly Gibbs, formerly called Poll,  
slave of Elizabeth Bordley, Anne Arundel County,  
1789 [MSA C111-1-2].

## NAMES

African Americans, for the most part, will use the same records as anyone else searching their family history. These records include probate (estate settlement) records, land records, military records, court records, federal records, and church records. Most people have accepted the tradition that enslaved people, when freed, took the surname of their former owner. But an examination of Maryland slave statistics, manumissions, and other records shows that blacks took surnames the same way whites had in earlier generations. Some freed slaves assumed the name of a respected white family, a beloved clergyman, or an admired black leader; others took a name from their trade, from a physical trait, or from a geographical

Molly Gibbs  
from  
Beale Bordley  
Manumission  
No. 3<sup>d</sup> day of December 1789  
above recorded, same day record-  
ed in Liber A.M.A.S. folio  
of One of Ann Arundel  
County Land record books

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Mr. Nich Harwood Jr.

BE IT KNOWN, That at the Instance  
of my deceased Sister, Elizabeth Bordley, late of  
Annapolis, I her Devisee, and Executor of her last  
Will and Testament, have manumitted, released and  
set Free, and hereby do manumit, release, and for  
ever set Free, her late Negro, called Poll, her Sister's Servant,  
and all her Children  
(who has assumed the Name of Molly Gibbs)

) from the State of Slavery in  
which ~~they~~ have been held hitherto under the Laws of the  
Country; and with Wishes that by honest Industry  
~~they~~ may thrive and preserve a good Name, I have  
hereunto set my Hand and Seal, this first Day of  
December, 1789.

Signed, sealed and delivered, *Beale Bordley*  
in Presence of us  
*Walter Dulany*  
*H.W. Brown*

feature where they lived. At times, you also see names derived from Ancient Greek and Roman works, or those found in the Bible. Only in rare instances are names of African origin found. Sometimes, if a white owner acknowledged a relationship to the person freed or if a free black man purchased his enslaved wife and children so that he could manumit them, the surname of the father, either white or black, was retained. It is important, however, that the researcher not assume that a white family bearing the same surname as a free black one was the family that had formerly held that person, or his ancestor, in bondage. This ambiguity, unfortunately, makes the search for enslaved ancestors far more difficult. But, in many cases, information can be gathered with patience, time, and disciplined effort.

## RECORDS RELATING EXCLUSIVELY TO AFRICAN AMERICANS

There are some records that relate specifically to African American Marylanders that will be of particular interest and value. Six series, or types, of records bear specifically on the lives of Maryland African Americans. They are: Manumissions, Certificates of Freedom, the Census of 1832, Slave Statistics, Military Records (including those for the United States Colored Troops), and Certificates of Slaves. Manumissions and Certificates of Freedom exist for almost every Maryland county established prior to 1864, including Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Caroline, Carroll, Cecil, Charles, Dorchester, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Kent, Prince George's, Queen Anne's, Somerset, Talbot, St. Mary's, and Washington Counties, and Baltimore City. Military records encompass soldiers from all areas of the state. The other record series are available for only some Maryland counties.

### a) *Manumissions*

A manumission is the legal document freeing an enslaved person by an act of their owner. Between 1752 and 1796, manumissions could only be accomplished by deed, so manumissions were recorded in the county land records. Some manumissions can be found in court documents called chattel records. By the end of the eighteenth century, certain counties, like Anne Arundel, Dorchester, and Queen Anne's, kept manumissions in separate books. Except for the period 1752–1796, manumissions also could be made by will and may be found in the probate record series.



2017 forensic artist depiction of Lot Bell, slave of Silbey Bell, created from her 1816 certificate of freedom.

Excerpt from Lot Bell's certificate of freedom  
[MSA C 478-1-37].

The image shows a close-up of a handwritten document. The text is in cursive script and appears to be a physical copy of the certificate mentioned in the caption. The handwriting is somewhat faded and illegible in parts, particularly the first few lines. The visible text describes a woman with dark complexion, long face, and high cheekbones. It mentions a mark on her head and a mulberry on her left side.

### **b) Certificates of Freedom**

Certificates of freedom were first issued in 1806. The legislature passed a law (Chapter 66, Laws of Maryland 1805) that required all free blacks to register at the county court, certifying by what means they were freed and recording physical characteristics such as height, color of eyes, complexion, and hair so that each free black person could be identified by a certificate with a matching description. These certificates were generally recorded in a separate record series. Some can be found with manumissions, however, and a few will be found among the county land records.

Please note that, in order to maximize accessibility of these essential records, the Maryland State Archives Legacy of Slavery Program staff has digitized and inventoried all 111 manumission and certificates of freedom record series. These scanned images can be accessed online through the Guide to Government Records (<http://guide.msa.maryland.gov/pages/index.aspx>), and the searchable online database found on the Legacy of Slavery Program website at: <http://slavery2.msa.maryland.gov/pages/Search.aspx>. These documents include names of enslaved and free African Americans, slave holders, counties of residence, and physical descriptions of the recipients.

### **c) Census**

Since 1790, the federal government has taken a census of the population of the United States every ten years. Enslaved and free blacks were included in the census to varying degrees throughout slavery's existence. The census records for 1790, 1800, 1810, and 1820 give a numerical figure for the number of enslaved people in each household. The censuses for 1830 and 1840 only list the head of household by name. There are numerical values recorded for the number of individuals who fall under specific demographic categories (ex. Free Female 10-23 years old, Slave Male 36-54 years old). The population schedules of the U.S. Census for 1850 and 1860 list the name of each person in a given household. The census for

these years also lists personal information about the individuals, including but not limited to: gender, race, value of property, and occupation. The slave schedules of the U.S. Census for 1850 and 1860 list the names of slaveholders and the number of slaves in their possession in county districts in the state. Most census takers did not record slaves in a cumulative fashion; rather each slave was counted with the number (1). The gender, age, and race of the slaves were recorded, but the names of the individual slaves were not. The census of 1870 was the first census taken after the Civil War and was the first to list all African Americans. The Legacy of Slavery Program staff has abstracted information from federal census records from Maryland for the period 1776 through 1880, with particular focus on the period 1830 to 1880. These records were stripped to identify all households with free blacks, enslaved people, and mulatto individuals. The results can be found in a searchable online database accessible on the Legacy of Slavery Program website at: <http://slavery2.msa.maryland.gov/pages/Search.aspx>.

### ***Census of Negroes (1832) and the Maryland Colonization Society***

In 1832, the General Assembly authorized a census (Chapter 281, Laws of Maryland 1831) to aid in the effort to resettle recently freed slaves and other free blacks in Liberia. The Maryland State Archives has schedules for the Census of 1832 for Harford, Talbot, and Somerset counties, while the Maryland Historical Society in Baltimore holds microfilm of all other counties except Baltimore and Baltimore City. Abstracts of Allegany, Anne Arundel, Calvert, Caroline, Cecil, Charles, Dorchester, Frederick, Kent, Montgomery, Queen Anne's, and St. Mary's Counties are available in the Maryland State Archives Library. The schedules give the name of each free black and the person's age, but each county arranged its census differently. The Harford County census groups free blacks by household and then lists the name and age of each family member. The Somerset County census is really two lists:

Continued				
William Johnson	1	3	248	
John Henry Johnson	2	1	349	
Thomas Myers	3	1	719	
William Bass	1	1	65	731
Mary Jones		1	43	732
Thosan Jones		1	13	733
Elizabeth Jones		1	10	734
William Jones	5	1	12	735
Asaac Holland	1	1	52	736
Henry Holland		1	43	737
Parry Holland		1	26	738
Doffy Holland		1	10	739
Tammy Rose		1	25	740
Paris Holland		1	16	741
Asaac Holland	7	1	16	742
John Holland		1	27	743
Peter Lambdin	1	1	38	744
Elizabeth Lambdin		1	35	745
Richard Lambdin		1	19	746
William Lambdin		1	14	747
Solomon Lambdin		1	12	748
Marrison Lambdin		1	9	749
Elizabeth Lambdin		1	8	750
Alexander Lambdin		1	6	751
Robert Henry Lambdin	9	1	3	752
Stephen Roberts	1	1	37	753
Maria Roberts	2		13	754
Noah Bayley	1	1	30	755
Renta Bayley		1	25	756
Louiza Bayley		1	7	757
Sarah Ann Bayley		1	5	758
Noah Bayley		1	3	759
Stephen Bayley	4	1	1	760
Bethly Brown		1	16	761

Census of free blacks in Talbot County, compiled by the Talbot County sheriff in 1832 [MSA C1841-I-24].

one of the names and ages of free males and one of the names and ages of free females. The Anne Arundel census lists the head of household, the number of family members, the number of males and females, their ages, and the number willing to go to Liberia.

The colonization movement in the United States was encouraged by some abolitionists, as well as slave owners. In Maryland, colonization was seen as a means of curtailing the growing free black population. The Maryland State Colonization Society was a former auxiliary of the American Colonization Society (ACS) that recruited free and manumitted black Marylanders to settle in Liberia. From 1832 to 1861, the Maryland State Colonization Society was largely supported by appropriations from

the Maryland General Assembly. Colonization was common ground upon which both slavery supporters and opponents agreed. Many whites who felt that slavery was immoral believed that emigration from the United States was the only way that free blacks could escape racial prejudice and attain civil rights. During the decades of the colonization movement, while relatively few Maryland blacks actually sailed to Africa, a Maryland District was created in Liberia. Despite attempts at colonization, Maryland maintained the largest free black population in the United States during the antebellum period. For more information on the Maryland Colonization Society, please see the Legacy of Slavery Program online at: <http://slavery.msa.maryland.gov/html/casestudies/mscscountycs.html> which includes brief biographies of some of the Maryland emigrants to Liberia, as well as links to the digitized collection of the Maryland Colonization Society Papers [MSA SC 5977].

#### d) Slave Statistics

Because Maryland remained in the Union during the Civil War, despite the divided loyalties of her people, Lincoln's emancipation proclamation did not free Maryland slaves. Instead, a new state constitution, enacted by Unionists in 1864, provided for their freedom on November 1 of that year. Hoping that the federal government would repay the state's loyalty and compensate its citizens for the "chattel" lost, the General Assembly ordered that a listing be made of all slave owners and their slaves as of November 1, 1864 (Chapter 189, Laws of Maryland 1867). The federal government never compensated the owners, but these records, called slave statistics, are the only evidence available of slaves and owners at the time of state emancipation. In addition to the names of owners and slaves, the lists also give the age of each black and his or her physical condition. Schedules also indicate those slaves who enlisted in the Union Army. Slaves statistics survive at the Archives for Anne Arundel, Carroll, Dorchester, Frederick, Howard, Kent, Montgomery, Prince George's, and St. Mary's Counties.

### e) Military Records

Blacks served in Maryland units during the Revolutionary War, especially after 1780 when both free blacks and slaves were eligible for enlistment, but proof of service is difficult to document. Muster rolls frequently fail to indicate race, although sometimes the word "Negro" or "mulatto" appears after a soldier's name. Pension records for Maryland blacks, unlike those for white soldiers, are virtually non-existent. After 1793, enrollment in Maryland militia units was restricted to whites. Nevertheless, not only did African Americans fight in the defense of Baltimore in 1814, they participated in all wars in which Marylanders fought.

But it was during the Civil War that the role of black Marylanders was first heralded and officially recognized in the public record. State muster rolls and federal pension files provide rich details, such as the soldier's name, rank, age, slave owner's name, disability, family relationships, and status as enslaved, free, or runaway. Six regiments of blacks enlisted from Maryland as part of the United States Colored Troops (USCT: the 4th, 7th, 9th, 19th, 30th, and 39th). During the first years of the war, Maryland blacks who escaped from their owners to join the federal army were usually returned to their owners or incarcerated as "runaways." But, by July 1863, despite the protests of Maryland's governor and slave-owning Unionists, the federal government began actively recruit-

ing slaves as well as freemen. A compromise was finally legislated whereby the owner of an enlisted slave, who immediately recorded the manumission of the slave, would receive \$100 from the federal government [Chapter 13 -14, Thirty-Eighth U.S. Congress, Session I, 1864].

Although there was a rush to enroll during mid-1863, enthusiasm among blacks for enlistment dwindled later in the war. Nonetheless, black regiments mustered at Camp Stanton in Benedict and in Baltimore served with distinction in the campaigns in the last years of the Civil War and in the southern states after General Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House, Virginia. Some regiments were mustered out at Brownsville, Texas at the end of the war, and veterans then may have joined federal units on the frontier. Many original muster in and descriptive rolls are among the collections at the Maryland State Archives. These give the name of the soldier, his age, height, color of hair and eyes, complexion, place of birth, dates of enlistment and discharge, and record of service. Records of the Maryland Adjutant General show that blacks also served in cavalry and artillery units and were sometimes transferred to the Federal Navy. It is important to note that some blacks who enlisted in Maryland military units came from southern states, and the bound muster rolls do include men from out-of-state who served in Maryland units. However, they do

Record compiled in 1867 of slaves freed by the State Constitution of 1864, Montgomery County [MSA C1140-1].

RECORD OF SLAVES IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY.				
NAME OF PERSON	RACE OF SLAVE	AGE	SEX	PREVIOUS CONDITION
John Ross	Black	years 25	Male	Slave
	Light Black	" 26		-
Black	" 27			
John Ross	Black	years 28	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 29	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 30	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 31	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 32	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 33	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 34	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 35	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 36	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 37	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 38	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 39	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 40	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 41	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 42	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 43	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 44	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 45	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 46	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 47	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 48	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 49	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 50	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 51	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 52	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 53	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 54	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 55	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 56	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 57	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 58	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 59	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 60	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 61	Male	Slave
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John Ross	Black	years 63	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 64	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 65	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 66	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 67	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 68	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 69	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 70	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 71	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 72	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 73	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 74	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 75	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 76	Male	Slave
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John Ross	Black	years 84	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 85	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 86	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 87	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 88	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 89	Male	Slave
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John Ross	Black	years 109	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 110	Male	Slave
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John Ross	Black	years 146	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 147	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 148	Male	Slave
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John Ross	Black	years 308	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 309	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 310	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 311	Male	Slave
John Ross	Black	years 312	Male	Slave

not include Marylanders serving in the units of other states because Maryland did not owe those soldiers bounty with the exception of the United States Colored Troops. The bound muster rolls list all black Maryland soldiers, regardless of where they served.

For a selection of online biographies of USCT soldiers, as well as digital images of the U.S. Colored Troops Pension File Collection [MSA SC 4126], please see the Legacy of Slavery Program website at: <http://slavery.msa.maryland.gov/html/casestudies/usct.html>. Original pension records for Union service in the Civil War are found at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. One must know the regiment and company to which the black soldier, sailor, artilleryman, or cavalry man belonged before the pension record can be located.

In 1898, the Maryland General Assembly ordered publication of the service records of all who fought for the Union in the Civil War. A two-volume publication entitled *History of the Maryland Volunteers, 1861-1865* resulted, and is available as part of the Archives of Maryland Online at <http://aomol.msa.maryland.gov/html/military.html>. Soldiers are listed by regiment and company, with dates of enlistment and discharge. A history of each regiment precedes the schedules of officers and men belonging to it. This information can be used to help find pension records.

Civil War record groups also include bounty records. These consist of records kept by the Maryland Comptroller of the Treasury relating

The Bounty Roll of slaves who with the permission of their owner enlisted in the Union Army's U.S. Colored Troops during the Civil War, Kent County, ca. 1863 [MSA S629-1-5].

	Negro's Name	Date of Birth	Date of Discharge	Owner
	Owner's Name			Date of Payment to Owner
15	Hornbeck Edward			Mrs. Robinson
16	Nichols Frederick			Mrs. Rose Parsons
17	Salter Samuel			Thomas Ringgold
18	Wagstaff Lewis			Sam'l H. Morris
19	Ziggyman Samuel			Charles Mitchell
20	Brown Upton			Samuel Conage
21	Brown William			Col. Morris
22	Benjamin Benjamin			James T. Nichols
23	Davis Leti			Fay Maxwell
24	Miller Joseph			Pro'f. Curby
25	Murray Adam			Master Boyd
26	Murray Keary			Elijah Wilson
27	Phillips James			Agnes Brown
28	Plecey James R.			Alexander Harper
29	Purnell James			William Welsh
30	Ringsgold Frederick			James Hale
31	Thompson Samuel A.			George Holliday
32	Thompson Wm. H.			Henry Casner
33	Warren John			Samuel Johnson
34	Wilson Thomas G.			Thomas Scarry
35	Anthony W. H.			Dudgeon Bhamius
36	Weston James W.			Robert Gandy
37	Blake Alexander			James Richards
38	Cooper Peter			George Gracie
39	Harvard Oscar H.			Ab'l. Garrison
40	Henton Amos			Samuel Woodland



Company of the 4th USCT [MSA SC 2432-I-12].

to bounty payments made by the counties and the state to individual enlistees [Chapter 15, Laws of Maryland 1864]. Bounty records include twenty-two paper-bound booklets entitled Comptroller of the Treasury (Bounty Rolls), one for each county. The name of the slave appears beside that of his master, and the regiment in which the slave enlisted is also generally given, as well as the date of bounty payments made to the slave and to the owner. Although all counties are represented, there is no index to the contents of the volumes.

#### f) Assessment Records, Slaves

A series of records pertinent to those interested in researching Frederick, Kent, Montgomery, St. Mary's, and Talbot County families consists of the tax assessment records for slaves. Slave-holders prepared these assessment records for the years 1804 through 1864 to be included in returns made to the assessor for personal property. The certificates include the owner's name, the slave's name, and the age and value of the enslaved person. Slaves were often leased out to farms, companies, or individuals needing additional labor, and this information can also be found on some certificates.

In addition to these record series that specifically relate to people of color, it must be repeated that virtually every other record series in the Maryland Archives may be a resource for African American genealogy. Some of the most important record series are described below.

#### PROBATE RECORDS

Few free blacks had sufficient property to make wills during the period of slavery. Some men, like John Wheeler and Smith Price, both of Annapolis, accumulated money and property during their lifetimes and wrote wills to direct how their assets were to be distributed after they died. Also, some women, like Mary Johnson in seventeenth-century Somerset County, recorded wills that bequeathed cattle "and their increase" to future generations. Items like parcels of property, household items and furniture, industrial tools, livestock, and, of course, chattel slaves, were all bequeathed to future generations. Generally, African Americans should explore the inventories of estates of slave-owning whites to look for their ancestors kept in bondage. If an ancestor can be traced back to enslavement, and the name of the owner can be determined, the names of the enslaved may be followed in the wills and inventories of the slave-owning family's estate.

Name in Full	Town or P. O.	Month	Day	Y. M. D.	Native of	Occupation
Earl Ruth Johnson	Bethesda	On Oct	27	2 27 1898	Calvert Co	
Case of Death	Primary Immediate	Male White Married Widow Divorced		Age		
		Female Colored Single Widower No. of children living		Husband of		
	Father's Name			Wife		
	Sue Johnson			Mother's Name		
	Remittent Fever	How long sick	10 days	Reported by	Annie Johnson	
	Typhoid Feaver	Ambient, Native, Household		Address	John S. Orey, M.D.	
Name in Full	Town or P. O.	Month	Day	Y. M. D.	Native of	Occupation
Irving Dorrestier	Devon	On Sept	10	2 10 1898	Maryland	Laborer
Case of Death	Primary Immediate	Male White Married Widow Divorced		Age		
		Female Colored Single Widower No. of children living		Husband of		
	Father's Name			Wife		
	Don't know			Mother's Name		
	Typhoid Fever	How long sick	3 weeks	Reported by	Martha Estep	
	Hemorrhage & Convulsions	Ambient, Native, Household		Address	B. A. Carr, M.D.	
Name in Full	Town or P. O.	Month	Day	Y. M. D.	Native of	Occupation
Emory Brown	Comus	On Oct	5	2 5 1898	Calvert Co	Oysterman
Case of Death	Primary Immediate	Male White Married Widow Divorced		Age		
		Female Colored Single Widower No. of children living		Husband of		
	Father's Name			Wife		
	Emory Brown			Mother's Name		
	Salmonellosis of lungs	How long sick	1 year	Reported by	J. W. King, M.D.	
	Ambient, Native, Household	Ambient, Native, Household		Address	Adeline	

Calvert County death register, 1899 [MSA C453-1-7].

The inventories of personal property owned by slave owners generally list slaves by first name only, followed by the age and value of each. Slaves are sometimes entered in family groups, and the names and ages of the enslaved, in addition to their implied family relationships, can provide valuable clues to the identity of persons who appear in later records as free persons. Probate records can be found in the Guide to Government Records on the Archives' website (<http://guide.msa.maryland.gov/pages/index.aspx>) and some digitized materials can also be located on the Family Search website under the Maryland Register of Wills Records, 1629-1999, Collection.

## LAND RECORDS

Land records can also be useful for tracing African American families, because all land transactions were recorded throughout the state from the beginning of colonization until the present day. After freedom, anyone who had the resources could purchase or lease property. Property was assessed and taxes were paid, so the assessment records, as well as land records, for each county are a rich source of genealogical information. Prior to emancipation, slave owners were assessed for the number

of enslaved people they owned. Moreover, since all freemen paid taxes, the names of free blacks also appear on assessment lists. As a result, assessments can provide important information on both free and enslaved blacks. The Archives has an unparalleled digital collection of Maryland land records which can be searched online at:  
<https://mdlandrec.net/main/>

## COURT RECORDS

Court records can also be useful for the family history researcher. Disputes over ownership of slaves and petitions for freedom made by blacks are found among cases tried in the Provincial Court and in the county courts. The largest number of these cases involving petitions for freedom occurred during the first two decades after the American Revolution. In order to find these cases, one must use court dockets, which often are unindexed. Cases pertaining to African Americans appearing in county and state court records vary widely in content and detail. Equity and Chancery Court cases are usually the most promising for yielding information on family relationships, as these cases pertain to financial matters rather than to criminal or civil law.

## VITAL RECORDS

It is particularly important in tracing African American ancestry to use not only federal census records, but also to make use of vital records, including birth, death, and marriage, kept by the state and the counties in Maryland. In 1865, each county was authorized to keep a record of all births and deaths. Unfortunately, these records were kept by only a few of the county clerks, and for only a few years. Ten years later, however, Baltimore City began recording vital records—births and deaths—in the city. In 1898, the state again required the counties to keep a record of all births and deaths. These records are now kept by the Division of Vital Records at the Department of Health.

Vital records provide valuable information for the researcher. In the case of birth records, the name of the child is given, as well as names of parents, place of birth, occupation of father, and number of children of the mother. The Archives can provide copies of birth records

for the year 1924 and prior, while the Division of Vital Records must supply certificates from 1925 forward. A death certificate gives parents' names, the deceased's birthplace, parents' birthplace, marital status, person giving the information, cause of death, and place of burial. The Archives has copies of death records up through 2007; certificates after that year must be obtained from the Division of Vital Records.

Marriage records were kept by the state beginning in 1777. Although, generally, these were only records of licenses issued to white couples, it is possible to find marriage records for people of color during this time period, particularly for Baltimore and Anne Arundel Counties. After the Civil War, marriage licenses were routinely issued to blacks. Not until 1851 in Baltimore City and 1865 in the counties did the marriage license require more than the names of the bride and groom. Therefore, even if a license is found it may have little information of

Class list of black males, Salem Station M.E. Church, Annapolis, ca. 1831 [MSA SCM725-21].

M. #	Coloured Male Clap	When Admitte	When Removed	Opinion	Proposed	Remarks
1	Henry Price					
	Henry Matthews					
	Markus Johnson					
	Samuel Johnson					
5	Charles Bullock					
	Jacob Matthews					
	Henry Hemmings					
	Wesby Miller					
	Asbury Miller					
10	William Samuel					
	Henry Barns					
	James Stewart					
	Luke Johnson					
	Paul Johnson					
5	Nathaniel Puffey					
	Henry Burkins					
	Henry Washington					
16 23	John Johnson	Adm in 1833				
33	Benjamin Lontier					
July 23 36	Aaron Johnson					
	Elaine Clark					
	Hannah Richardson					

genealogical interest except the names of the prospective bride and groom. The Archives has copies of marriage records up through 2004; for certificates issued in 2005 and later, please contact the circuit court in the county in which the marriage took place.

## CHURCH RECORDS

Church records are a good source to supplement government records when performing family history research. Few churches prior to 1864 had exclusively black congregations, although Sharpe Street and Bethel churches in Baltimore were exceptions. African Americans usually worshipped in the church of their owners, and, if records were kept of their baptisms, deaths, or marriages, they would be found among the records of these churches along with records of the white parishioners. Episcopal and Catholic parishes throughout Maryland, such as St. Paul's Baden in Prince George's, St. Peter's in Cambridge, and the early Catholic cathedral records in Baltimore, have many entries in their records for African American members. Methodist records also list black members of their congregations on class lists until the 1830s. Generally, information on African Americans in the records of predominantly white churches is scattered and incomplete, but still worth pursuing, particularly if government record sources have been exhausted. After the Civil War, the number of black churches in Maryland increased. The records of some of these churches have been preserved on microfilm by the Archives and are maintained in Special Collections. Researchers should consult the Guide to Special Collections for the most up-to-date listing of donated church records at <http://speccol.msa.maryland.gov/pages/speccol/index.aspx>. Records of Sharpe Street United Methodist Church and Bethel A.M.E. Church, as well as those of St. Francis Xavier Roman Catholic Church, constitute the Archives' largest holdings of African American church records. Bethel records began about 1815, those for Sharpe Street about ten years later, and the records of St. Francis Xavier in 1871.

**ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS REWARD.**  
—Ran away from the subscriber on the night of the 21st instant, my NEGRO GIRL CINDERELLA, about 22 or 24 years of age, very pleasant when spoken to, of a light yellow complexion, and about 4 feet 5 or 6 inches high; took with her a variety of clothing. She has a husband living in Baltimore by the name of Abram Brogdon, who is supposed to have taken her away from home. I will give \$75 for her arrest so that I get her again, or \$100 if taken out of the State.  
**EDWARD H. BROWN,**  
Overseer for Geo. F. Worthington,  
Address Brotherton Post-Office, Anne Arundel co.,  
Md. d23-81.\*

Runaway advertisement for Cinderella Brogdon, Anne Arundel County [*Baltimore Sun*, December 23, 1848].

## NEWSPAPERS: RUNAWAY SLAVE ADS

Advertisements were routinely placed by owners and overseers in county and municipal newspapers which, among other facts, noted the escape date and location, enslaved individual's name and physical description, and reward amount for the runaway's capture and return. The advertisements also occasionally note familial connections by providing potential names and locations of kin with whom the runaway might seek shelter.

## COMMITTAL NOTICES

Committal notices were placed in newspapers by local law enforcement officials. These advertisements typically listed individuals who had been picked up and were being held in the local jail until claimed. The assumption of these notices is that the individual might be a runaway and that an owner would come to retrieve their property upon reading the advertisement. Committal notices often list the name, physical description, and reported status of the individual (whether he/she claimed to be free or owned by someone).

## DOMESTIC TRAFFIC/NOTICES OF SALE

Domestic traffic advertisements are notices of sale of slaves or, conversely, listings by those seeking to purchase slaves. These ads are typically more general, listing numbers of individuals for sale and attributes such as age, sex, and type of work recommended. To search over 12,000 examples of newspaper ads related to slavery from across the state of Maryland, please see the Legacy of Slavery in Maryland website.

## SUMMARY

This overview by no means covers all records of use to genealogists investigating African American families. Virtually every activity considered worthy of recordation by state or county government contains information on its citizens, including free and enslaved blacks. After exhausting the records discussed above, the researcher can turn to other series, including indentures, bills of sale, coroners' records, mechanics liens, voting records, poll books, chattel records, and newspapers. All records are available for free, public use in the search room at Maryland State Archives, 350 Rowe Blvd., Annapolis, Maryland. The catalogs for all of our collections, both government records and special collections, are available online at msa.maryland.gov. Review the series list in our Guide to Government Records and Special Collections finding aids for each county, agency, and family name that you are researching and go through the contents carefully. If you cannot understand a title, ask an archivist to explain the series to you by phone, email, or in person. You should also be sure to take advantage of the published work of the Legacy of Slavery Program online. The staff of the Maryland State Archives is always ready to help you in your research.

*Have patience and find your roots!*

*African American servicemen in parade marching past Capitol Theater on West Street in Annapolis, 1953 [MSA SC 2140-1-426].*



## THE STUDY OF THE LEGACY OF SLAVERY IN MARYLAND PROGRAM

### Research Department of the Maryland State Archives

The Legacy of Slavery Program in the Maryland State Archives' Research, Education and Outreach Department is devoted to the study of the contributions, influences, triumphs, and struggles of black Marylanders from 1634 to the present. From the resistance to bondage in Maryland's early years to the complicated workings of the Underground Railroad to modern-day examples of racial inequality in our society, the Legacy of Slavery Program examines every facet of this history. The mission of the program is to uncover untold stories of individuals and honor the lives of those Marylanders who have remained hidden for many years.

Since 2001, grants from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of Education, National Historical Publications and Records Commission, Four Rivers Heritage Area, City of Annapolis, City of Bowie, the Dominion Foundation, Maryland Heritage Area Authority, and the Friends of the Maryland State Archives have helped to support the division's research, along with numerous colleges, universities, and individual volunteers. The ultimate goal of this work is to make the materials related to African American history and legacy openly accessible and clearly comprehensible. Program staff identify record materials, create searchable databases, transcribe original documents, and publish model biographies to provide sample case studies on how to use these primary sources.

Close to twenty years of research conducted at the Archives has brought to light fascinating original records, such as slave owner Aaron Anthony's ledger listing the birth year of young "Frederick Augustus" (Frederick Douglass) as 1818, as well as court documents involving the owners of the slave "Minty," also known as Harriet Tubman. Staff of the Legacy of Slavery Program served as consultants to the National Park Service Harriet Tubman Discovery Center and as members of the National Park Service Network to Freedom, Frederick Douglass 200 Bicentennial, the Annapolis 1864 Commission, and the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture.

Legacy of Slavery Program staff has created and made accessible online more than 300 biographical case studies, which are enriched by digitized scans of related runaway ads, court documents, census data, and other records in the Archives' holdings. In total, over 400,000 searchable database entries are available for searching and browsing. The program has a traveling exhibit that is available for loan and staff may be requested for presentations to students, teachers, genealogists, scholars, churches, senior centers, community groups, and the general public. If you would like to help support the Legacy of Slavery in Maryland Program, please make a tax deductible donation to the Friends of the Maryland State Archives and specify that you would like your gift to support the study of African American history in Maryland.

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## TIMELINE

### *of Significant Laws and Events Relating to African American History in Maryland*

#### **FROM COLONY TO STATE, 1634-1776**

**1634** Maryland settled as a British colony under a grant made by King Charles I to Cecilius Calvert, Second Lord Baltimore. Fewer than 150 settlers arrived on the Ark and Dove. Most were Protestants and two were of African descent. One was named Francisco. The other, named Mathias de Sousa, arrived as an indentured servant to the Jesuits and worked for Father Andrew White. By 1637, de Sousa was a free man who served in the Freeman's Assembly in 1642, making him the first person of African descent to sit in a legislative assembly in the English colonies.

**1644** Thomas Cornwalleys of St. Mary's County purchased two black slaves, the first known to have been in Maryland.

**1663–1664** Maryland legalized slavery. Free white women who entered into marriage with a black slave were declared slaves for the duration of the life of their spouse. Imported Africans and their progeny were given the status of slaves for life. Maryland passed a law prohibiting marriage between white women and black men.

**1681** Maryland passed a law that children born to free black women and mixed race children of white women would be free. Prior to this law, children inherited the status of the father.

**1692** Maryland passed a law requiring white men to serve seven years of indenture for marrying or having children with a black woman. Black men who had sexual relations with white women were also penalized.

**Above:** Residents of Sherwood, Talbot County, before 1906. [MSA SC1477-1-4749].

Annapolis, Sept. 29, 1767.

J U S T I M P O R T E D,

*In the Ship LORD LIGONIER, Capt. DAVIES,  
from the River GAMBIA, in AFRICA, and to  
be sold by the Subscribers, in ANNAPOLIS, for  
Cash, or good Bills of Exchange, on Wednesday the  
7th of October next,*

**A**CARGO of CHOICE HEALTHY SLAVES.  
The said Ship will take TOBACCO to  
LONDON, on Liberty, at 6*l.* Sterling per Ton.

**X**JOHN RIDOUT,  
DANIEL of St. THOS. JENIFER.

*N. B. Any Person that will contract for a  
Quantity of Lumber, may meet with Encourage-  
ment, by applying to D. T. JENIFER.*

*Maryland Gazette, October 1, 1767 [MSA SC2311-1-12].*

**1692** Anglican (later becoming the Episcopal) Church was established as state church of Maryland. Colony administered by a governor appointed by the Crown, 1689–1715.

**1717** Marriages between white women and free black or mulatto men forbidden, and clergy who performed such marriages penalized; children of these unions required to serve for a specified number of years. In marriages between white men and black or mulatto women, the black or mulatto became a slave during life, excepting mulattoes born of white women, who for such intermarriage, became servants for seven years. Freedom of movement and activity of blacks restricted.

**1723** Constables authorized to patrol areas of each county for unauthorized meetings of blacks to prevent riots and insurrections.

**1731** November 9 Benjamin Banneker born in Ellicott City, Maryland.

**1752–1796** Manumissions no longer granted by will, but only by deed.

**1753** Benjamin Banneker designed and built one of the first wooden striking clocks in the British North American colonies.

**1760–1780s** Maryland courts began to hear petitions from enslaved blacks who claimed their freedom based on descent from white women. The freedom suits were facilitated by a court ruling that oral testimony could be accepted as evidence in such cases.

**1767** Kunta Kinte (featured in Alex Haley's *Roots*) arrived in Annapolis as part of a cargo of slaves aboard the *Lord Ligonier*.

**1774** Duties placed on importation of Negroes into Maryland.

**1775** Lord Dunmore, Virginia's royal governor, issued proclamation which promised to make any "indented [sic] Servants, Negroes, or others (appertaining to Rebels) free that are able and willing to bear Arms, they joining His Majesty's Troops as soon as may be".

**1776** Declaration of Independence signed; Jefferson's condemnation of slavery stricken from final draft by southern delegates. Maryland's first state constitution permitted voting by all men, including blacks, who met certain property qualifications.

**1776-1783** Maryland blacks served in the Maryland Line during the Revolutionary War.

**1777** Maryland Yearly Meeting directed Quakers to manumit slaves.

1777-1860 NATIONAL UNION

**1780** Free blacks and slaves accepted in Maryland militia and in maritime service.

**1783** May 15 The *Maryland Gazette* published “Vox Africanorum” anti-slavery editorial.

**1784** Slave importations no longer allowed in Maryland. Only blacks freed before 1783 could vote for sheriff and delegates to the General Assembly.

**1784** Ratification of the Treaty of Paris ending the War for Independence occurred while Congress met in Annapolis. Treaty called for slaves taken by the British to be returned to their masters.

**1784** Methodist Episcopal Church organized; strongly opposed slavery.

**1787** Some black Methodists in Baltimore and Philadelphia left the church because of discrimination and because their lack of education denied blacks the right to ordination as elders. These groups later formed the nucleus of the Sharp Street and Bethel congregations.

**1789** Anti-slavery advocates, including Charles Carroll of Carrollton, founded the Maryland Society for the Relief of Poor Negroes and Others Unlawfully Held in Bondage, which provided legal assistance to enslaved individuals seeking their freedom and also unsuccessfully petitioned the Maryland General Assembly for a gradual emancipation law.

**1789** Josiah Henson, believed to be the inspiration for "Uncle Tom" in Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, born in Charles County, Maryland.

**1791** Benjamin Banneker aided in survey of the National Capital and corresponded with Thomas Jefferson over the intellectual abilities and equality of blacks and whites. He also published the first edition of his almanac.

**1792** First black and white Catholic refugees from revolution in Haiti arrived in Baltimore.

**1793** Blacks no longer allowed in Maryland military.

**1793** Congress passed the first fugitive slave law, which allowed for prosecution of runaways and their return to their masters.

Closest known birth record of Harriet Tubman. This judgment record from the Maryland Court of Appeals states that her mother, Negro Rit, gave birth and paid the midwife \$2. [MSA S380-61-151].



Residents of Cecil County, n.d. [MSA SC 1477-I-5780].

**1796** Maryland courts declared testimony of blacks inadmissible in freedom suits and moved cases to county courts.

**1796** The Maryland General Assembly liberalized the state's manumission laws by allowing slaveholders to manumit by will.

**1802** Congregation that formed Sharp Street Methodist Episcopal Church in Baltimore bought land to build church and school.

**1802** Free blacks lost the right to vote in local and State elections.

**1805** Free blacks ordered to register with the county courts.

**1807–1808** Britain and the United States outlawed the Atlantic slave trade.

**1810** Free blacks lost the right to vote in national elections.

**1812–1815** War of 1812, the second war with Britain, fought over impressment of seamen and U.S. expansionism. Blacks aided in the defense of Baltimore during the British bombardment of Fort McHenry (September 1814) that inspired Francis Scott Key to write the "Star-Spangled Banner."

**1816** African Methodist Episcopal Church founded. "Mother" Bethel organized in Philadelphia; Bethel Church in Baltimore and an African meeting house in Annapolis, as well as other churches in Maryland, were part of the "connection." The Society for the Colonization of the Free People of Color in the United States (American Colonization Society) established in Washington by a number of prominent whites, including northerners who wanted to abolish slavery and some Marylanders and others who wanted to rid the South of free blacks by sending them to Africa.

- 1817** October 17 Abolitionist Rev. Samuel Ringgold Ward born on the Eastern Shore of Maryland.
- 1818** February 14 Frederick Douglass born in Tuckahoe, Talbot County, Maryland.
- 1822** Harriet Tubman born in Dorchester County, Maryland.
- 1825** Jews in Maryland granted the right to vote and to hold office.
- 1825** Frances Ellen Watkins Harper born in Baltimore.
- 1827** Property purchased in Baltimore City for the Colored Female Benevolent Society, one of the early beneficial societies established in the state to meet the social and economic needs of blacks.
- 1829** Oblate Sisters (Sisters of Providence) established in Baltimore; first order of black Catholics in the United States.
- 1830** Census showed Maryland's population to be 291,108 whites, 52,938 free blacks, and 102,994 slaves. Maryland had a larger number of free blacks than any state in the Union (with Anne Arundel, Charles, and Prince George's counties having the greatest number of slaves). Thirty percent of the free blacks lived in Baltimore City.
- 1831** Marylanders formed a State Colonization Society in Baltimore with the intention of relocating Maryland blacks to Liberia.
- 1831** Nat Turner rebellion in Southampton, Virginia fomented fear among slave owners of a similar rebellion in Maryland.
- 1831** Maryland legislature limited the right of manumission and attempted to regulate slaves and free blacks more closely.
- 1832** In the aftermath of the Nat Turner slave revolt, the Maryland General Assembly prohibited free blacks from entering the state, from owning firearms without county approval, and from purchasing alcohol, powder, and shot. Also, blacks could no longer hold a religious meeting unless a white minister was present.
- 1832–1850** About 1,200 Maryland blacks sailed to Liberia under the auspices of the State Colonization Society.
- 1838** Frederick Douglass fled from slavery in Baltimore using the railroad through Philadelphia and New York to reach New Bedford, Massachusetts, where he worked as a ship caulker, a trade he had learned in Maryland.
- 1845** Frederick Douglass' autobiography, *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, published.
- 1849** Harriet Tubman fled from slavery in Caroline County, Maryland, and, in the following years, returned to Maryland's Eastern Shore on numerous missions to lead enslaved individuals to freedom. Although many fled previously, the "Underground Railroad," a network of hiding places and agents for escaped slaves travelling from the South to Canada or to northern free states, functioned in Maryland between 1830 and 1860. Tubman played a major role in these efforts on Maryland's Eastern Shore.
- 1850** Congress strengthened the Fugitive Slave Law requiring individuals, even in northern states, to assist in the capture and return of runaway slaves.
- 1851** Baltimore County resident Edward Gorsuch killed by free blacks resisting the provisions of the Fugitive Slave Law, while trying to reclaim his runaways in Christiana, Pennsylvania.
- 1852** Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* published.
- 1854** The Maryland General Assembly prohibited free blacks from leaving employers before completion of their contracts, imposing penalties of fines and imprisonment.
- 1857** Chief Justice Roger Brooke Taney, a Marylander, wrote the majority (7 to 2) decision, in the Dred Scott case, deciding that slaves were not citizens of the United States under the Constitution and therefore had no right to sue in federal courts.
- 1857** Rev. Samuel Green of Dorchester County arrested for possessing a copy of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.
- 1859** October 16–18 John Brown raided Harper's Ferry, Virginia (now West Virginia), using a Maryland farm as his base, in an attempt to arouse slaves to revolt.
- 1860** The Maryland General Assembly outlawed manumission by deed or will, and also created a legal process for free blacks to renounce freedom and become slaves.

**1861–1900**

## CIVIL WAR AND INDUSTRIALIZATION

**1861** March 4 Abraham Lincoln inaugurated as first Republican president of the United States. April 9 Fort Sumter fell, and the Civil War began. April 19 Southern sympathizers rioted against federal troops passing through Baltimore on their way to Washington. Reaction against the riot strengthened Maryland's status in the Union, which Governor Hicks had sworn to protect.

**1861** June 1 Chief Justice Taney ruled in Ex Parte Merryman that the president of the United States had no right to suspend the writ of habeas corpus. Throughout the war, Maryland, a border state with divided loyalties, remained in the Union.

**1863** January 1 Emancipation Proclamation freed slaves in rebelling states but did not apply to Maryland slaves, as Maryland remained in the Union. Federal government recruited free blacks and slaves for the U.S. Colored Troops.

**1864** November 1 Third Constitution of Maryland went into effect and freed all slaves within the state as of that date. Maryland was the first border state to grant freedom to its enslaved population.

**1865** April 8 General Robert E. Lee surrendered the Army of Northern Virginia to General Ulysses S. Grant.

**1865** April 14 President Abraham Lincoln assassinated.

**1865** Reconstruction began in the southern states.

**1865** 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution ratified abolishing slavery in all states.

**1865** Bowie State University founded as a teaching school by the Baltimore Association for the Moral and Educational Improvement of Colored People.

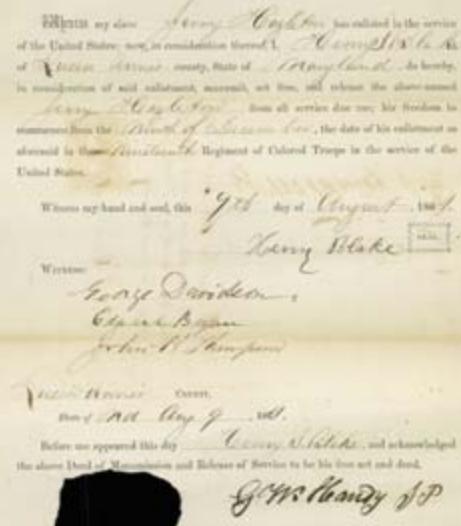
**1867** Morgan State College in Baltimore chartered as Centenary Biblical Institute by the Methodist Episcopal Church.

**1867** October 13 Federal courts struck down the practice of apprenticeships of black children, ruling that they were essentially involuntary servitude (*In re Turner*, 24 F. Cas. 337 D. Md., 1867).

**1868** July 9 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution ratified, granting citizenship to all male inhabitants of the U.S., excluding native Americans. Maryland does not ratify until 1959.

**1868** Maryland law passed renewing tax for public education. Taxes from blacks to be used for black schools. Public schools for blacks established in some counties.

### DEED OF MANUMISSION AND RELEASE OF SERVICE



Deed of manumission and release for enslaved, Jerry Hazleton, who enlisted in the United States Colored Troops, 1864 [MSA C2512-1-20].

**1870** 15th Amendment granting suffrage to blacks ratified. Maryland failed to ratify the amendment until 1973.

**1870** First black voting in Maryland since 1810 took place in local elections held in Towson, Baltimore County.

**1873** Supreme Court differentiated between state and national citizenship in the "Slaughterhouse" cases. Court held that the 14th Amendment only applied to federal citizenship.

**1873** William Butler elected as Annapolis Alderman, the first elected black official in Maryland.

**1874** Boxer Joe "Old Master" Gans born in Baltimore. Gans considered to be the greatest lightweight boxer of all time.

**1875** Congress passed Civil Rights Act, declaring equal rights in public accommodations.

**1880** February 10 Colored Equal Rights League formed in Baltimore to get black teachers for black schools, admission of black lawyers to the bar, and inclusion of blacks on juries.

**1883** Supreme Court held that the federal government could only protect political rights of citizens; effectively nullified Civil Rights Act of 1875.



Picking crabs for market, before 1906 [MSA SC 1477-1-4752].

**1886** University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) founded.

**1887** Ragtime pianist and composer Eubie Blake born to formerly enslaved parents in Baltimore.

**1888** Maryland Colored Industrial Fair organized in Baltimore.

**1890** Harry S. Cummings elected to the Baltimore City Council, the first elected black official in Baltimore.

**1892** The *Baltimore Afro-American* newspaper founded by William Murphy.

**1894** Provident Hospital established in Baltimore by leading black physicians.

**1896** Supreme Court in *Plessy v. Ferguson* upheld a Louisiana law requiring “separate but equal” segregated facilities and accommodations.

#### EARLY 20TH CENTURY AND BEYOND

**1900** Coppin State University founded.

**1904** Maryland legislature passed the Poe Amendment to deprive blacks and other ethnic groups of voting rights. First “Jim Crow” law passed in Maryland. Somerset County restricted black voting in municipal elections.

**1905** The Maryland Suffrage League, a coalition of African American activists and recent European immigrants, and the Baltimore Reform League defeated ratification of the Poe Amendment that would have disenfranchised the black voter through the Grandfather Clause. Maryland Court of Appeals ruled that interstate commerce cannot be segregated,

**1907** Republican party in Maryland openly segregated membership.

**1909** Straus Amendment to disenfranchise blacks defeated by referendum vote.



*The Baden Family, Thanksgiving Dinner 1947, by Thomas Baden [MSA SC 2140-I-456].*

**1909** April 6 Matthew A. Henson of Charles County, with Admiral Robert Peary, reached the North Pole.

**1910** National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) founded in New York City. U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled unconstitutional attempts by legislature to disenfranchise Annapolis blacks. Decision upheld by Supreme Court in 1915.

**1911** Final attempt to disenfranchise Maryland blacks defeated.

**1912** Baltimore passed an ordinance segregating residential areas of the city.

**1914** World War I began in Europe.

**1915** Great migration of blacks to northern cities commenced.

**1915** Jazz drummer, Chick Webb, born in Baltimore, Maryland.

**1917** April 6 U.S. declared war on Germany and the Central Powers.

**1918** American Expeditionary Force went to France, including two divisions of black troops.

**1918** Jazz singer and bandleader Cab Calloway moved to Baltimore with his family; his mother graduated from Morgan State College in Maryland.

**1920** 19th Amendment to the Constitution declared the right to vote shall not be abridged on account of sex. Maryland does not ratify until 1941.

**1933** October The last documented lynching in Maryland occurred in Salisbury. The victim's name was George Armwood.

**1936** The Donald Gaines Murray case began desegregation at the University of Maryland School of Law.

**1938** Federal law prohibited child labor in industry.

**1938** Maryland equalized the pay of black and white teachers.

**1939–1945** World War II. Blacks played a major role in all branches of military service around the world.

**1940** Threat of a nationwide black march on Washington forced President Roosevelt to establish the Fair Employment Practices Commission and to order equal pay in government and defense industries.

**1942** April 23 Blacks marched on Annapolis to demand an end to police brutality and black representation on the Baltimore School Board. Governor O'Conor appointed Commission to Study the Problems Affecting the Negro Population.

**1942** Businessman and financier Reginald F. Lewis born in Baltimore and became the first African American to build a billion dollar company in the US.

**1942–1945** U.S. government interned Japanese-Americans in relocation camps.

**1943** Naval Academy and other naval schools accept first African American students.

**1944** Supreme Court ruled against exclusion of blacks from party primaries.

**1946** Desegregation of Baltimore City golf course began to open public accommodations to blacks.

**1947** Morgan State University students protested for equitable school funding from the state.

**1948** President Harry S. Truman ordered U.S. armed forces to integrate.

**1948** St. John's College in Annapolis admitted first black student.

- 1949** Wesley Brown first African American graduate of the Naval Academy.
- 1951** Governor Theodore R. McKeldin established Commission on Interracial Problems and Relations.
- 1951** Maryland ends segregation on trains and boats.
- 1951** October 4 Henrietta Lacks died of ovarian cancer in Johns Hopkins Hospital where she had been treated for approximately nine months. Her cancer cells were the source of the HeLa cells, the first immortalized cell line still in use today.
- 1952** Ford's Theatre in Baltimore desegregated. Civil rights movement in Maryland accelerated under the leadership of Lillie May Carroll Jackson. Segregation of municipal swimming pool in Baltimore outlawed.
- 1954** Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* of Topeka, Kansas declared segregation in public schools unconstitutional. Desegregation of Baltimore public schools began. Ten Maryland counties soon followed Baltimore's lead. First blacks—Harry A. Cole, Emory E. Cole, and Truly Hatchett—elected to the General Assembly.
- 1955** January 20 Read's Drug Store in Baltimore the site of one of the earliest sit-in protests against segregation. Students from Morgan State University and members of the Congress of Racial Equality participated. Two days later, the store officially desegregated.
- 1955-1956** Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott led by Martin Luther King, Jr.
- 1956** Baltimore passed Fair Employment Ordinance.
- 1959** Verda Welcome elected as the first black woman to serve in the Maryland House of Delegates.
- 1959** Protesters forced the desegregation of Arundel Ice Cream Shops of Maryland.
- 1960** Sit-in movement continued in Greensboro, North Carolina. Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) formed. Sit-ins at lunch counters in Salisbury, Baltimore, and College Park.
- 1961** Freedom ride to protest at restaurants along U.S. Highway 40 across Maryland and into Delaware by 2,000 black and white college students led by Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). Forty-seven restaurants across the state agreed to desegregate.
- 1963** State open accommodations act passed by large margin; extended to entire state in 1964.
- 1963** Morgan State University students protested segregation at Northwood Theater in Baltimore.
- 1963** Maryland senator Verda Welcome became the first black woman elected to serve in a state senate in the country.
- 1963** July 12 Riot in Cambridge Maryland.
- 1964** March on Washington led to Federal Civil Rights Act of 1964.
- 1965** State passed Fair Employment Act.
- 1965** Vietnam War began.
- 1967** Second Cambridge riot.
- 1967** Thurgood Marshall became Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.
- 1968** Assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., resulting in riots in Baltimore and other large cities.
- 1968** State Commission on Interracial Problems reorganized as the Maryland Commission on Human Relations.
- 1969** Legislature created the Maryland Commission on Afro-American History and Culture.
- 1968-1978** Number of black representatives in the General Assembly of Maryland increased from 10 to 19.
- 1976** Janie L. Mines the first African American female admitted to the Naval Academy in Annapolis. She graduated in 1980.
- 1987** Dr. Benjamin Carson and his team at Johns Hopkins Hospital separated conjoined Binder twins who were joined at the cranium.
- 1987** Clarence H. "Du" Burns became the first African American Mayor of Baltimore.
- 2005** Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History & Culture founded in Baltimore Maryland.
- 2007** Maryland resolution of apology for slavery approved by both houses of the Maryland General Assembly.
- 2008** Barack Hussein Obama elected 44th president of the United States. First African American to hold the highest office in the nation.
- 2009** Former Lt. Gov. Michael Steele becomes first African American chairman of the Republican National Committee
- 2015** Death of Freddie Grey in Baltimore, Maryland and subsequent protests. Becomes one of several incidents nationwide that spawned 21st century conversation about race in the United States.

*Liberas sunt voces illi.*  
TO a people whose characteristic virtues are justice  
and fortitude, in the exercise of which they have become  
the wonder, and abomination of the universe. We, the  
black inhabitants of these United States, humbly submit  
the following address.

Worn Great-Sick  
and wicked among  
the noble spirit of  
America, with th  
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punishes them, we  
admitting the fact  
stated, "We w  
with admiration  
filled approbation.

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so high; the glo  
the court of heaven.

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tute.

To that will  
hosted you to fa  
peal. Freedom  
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degraded to hu  
man: We shall  
not talk of won  
tion. In the language of your numerous ancestors to suc  
lustrate throne of Britain, permit us humbly to ad  
dress you. Liberty is our claim. Reverence for our  
Great Creator, principles of humanity, and the duties  
of common men, are our sole solicitude. Your as

Annapolis, May 14, 1783.  
WALLACE, JOHNSON, & MUIR,  
Have for SALE.

March 21, 1783.  
The beautiful well bred horse  
**ROEBUCK,**

This guide to Researching African American Families at the Maryland State Archives was originally created in 1984 by Phebe Jacobsen. Ms. Jacobsen was a senior reference archivist from 1960 to 1990. In 2018, the staff of the Legacy of Slavery Program at the Maryland State Archives updated and revised this guide, printing a second edition, and also providing a digital copy online. It is by no means a definitive guide, nor are all significant events or laws enumerated. The hope is that it will encourage further study of the people and events that comprise the black experience in Maryland. The guide is printed with the generous support of the Friends of the Maryland State Archives and the Four Rivers Heritage Area.



**Below:** 1908 Unknown family  
[MSA SC 1477-1-6204].



THE HERITAGE AREA OF  
ANNAPOLIS,  
BOSTON TOWN,  
AND SOUTH COUNTY



**Background:** Anti-slavery editorial  
published in the *Maryland Gazette* on  
May 15, 1783 [MSA SC 1556-1-42].

