

Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture  
Public Meeting  
Minutes of October 1, 2018

A public meeting was held on Monday, October 1, 2018 at the Hagerstown Community College, 11400 Robinwood Drive, Hagerstown, Maryland 21742.

The meeting was called to order at 11:04 a.m. by Chair Dale Glenwood Green. The following commissioners were in attendance: Iris Leigh Barnes, Vice Chair Rev. Dr. Tamara England Wilson, Maya Davis, Malcolm Funn, Janice Curtis Greene, Edwin T. Johnson, Melvin Kelly, Steven X. Lee, Cheryl McLeod, Elinor L. Thompson and Reggie Turner.

**Proof of Public Notice**

Accepted by general consensus.

**Welcome**

Mr. Jim Klauber, President-Hagerstown Community College thanked the public for coming and the Maryland Commission on African American History & Culture (MCAAHC) for having its meeting on their campus. He shared that he originally came from Greenville South Carolina, where he was a history major. He said that he was glad to be in the State of Maryland where the African American History is very rich.

**Minutes of June 4, 2018 Meeting**

Chair Dale Green called for a motion to accept the minutes of the August 6, 2018's MCAAHC meeting. Commissioner Iris Barnes asked for an amendment to her report on page seven that the name "Mr. Merroll Schwarz" be changed to "Mr. Will Schwarz." She also asked that in the first paragraph, the third sentence in her report that "Hartford County" be changed to "Harford County."

Last but not least Commissioner Iris Barnes asked that the first sentence in the fourth paragraph of her report go from saying, "Commissioner Barnes said that she and Chair Dale Glenwood Green to she and Commissioner Janice Curtis Greene went to the Salisbury Court House where they looked at the case of George Armwood that galvanized many people like Lillie Carrol Jackson, Clarence Mitchell, and Juanita Mitchell to become the Freedom Fighters that they were."

Commissioner Janice Curtis Greene asked for an amendment to page five that the first paragraph would move from saying, "the Permanent Order of Val Catholic Women of Color in the United States" be changed to the "Permanent Order of Catholic Women of Color in the United States." Last but not least, she asked on page five, the second paragraph move from saying, "Sister Virger A. Fische to Sister Virginie A. Fische".

Commissioner Steven X. Lee asked for an amendment in his report to say in the first paragraph that Commissioner Lee shared that he has been researching the BDM's artifacts over the past couple of months as well as have meeting changed to conversing with Director Compton. "

Commissioner Edwin T. Johnson made a motion to accept the minutes with the amendments requested. Commissioner Cheryl McLeod seconded the motion and the motion carried.

**Director's Report**

Chair Dale Glenwood Green took a moment to recognize Ms. Chanel Compton, the Executive Director of the MCAAHC and the Banneker-Douglass Museum (BDM), who celebrated her first year working in her dual positions. Director Compton thanked Chair Green for the introduction. She thanked LeRonn Herbert, Special Assistant for the MCAAHC, who also received a promotion, holding a dual position, in being made the Administrative Manager. She also took the moment to recognize the MCAAHC Commissioners who represent preserving African American History and Culture in the four parts of the State of Maryland.

Director Compton said that she will be giving a report on the many activities that took place for the months of August and September focusing primarily on the Banneker-Douglass Museum. She said that the BDM staff has been working closely and diligently with the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives (GOCI). Director Compton recognized and thanked Mr. Alex Choi, Director of Communications for GOCI for coming to the public meeting.

Director Compton also said that the museum has been working with their stakeholders in furthering education outreach and initiatives to promote Maryland's African American Heritage to larger and diverse audiences. The mission of the BDM is to: document, interpret, and to promote African American History and Culture in the great State of Maryland. Director Compton says that the museum does this through exhibitions, programs, and projects in order to improve the understanding of diverse cultural history for all. She shared that the BDM is a component of the MCAAHC and is a unit under the GOCI.

Director Compton said that in August and September, leadership from BDM and the commission, began meeting with community stakeholders to develop plans for the Frederick Douglass culminating Celebration as well as prepare for the MCAAHC 50th Anniversary Campaign in 2019. She said that this is the year of Frederick Douglass as stated by Governor Larry Hogan. Director Compton said that Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey Douglass was born in Talbot County on February 14, 1818, and 2018 marks his bicentennial year. The BDM, the State of Maryland's Official Repository of African American History and Culture will be celebrating Frederick Douglass through lectures, performances, exhibits, and more!

Director Compton said that in 2019, the State of Maryland will be celebrating the 50th Anniversary for the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture. These initiatives mark the accomplishments of MCAAHC and BDM and will continue to attract visitors and supporters from across the region. Born out of the civil rights movement, the MCAAHC and BDM were founded to be a voice for African Americans, broadening historical narratives, and inspiring the hearts and minds of Maryland citizens.

To further the BDM and MCAAHC's reach and capacity, Director Compton said that she participated in the Association of African American Museums (AAAM) conference, a preservation leadership training, and committee led planning meetings, to engage in networking, professional development, and fundraising opportunities.

Director Compton shared that the Douglass Reading Room: In celebration of the "Year of Frederick Douglass," features books written by and about Frederick Douglass and other influential African American authors. There will also be art works by noted artists: Elizabeth Catlett and Romare Bearden. In August, a second rotation of the exhibit features noted artists such as Mildred Thompson and the first addition of Frederick Douglass' My Bondage and My Freedom. The exhibit will be open until February 28<sup>th</sup>. It's a great interactive exhibit where one can sit, read, be inspired, and learn.

Director Compton said the AAAM reached a milestone: 40 years of convening Black Museum professionals to advocate, collaborate, and advance the field. The 40th Anniversary AAAM Conference was held at Hampton, Virginia and was hosted by the Hampton University Museum, which celebrated its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Director Compton said that the AAAM conference was a four day conference that included preservation training, key note addresses from the Studio Museum of Harlem Thelma Golden and author and historian, Ibram X. Kendi. The 2018 conference theme was "Till Earth and Heaven Ring: Celebrating the Progress and Sustaining the Promise of African American Museums." This conference also examined the past 40 years of the Black Museums movement and interrogated the viability of Black Museums and Black Museum professionals for the next 40 years and beyond.

Director Compton shared that during this conference, she was awarded the Pace Setter Award, for academic and professional achievement within the field of African American museums and community outreach. She felt that this was a true honor. Director Compton said that Hampton University is the oldest African American Museum in the U.S. and is one of the oldest museums in Virginia. Founded in 1868, the museum represents the first assemblage of

African American art collected by William H. Sheppard, an African American art collector. Director Compton said that one of the museum's most iconic pieces is the Henry O. Tanner, *The BANJO Lesson* that the Hampton museum acquired in 1894.

Director Compton shared that at the conference, many of the museums and agencies represented throughout the nation were established within the last 50 years out of the civil rights and black power movements. So in the late 60's to the 90's America saw a huge surge of African American museums. The Banneker-Douglass Museum and the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture is part of this social movement. Director Compton said that right here in Maryland, scholars such as Benjamin Quarles, a student of Carter G. Woodson, the father of Black History, and activists such as, Verda Welcome, who became America's first woman senator, led the legislation to create the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture founded in 1969.

This was one year after King's assassination, and like our sister agencies throughout the country, BDM and the commission were founded to combat institutionalized racism that actively promoted the idea that African Americans did not have a significant history and made little to no contribution to this country. The commission would go on to service and provide resources to hundreds of African American historical sites, museums, and centers throughout the region and service thousands of visitors to the Banneker-Douglass Museum. 2019, will be a powerful year as the commission celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary! The commission would lead in the founding of the Banneker-Douglass Museum in 1984.

Director Compton said that the National Trust for Historic Preservation in partnership with the National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) hosted a two-day workshop designed to address the specific needs of executive directors, trustees, and boards managing African American historic sites and museums at the BDM. Topic areas included: non-profit management, preservation planning, board development and fundraising strategies. Workshop facilitators used highly interactive exercises, case studies, small group work, and assignments focused on the specific needs of participant organizations.

As an outcome, members of the BDM Foundation and Friends group, BDM Executive Director, and MCAAHC leadership, developed a 6 month action plan focused on donor stewardship. Facilitators from the National Trust of Historic Preservation encouraged MCAAHC, BDM Foundation, and Friends group to think bigger when it comes to collaboration and philanthropy.

Director Compton said that the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee developing a list of programs honoring honorary Maryland leaders, commission achievements, & historic sites. Chair Green took a moment to say that the MCAAHC was the first commission enacted in America established in 1969 where the mission of the commission is to document, discover, and promote the African American History of the State of Maryland. It is a commission now 50 years later, leading and inspiring other commissions around the country. There are nine commissions like the MCAAHC in America.

### ***Report of the Officers***

*MCAAHC Chair Dale Green*

Chair Dale Green began his report by sharing that the MCAAHC will be celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2019. He said that the MCAAHC is unique and is the first of its kind where it was established in 1969. It is one of nine commissions and the first to be established in America. The commission has 21 commissioners that are appointed by the governor where the commission oversees the State of Maryland Museum: Banneker-Douglass Museum which also has a director that serves a dual role of overseeing the MCAAHC and the BDM.

Chair Green said that the MCAAHC has a State of Maryland \$1 million dollar African American Heritage Preservation Grant (AAHPG) that the commission is extremely proud of. The grant, since its inception in 2010, has inspired

economic development not only around the State of Maryland but has inspired other states as well to look at having a grant like the AAHPG as an investment tool.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation (NHTP) recently launched a case study on the grant program of the commission. The NHTP has a \$15 million African American Grant program where they released awards to 15 sites across the country. They received 836 grant applications.

Chair Green said that every year, since 2010, the MCAAHC has received grant requests from across the State of Maryland. This year the MCAAHC received 35 applications. He said that there were: three that came from Baltimore County, five from Baltimore City, one from St. Mary's City, two from Queen Anne's County, two from Somerset County, two from Montgomery County, one from Talbot County, one from Dorchester County, five from Caroline County, one from Calvert County, one from Frederick County, one from Alleghany County, five from Anne Arundel County, one from Charles County, two from Prince George's County, and one from Washington County.

Chair Green said that this year the MCAAHC received two applications from Western Maryland. He looks for more applications from this area where he shared that the MCAAHC will have past awardees to give information on how the AAHPG helped their organization. Chair Green said that the applications lead to successful investments in the State of Maryland. To date, through the AAHPG, \$7 million has been invested throughout the State of Maryland and African American Preservation. Previous to this grant program, 100 African American sites were divested.

Chair Green shared that roughly 350 jobs were created because of this program. He also said that initially, the AAHPG was a conditional grant but in 2015 it was signed into legislation to perpetuity by the Maryland General Assembly. Chair Green said, each year the governor has to find \$1 million dollars to fund this program. He shared that the commission is equally proud that the legislators are looking to expand the amount of money given towards this grant because of its impact. Chair Green said that the MCAAHC is working on some numbers to make sure the value matches the impact of the new grant requests.

Chair Green said that before he yields his time to Vice Chair Rev. Dr. Tamara England-Wilson, he wanted to report that there was a person who was going to come from the audience and make a presentation on the "Year of Frederick Douglass." He said that from this presentation, Frederick Douglass came and visited Hagerstown on three different occasions, all in the year of 1879, when he was the first U.S. Marshall. Chair Green said that we truly celebrate the "Year of Frederick Douglass" for he did go to all four corners of the State of Maryland.

*MCAAHC Vice Chair Rev. Dr. Tamara England Wilson*

Vice Chair Rev. Dr. England Wilson shared that she was going to yield her time since Chair Dale Green, Director Chanel Compton and many of the MCAAHC Commissioners will be giving their reports on many things she would have shared.

## **Report of Commissioners**

*Commissioner Reggie Turner*

Commissioner Reggie Turner gave his report saying that he has been doing a considerable amount of outreach in the Washington County-Hagerstown, Maryland area. He shared that he wanted to thank Commissioner Lynn Bowman for taking the time to meet with him to connect with individuals that he did not know from Frederick County and Washington County in preparation for this MCAAHC meeting. Commissioner Turner said that he believes that the registration for the AAHPG will go up next year because of the various information that has been shared to the Western Maryland area.

*Commissioner Lynn Bowman*

Commissioner Lynn Bowman began her report by giving a power point presentation on a program that took place in Frostburg over the week of September 9-15, 2018. She gave background history that in 2011 she published a book entitled *Being Black in Brownsville: Echoes of a "forgotten" Frostburg*. This book was written concerning the

Brownsville Community land that was used to build Frostburg State University. Commissioner Bowman shared that in 1876 there were 250 people in 11 homes. Frostburg State took ownership of this community and at the Appalachian Festival where stories were shared about this community.

Commissioner Bowman said that it is important that we, as people, take ownership of our stories and fortunately she was able to take ownership of those stories from individuals that lived in that community. In 2017 she shared that the descendants of the community got together with her on a conference call and asked her if she would not mind if they started was is called, "The Brownsville Project."

Commissioner Bowman was delighted for she felt that the only way that this project would take place is if the community took the reins of this project. The Brownsville Project started out as a workshop and then evolved into a play. The play was put together by two women: Ms. Clory Jackson, a descendant from the Brownsville Community and Ms. Caroline Hahn who is not. Commissioner Bowman said it was great to have Carolyn to be a part of this endeavor because the play encompasses the black and white perspective of what was thought of concerning the Brownsville Community. Ultimately this collaboration open doors for these ladies to be invited to bring their play called "The Brownsville Project" to the Appalachian Festival. The play has been taking place at the Palace Theatre which was once a segregated theatre. Eleven acting classes from Frostburg State University worked with Klorrie and Carolyn for the production of this program.

#### *Commissioner Maya Davis*

Commissioner Maya Davis began her report sharing that she gave a presentation at the Society of American Archives where there were 3,000 attendees. Her presentation was on the Maryland State Archives (MSA) Legacy of Slavery program where there were 100 individuals in attendance. Commissioner Davis said that the highlight of the conference was the breakout sessions. There was a session on the Meeting of Minorities Archivist Librarians and Museum Professionals where one was able to dialogue with individuals in that area and have a discussion of the issues that they were facing.

Commissioner Davis shared that the National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) gave information on the Great Migration project they are working on at the end of the session. She said that the NMAAHC is digitizing still images and videos. Commissioner Davis said that if one wants to share their history with the museum and help them preserve the story of the Great Migration please reach out to them and make an appointment. She shared that it was great to see that there were new efforts to redescribe records and archival holdings. Commissioner Davis said that minority groups have been written about in records in an insensitive way. She shared it is our responsibility to go back and make sure to look at how individuals were described in these records. Commissioner Davis said that individuals were not described as people in the records.

Commissioner Davis said that another thing that was on the rise was archiving the records on the LGBTQ community. She shared that it is very important to give the same time and consideration to their archives as well as to other minority groups. Commissioner Davis had a meeting with the Baha'i faith community where they had a discourse on faith and race communities. She said that it was an interesting discussion on the responsibility of the faith community as it regards to race issues nationally as well as around the globe.

One of the things Commissioner Davis found interesting was that both of Dr. E.B. DuBois wives were of the Baha'i faith community. She said that the Baha'i faith grew out of the Middle East and Iran. The group has been persecuted by Iran and are not allowed to practice openly. Commissioner Davis said that it was interesting to see the work that they are doing here in the United States of America, their community as well as the community at large.

Commissioner Davis said that she will be involved with the DC Conference that will be taking place Nov. 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> in Washington, DC. The conference will consist of Washington, DC history as well as the history between the States of Maryland, Virginia, and other states. Commissioner Davis said that in the month of October she will be presenting

at the Mid Atlantic Regional Archives Conference in Wilmington, Delaware where the MSA will be doing an update version of the Legacy of Slavery program.

*Commissioner Janice Curtis Greene*

Commissioner Janice Curtis Greene shared that she is continuing to work on her oral history project for the Oblate Sisters of Providence, the First Order of Vowed Catholic Religious *Women* of Color in the United States who celebrated their 190<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2019. She shared that she was able to get the Maryland Arts Council to come aboard by giving a grant for this project.

Commissioner Greene says that she continues to portray Harriet Tubman and Juanita Jackson Mitchell across the State of Maryland. She said that she has been invited several times to the Harriet Tubman Visitor's center where she recently visited them as Harriet Tubman on Saturday, September 29, 2018.

Commissioner Greene said that she is working on the United States Census Bureau (USCB) project where the National Association of Black Storytellers (NABS) is in partnership with them. Fifteen affiliates across the United State of America are using story telling as part of their community outreach project to encourage the public to be counted as part of the 2020 census project. Commissioner Greene says that people and people of color get counted in the census numbers so that they know that there is funding for them at the state and federal level. She said that people of color sometimes are afraid to give their names and phone numbers for various reasons. Commissioner Greene said that in 2020, the census will be done by computer. She said that the U.S. Census Bureau and the National Black Story Tellers are trying to engage the library systems for individuals that don't have computers in their homes. Commissioner Greene said that September 26, 2018 is the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the USCB. She shared that 72 years was considered the normal life span of a person and that the USCB will be covering information up to that time period. Commissioner Greene said that this will be one of the biggest initiatives given at the NBST Conference that will take place Thursday, November 1, 2018.

*Commissioner Melvin Kelly*

Commissioner Melvin Kelly shared that this is normally the time where he gathers a group of young people and take them on an excursion to some historical landmark. He said that he went to a Juneteenth Celebration in Easton, Maryland and Darlington, Maryland. At the Juneteenth celebration in Easton, Maryland, Commissioner Kelly met the keynote speak who happened to be the daughter of his English high school teacher. He also said that he truly enjoyed the Juneteenth Celebration that the Hosanna School Museum put on. Commissioner Kelly said that the programs were great, the food was great, and that he significantly enjoyed the apple cake there.

Commissioner Kelly rounded off his report by sharing that the MCAAHC's Financial and Administration committee which consists of Commissioner Herbert Frisby, Chair; Commissioner Lynn Bowman; Commissioner Reggie Turner; Director Chanel Compton; and Commissioner Kelly met on a conference call to discuss the various things that the committee would like to present at the MCAAHC Retreat as well as look at establishing a budget for this coming 2019's legislative session.

*Commissioner Edwin T. Johnson*

Commissioner Edwin T. Johnson shared that the Loudon Park Cemetery project is coming very well. He shared that Commissioner Maya Davis has been working with him significantly where the Maryland State Archives is on board in helping with this project. Commissioner Johnson said their next meeting will take place the second week in November. He also said that he know has two graduate students and one public high school from Baltimore County that are working on this project. He said that he still has an open invitation for anyone that would like to come aboard and help.

#### *Commissioner Malcolm Funn*

Commissioner Malcolm Funn gave his report by sharing that he appreciates the various individuals and commissioners that come from Western Maryland to the other parts of Maryland in dealing with traffic issues, accidents, and construction. He shared that Frederick Douglass has come to Calvert County where Bill Gremmette, reenactor will be speaking October 23, 2018 at Patuxent High School and Northern High School. That evening, Mr. Gremmette will also be speaking at All Saints Church in Sunderland, Maryland where they will be the host of the MCAAHC's December 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting.

Commissioner Funn said that he found out that the Episcopal Church is very active in researching its African American History and its involvement in it. On Saturday, October 6<sup>th</sup> Calvert County will be celebrating Lower Marlboro Freedom Day. Commissioner Funn said that slaves were given freedom by the British when they came up the Patuxent River. He said 13 slaves in that particular area left for freedom. He said that the MCAAHC, the Maryland Historical Society, and many other organizations within the county have been involved with this celebration.

Commissioner Funn said that on Saturday, November 3, 2018 the NAACP, in Calvert County, will celebrate its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ending of World War I at the Rod n' Reel restaurant in Chesapeake Beach, Maryland. He said in 1917, there was a disturbance, a riot, where it was called a mutiny in Houston, Texas. An African American attachment was sent there to build a facility in Fort Logan. People in Houston did not want African Americans to be in the city because they felt that if one had to pay difference to people in uniform where they did not want to give the same treatment to African Americans in uniform.

Commissioner Funn said that the people of Houston wanted to keep the African American soldiers oppressed and suppressed. A soldier who was an MP, interfered with an arrest of a black woman by a white police officer. He was arrested and they eventually let him go. Rumor had it that the soldier was shot, but was not killed and was released.

Commissioner Funn said that there was a story that there was a white mob sitting on a military encampment who acquired guns, went into Houston, where 16 whites were killed and two blacks were killed. Eventually 16 of them were hung and 20 individuals were sent to prison. Commissioner Funn shared that this was the largest hanging in the United States of America. If one would like to find out more information about this Commissioner Funn said to please attend the NAACP breakfast on November 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Last but not least he admonished the public to join the MCAAHC at its public meeting in Calvert County where one can hear about what African Americans are doing to enhance their history in Calvert County.

#### *Commissioner Steve X. Lee*

Commissioner Steven X. Lee began his report by sharing that he is a commissioner from the Baltimore City-Baltimore County area. He said he will be reporting on the Nominations Committee that is a new committee of the commission that was formed earlier this year. He was glad to say that Commissioner Cheryl McLeod and Commissioner Reggie Turner serve on this committee. Commissioner Lee said that he is very honored to work with them both and that he looks to have some information to present at the next MCAAHC meeting.

#### *Commissioner Cheryl McLeod*

Commissioner Cheryl McLeod gave a report that she lives in Howard County and awhile back in previous MCAAHC meetings she gave a report on the Harriet Tubman High School in Howard County where African Americans attended. There was a ceremony given every year at that high school. She said this past year's celebration was outstanding where they had 300 individuals that attended the program this year.

Commissioner McLeod said that the Board of Education was using the facility as a maintenance building. There was a relationship established by the county and the Harriet Tubman Foundation that the foundation would like to own

the building. Commissioner McLeod said that there now has been that transfer of ownership where the foundation and the county are working on restoring the building back to its original state. For the second year of its opening, they hosted the Harriet Tubman Day there. "In the Spirit of African Americans at the Times of War" which is the theme of the Association for the Study and Life of African American History there will be a ceremony for the raising of the flag where it is to honor all of the veterans of war especially those of African American descent. Commissioner McLeod said that the more the students come these events, the more they learn and the more their eyes light up about the significant contributions African Americans have made.

Commissioner McLeod said that she likes to make comparisons of various institutions. She shared that she will be going to Philadelphia for an African American tour of the African American History representing the commission's eyes as well as come back with some suggestions. Commissioner McLeod said that she will be attending a pleather of films at the National Museum of African American History & Culture. In three to four days the NMMHC will be showing six to eight films where some of them pertain to African Americans and the Vietnam War, archiving African American history.

*Commissioner Iris Leigh Barnes, Ph.D.*

Commissioner Iris Leigh Barnes, Ph.D. began her report by sharing that she is from Harford County in the northern part of Maryland. She said that the Hosanna School Museum, in Darlington Maryland is a Freedmen's School, like Tolson's Chapel. A bus trip was led from the Hosanna School Museum where they had an Underground Railroad looking at historical sites in Harford County connecting the dots to Cecil County heading down to the Harriet Tubman Center. She said that it was a very successful trip enlightening people about the Underground Railroad history in Harford County. Commissioner Iris Barnes said that the Hosanna School Museum sits on the upper tier of the Maryland-Pennsylvania line. She also said that there were a lot of stories heavily documented in William Still's book about the Underground Railroad where he would document the people that he helped. William Stills hid his book until it was published in 1872. His book serves as a great resource for genealogists.

Commissioner Barnes also shared that she have been working with the planning committee for the Lynching in Maryland Conference. The conference takes place on Saturday, October 13, 2018. She said that there has been great registration for this conference but one can register as being a part of the over flow. Commissioner Barnes said that she is working on the research committee helping to gather information on lynching's that took place in the various counties.

*Commissioner Elinor Thompson*

Commissioner Elinor Thompson began her report sharing that she is from Southern Anne Arundel County. She said that she has been working on a very important project that includes the burials at Brewer Hill Cemetery which is one of the oldest cemeteries in Anne Arundel County. Commissioner Thompson said African Americans and other ethnic groups were interred at this cemetery.

On January 9, 2019 Commissioner Thompson shared that she will be speaking at the Maryland State Archives about the burials of blacks and white at the cemetery. She also said that during the time of the foundation of the cemeteries, which goes back two centuries, there were a lot of lynching's in that area. Five more individuals, along with the three she just discovered, where interred there with Civil War and Revolutionary Soldiers. Commissioner Thompson said that if anyone has any information concerning the Brewer Hill Cemetery one can email their website. She also shared that Christopher Haley, Director of the Legacy of Slavery in Maryland did an excellent job in a news article that was written about his research on the lynchings in Maryland. Last but not least Commissioner Thompson said one may want to Google Brewer Cemetery and the lynchings for more information.



## Presentations

### *Ms. Edie Wallace, President of the Friends of Tolson's Chapel*

Chair Dale Green introduced Ms. Edie Wallace, President of the Friends of Tolson's Chapel as well as shared that Tolson's Chapel was a recipient of Maryland's African American Heritage Preservation Grant. Ms. Wallace shared that she lives in Sharpsburg, Maryland and said that she came to the MCAAHC meeting giving a presentation on the various things that are taking place there.

Ms. Wallace shared that Tolson's Chapel is a Methodist Episcopal church built in Sharpsburg, Maryland where it was made famous from the Battle of Antietam. In 1866 on the backstreet, High Street, of Sharpsburg, the African American Community worshipped there. Their edifice was constructed two years after the Emancipation Proclamation and four years after the Battle of Antietam. Several of the original members of the church were enslaved on those very battlefield farms. Ms. Wallace shared that when she gives tours, she lets the public know that the Emancipation Proclamation came out of the Antietam battles. She also said that Maryland did not free those that were in enslaved in 1863 when the Emancipation Proclamation was established.

Ms. Wallace said that there was a person named H. Watson that was enslaved on the Auto family farm grounds where he worked on the Antietam Battlefields. A Jeremiah Cornelius Summers was known as the last enslaved person that worked on the Piper Farms on the Antietam Battlefields. Ms. Wallace shared that for many years individuals in the Sharpsburg community did not speak about nor share any information concerning the African American History. From growing up in Frederick, Maryland Ms. Wallace thought that there was not any slavery although she realized that there was a vibrant African American community there. In finding this information out, she decided to take on the helm of learning and sharing the African American history in the area. She pointed out that Tolson's Chapel was a school and church for 30 years.

Each year Tolson's Chapel has a worship service by simulated candlelight. There isn't any electricity in the chapel but individuals come each fall to join together to have a traditional worship service. Ms. Wallace asked the public to come and visit Tolson's Chapel where one can learn more about the area as well as the African American History of the United States there.

### *Mr. Ronald Lytle, Washington County Heritage Guide*

Mr. Ron Lytle, originally from Cumberland, Maryland came to the MCAAHC meeting to share information on the Washington County Heritage guide that he worked with the Governor's Office in 2003 to get published. Since then, he and others, have been on the pathway of establishing historical markers denoting the African American History in that area. He shared that on the front cover of the guide, Ms. Carolyn Brooks great, great, great, grandfather: Mr. Nathan William's image was used where he was the owner of Fort Frederick. Mr. Lytle invited the MCAAHC and the public to come back in the month of April 26, 2019 where a hallowed ground tour with Tolson's Chapel and many others will take place.

### *Mr. Anthony Williams, Western Maryland Black Heritage Festival*

Mr. Anthony Williams shared that there is a lot of African American history in Western Maryland. He shared that his organization focuses on the educational part of presenting the African American history to the public. Mr. Williams said that he founded and is the executive director of Beacon House, Incorporated. His organization is a STEAM non-profit that is concerned about increasing the awareness and achievement of educational opportunities. Beacon House, Incorporated focuses in particularly on targeting low income individuals from low income, minority, and exceptional learning backgrounds.

Beacon House, Incorporated is trying to figure out how they can work to increase education to these subsets in STEAM education. What he has learned is that those who go into STEM careers tend to be white males. He said that his organization looks into bringing equity in STEM careers going into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond. Mr. Williams said that he and his organization is working with other organizations and corporations to have a Western Maryland Black Heritage scholarship festival where all of the donations goes towards funding three scholarships. All of the

scholarship recipients will be African American. He said one of the recipients will be a graduating senior from high school, another is a single mother coming from a transitional situation and another recipient was a person who was incarcerated in the past.

*Ms. Jessica Scott, Robert W. Johnson Community Center*

Ms. Jessica Scott, from the Robert W. Johnson Community Center, has been serving the community for more than 100 years. It was established as the first African American school in Washington County. In the 1960's it was converted into the first black YMCA. In the last 50 years it was converted into the Memorial Recreation Center which was the community center for African Americans. Ms. Scott said that over the last two years the pool had to be closed to low income community that surrounds the center. The pool had been breaking down where they original pipes need to be updated and lights replaced. The center is venturing out to have a pool campaign.

Ms. Scott said that the Robert W. Johnson Community Center serves 50-75 youth a day. In the summer time they host a summer camp that is free. Chair Dale Green asked that Ms. Scott apply for the AAHPG. He said that it is a non-dollar matching fund grant where he would like to see the center receive the potential help it could get from this grant. He said that the Washington County area is an area of high importance that the commission would like to see the African American history preserved there. He asked that the organization please consider this grant program.

*Mr. John Gates, Jane Gates Heritage House*

Mr. John Gates, of Jane Gates Heritage House shared that he is from Alleghany County and that his wife is the president of the Jane Gates House. He thanked Chair Green for the opportunity to speak at the MCAAHC meeting. Mr. Gates said that Chair Green encourage he and the organization to continue the preservation of the Jane Gates Heritage House as one of the historical African American landmarks in Alleghany County. He also thanked Commissioner Lynn Bowman of which Mr. Gates said that she was the initial contact in the Jane Gates Heritage House applying for the African American Heritage Preservation Grant. He also thanked the MCAAHC for the opportunity of receiving two \$100,000 grants towards the Jane Gates Heritage House. Mr. Gates took the moment to recognize Commissioner Cheryl McLeod, a former colleague of his that he worked in the school system with as well as Mr. Ron Leitle, his childhood friend.

Mr. Gates said that Jane Gates was born in Alleghany County around 1813. Her obituary shares that she died in 1888 in Alleghany County. He said that in 1865 the Civil War was just ending and in 1867 Ms. Jane Gates buy some property on 515 Green Street where court house records say that she bought the property for \$1,400. This property would equate to being worth \$28,000 at that time. Mr. Gates said that he is a sixth descendant of Ms. Jane Gates where Dr. Henry Louis Gates is his cousin. He said that he, Dr. Gates and the family have been researching to find out where Ms. Gates got the money to acquire the property.

Mr. Gates said that the house is still standing and is in desperate need of repairing. He said that this is a very slow process where it is hard for someone construction workers, architects or anyone from the State of Maryland to come out to Western Maryland. Mr. Gates said that the organization applied for a substantive grant and on firm said that they would take on this project. In November they will be breaking ground for the Jane Gates Heritage House. The central theme is to put African American Historical artifacts from Western Maryland in the house.

The Jane Gates Heritage House derives its name from Jane Gates, a former slave, who purchased the property in Cumberland, Maryland, in 1871 less than a decade after official emancipation. She lived there with her 5 children, including Edward Gates, the great-grandfather of Dr. Henry Louis Gates Jr., a prominent contemporary scholar of African American culture. Since its purchase, the home has served as significant landmark for the Gates family, which is currently in the process of rehabilitating it to develop a community center dedicated to the documentation and celebration of African American History in the Potomac Highlands. Recently, the project received a \$100,000

grant from The Maryland African American Heritage Preservation Program, moving the center one step closer to becoming a reality. Mr. Gates shared that being that the house is in Appalachia Maryland, the organization is looking to be an educational resource center for students. He said that sometimes students fall behind living in Appalachia. The Jane Gates Heritage House is looking to provide tutoring, gardening skills, culinary art skills that will be accompanied with the professors and students of Frostburg State University.

Chair Dale Green, called for a motion to adjourn the MCAAHC meeting. Commissioner Edwin T. Johnson made a motion that the MCAAHC be adjourned. Commissioner Melvin Kelly seconded and the motion carried. The public meeting was adjourned at 1:49 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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LeRonn Herbert, Special Assistant