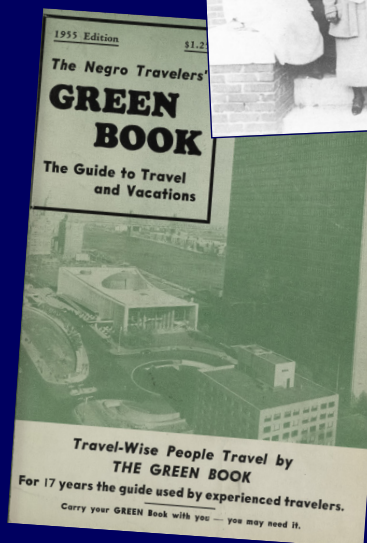
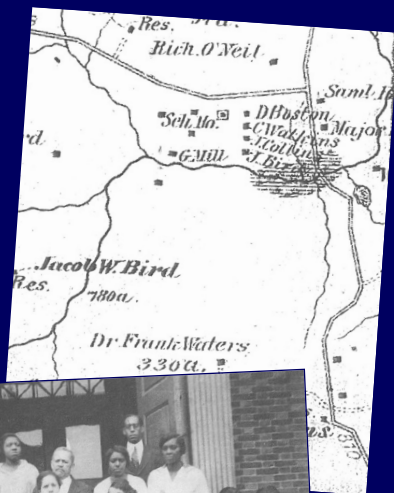
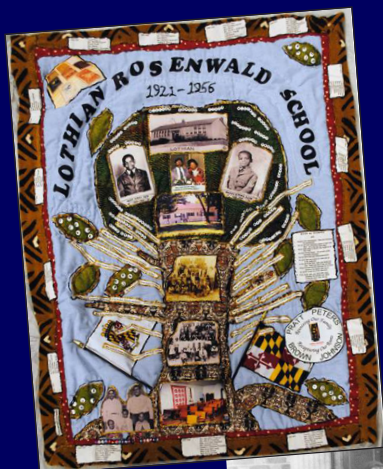


A Guide to...

African American Heritage & Culture in the *Four Rivers Heritage Area*





Built in 1941, Margaret Crowner's Lunch Room (AA-918), also referred to as the Cook Shop, was a central gathering space in Galesville and the West Benning Road community. Mrs. Crowner, and later her daughter, prepared meals in this two-room structure for many of the men who worked at oyster packing houses on all days but Sunday. The lunch room was demolished in 1994. (Courtesy, Anne Arundel County Cultural Resources Division.)

Front cover images, clockwise from top left:

-Lothian Rosenwald School story quilt. Dr. Joan M.E. Gaither was Project Manager with the assistance of Lyndra Marshall (née Pratt) and Tammi Carroll Hall. The Lothian quilt was designed and handcrafted by Southern High School students and the Mt. Zion/Lothian Community.

-Excerpt of Mill Swamp area from *Atlas of Anne Arundel County, Maryland, First District*, by G.M. Hopkins, C.E., Philadelphia, 1878.

-Elementary and High School faculty posed in front of the Stanton School in Annapolis, c. 1920. Courtesy, Phillip L. Brown Family Collection.

-Image of Daniel Boston in the kitchen of Daniel's House II (AA-225C, Ivy Neck Farm. Date unknown. Courtesy, the Calhoun Family Collection.

-*The Negro Travelers' Green Book: The Guide to Travel and Vacations, 1955 Edition.*

African American History in Anne Arundel County

The experiences of African Americans in Anne Arundel County over the course of centuries have too often been overlooked and underappreciated. Innovative efforts are underway to better document this heritage, understand the challenges and triumphs of people of color, and celebrate the profound ways in which they have influenced and enriched our communities.

In the early 18th century a growing number of enslaved men, women, and children from Africa and the Caribbean were brought to Anne Arundel County's shores on transatlantic ships to support Maryland's tobacco economy. It was upon the backs of these workers that local plantations became profitable. Aside this legacy of bondage, a robust free black population grew in the City of Annapolis, and in the County, like the Freetown community, in present-day Pasadena.

Emancipation and the end of the Civil War brought the promise of equality and opportunity which African Americans found to be short lived. Like other southern states, racist Jim Crow restrictions in Anne Arundel County were enforced by intimidation, violence, and horrendous, brutal public lynchings. As late as 1908, Henry Davis was dragged from the Calvert Street jail and lynched and shot in Annapolis.

Residents of African descent turned to the support and protection of their family enclaves and community institutions in response to wide spread segregation in the 20th century. Families and communities were empowered in this solidarity, and resisted exclusion and overt racism by creating their own private spaces within local churches, Rosenwald schools, beach resorts and summer communities, ballfields, juke joints, and other places across Anne Arundel County.

Following World War II, African Americans organized nonviolent demonstrations and protests in Annapolis and celebrated the monumental 1954 Supreme Court ruling *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* and the Civil Rights Act of 1964. After these victories came shock and unrest with the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968 and upheaval as local schools desegregated, including Wiley H. Bates High School, which had served black students across the county since 1933.

In the 21st century, residents and leaders in Anne Arundel County continue to address ongoing challenges involving inequality, economic disparities, and racism through social justice. The knowledge of this past, and the recognition of the sacrifices of earlier generations, bring with it power and inspiration, and the ability to make positive changes.

The Four Rivers Heritage Area African American Trail

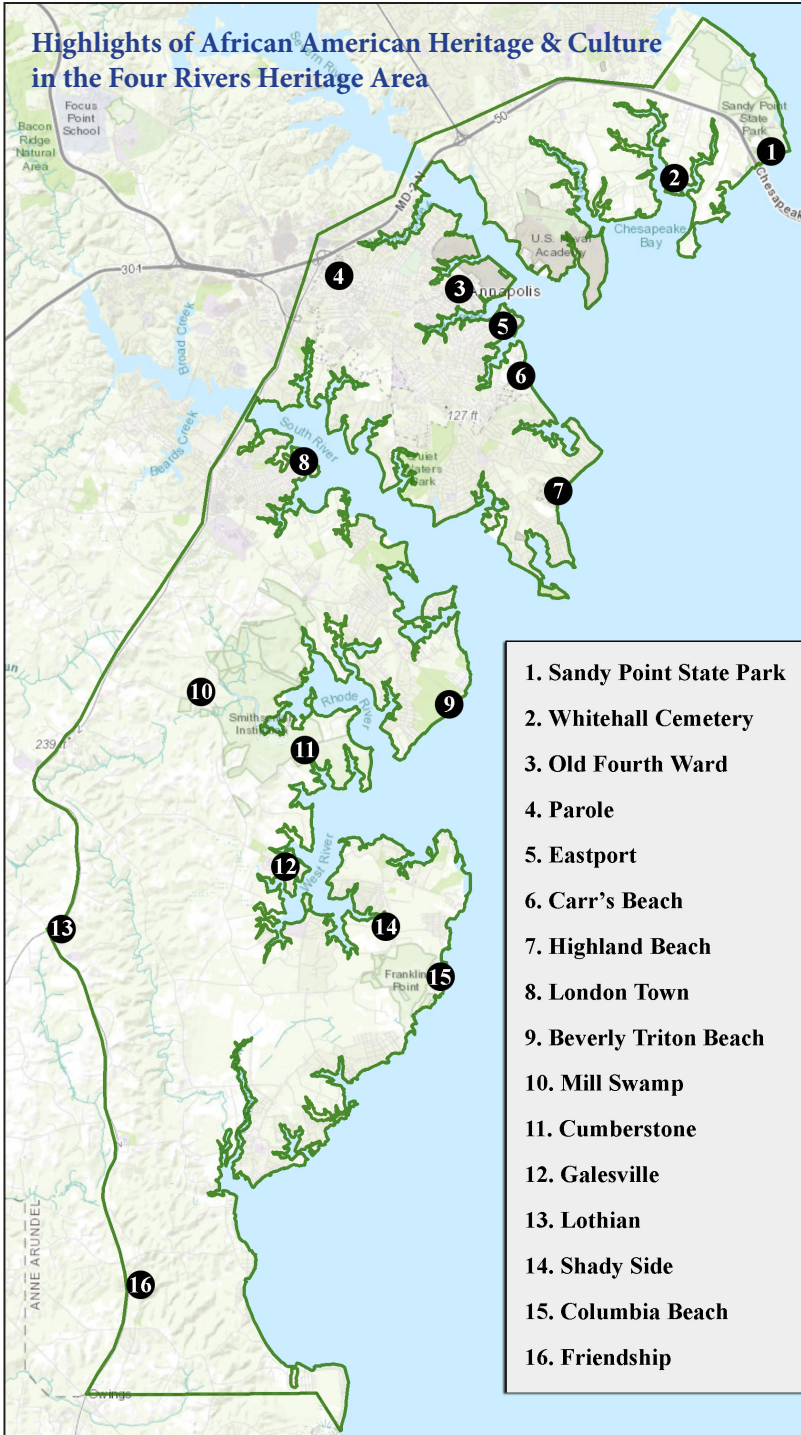
Four Rivers is an area rich in African American history, a heritage area that spans from the Chesapeake Bay Bridge in the north, across the Severn, South, Rhode, and West Rivers, bound by Solomons Island Road to the west, on to Herring Bay and the Calvert County line in the south. Throughout the heritage area are historic structures, sites, landscapes, and cemeteries that have been forgotten over time or lost due to neglect and development. Significant and meaningful sites await discovery and can be found in unexpected places and even in backyards.



The Henry Wilson Farmhouse in Galesville (c. 1870), before and after preservation that was completed in 2015. Born into slavery, Wilson gained his freedom in 1828. Post-emancipation, Wilson and his wife Kitty acquired 28 acres in the heart of Galesville, and built this substantial “I-House” (two-story dwelling, two rooms wide and one room deep) on Main Street.

Ongoing efforts to document African American heritage are guided by the voices and experiences of individuals, families, and residents of local enclaves across the Four Rivers Heritage Area. Preserving public and private spaces where they lived, worked, raised families, and built communities ensures that future generations understand and appreciate their shared experiences and contributions over many centuries. This guide, by no means comprehensive, highlights a representative selection of important sites, and encourages the reader to explore further.

Highlights of African American Heritage & Culture in the Four Rivers Heritage Area



1. Sandy Point State Park



A 1952 aerial photo shows the new Chesapeake Bay Bridge and Sandy Point State Park with racially segregated beaches and bathhouses. African Americans restricted to East Beach and denied access to the more expansive, preferable South Beach, filed a civil lawsuit challenging this inequality. In 1955, Sandy Point, Fort Smallwood, and other state parks became integrated by order of the U.S. Supreme Court through its landmark ruling *Maryland and City Council of Baltimore City v. Dawson*.

2. Whitehall Cemetery



The Whitehall Cemetery in St. Margarets has an unknown number of unmarked graves just outside of the Ridout Family plot where those enslaved at Whitehall rest. While the wooden makers are gone, one gravestone survives, that of Amelia Martin (1878-1899), daughter of Mary Calvert Martin, who was free-born, but worked for the Ridouts before the Civil War.

3. Old Fourth Ward

The Old Fourth Ward grew up around Asbury Methodist Episcopal Church (c. 1803), one of the oldest congregations in Annapolis. During post-Civil War reconstruction and as segregation grew, community members found strength and kinship in the churches, fraternal organizations, and the Stanton School, which was founded in 1865.



Present-day Asbury United Methodist Church sits on land purchased in 1803 from Smith Price, a free black. When a “new” church was constructed in 1838, the congregation numbered several hundred, many of whom were enslaved.

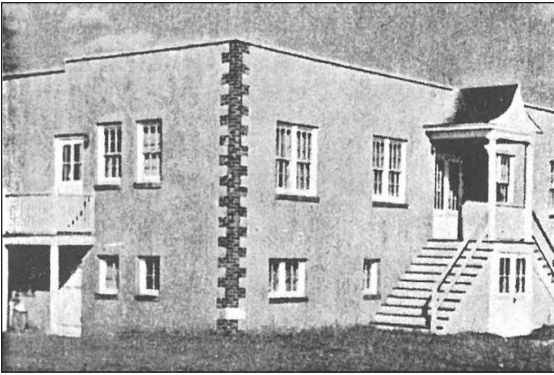
The Fourth Ward became a political entity in 1914, and expanded out West Street and towards Parole. Many businesses and homes were lost to a growing local and State government footprint and urban renewal into the 1960s and 1970s, which adversely affected its sense of community, connections, and heritage.

Entire city blocks along Calvert, Clay, and West Streets were demolished as part of a coordinated urban renewal program.



4. Parole

The origins of Parole reach back to the Civil War, when African Americans arrived in the Annapolis area to work at camps that held Union troops captured by the Confederate Army. The infrastructure of Camp Parole formed the basis for the post-war African American enclave that flourished along outer West Street. Many of Parole's residents can trace their family genealogy back to these early founders.



The Parole Health Center was built by Parole residents and opened in 1949. Renovated in 2002, it continues to provide outstanding medical care.

5. Eastport

Founded in 1868, the Eastport community is closely tied in many ways to the Chesapeake Bay. Residents of this tight-knit African American enclave have supported themselves as watermen, building and repairing boats, and processing local seafood over the decades. The nearby U.S. Naval Academy and the Annapolis Glass Factory also provided job opportunities.

In the 1930s Davis's Sweet Shop began catering to African Americans denied access to Caucasian owned restaurants and shops. This community institution later operated as a tavern and is now Davis's Pub.



Annapolis Area Beaches

African Americans denied access to whites only beach resorts and communities responded by establishing their own waterfront sites for recreation and leisure. These private bayside beaches were a source of empowerment and resistance, ensuring that people of color could relax and enjoy swimming, boating, entertainment, and socializing on their own terms. Popular destinations included Highland, Carr's, Sparrow's, and Venice Beaches, and Oyster Harbor and Arundel-on-the-Bay.

6. Carr's Beach



Legendary radio announcer and host Charles "Hoppy" Adams Jr. at Carr's Beach, promoting Ballantine beer and an upcoming musical performance.

7. Highland Beach



Girls from Bay Highland's Y.M.C.A. Camp Clarissa Scott enjoying a visit to Highland Beach.

8. London Town

In the late 17th century, the seaport of London Town on the South River was an economic hub, where transatlantic ships brought enslaved men, women, and children from Africa and the Caribbean on a regular basis. Forced to work for the town's tradespeople and merchants, and on surrounding tobacco farms, these captive laborers generated enormous wealth for their owners until the Civil War. The success of the County's agricultural complex was built upon the labor of the enslaved.



A County Almshouse was established at London Town in 1828. African Americans without family and financial means lived here in segregated housing. The Almshouse closed in 1965, with the creation of the National Welfare Act.

9. Beverley and Triton Beaches

Established in the early 20th century, these whites only beaches became a battlefield for equal rights. Beverley Beach Club (now Beverly Triton Beach) closed in 1968 when slot machines became illegal and the owner refused to comply with a civil rights court order to integrate.

This abhorrent sign stood at the entrance of Beverley Beach Club during the period of segregation when Jim Crow laws denied African Americans access to beaches and housing. It proclaimed "Membership Limited To Gentiles Only."



10. Mill Swamp

The Mill Swamp community was established by freedmen in the 1830s, growing up around the O'Hara Grist Mill, later owned by Jacob Bird (namesake of Birdsville). The Mill operated with both enslaved and free African Americans in the early years. Post-emancipation, the community thrived. One of the first Freedmen's Bureau schools in the County was built at Mill Swamp, a community that continued to be a center for education into the mid-20th century.



Named after the celebrated scientist, academic, and diplomat, the c. 1930 Ralph Bunche Elementary School continues to serve the Mill Swamp enclave as a community center.

11. Cumberstone

Intact 18th- and 19th-century landscapes survive along Cumberstone Road, and include houses, outbuildings, farm fields, and cemetery ruins. The Cumberstone area thrived, at the expense of those enslaved people whose labor built, ran and managed farms and plantations.



This mid-19th-century house is one of the few surviving examples of typical housing for enslaved workers, freedmen, and tenant farmers. Often just one room with a loft, for an entire family, these simple frame dwellings once dotted the landscape.

12. Galesville

West Benning Road in Galesville became a central space for the African American community in the 19th century, along with the nearby Ebenezer African Methodist Episcopal Church (formerly known as West River A.M.E. Church) and homes on Main Street and Church Lane. Residents of Galesville today can trace their roots back to early property owners who established homes and businesses here, including the Crowner, Turner, Wilson, Booze, and Davis families, among others.

Ebenezer African Methodist Episcopal Church is the oldest congregation in Galesville and the only A.M.E. church in South County. The first parsonage built circa 1889, is no longer standing. A new brick church built in 1968 can be seen in the background.



The seafood industry and businesses like the *Woodfield Fish and Oyster Company* provided steady employment for local residents. Institutions such as the Ebenezer A.M.E. Church (1880), the Rosenwald School (1929), Mrs. Crowner's Lunch Room (1941), and the Hot Sox Ballfield (c. 1915), supported the vibrant African American community that survives today.

Lady Ellen's Beauty Corner was the first African American licensed beauty shop in southern Anne Arundel County. Originally built as a local jail circa 1937, this simple concrete building is now an antique store.



13. Lothian

The African American enclave in Lothian called Mt. Zion includes a close-knit cluster of homes and buildings just north of the traffic circle. Taking root after the Civil War, the area grew into an important and thriving community in South County by the early 20th century. Many of the residents' ancestors are historically connected to nearby plantations on which African Americans were enslaved, such as the Hall Family's *Bachelors Choice* and the Thomas Family's *Lothian*.




The Upshop served Mt. Zion as a grocery store during the day and a juke joint at night. The building has been extensively remodeled and is now a residential house.



Established in 1874, Mt. Zion United Methodist Church continues to serve spiritual and social needs of this historic African American enclave.

14. Shady Side

A strong sense of African American heritage is evident in the Shady Side community, through historic churches, schools (like Lula G. Scott), cemeteries, beach communities, and summer boarding houses. The 1949 *Green Book* advertised Mrs. M. Carter's Boarding House.

THE GREEN BOOK VACATION GUIDE SEASON 1949	
	
<i>Make your selection from the Vacation Resorts advertised inside</i>	
OGUNQUIT	Viewland:5
GARDINER	Pond View:6
FAYETTE	Pine Cone Lodge:7
WEST SCARBOROUGH	Elcla Acres:8
MARYLAND	
ANNAPOLIS	Carr's Beach:9
	Sparrow's Point:10
SHADYSIDE	Mrs. M. Carter:11
BENEDICT	Violet Belle Hotel:12
JEFFERSON	Miss Ardella Whalen:13
WYE MILLS	The Frederick:14

15. Columbia Beach

Columbia Beach was established in 1940 by African American professionals from Washington, D.C., and Baltimore as a summer retreat for people of color during the period of segregation. This community thrives today, and includes a boat ramp, fishing pier, picnic and beach areas, basketball/tennis court, and playground.



During its heyday, the community provided annual regatta boat races, the Miss Columbia Beach Pageant, musical entertainment, and water-related activities.

16. Friendship

Friendship is a crossroads community named for the many Quakers who settled and lived in the area. It remained an important center of commercial and social activity in the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries, with shops, churches, and community spaces that supported nearby plantations and tobacco farms such as Holly Hill. Quakers became a leading voice in the Abolitionist Movement, yet many local families still held people in bondage until the Civil War.

Built in 1910, Carter's United Methodist Church is a significant site for African American Methodists in Anne Arundel County. A cemetery surrounding the site provides evidence that blacks and whites worshipped here from the early 19th century.



In 1958, a new brick elementary school for African Americans opened in Friendship. It represented a significant improvement from an overcrowded Rosenwald school and an earlier dilapidated one-room school with few windows. Closed in 1966 after consolidation and desegregation, the building is now occupied by the Anne Arundel County Bureau of Highways.

African American Voices, Memories and Places: A Four Rivers Heritage Trail

African American history, culture, and sites in the Four Rivers Heritage Area

Welcome!

We invite you to explore this online "virtual" tour which highlights the historic sites, communities, long-gone and surviving buildings, and places of remembrance significant to African American history and culture in Anne Arundel County, MD.

The memories and research of earlier generations and scholars has made it possible to identify sites and landscapes of the past. These sites, whether still standing, or lost to time, live on through the oral histories, photographs, newspaper articles, maps, archives, and historical records you can see here.

This project documents struggles involving injustice, resistance, and perseverance, while shared sacrifices and triumphs provide hope and inspiration for the future. It also demonstrates that there are important stories yet to be discovered right in our own backyards. We hope this is a small step toward filling a gap in our historical knowledge.

Enjoy the Tour!

0:21 / 0:28

MARYLAND HERITAGE AREA
ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY
MARYLAND
Office of Planning and Zoning

Help us build and improve upon this virtual tour!

The memories of Ernest Smith and Stephanie McHenry, shown above at the Peerless Rens Club in Eastport, are documented in one of many oral history interviews featured on the heritage trail.

We invite you to explore an online virtual trail which highlights nearly 200 historic sites, communities, and long-gone and surviving buildings and places of remembrance significant to African American history and culture in Anne Arundel County's Four Rivers Heritage Area.

ACCESS THE TRAIL AND
LEARN MORE AT
www.aacounty.org/AfricanAmericanHeritage

Researching African American History

It is vitally important to collect, document, share, and promote the often underrepresented contributions of African Americans to our County's past. Historic sites, whether still standing, or lost to time, live on through oral histories, photographs, newspaper articles, maps, archives, and historical records.



Betty Turner discusses Lady Ellen's Beauty Corner in Galesville.

The memories of earlier generations and the research of scholars have made it possible to identify sites and landscapes of the past. Raising awareness about previously unrecorded historic resources can help protect them for future generations.



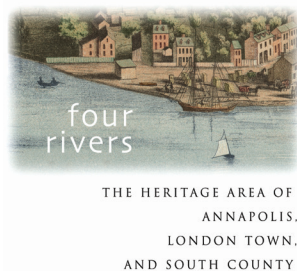
Gary "Chic" Roberts and Brian Trivers at Columbia Beach.

You can document Anne Arundel County's African American heritage and culture. If you know of sites, stories or resources that deserve study and recognition, please email:

Shareyourstory@losttownsproject.org

Image Credits for Highlighted Historic Sites

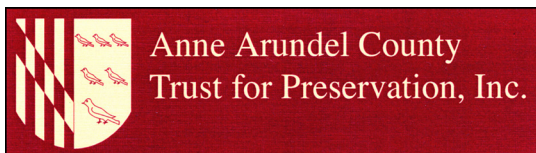
- Henry Wilson Farmhouse, before and after preservation. Courtesy, Anne Arundel County Cultural Resources Division.
- Sandy Point State Park at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge. Courtesy, Anne Arundel County Cultural Resources Division.
- Whitehall Cemetery. Courtesy, Anne Arundel County Cultural Resources Division.
- Asbury United Methodist Church. Courtesy, Visit Annapolis & Anne Arundel County.
- Old Fourth Ward neighborhood. Courtesy, Maryland State Archives.
- The Parole Health Center. Courtesy, Jean Haughton.
- Davis's Sweet Shop and Tavern. Courtesy, Maryland State Archives.
- Charles "Hoppy" Adams Jr. at Carr's Beach. Courtesy, Philip L. Brown Family Collection.
- Highland Beach. Courtesy, Jack Nelson Collection.
- Segregated housing at London Town Almshouse. Courtesy, Maryland State Archives.
- Entrance to Beverley Beach Club. Courtesy, Jewish Historical Society of Greater Washington.
- Ralph Bunche Elementary School. Courtesy, Maryland Historical Trust Survey No. AA-2063.
- Mid-19th-century tenant house. Courtesy, Anne Arundel County Cultural Resources Division.
- Ebenezer A.M.E. Church Parsonage. Courtesy, Anne Arundel County Cultural Resources Division.
- Lady Ellen's Beauty Corner. Courtesy, Anne Arundel County Cultural Resources Division.
- The Upshop. Courtesy, Lyndra Marshall (née Pratt) Archival Collection.
- Mt. Zion United Methodist Church. Courtesy, Lyndra Marshall (née Pratt) Archival Collection.
- The Green Book Vacation Guide, Season 1949*. Courtesy, New York Public Library.
- Columbia Beach Regatta. Courtesy, Columbia Beach Citizen's Improvement Association.
- Carter's United Methodist Church. Courtesy, Anne Arundel County Cultural Resources Division.
- Friendship Elementary School. Courtesy, Anne Arundel County Cultural Resources Division.
- Images of Ernest Smith and Stephanie McHenry at Peerless Rens Club, Betty Turner discussing Lady Ellen's Beauty Corner, and Gary "Chic" Roberts and Brian Trivers at Columbia Beach are from interviews conducted by Lyndra Marshall (née Pratt), oral historian, and filmed and edited by Anthony Smoot of Anthony A. Smoot Productions.



Lost Towns Project



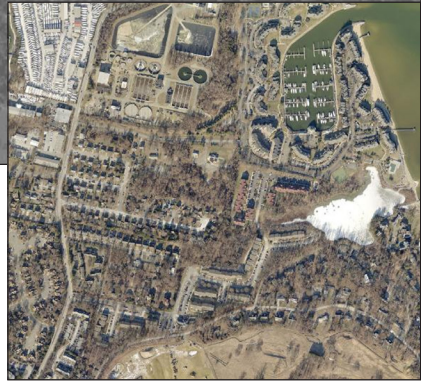
of Anne Arundel County



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A 1952 aerial photo (above) documents Carr's and Sparrow's Beaches and the Clover Inn, a popular juke joint. A recent view (right) shows Chesapeake Harbour Community and Marina, where the beaches were located, and Edgewood Green neighborhood, where the Clover Inn stood. Please let us know if you have a photo of the Inn's exterior, as none are known to exist. (Courtesy, Anne Arundel County Cultural Resources Division.)



This publication was designed and written by historian John E. Kille, Ph.D., genealogist and oral historian Lyndra Marshall (née Pratt), and C. Jane Cox, Chief of Historic Preservation, Anne Arundel County, MD.



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