

African American History in Arlington, Virginia

*A Guide to the Historic
Sites of a Long and
Proud Heritage*

Freedmen's Village, Arlington, Va.

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Cover: Dr. Charles R. Drew photo provided by the Moorland Spingarn Research Center, Howard University. Outdoor gathering of Freedman's Village residents photo provided by Arlington County Library.

Discover Arlington's African American Heritage

From the slaves who built Arlington House one brick at a time to the government, civic and business leaders who are building the framework for our future, the history of African Americans in Arlington — and their important contributions to our community and society — is a 200-year-old work in progress.

It is believed that in 1870, African Americans represented some 90% of Arlington's population. Many of the stories of their lives were never told, which means we may have lost them forever. The stories that are known are often overlooked because to appreciate them fully means taking time from a busy schedule, searching for old documents and pictures, not being ashamed to discuss the lives of relatives or loved ones, read a weathered tombstone, walk a wooded trail or imagine an entire village that is no longer there. Failure to research and document the lives of our people will be as if they never lived.

This guide to 17 sites, homes, churches and neighborhoods important in Arlington's African American History is just one of several recent efforts of organizations such as the Arlington County Board, Arlington Bicentennial Task Force, Arlington Historical Society, the Black Heritage Museum of Arlington and the National Park Service to rediscover these reminders and bring them alive not only for ourselves but for future generations .

We are proud to welcome you to this historic tour guide of African Americans in Arlington.

With the release of this guide, we are assuring that Arlington's historical legacy is acknowledged and used as a source of learning and understanding of African Americans who have a claim on the building of Arlington County.

Thank you for your participation in this African American tour. As with any historical document, oversights and differences in perspectives are possible. We welcome your feedback and advice with regard to this first African American tour guide of Arlington. Please contact the Arlington Visitors Center at 1-800-677-6267 should you have questions or wish to comment.

Sincerely,

Talmadge T. Williams, PhD

Chairman

Black Heritage Museum of Arlington

Welcome

Arlington House and Arlington National Cemetery

Built by African American slaves in 1802, protected during the Civil War by slaves and restored in the 20th century thanks largely to the memory of former slaves who had lived and worked there, Arlington House is both the birthplace of African American history in Arlington — and a lasting reminder of the role of African Americans in Arlington’s growth and development.

Arlington House was the home of George Washington Parke Custis, adopted grandson of George Washington. Land rich but cash poor, Custis most likely needed slave labor to build his mansion, as well as fabricate the bricks that went into it.



Arlington House, built by the black slaves of George Washington Parke Custis. Photo by David Scavone.

Even though Virginia law prohibited educating slaves, George’s wife, Mary Fitzhugh Custis, taught the field and house slaves to read so they could study the Bible. She also persuaded her husband to free several women and children. Perhaps she’s why George’s will called for freeing all his slaves five years following his death. George died in 1857, but the outbreak of the Civil War in April 1861 kept his son-in-law, Robert E. Lee, from carrying out the will. Lee left immediately to join the Confederate army. Mary Custis Lee abandoned Arlington a month later, entrusting care of her house and “Washington treasures” to

her personal housemaid Selina Gray. Despite telling occupying Union troops “never to touch any of Miss Mary’s things,” Selina could not stop them from stealing many of the family’s prized possessions. Selina eventually saved the Washington heirlooms for posterity when General Irwin McDowell heeded her warnings and sent the remaining pieces to the U.S. Patent Office for safekeeping.

In January 1864, the government purchased the estate at public auction after Mrs. Lee failed to pay her property taxes in person. That same year, 200 acres were set aside for a cemetery for war dead. In the 1920s, Selina Gray’s daughters assisted the War Department in restoring Arlington House by providing the only firsthand accounts of the mansion’s pre-Civil War condition. They also donated several original furnishings which had descended in the Gray family. Today, a replica of Freedman’s Village and exhibits in the restored Arlington House slave quarters retell the beginnings of African American history in Arlington.

Arlington National Cemetery

Buried at Arlington National Cemetery are many African Americans famous for their roles in our nation’s history. Among them are Matthew Alexander Henson, co-discoverer of the North Pole; Medgar Evers and Allard Lowenstein, slain civil-rights leaders; and Joe Louis, legendary world heavyweight boxing champion. Arlington is also the final resting place of some of the first African Americans to attain the highest ranks of national service. These include Army Brig. Gen. Benjamin O. Davis, his son, Lt. Gen. Benjamin O. Davis, Jr. Gen. Roscoe Robinson and Col. Charles Young; Air Force Gen. Daniel (Chappie) James and U.S. Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall. James Parks, former Custis slave and Arlington Cemetery worker, was the first African American to be buried there in a marked grave.



Points of Interest

Above: Changing of the guard ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknowns, Arlington National Cemetery. Photo by David Scavone.

Freedman's Village

Probable location: Arlington National Cemetery, Sections 8, 47 and 25 along Eisenhower Drive.

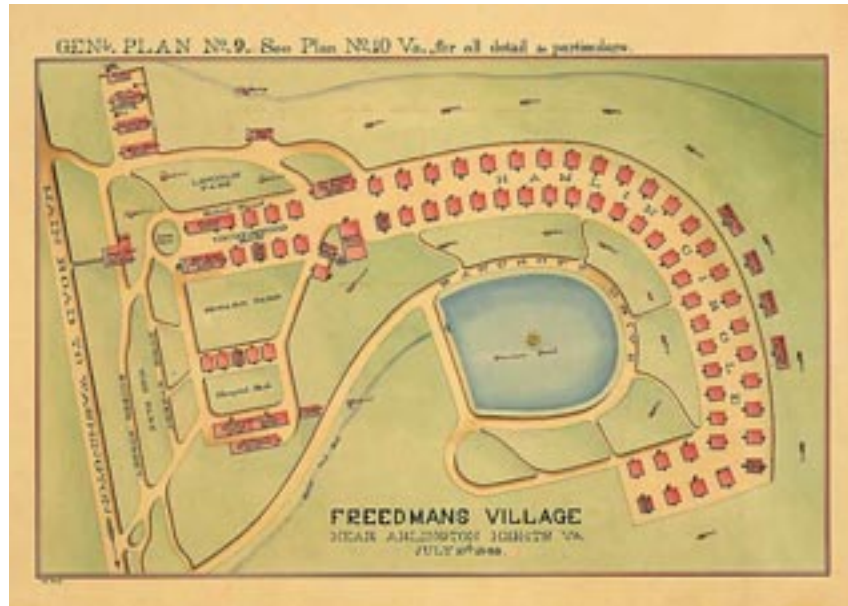
Historical marker: Foxworth Park, Southgate Road and Oak Street

In June of 1863, on the grounds of the federally confiscated Custis Arlington estate (today's Arlington National Cemetery), the U.S. government established Freedman's Village as a temporary wartime refuge for emancipated and fugitive ("contraband") slaves. But Freedman's Village survived long after the Civil War, thriving for 37 years and sowing the seeds of Arlington's African American community. Mount Zion and Mount Olive Baptist churches both descended from the village's Old Bell Church. By 1900 when the village was eventually dismantled, many residents were the grown children of original villagers. More than 3,800 markers in Section 27 — near the Netherlands Carillon and the Marine Corps Memorial — bear the inscriptions "civilian" or "citizen," indicating the burial places of Freedman's Village residents.

History

Abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia in April 1862 led many former and escaped slaves to Washington seeking shelter and employment. The government established camps for these free blacks and contrabands throughout the city. Most

available jobs were war related, and able-bodied black men from the camps were expected either to join the military as United States Colored Troops or work as military laborers. Women sewed uniforms or worked in the fields and gardens. Black workers received the same wages as whites: up to \$30 a month, plus a daily ration, less \$5 a



U.S. government map of Freedman's Village, 1865. Provided by National Archives, College Park, College Park, Maryland.

month for the "contraband fund" levied to defray the camps' operating costs.

With overcrowding from the steady flow of newcomers, conditions in the camps grew worse. Death from smallpox, scarlet fever, measles and whooping cough was common. Believing work in the open air would promote better health, the government established a new camp on the Custis estate in Arlington Heights. In just one year, the new Freedman's Village grew into the bustling and successful community described in the May 7, 1864 issue of *Harper's Weekly*:

"The village is quite lively, having a large number of children in it. For these there is a schoolhouse; there is, besides, a 'home' for the aged, a hospital, church, tailor and other work-shops, with other public buildings. The principal street is over a quarter of a mile long, and the place presents a clean and prosperous appearance at all times."

Village homes were wooden, a story and a half tall and divided down the middle for occupancy by two families. The Freedman's Village school opened with 150 students and grew to 900, both children and adults. In the village's industrial school, residents gained employable skills apprenticing as blacksmiths, wheelwrights, carpenters, shoemakers and tailors. Abbott Hospital, opened in 1866, had 50 beds and a 14-member staff.

But Freedman's Villagers lived under military rule. Residents needed passes to go into Washington. Friends from outside needed the guard's permission to visit. Even non-resident members of the United States Colored Troops (who trained on nearby Mason Island, now Theodore Roosevelt Island) needed permission to attend church services in the Village. In December 1864, the National Freedman's Relief Association hired the ex-slave and abolitionist Sojourner Truth as a counselor and advocate for Freedman's Village residents.



Outdoor gathering of Freedman's Village residents. Photo provided by Arlington County Library.

Freedman's Village, Arlington, Va

After the Civil War, the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (the Freedmen's Bureau) became responsible for residents' transition to freedom, working to relocate villagers, encourage their return to the countryside and close down Freedman's Village. The government had other potential uses for the land; in 1864, part of the Custis estate had already become Arlington National Cemetery.



Artist's depiction of Freedman's Village for Harper's Weekly magazine, May 7, 1864. With permission of harpweek.com.

Residents successfully appealed for a delay in the village's closure and in 1868 were allowed to purchase their dwellings and rent 10-acre plots of nearby land for up to \$2 an acre for two years. When these leases expired in 1870, the Bureau allowed residents to stay with the understanding they would never own the land and would one day have to leave.

Residents of Freedman's Village gained political influence through 1870s state legislation that divided counties into districts. The Custis Arlington Estate straddled two of the three districts of Alexandria County (later to become Arlington), enabling villagers to elect officials who went on to become some of Arlington's most prominent leaders. These included H.L. Holmes, who served as revenue commissioner for almost 30 years until 1903, and John B. Syphax, at various times county supervisor, the first black delegate to the General Assembly and Arlington's justice of the peace.

Throughout the 1880s and 1890s, development interests gained increasing local support for evicting the Freedman's Villagers. Finally, in 1900, Congress offered the villagers \$75,000 for the dwellings they had purchased in 1868 plus a refund of contraband taxes they had paid during the Civil War. Villagers who remained in the area established such continuing neighborhoods as Arlington View, Butler-Holmes, Hall's Hill and Nauck.

Banneker Boundary Stone

(Southwest 9 Intermediate Boundary Stone)
18th Street North and North Van Buren Street

Benjamin Banneker — the free self-taught mathematician and astronomer known as the “first black man of science” — was part of Andrew Ellicott's survey team that in 1791 laid out the boundary of the District of Columbia. With 60-year-old Banneker performing the required astronomical calculations, the survey team placed 1-foot-square sandstone markers at 1-mile intervals along the 40-mile perimeter of the diamond-shaped capital city on the Potomac River. In 1847, Congress returned the land south of the river to the Commonwealth of Virginia, where Banneker's boundaries define what is today Arlington County.

Banneker demonstrated his mathematical genius in many ways. A clock he built of carved wooden parts struck the hour and kept accurate time for over 50 years. Contradicting the forecasts of prominent mathematicians and astronomers, he correctly predicted the solar eclipse of April 14, 1789. He gained national recognition with his publication in 1792 of weather, astronomical and related information in *Almanack and Ephemeris*.

Southwest 9 Intermediate Boundary Stone, in a park at 18th and North Van Buren Streets, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and was chosen by the Afro-American Bicentennial Corporation to commemorate Banneker's life and contributions. Two other stones along Arlington's boundaries are easily accessible to the public: Southwest Stone 6 in the median of Jefferson St. between Leesburg Turnpike and Columbia Pike; and the West Cornerstone, in a park (reachable from Arizona St.) where Arlington County meets Fairfax County and the City of Falls Church.



Banneker Boundary Stone near 18th and North Van Buren Streets. Photo by Heather Patterson, Scavone Photography.

*imagine a village no longer there, or
take time to read a weathered tombstone*

Historic Homes



South First Street home of Charles R. Drew, inventor of the modern-day blood bank. Photo by George H. Decker.



Harry W. Gray modeled his home after townhouses he had seen in Washington's Foggy Bottom neighborhood. Learning masonry as a slave at Arlington House, Harry applied his skill to building the first red brick townhouse in Arlington County in 1881. Photo provided by Arlington Historic Affairs Landmark Review Board.

Harry Gray House

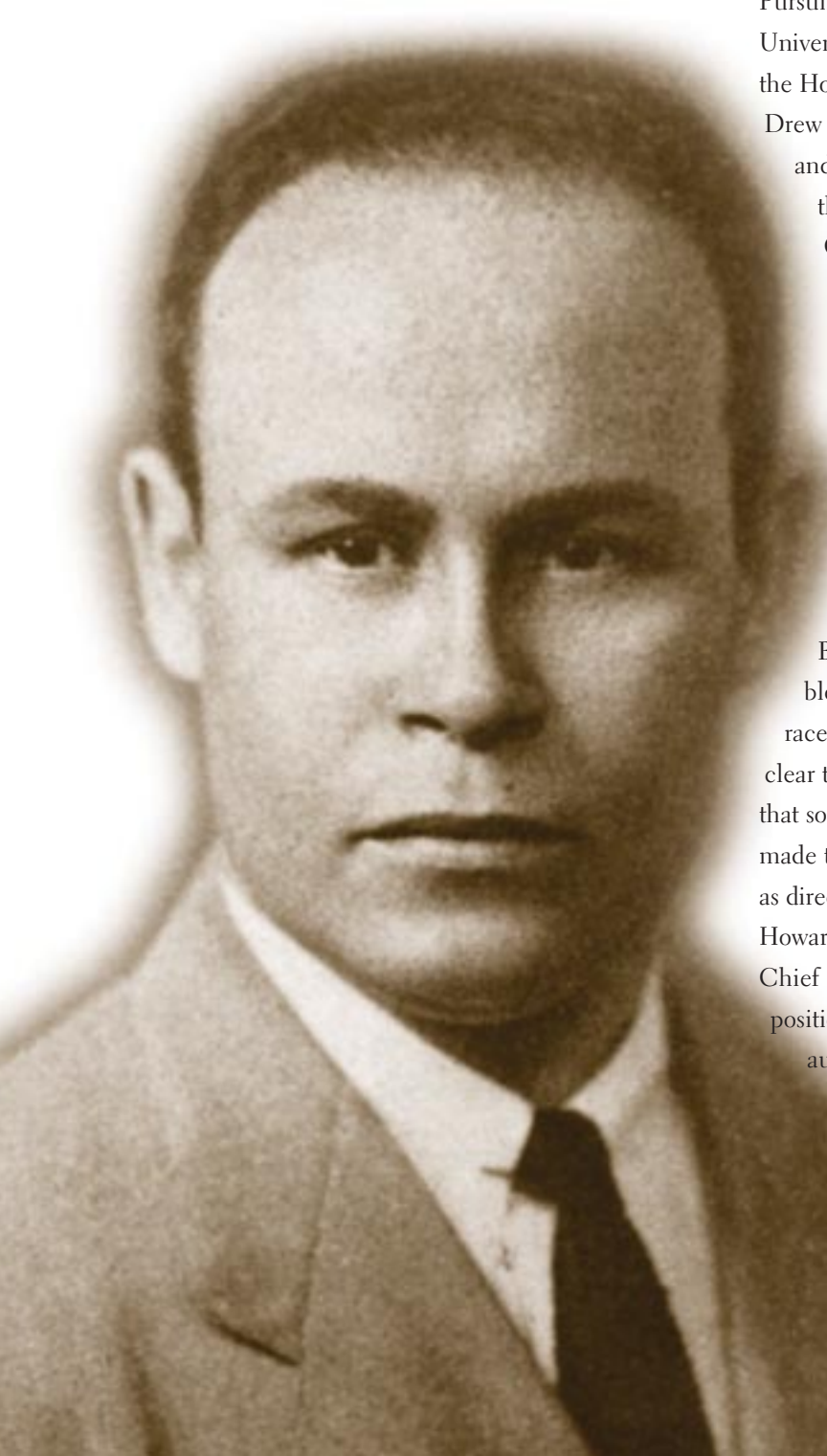
1005 South Quinn Street

Designed and built in 1881 by a man born into slavery, Harry W. Gray house is significant not only for its place in the history of Arlington's African-American community, but also for being the first red brick townhouse built in Arlington County.

Harry Gray learned masonry at the Custis Arlington estate where his father, Thornton, was a slave, and his mother, Selina, was personal housemaid of Mary Custis Lee, wife of Robert E. Lee. Perhaps because of their mother's position in the household, Harry and his five sisters were educated with the Lee children. Harry's odd jobs as a youth included refurbishing masonry around the estate and assisting in building its stone walls and parapets.

As a free man after the Civil War, Harry purchased his own 10-acre estate from a local landholder. He modeled his red brick house on townhouses he had seen in the Foggy Bottom neighborhood of Washington, D.C., when visiting friends and relatives of his wife, Martha Hoard Gray, originally from the James Madison Estate in Orange County, Virginia. The house quite literally bears Harry Gray's name: on the day his family moved in, he carved "Harry W. Gray May 1, 1881" on a brick by the back door.

Harry worked for the U.S. Department of the Interior and the Patent Office for 40 years as a clerk and messenger. He and Martha raised four children on the Gray Estate, Thornton, Sara, Julia and Martha, who created a perpetual tribute to Harry W. Gray by subdividing the property into four streets with building site lots and naming it the Gray's Subdivision. Streets were originally named for the family: Gray Street, Hoard Street and Slade Street; as well as Radio Place because the house faced the radio towers at the north.



Charles R. Drew Family Home

2505 First Street South

The modern-day blood bank, as well as proof that blood plasma could be used in place of whole blood for transfusions, resulted from the groundbreaking research of a young African American physician and Arlington resident, Dr. Charles R. Drew.

Pursuing advanced training at Columbia University Medical School on a fellowship from the Howard University College of Medicine, Dr. Drew demonstrated the practicality of separating and storing blood plasma. His published thesis, “Banked Blood,” earned him Columbia’s first doctorate ever awarded to an African American.

As a result of this work, Dr. Drew became medical supervisor of the Blood for Britain project in 1940, then director of the Red Cross Blood Bank and assistant director of the National Research Council, in charge of blood collection for the U.S. Army and Navy.

But when the U.S. armed forces ordered blood to be separated according to the donor’s race, Drew called a press conference to make it clear there was no racial difference in blood and that soldiers and sailors would die needlessly if made to wait for “same race” blood. He resigned as director of the blood program and returned to Howard University as Professor of Surgery and Chief Surgeon for Freedmen’s Hospital — positions he held until his death in an automobile accident on April 1, 1950.

Pioneering blood researcher and onetime Arlington resident Dr. Charles R. Drew resigned as director of the U.S. armed forces’ blood program rather than support the separation of blood by the donor’s race. Photo provided by the Moorland Spingarn Research Center, Howard University.

Dunbar Mutual Homes Association

3500 Block of South Kemper Road

On an 11-acre site overlooking Shirlington from Arlington’s Green Valley, 86 African American households built a community dedicated to providing affordable housing to people locked out of the local real estate market because of their race. Dunbar Mutual Homes Association was a low-cost housing cooperative formed in 1949 by a group of black veterans and their families already living in the homes built by the U.S. government to house war program workers.

When the war ended, the government offered the entire development to Arlington County for one dollar. The County declined. Many other people and businesses, however, recognized the value of the property. One local car dealer reportedly offered a million dollars for it.

Black residents already living there wanted to stay and formed a non-profit housing cooperative to put together a bid. But the Dunbar Mutual Homes Association found they could not obtain funds from local banks. James A. Hewitt, a white

real estate broker in Washington, D.C., helped the Dunbar association secure loan money from a New York bank. Hewitt also lent Dunbar the money for closing. Since the complex was originally built for the benefit of veterans and

displaced people, and many of the residents were veterans’ families, the government — rather than selling to the highest bidder — accepted the Dunbar association’s bid of \$264,000.

During the 25 years of the Dunbar Mutual Homes Association’s first mortgage, members paid \$65 a month for a two-bedroom house or \$72 for a three-bedroom, plus a down payment. The organization was a cooperative, so members bought in, they did not rent.

According to a 1974 newspaper article commemorating the association’s 25th anniversary, Dunbar’s founders thought of their

project as an alternative to public housing — an experiment that helped generation after generation of people of modest resources build self-sufficiency and pay their own way.

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86 African American households

Churches



The Senior Choir of Former Years, Charlie Richardson, President; Rev. Dennis Edward, Director. As pictured in the Mt. Zion Baptist Church centennial program. Photo provided by Arlington County Library.

Mount Zion Baptist Church

3500 South 19th Street

Founded as Old Bell Church in Freedman's Village during the Civil War, Mount Zion Baptist Church is one of the first black churches in Arlington County. Rev. Robert Law was the church's first pastor. When the federal government required the church's members to move out of Freedman's Village, many settled in Alexandria County (now Arlington). In September 1866, the congregation purchased property on Mount Vernon Avenue (now Arlington Ridge Road) and, under the leadership of Rev. Joseph Andrews, erected a new two-story red brick church with a white marble front. They renamed it Mount Zion Baptist Church.

In 1930, during the pastorate of Rev. James Green, the Mount Zion congregation built a new church on the same site. But the U.S. government condemned the property in 1942 to make way for construction of roads serving the Pentagon. The present Mount Zion Baptist Church building was constructed in the Nauck community at 19th and



Mt. Zion Baptist Church on South 19th St. Photo by David Scavone.



Lomax A.M.E. Zion Church as it appears today. Photo provided by Arlington County Library.



Erected in 1889, the second Lomax A.M.E. Zion Church replaced the first building on this site, which had been reassembled from planks of the Little Zion Methodist Church in Freedman's Village. By 1922, the congregation had outgrown this building which had served as the center of their religious lives for over thirty years. Illustration provided by Arlington County Library.

Lomax A.M.E. Zion Church

2704 South 24th Road

Lomax A.M.E. Zion Church is another of Arlington's oldest continuing black churches. First led by Reverend Richard Tomkins as Little Zion Methodist Church in 1866 in Freedman's Village, the congregation later met in the nearby home of Levi and Sarah Jones before moving to their own one-acre site in Green Valley (Nauck) purchased for \$75 in 1874. Members dismantled their original church in Freedman's Village and reassembled the small frame building on the new site. Wallace Boswell (1843-1934), who made the \$5 down payment on the property, is buried under the church steps. In 1876, they renamed the church for Bishop T.H. Lomax. The original church had only one room, where the congregation worshiped on Sundays, held meetings at night and conducted school during the day. Lomax Chapel was built between 1887 and 1889. The church's brick structure was built in 1922. Guests are encouraged to visit the church cemetery and come inside to see the commemorative quilts that depict church history through photographs on fabric.



The original Mt. Olive Baptist Church building as it appeared in 1938. From a commemorative church program. Photo provided by Arlington County Library.

Mount Olive Baptist Church

1601 South 13th Road

Near the end of 1873, 85 members of Old Bell Church in Freedman's Village set about to establish a new church under the leadership of Rev. Washington Waller. Because on paper they were still members of Old Bell Church, they could not launch a new congregation themselves. So a revival was held in April 1874 at which nine persons were converted and baptized. They immediately formed Antioch Baptist Church and voted to accept the 85 members from Old Bell.

Antioch church was later destroyed during one of the federal government's initial attempts to close Freedman's Village. For a time the congregation held services across the river in Southwest Washington, D.C. Unhappy with this location, the church moved back to Arlington, holding services at Johnson's Hall on Columbia Pike. When a member's home was destroyed by fire, the congregation acquired her land and in 1893 erected a new building and renamed themselves Mount Olive Baptist Church.

A significantly remodeled Mount Olive reopened in May 1940, but just one year later the congregation was ordered to vacate by the War Department to make way for Pentagon roads. The last service at this location was held in a roofless, empty and partially demolished building the third Sunday in July 1942. Mount Olive moved into its present building in late 1944.



Calloway United Methodist Church as it appears today. Photo by David Scavone.

Calloway United Methodist Church

5000 Lee Highway

Calloway United Methodist Church began at an 1866 prayer service in the home of a member just two miles from the church's present-day location. The congregation's first church building was located at 4840 Lee Highway in the Hall's Hill neighborhood. It took the membership less than 40 years to outgrow their original building. A larger church was built on the current site in 1904.

St. John's Baptist Church

1905 South Columbia Pike

Established in 1903, St. John's Baptist Church was the first African American congregation founded in the 20th century in Arlington County.

For the church's first five years, services were held at Odd Fellows Hall on Columbia Pike. Members purchased the present site for \$500. Within three and a half years, they had saved \$2,100 to build and dedicate the original church in 1908.

Rev. Edgar E. Ricks was the first pastor of St. John's, and its deacons and trustees were H. L. Holmes, J. Willis Wormley and Dallas Jones.

Two extensive renovations during the pastorates of Rev. James H. Marshall and Rev. John R. Wheeler brought St. John's Baptist Church to its present size.

Macedonia Baptist Church

3412 South 22nd Street

Prayer gatherings in the home of Bonder and Amanda Johnson in 1908 led to the formal establishment of Macedonia Baptist Church in 1911 by Reverend Brass Clark of Alexandria and Reverend Frank Graham of Mount Zion Baptist Church. Reverend John Gilliam served as the church's first pastor. After outgrowing their original home, the congregation purchased its first building, the Old Peyton Hall at Nauck Station. Continued growth led to construction of a new building at 22nd Street and the "Track" (Kenmore Street), where the cornerstone was laid on September 18, 1927. Just 44 years later another building expansion program was initiated with the October 10, 1971, with the laying of a cornerstone for the church's newest wing.

The background image is a journal entry from a typical church ledger book from 1886.

Our Lady, Queen of Peace Catholic Church

2700 South 19th Street

Sixteen black Catholic families gathered in the South 2nd Street home of Edward and Alice Moorman one day in early 1945 to explain to representatives of the Richmond diocese the need for their own church. At the nearest Arlington parish, only the rear pew was available to African Americans, and a chain across the opening assured they would only receive Communion after the whites. Churches in Alexandria and Washington were more welcoming, but more difficult to get to.

Bishop Peter Ireton approved the establishment of Our Lady, Queen of Peace and the Holy Ghost Fathers agreed to staff it. Services were first held in parishioners' homes and then in rented halls. Founding member Clarence Brown, who died in 1993 at age 98, worked with local black Realtor Solomon Thompson to purchase a 1.7-acre building site at 19th and South Edgewood Streets for \$14,000. The new church was blessed by Bishop Ireton on Pentecost Sunday, June 15, 1947. Today, as a highly diverse parish, Our Lady, Queen of Peace sustains the spirit of openness in which it was founded.



Notable Neighborhoods

Above: Levi Jones, a free black man, established the Nauck neighborhood when he built his house in 1844.
Photo provided by Arlington County Library.

Nauck

Bounded by the Army-Navy Country Club (north), Shirley Highway (east), Four Mile Run Drive (south) and South Walter Reed Drive (west)

Initially settled in 1844 by the free black man Levi Jones, Nauck began its gradual growth into an African American community when former residents of Freedman's Village began moving into the area after the Civil War. Availability of the streetcar by 1900 spurred additional residential construction as the Washington, Arlington and Falls Church Electric Railway connected Nauck to Rosslyn and the District.

As it did in many African American communities in southern states, segregation played a significant role in Nauck's history. Black students originally attended the Kemper School which opened in 1875 at Lomax AME Zion Church. A new segregated elementary school was built for Arlington's African American population in 1945. Originally called the Kemper Annex, it was renamed in 1952 to honor Dr. Charles R. Drew, the Arlington resident and blood plasma pioneer who died in a 1950 automobile accident. With the end of segregation in 1971, Drew Elementary became the Drew Model Elementary School, a countywide magnet school. In 2000 the school was demolished to make way for a larger and technologically advanced school building.

As it did in many African American communities in southern states, segregation played a significant role in Nauck's history.

Hall's Hill

Bounded by Lee Highway(north), Glebe Road (east), North 17th Street (south) and George Mason Drive (west); also known as High View Park



The African American volunteer company at Fire Station No. 8 in Hall's Hill was known throughout Arlington for its efficiency. Photo provided by Arlington County Library.

The Hall's Hill community came into being after the Civil War as landowner Basil Hall — and later his son and neighbors — sold nearly 300 acres to former slaves for prices ranging from \$10 to \$15 an acre on terms ranging from lump-sum cash, in-kind trade, 10 cents a week or 50 cents a month. The community maintained its African American identity during the World War II building boom as residents came to each other's aid, helping their neighbors pay their rising property taxes to avoid forced home sales.

The neighborhood's Fire Station No. 8, organized as a volunteer unit in 1918, was the county's first black fire station, and later the first and only with paid black firemen. Their efficiency was known and respected countywide.

Until the 1950s, a seven-foot-high wooden fence surrounded the community on three sides. It had been erected by white homeowners whose houses backed up to Hall's Hill lots, making Lee Highway residents' only way into or out of Hall's Hill.

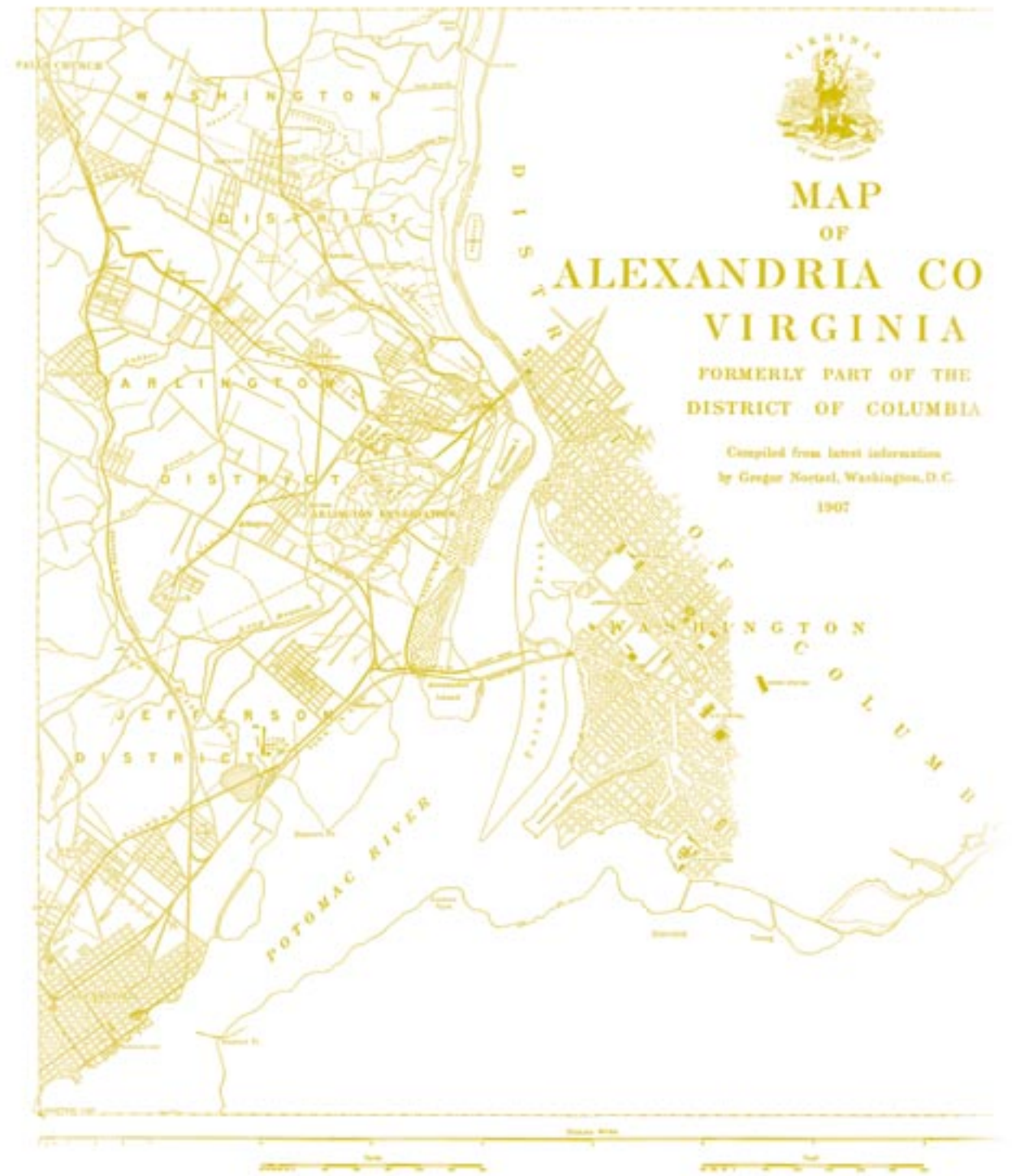
Today, of course, segregation is long gone and only a small part of the fence that symbolized it can still be seen from 17th Street. Hall's Hill remains the only predominantly African American neighborhood in the northern part of Arlington County and is by some accounts the oldest black enclave in all of Northern Virginia.

Butler-Holmes

Bounded by Arlington Blvd. (north), Ft. Myer (east), 2nd St. (south) and Fillmore St. (west); within today's Penrose neighborhood

A pair of African American businessmen and local government officials had a lot to do with Arlington's transition from a farming area to a residential community. William H. Butler, Arlington superintendent of roads in 1879, and Henry Louis Holmes, Alexandria Commissioner of Revenue from 1876 to 1903, purchased 13 acres of the Hunter Plantation (Brookdale) just west of Fort Myer and subdivided their parcel into building lots in 1882.

One original house still standing on South 2nd Street was operated by a member of the Holmes family as the Fireside Inn, providing a restaurant and lodging for African American travelers to whom other accommodations were not available. The Charles Drew home is located in Butler-Holmes.



As shown in this 1907 map, neighborhoods, street names and major routes familiar today were already established at the beginning of the 20th century. All of today's Arlington County was included within the original boundaries of the federal District of Columbia. When the land was returned to the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1847, Arlington became a district within a larger Alexandria County. Arlington would not become the official name for a separate county until 1920.



Getting Around

All of the sites and neighborhoods described in this brochure can be reached by Metro, bus, taxi or car. If you are traveling here from out of town, you'll find Arlington easy to reach by both air and ground transportation. Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport is right here in Arlington, and served by its own Metro station. Washington-Dulles International Airport is just a short drive away.

Ground Transportation Information

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
 Metro and Metrobus
 Schedule Information202-637-7000
 Metro Maps202-637-7000

Washington Flyer
 Official ground transportation of the Washington Metropolitan Airport Authority.....703-685-1400
 Scheduled routes:
 • From Dulles to Washington, D.C.
 • From National to Washington, D.C.
 • Between Dulles and National
 • From Dulles to West Falls Church
 Metro Station
 Arlington Taxi Companies
 Blue Top703-243-8575
 Red Top703-522-3333

Acknowledgments

- Arlington Historical Society
Gerry Laporte, *President*
- Arlington Bicentennial Task Force
Margaret Lampe, *Chairman*
- Arlington Cemetery
Jack Metzler, *Superintendent*
- Black Heritage Museum of Arlington
Talmadge Williams, *Chairman*
- Arlington Chamber of Commerce
Richard Doud, *President*
- Arlington Economic Development
Adam Wasserman, *Director*
- Arlington Convention & Visitors Service
- National Park Service
Audrey Calhoun, *Superintendent*
- Virginia Foundation for Humanities
Robert Vaughan, *President*
- Virginia Tourism Corporation
- Arlington Central Library, Virginia Room
- Howard University
Dr. Victor Dzidzenyo
Peter Scott

- Arlington County Board
Chris Zimmerman, *Chairman*
Charles Monroe, *Vice Chairman*
Barbara Favola
Jay Fisette
Paul Ferguson

- Special Recognition
U.S. Senator John Warner
U.S. Congressman Jim Moran

- Recognition of the following individuals for their assistance with the project
Sara Collins
Saundra Green
Shirley Green
Frank Impala
Herschel Kanter
Jennifer King
Jim Palmer
Debbie Powers
Angela Rouson
Margaret Sanders
William Thomas
Joan White

Virginia is for Lovers

A project of the Arlington Convention and Visitors Service, Arlington Chamber of Commerce and the Black Heritage Museum of Arlington.



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