

BLACK HISTORY MONTH IN THE PARKS



To preserve local African American culture and history, the Park Authority joined with historians from other county agencies and the Fairfax County History Commission, to research and collect historical information. Started in January 2021, the new initiative, called the African American History Inventory (AAHI), was an ambitious project with the goal of gathering documentation in one place. The Park Authority's Archaeology and Collections Branch staff was a major partner in contributing to the inventory. Committee members scoured printed materials such as newspapers, brochures, letters, photographic collections, maps, and collections of family papers found at local libraries, museums, and other repositories. African American churches and schools were identified as vital historic components of the communities. A wealth of digital information, such as websites, story maps, and videos tell the story of the African American communities in the County.



A draft of the AAHI was completed in late 2021. The AAHI is a living document that can be added to when further information is discovered. It is organized by supervisory district. The draft document was transferred to George Mason University for students to convert it into a searchable database.

This project helps the Park Authority acknowledge the significant contributions and the struggle for freedom by enslaved African Americans at sites that are now part of our park system. In February 2023 we will share the stories of the enslaved communities of Fairfax County to bring awareness to the new AAHI. Multiple parks and historic sites will feature programs so we can share what we have learned and what we are still researching:

Frying Pan Baptist Meetinghouse

The historic meetinghouse will be open each Saturday in February from 12-2 p.m. Established in the 18th century, the original congregation of the meetinghouse included enslaved and free Blacks, as well as slaveholding members.

Sully Historic Site

Tours in the month of February will focus on the work of the enslaved community at Sully such as Madam Juba the Laundress. There will also be an exhibit of artifacts to view in the east wing.

Ellanor C. Lawrence Park

The African Americans at Walney Walking Tour will be offered for participants to hear the stories of African American families who lived and worked at Walney Farm.

Colvin Run Mill

During the month of February, take a tour of the mill where you will hear the stories of enslaved workers. Learn how historians are searching for information to tell a more complete history of the Colvin Run community.

Historic Huntley

Join a historian for the Enslaved Lives and the Legacy of Slavery tour that examines the relationship of the Mason family to the Humphreys, as well as other enslaved people who lived and worked at Huntley.



Turn to the History section or visit Parktakes online for more details about these programs and to register. To learn more about the AAHI, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/history-commission/african-american-inventory.