

AFRICAN AMERICAN

Landowners, Churches,
Schools and Businesses

FAIRFAX COUNTY
VIRGINIA
(1860-1900)



A Historical Sketch of African American
Participation in the Development
of Fairfax County in the Mid to Late
Nineteenth Century

AFRICAN AMERICAN LANDOWNERS, CHURCHES, SCHOOLS AND BUSINESSES

Fairfax County, Virginia
(1860-1900)

"We are to be tested in our patience, our forbearance, our perseverance, to acquire and use skill; in our ability to compete, [and] to succeed..."

Booker T. Washington

Virginian

Prominent Educator, Author of *Up from Slavery*

A Historical Sketch of African American Participation in the Development of Fairfax County in the Mid to Late Nineteenth Century

In the mid 1800s the Northern Virginia area, of which Fairfax County was an integral part, attracted many African Americans who migrated from places further south. Once the Civil War started, fugitives from slavery followed the Union Army to Washington, DC and surrounding areas. They joined newly emancipated individuals and men and women whose freedom had been secured earlier in the 18th and 19th centuries.

In 1760, free African American, Bob Cole was named in the Fairfax County court order book. George and Dolly Roberts were mentioned in 1784, Joseph Moore in 1786, Charles Bell in 1788, and a man named Simms also appeared in late 18th century records. In the 1810 census for the county sixty free African Americans were listed and by 1820 the census showed that 507 men and women were free. All reflected the freedom of their new liberation as they purchased land, settled in communities and reared families.

Farmers who moved from New York and Pennsylvania into Fairfax County during the 1840s and 1850s, were more inclined to use free laborers. This was especially true in the settlement of New Jersey Quakers in the Woodlawn neighborhood. These same men were active in fostering schools after the Civil War ended. On a parallel course, African American residents began to purchase land, build churches, attend schools and start businesses.

Discovering African American participation in the development of nineteenth century Fairfax County, Virginia extends an invitation to rescue, recover and remember. Their many achievements during the 1800s are rarely mentioned in historical accounts. To that end, this map with text has been designed to cite significant African American land ownership and a representative number of churches, schools and businesses in Fairfax County in the mid to late nineteenth century.

AFRICAN AMERICAN LANDOWNERS (1860- 1900)

In the nineteenth century land ownership was rare because of enslavement and limited economic opportunities for free men and women. Yet, in 1860, sixty-six African Americans in Fairfax County owned land. Among factors for achieving land ownership were: 1) U.S. Army reenlistment bounties 2) wartime employment 3) inheritance of small tracts of land from pre-war free family members 4) a small percentage of wages retained (when allowed) while being hired out during slavery 5) land purchased then subdivided among each other and 6) on rare occasions, wills of plantation owners granted freedom and land to enslaved men and women. The history of African American land ownership in Fairfax County can be traced back to the founding of Gum Springs by West Ford who lived in the early 1800s. West Ford, formerly enslaved, had worked as a carpenter, wheelwright and florist on the Mount Vernon plantation. In 1829, the will of Bushrod Washington, nephew of George Washington, granted Ford 119 acres of land. In 1830, he sold this acreage for \$350 and purchased 211 acres three years later. In 1837, West Ford divided this land into four equal parts for his four children.

As early as 1830, the census confirmed a small yet important group of African American landowners. Lists include: Lucinda Carter, Bernard Hoe, Thomas Triplet, Robert Hunter, William Bruen, Alexander More, James McDaniel and Nehemiah Davis. Between 1830-1860, property owners listed include: William Conner (200 acres), George Harris (158 acres), Jesse Harris (264 acres), and Osmond Quander (168 acres).

Following the Civil War, African American landowners emerged in several communities in Fairfax County: **Falls Church, Forestville** (Great Falls), **Lewinsville** (Vienna), **Williamstown** (Merrifield), **Willard** (Dulles), **Cooktown** (Herndon), **Hortontown** (Centreville), **Gum Springs** (Mount Vernon), **Lincolntown** (McLean), and **Freetown** or **Freedom Hill** (Gallows Road area).

MOUNT VERNON

Prominent landowning families in the Mount Vernon area were the Fords, Hollands and Quanders. West Ford, founder of the Gum Springs community, and one of the descendants of the Quander family married, thereby linking the families together.

According to the 1870 Census:

Landowners	Property Values
John Wade	\$1,040
William Ford	\$1,000
George Williams	\$760
Alexander Page	\$500

Other African American landowners listed in the 1870 Census were: Young, Ferguson, Jasper, Hunter, Brown, Gray, Seaton, Herpnair and Froth.

LEE

Landowners	Property Values
L.R. and Jane Lee	\$3,000
Jeremiah and Martha Jackson	\$2,600
Charles and Sarah Pearson	\$1,900

Family names of other landowners were: Jasper, Simpson, Early and Burrell.

PROVIDENCE

The Providence District was a very prosperous and well-populated area of African Americans.

Landowners	Property Values
Robert Gunnell	\$1,000
Henry Newman	\$1,000
Samuel Sharper	\$1,000
Alfred Odrick	\$750
Charles Dobson	\$600
Alfred and Matilda Holly	\$500
Jerry Smith	\$500
Cyrus Carter	\$250

Other landowners listed in the 1870 Census were: Harper, West, Thompson, Harris, Person, Hudson, Gibson, Taylor, Tibbs, Robinson, Gaskin, General Joe and Lee.

FALLS CHURCH

According to the 1870 census:

Landowners	Property Values
Fred Foote, Sr.	\$3,000
Fred Foote, Jr.	\$1,500
Andrew and Sarah Smith	\$450
Thompson and Harriet Warner	\$450
Lea Lewis	\$400

MASON

In the Baileys Crossroads area, John Bell, a former Washington, DC resident, bought 50 acres from Miles Munson in 1876. He would later donate land to build a public school for African American children. His house was built on the south side of Columbia Pike.

According to the 1870 census, other landowners were: Lemon, Price, Johnson, Sappin, Jenkins, Bowman, Lee, Strather, Garrell, James, Tyler, Banks, Mancy, Williams, Massey, Williams, Ford, Franklin, Derrick, Stewart and Gray.

DRANESVILLE

Landowners	Property Values
Jefferson and Rose Coates	\$500
Thomas and Mary Simmel	\$500

Family names of other landowners were: Parker, Bush, Sr. and Jr., Watson and Honesty.

HUNTER MILL

Landowners	Property Values
William and Harriet Harris	\$2,000 <i>(also personal property-\$300)</i>
Charles Parker	\$500 <i>(also personal property-\$600)</i>
Edmund Brown	\$500
Albert Bowles	\$500
Alfred Beckwith	\$500

Other family names listed in the 1870 Census as landowners whose property was set at smaller monetary values were: Buckner, Jones, Hughes, Botts, Byers, Day and Fitzhugh.

On the tour map, historical churches are referenced by alphabet and schools by number. For further information on these and other historic sites and areas of interest contained in this text, you may call the Virginia Room of the Fairfax City Regional Library (703) 246-2123 or the Fairfax County Park Authority (703) 324-8662, TTY (703) 324-3988. For copies call Black Women United for Action at (703) 922-5757.

AFRICAN AMERICAN CHURCHES (1860- 1900)

With meager resources and unlimited faith, African Americans moved quickly to establish communities reflective of their culture. Cognizant of the importance of this spiritual journey and its attending roots, they used their collective means to accomplish the establishment of churches as the heart of community life. Despite growth and change, some historically African American congregations and communities remained stable components of Fairfax County throughout the duration of the nineteenth century. Churches and communities identified are key representations of surviving African American settlements.

(A) Shiloh Baptist Church

Location 10226 Gunston Road, Lorton.

In 1869, Shiloh Baptist Church began in a log cabin located across the street from its present site. In 1900, the church purchased its present building, the original Gunston School for white children, built in 1883. A new sanctuary was added in 1984 and the original section is now the church's educational building.

(B) Woodlawn United Methodist Church

Location: Woodlawn Road, Fort Belvoir. (currently at 7730 Fordson Road, Alexandria)

In 1866, the church was built on ground given by African American landowner, William Holland. Fort Myer was being demolished after the Civil War. The fort's commanding officer granted a request from freed men and women of Woodlawn - that they be permitted to salvage the Fort's lumber for a new church. The ground on which it stood is today the Woodlawn Church Cemetery. The original foundation of the church can still be seen. In 1888, a new church was built across the road on land given by another member of the Holland family. At this church a Sunday school and day school were started with Sarah Cox, a Quaker missionary, as the first teacher.

(C) Bethlehem Baptist Church

Location: 7836 Fordson Road, Alexandria.

In 1865, Reverend Samuel K. Taylor and a small group of Christians erected the building named Bethlehem. Taylor had previously preached to parishioners in their homes. The original building, built of lumber donated from a United States government stable in Alexandria, served as a school as well as a church. The growth of the congregation led to the creation of a second building, erected in 1884.

(D) Laurel Grove Baptist Church

Location: 6834 Beulah Street, Franconia.

Laurel Grove Baptist Church began in the 1880s when African

American families met for open-air worship services near a "grove of laurel." On May 10, 1884, William and Georgianna Jasper deeded a half-acre of land to the congregation and later named it Laurel Grove Baptist Church. Since its initial construction the church's interior has not been altered. Behind a basic one-room sanctuary sits the cemetery in a grove of oaks.

(E) Mount Pleasant Baptist Church

Location: 6477 Linconia Road, Alexandria.

Organized in 1867 by a group of freed men and women, Mount Pleasant Baptist Church was built on land donated by Charles H. and Elizabeth Brown of Westchester, New York.

(F) Shiloh Baptist Church

1331 Spring Hill Road, McLean.

At the close of the Civil War, the freedmen's community of Odricks Corner was originated. In 1873, Shiloh Baptist Church, organized by Reverend Cyrus Carter, served the newly established community. Carter probably was an itinerant minister.

(G) First Baptist Church of Chesterbrook

Location: 1740 Kirby Road, McLean.

Reverend Cyrus Carter, who had driven a Union wagon team in the Ambulance Corps during the Civil War, founded the First Baptist Church of Chesterbrook in 1865. The Church's congregation has maintained a strong reflection of rural community life.

(H) Pleasant Grove Methodist Church

Location: 8641 Lewinsville Road, McLean.

In 1882, Samuel Sharper as Trustee was authorized to collect funds to build Pleasant Grove Methodist Church. Approximately one acre of land was purchased and construction on the church began in 1892. The structure was referred to as "Sharper's Church" in honor of the trustee. Samuel Sharper died in 1894 and was first to be buried in the adjacent cemetery. In 1981, Gary and Joan Jewett, residents in the church community, contacted other residents, some of whom were Sharper descendants, and began to explore ways and means to preserve the church. It is now completely renovated and is a very good example of a late nineteenth century Fairfax County country church. The structure includes a museum dedicated to local African American history.

(I) Chantilly Baptist Church

Location: 14312 Chantilly Baptist Lane, Chantilly.

After a series of services in a "Little Log School House," Chantilly Baptist Church was organized on April 18, 1880. In December 1881, the congregation purchased an acre of land on which to build a church. The price of the property was \$100.00 and the property itself was the acre of land on which the "Little School House" had stood. In July 1887, the first Chantilly Baptist Church was erected and dedicated. In 1900, expansion continued with the purchase of an additional acre of land for use as a cemetery.

(J) First Baptist Church of Vienna

Location: 214 Lawyers Road, (currently Orchard Street) Vienna.

Organized in 1867, First Baptist Church of Vienna was the first church established in Vienna after the Civil War. The need for a school was noted in the deed between trustees of the church and Major O.E. Hine. Subsequently, the original building on Lawyers Road functioned as a center for civic gatherings, a school for freed men and women as well as a church. Freedmen Thomas West and son Daniel contributed their carpentry skills in the construction of the 30 ft. by 40 ft. structure. The first minister was Reverend Cyrus Carter.

(K) Little Zion Baptist Church

Location: Burke Lake Road.

This church was built in 1891 on land donated by Jack and Elizabeth Pearson, who in 1874 had given adjacent land for a school. The Goins, Wright and Hamilton families were among the founders of the congregation. The first minister, Reverend Lewis Henry Bailey, celebrated his 41st year of service to the church in 1929.

(L) Clifton Primitive Baptist Church

Location: 7200 Main Street, Clifton.

Built in the 1880s on land of the Beckwith family, the one story frame building has a tin roof and a front gabled façade with double doors. The church under the Cub Run Primitive Baptist Association was established in 1879. The first elder was John Bell.

(M) Mount Olive Baptist Church

Location: 6600 Old Centreville Road, Centreville.

In 1896, this church was erected on property given by Emma and Samuel Harris. The church was first organized in the home of Emma Harris and its first pastor was Reverend William Smith.

AFRICAN AMERICAN SCHOOLS (1860- 1900)

In 1870, Fairfax County, Virginia established a public school system. Long before the Supreme Court case, *Plessy vs. Ferguson* in 1896 which separated the races by law, public schools in Fairfax County were segregated. Consequently, several separate schools were organized for the education of African American students. One-room schools served an African American pupil population with enrollments of 408 in 1870 which increased to 1150 in 1899. Generally, the school day was in session from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m., resumed after lunch and recess at 1:00 and students were dismissed at 4:00 p.m. A teacher's salary, in the 1870s, was about one dollar per day. The average time that school was in session was six months. Schools included grades one through six or seven until students gained access to a high school education in 1954. In archival records, these educational facilities were identified in one of three ways: by the designation *Colored*, by alphabetical listing (A,B,C,) and by the term *Negro* in parenthesis.

Jane Ford Rogers of Gum Springs, Jesse Harris of Centreville, John Bell of Baileys Crossroads and other African American landowners donated land on which schools for their children were built. Churches and individual humanitarians also bought or set aside land for public schools. Quaker families from the Philadelphia area who settled in Fairfax County, Virginia as early as 1846 and the Freedman's Bureau, a government agency, worked in partnership with local African Americans to establish free public schools in the county. Moreover, African American self-help and philanthropy were recurrent themes in the drive to secure educational opportunities for the children in their communities.

Magisterial districts, school names and locations are identified in the information that follows:

MOUNT VERNON DISTRICT

Pennsylvania Quaker, Chalkley Gillingham was instrumental in organizing free public schools at Gum Springs and Woodlawn for African American children. The Quakers partially funded the two schools, giving \$10 per month per school; the state furnished a balance of \$15 for each.

Gillingham's diary reads:

January 14, 1871

Have started two colored schools, one on each side of my place at Woodlawn and Gum Spring, the 2 of which I have had the charge so far. Under the assistance of Friends in Philadelphia with their fund - giving 10 dollars per month for each school - we have a colored teacher in the Woodlawn and a white one in the Gum Spring School and about 40 scholars in each on the list, 37 being present yesterday at Gum Spring and 34 at Woodlawn."

(1) Gum Springs Colored School

First location: Bethlehem Baptist Church at Fordson Road and Sherwood Hall Lane.

As early as 1865, a free public school was in operation at Bethlehem Baptist Church. The Freedman's Bureau provided building materials and Quaker teachers from the Philadelphia area: Helen Harley, D.E. Smith and Josephine Baker instructed the students.

Teachers reported that the youth of Gum Springs displayed a remarkable zeal for education.

Second location: Richmond Highway and Sherwood Hall Lane.

One acre of land was conveyed from Jane Ford Rogers and her husband for the building of this school which was established in 1867. Some community residents provided the labor for construction and maintenance while others furnished wood for heating the building. Annie Dandridge Smith was the first African American teacher at this school.

(2) Woodlawn Colored School

Location: Woodlawn Road, Fort Belvoir.

In 1871, an African American was first to teach at the Woodlawn Colored School. The school had on roll a population of forty students.

(3) Gunston Colored School

Location: Gunston Road, across from the Shiloh Baptist Church.

In 1882, the Fairfax County School Board bought one acre of land from Colonel Edward Daniels who owned Gunston Hall. The 32 ft. by 25 ft. one-room school was covered with a tin roof and heated by a potbelly stove. The Haislip family under contract to the school board supplied wood. In 1890, forty-four students were enrolled at the school.

(4) Springbank Colored School

Location: Quander Road and Richmond Highway.

One of its teachers, W. T. White, also served as the school's principal. Each day, he walked to and from the northern end of Alexandria (approximately five miles) to instruct the students in this one-room school that was built on three-fourths acre of land. "Our School" (a description of the school), an artist's interpretation of Springbank Colored School and a report card from Springbank student, Joseph Quander can be found on this map. The school was founded in 1890.

LEE DISTRICT

(5) Laurel Grove *Colored School*

Location: Beulah Street, near Manchester Boulevard and the Franconia-Springfield Parkway.

Georgianna and William Jasper, prominent African Americans in the community, donated one-half acre of land for the building of the school in 1884. The school was furnished with desks that had slip tops which opened to reveal inserted slates for the students' lessons to be written. A piano in this one-room school provided accompaniment to songs which were part of the teacher's instruction. Mark and Barbara Fried, developers of Metro Park in Franconia, will provide funding for the restoration of this historic school.

MASON DISTRICT

(6) Baileys Crossroads *Colored School*

Location: Lacy Boulevard, three blocks from Columbia Pike.

This three-room frame building, founded in 1880, was the only school in Baileys Crossroads to serve African American children for forty years. Active in the Freedman's Bureau, John Bell, African American landowner, carpenter and U.S. Patent Office employee donated five acres of land for the school's construction. The land reverted to him when the school closed.

PROVIDENCE DISTRICT

(7) Falls Church *Colored School*

Location: at Route 50 and Annandale Road.

In 1864, J. D. Read and his daughter Betsy established the first school in Falls Church to provide an education previously unavailable to African American children. The second Falls Church *Colored School* was established in 1890.

DRANESVILLE DISTRICT

(8) Odricks *Colored School*

Location: Lewinsville Road.

In 1879, this one-room school was also used for community meetings and religious gatherings. Multiple accounts link landowner and carpenter Alfred Odrick to the establishment of this school.

(9) Forestville *Colored School*

Location: Walker Road and Georgetown Pike in Great Falls.

In 1884, William and Clara Rouzee deeded one acre to Alfred Leigh and James Smith, who were school trustees of the Dranesville District. The one-room school building erected on that land was closed in the early 1900s. Teachers from 1886-1901 included R. T. Jackson, Henrietta Smith and Ella Adams.

SULLY DISTRICT

The Freedman's Bureau, a government agency, had been formed in 1865 by the Congress to protect, care for and educate formerly enslaved persons and Civil War refugees. This agency established several schools in Fairfax County but none were in Centreville. Hence, in 1868, Charles Harris wrote the following letter to the Bureau requesting school funding. On file at the National Archives, he wrote:

“... we have endeavored to erect to a school house up here...and we are not really able to complete the building...Sir you would very much oblige us to help with 150 dollars and we would be able to educate our children which is very much needed...”

The issue was resolved. Four months later, the partially constructed school was completed with Freedman's Bureau funds on land donated by prominent African American, Jesse Harris. Additionally, the Bureau arranged for a teacher to come from Philadelphia and educate the children.

(10) Freedman School

Location: Naylor Road, Centreville.

In 1868, this school was founded by Charles Harris and members of the community. Funds provided by the Freedman's Bureau helped complete the school building.

(11) Mt. Pleasant Colored School

Location: Old Columbia Pike and Linconia Road.

In 1867, Charles and Elizabeth Brown from Westchester, New York conveyed land for religious and school purposes. The wooden building was called by teachers and students “our shoebox” because the one-room structure with its potbelly stove was so very small. It closed in 1948.

HUNTER MILL DISTRICT

(12) Vienna Colored School

First location: 214 Lawyers Road.

In 1867, African Americans of Vienna bought one-eighth of an acre from Major O.E. Hine, an ex-Union officer from Broome County, New York who had settled in Vienna. With the help of the Freedman's Bureau, the school was built on this land. Teachers in this first school were Caroline Hall who boarded with the Hine family, May McBride and Caroline Alvard. William West, son of freedman Daniel West, completed a major in education at Howard University and was assigned to teach at this school in 1900.

Second location: Lawyers and Malcom Road.

To begin construction of the one-room school in 1896, one-half acre was conveyed from Thomas Frey and his wife. The third Vienna school for African American students, built in 1939 and located on Nutley Street, was later named the Louise Archer School.

(13) Cub Run Colored School

Location: Warrenton Turnpike and Route 29.

In 1887, Jamimi Robinson Harris, daughter of James Robinson or “Gentleman Jim”, donated land near Cub Run for a new school. The one-room school expanded to include three classrooms and eventually closed in 1953.

(14) Floris Colored School

Location: Squirrel Hill Rd., Herndon

This school was built in 1870. The wooden structure contained slate floors and a potbelly stove.

AFRICAN AMERICAN CRAFTSMANSHIP AND COMMERCE (1860- 1900)

*"art...tends to reproduce itself. Nothing is ever destroyed altogether.
And what... was accomplished in Africa was not lost"*

Carter G. Woodson

Father of African American history

A legacy of skilled artisanship and metallurgy had flourished over several thousand years on the African continent. Hence, on colonial and postcolonial plantations, many enslaved Africans utilized a variety of skills they had mastered before.

Although the hand-crafting skills of Africans enslaved in America were often unappreciated by plantation owners who preferred their manual labor, some artisanship survived because hand-crafters produced plantation necessities and the family needs of those enslaved. Woodworking and black-smithing were most common among hand-crafters. In freedom, artisans continued to apply their trades. Since it was virtually impossible for African Americans to enter national craft unions in the late 1800s, many in Fairfax County developed a more private initiative. Independently, they continued to master their crafts as carpenters, blacksmiths, quilters, shoemakers, coopers, wheelwrights, furniture makers, weavers, spinners, seamstresses, millers and brick makers.

No stranger to commercial enterprise, men and women of West Africa had engaged in commerce along extensive trade routes across the African continent for many centuries. Just as craftsmanship was part of an African and African American continuum, business leaders also shared the connection. There was a simultaneous movement to establish economic institutions. Businesses in African American communities throughout the South emerged after slavery was abolished. Christopher Columbus Hall, of Lincolnvillle (near McLean), established a twenty-six acre dairy farm in 1872. Hall also owned a store, operated by his sons, in Washington, DC where his milk products were sold. During the late 1800s, Cyrus Carter, also of Lincolnvillle, supplied a Washington, DC jail with farm produce. In addition to agricultural businesses, African Americans like 38-year-old Jim Fogg purchased and began the operation of a livery stable. In 1880, Fogg and his wife also owned a small rooming house above their restaurant in the town of Fairfax.

During the late 1800s, Lane's Mill, an old gristmill, was operated by African Americans and patronized by farmers of both races in the surrounding neighborhoods of Bull Run and Cub Run. The Robinson and Harris families were the last millers at Lane's Mill. After 1900, Pendleton Robinson leased the mill and continued to grind grain for local farmers. During this time, the mill was called Robinson's Mill. For many years, Pendleton Robinson was also a retailer of fruits and vegetables in Washington markets and opened a small store at the mill. Additionally, the Robinson family owned a stone quarry at Cub Run in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The crushed stone was primarily marketed for use on roads and private driveways. Many other African American residents in Fairfax County conducted small businesses as midwives and as vegetable, fruit or flower vendors at local markets.

In 1890, members of the Gum Springs community formed a joint stock club. Five men of Bethlehem Baptist Church-Samuel Taylor, Nathan Webb, Hamilton Gray, Robert King and Henry Randall-pooled their resources, bought a large parcel of land and sold lots, at cost, to individual families who built homes. This innovative approach was a forerunner to the later concept of real estate subdivision.

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Funded by:



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Virginia Foundation
for the Humanities and
Public Policy

With the Support of:



Fairfax County History Commission



Text by:

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Photo Editor: James Powell

Photographs courtesy of *The Virginia Room*, Fairfax City Regional Library

November 2000