

# ***The African-American Experience***

**T**he experience of African-Americans in Prince George's County cannot be isolated in a single chapter. Indeed, all the chapters of this report draw upon the experiences of the African-American citizens of Prince George's County during the postbellum period, with four chapters being especially important. Chapter 3 has discussed aspects of the transition from slavery to freedom through the experience of African-Americans in the agricultural sector of Prince George's County, while Chapter 4 presented a similar discussion in terms of manufacturing, especially important in the Laurel area. To preview, Chapter 8 will discuss the contribution of African-Americans to transportation, especially with regard to airplanes, in Prince George's County, while patterns of settlement are examined in Chapter 9. The present chapter, however, focuses on aspects that are unique to the African-American experience in Prince George's County.

Several excellent histories of African-Americans in Prince George's County have been authored: *Records and Recollections: Early Black History in Prince George's County, Maryland* by Bianca Floyd (1989); *African-American Heritage Survey, 1996* by Susan Pearl (1996); *Like A Phoenix I'll Rise* by Alvin Thornton and Karen Williams Gooden (1997), and *The Effects of the Civil War and Emancipation on the Black Population of Prince George's County* by Susan F. Daniels (1990). Joyner (2003) presents an insightful context on "interpreting Africanisms" that places many of the topics discussed below, and in the works cited above, in a broader historical context. The African-American experience in Prince George's County is also discussed in other themes within the present work: in the discussion of changing labor relations after the Civil War, agriculture, industry and services, state and county facilities, and settlement and suburbanization, among others. This chapter details aspects of that experience that affected African-Americans to the greatest extent—living in a segregated society enforced by Jim Crow laws and countering this institutionalized repression through community, church, benevolent societies, and education (Benson et al. 2003:95; Thornton and Gooden 1997).

Thornton and Gooden (1997:80) and Daniels (1990:95) indicate that the end of the Civil War produced a new class structure in Prince George's County, one that was to profoundly affect the African-American population to the present day. In 1860, African-Americans accounted for 25 percent of all people in the State of Maryland; slightly more than half of the total was enslaved with the rest being free. Prince George's County contrasted with those numbers; in 1860, almost 60 percent of the population in the

county consisted of African-Americans, and most were enslaved. The freed black population in the county totaled 1,268 and was clustered in the Vansville, Aquasco, Queen Anne, and Piscataway districts (Floyd 1989; see also Daniels 1990:110).

With the end of the Civil War, the African-American population in the county dropped significantly. Daniels (1990:97) indicates that many migrated to cities such as Baltimore, while many enlisted African-Americans never returned. In 1870 blacks in Prince George's County had a lower standard of living than did free blacks in the county in 1860, and most were employed as servants, laborers, or farmhands, being for the most part closed out of the job market for skilled positions (Daniels 1990:97–99).

In general, politicians affiliated with the Democratic Party controlled the elected offices through this period, and immediately after the war most opposed reconstruction and many supported attempts at disenfranchisement and the enactment of "Jim Crow" laws. The Democratic Party in Prince George's County has been described as being supportive of states' rights and against black empowerment. The lack of political and economic power and educational opportunities led to a black community that lacked elites such as merchants and bankers, and many of the professional occupations were closed to African-Americans (Daniels 1990:99–100). Talented African-Americans were primarily artisans, and the influx of northern goods and a lack of credit severely impacted their economic prospects (Thornton and Gooden 1997:80).

## **Segregation and Jim Crow**

Segregation has been defined as the act of isolating or setting groups of people apart by race, religion, or other criteria. Segregation can be established by practice and maintained by custom (*de facto* segregation) or encoded in law (*de jure* segregation). In Maryland, both forms of segregation were practiced against African-Americans during the postbellum period. Prior to the Civil War, Maryland, in general, and Prince George's County, in particular, posed many contrasts with regards to African-Americans. Maryland was a southern slave-holding state, yet it contained the largest free population of African-Americans in the nation. Slave codes plus the threat of a return to slavery were used by the white population as a means of social and legal control over the free population. An act of the Maryland legislature emancipated all slaves in the state on November 1, 1864.

The 15th Amendment to the US Constitution, adopted in 1870, guaranteed the right of all male citizens to vote. At that time, there were approximately 1,500 black males of voting age in Prince George's County (Thornton and Gooden 1997). The first black to run for office in the county was William Beckett, Jr., of Bladensburg. In 1870, as a Republican, Beckett ran for a seat on the town commission and lost. With the exodus of many black families from Prince George's County after the Civil War, and the gradual rise of white voters,

African-Americans did not have enough support in the county to win election. African-Americans formed a coalition with the Republican Party, but only to weaken the post-war hold on county politics by the Democrats. It was not until after 1900 with the formation of segregated African-American communities that black officials were elected to municipal office in the county (Thornton and Gooden 1997:162). In 1968, the first African-American represented Prince George's County in the state assembly.

Jim Crow, typically defined as the institutionalized discrimination against African-Americans during the late 1800s and 1900s, was most often manifest in state and local laws that prohibited certain actions or activities based on race. The aim of Jim Crow laws was the segregation of blacks and whites in the areas of education, transportation, public accommodations, and marriage. Local ordinances often restricted land or housing sales. The State of Maryland enacted Jim Crow laws as early as the 1870s, when legislation was approved that earmarked taxes paid by blacks to be used for maintaining schools for black children and that schools be established for black children when warranted by population. This incipient segregation of education between white and black schools was formalized in 1924 when the state code was changed to require racially segregated schools. By 1935, the streets in African-American communities were most often not paved, the courthouse in Upper Marlboro was racially segregated, and colored-only signs were common (Thornton and Gooden 1997:167). At this time, however, Donald Murray filed suit against the University of Maryland Law School in the Maryland Court of Appeals for denial of admission based on racial grounds. The court ordered Murray admitted, and the response of the state was to increase funding to the segregated black schools in Maryland.

Maryland was also active in passing legislation that required separate areas for whites and blacks on vehicles of public transport (The History of Jim Crow 2007). Statutes pertaining to steamboats were enacted in 1904 and 1908, railroads in 1904, and streetcars in 1908. Marriages between white and blacks, known as miscegenation, were also the focus of numerous statutes and state codes, including those adopted in 1884, 1924, 1935, 1955, and twice in 1957. These later statutes were repealed in 1967, although those segregating public accommodations were repealed in 1951.

One method of segregation, de facto in nature, was the use of violence to enforce a separation of the races. Throughout the South, the postbellum period was one of violence against African-Americans by white supremacists in an attempt to retain control over black populations. Although overt acts of violence appear to be relatively few in Prince George's County, examples can be cited. In the May 19, 1907, edition of the New York Times, an article "Crowd Threatens Lynching" discusses that the streets surrounding the county jail in Upper Marlboro were surrounded by a mob threatening the lynching of an unnamed African-American prisoner after that prisoner had been granted a retrial. The article states that the prisoner "may be lynched before morning." Another

example is that of Stephen Williams, a black man accused of “manhandling” a white woman. Arrested, he was taken from his cell in Upper Marlboro on October 20, 1894, and taken to the Marlboro Bridge where he was lynched. Change was also resisted, as when a nonsegregated diner, the Chickland Café in Capitol Heights, was opened. Shortly after its opening in 1951, the café was looted and burned (Thornton and Gooden 1997:168).

Housing discrimination also has had a profound effect on the distribution of population in most major cities and in Prince George’s County. Orfield (2001) traces the roots of segregated housing to the black exodus from the rural south during World Wars I and II. During this period public entities as well as private organizations fostered a segregated housing market, with African-Americans relegated to particular neighborhoods or suburbs. Racial violence, zoning restrictions and planned segregated subsidized housing were among the tactics used to foster residential segregation. In 1926, the Supreme Court authorized enforcement of private agreements, such as deed restrictions or covenants that attached racial restrictions to deeds. It was not until the late 1960s that legislation and court decisions began to provide for equal opportunity in housing.

Deed restrictions and segregated neighborhoods and communities were a common feature in Prince George’s County during the postbellum period. In older communities, such as Bladensburg, African-American neighborhoods arose around schools and churches. Other communities, such as North Brentwood, were planned, segregated communities. An overview of these communities is presented in the Communities section of this chapter. Deed restrictions were also common in the county during this period. A random review of deeds found many examples, a typical one is found in a deed dated March 17, 1929, for lots 49–50 in the Beltsville Heights development. The owner, People’s Cooperative Realty Company, Inc., placed the following covenant in the deed:

*2. That the said lots or buildings thereon shall never be rented, leased, or sold, transferred or conveyed to nor shall the same be occupied exclusively by any negro or colored person or person of negro blood.*

## **Churches and Benevolent Societies**

With emancipation in 1864, African-Americans faced the challenge of creating a new life (Billingsley 1999; Daniels 1990:95; Maffly-Kipp 2001). This challenge included organizing communities, reuniting families, and determining what it would mean to live in the United States as citizens rather than as property. One way that African-Americans coped with these challenges, along with institutionalized repression, was through the construction of a sense of community, both through churches and the numerous benevolent societies that were formed. The black churches emphasized the equality of mankind and provided a platform for African-Americans to affirm their belief

in a better future, yet at the same time highlighting and combating many of the social injustices that were imposed by racism, segregation, and Jim Crow laws (Billingsley 1999). As importantly, it provided African-Americans with leadership positions and organizations that were denied them in the rest of American society.

The creation of African-American churches in the former slave states, including Maryland, came about through missionary efforts by northern black organizations as well as those of white denominations (Billingsley 1999; Maffly-Kipp 2001). Many of these missions also aided in the general welfare of former slaves, built schools (which increased southern black literacy from 5 percent in 1870 to 70 percent by 1900), and promoted blacks to leadership positions. Most of the newly freed slaves joined independent African-American denominations that had formed in northern states prior to the Civil War (Maffly-Kipp 2001).

African-American churches in Prince George's County have been documented in a series of MIHP forms as well as in Pearl (1996), Thornton and Gooden (1997), and Floyd (1989) (Figure 17). Not surprisingly, the 1861 Martenet map is devoid of churches identified as African-American. However, by 1878, the Hopkins map identifies numerous churches as African-American. The early African-American churches in the county included the Methodist and African Methodist Episcopal denominations. Often, after the conclusion of the Civil War, small parcels of land were deeded to or purchased by a group of African-American trustees on which a church, cemetery, and school were constructed. The first church and school are often described as being small log structures, and these were replaced through time with more substantial wood-frame or brick structures. Queen's Chapel and Cemetery (MIHP PG:62-21), Union Chapel and Cemetery (MIHP PG:79-46), Carroll Chapel (MIHP PG:74B-6), John Wesley Methodist Church and Cemetery (MIHP PG:87B-33), and Brooks Methodist Church (MIHP PG:86B-5) are among the examples

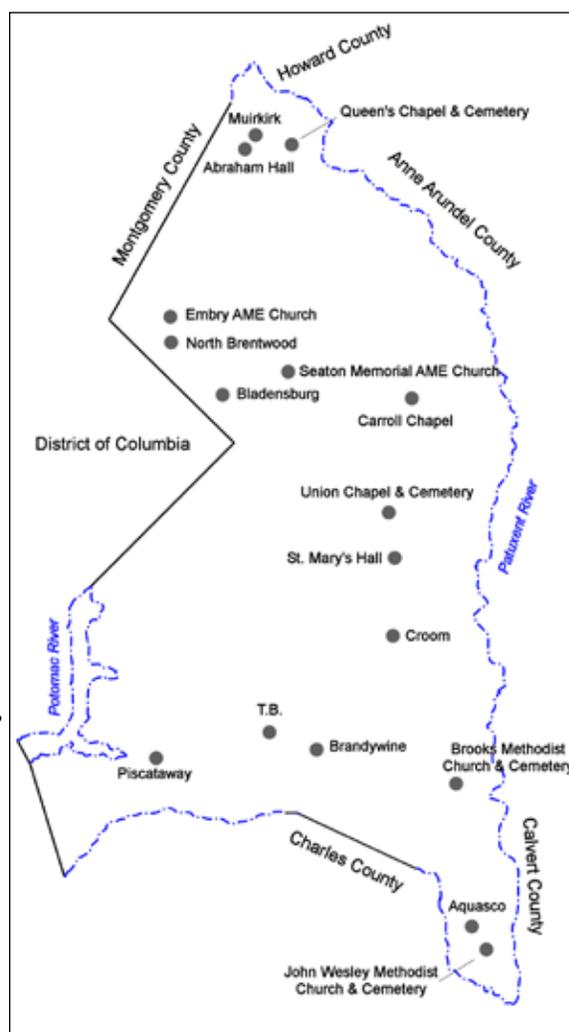


Figure 17: African-American churches and communities discussed in text.

of early African-American churches and cemeteries in the county. In most instances, the churches, cemeteries, and schools are described as being the focal point of the local African-American community.

African-American church construction continued through the late 1800s and early 1900s in Prince George's County. These churches were larger, frame or brick structures, many of which have also been replaced by newer structures during the last 50 to 60 years. A number of the churches built during the late 1800s to early 1900s were also associated with cemeteries and schools. Unlike their earlier counterparts, which were mainly (but not exclusively) located in rural portions of the county, many of these newer churches were constructed in urban settings, including new (but segregated) suburbs or in black neighborhoods of established communities. For instance, the Seaton Memorial AME Church (MIHP PG:70-15) was constructed in the segregated community of Lincoln in 1916, while the Embury AME Church (MIHP PG:66-12) was built in 1920 in Lakeland. In a more urban setting, the Union United Methodist Church (MIHP PG:79-20) was constructed in 1916 in Upper Marlboro. Similar to the earlier churches, these churches, cemeteries, and schools are also described as being the focal point of the local African-American community.

The African-American community of Ridgely exhibits many of the postbellum community formation trends discussed in this chapter. Pearl (1996:121) describes the Ridgely community as consisting of a few dwellings scattered on either side of Central Avenue with a church, lodge, and school being its most important elements. Ridgely, located in north-central Prince George's County, began in 1871 when Thomas E. Berry deeded 0.5 acres to Lewis Ridgely and two other African-American trustees for the location of the Ridgely Methodist Episcopal Church. The first Ridgely Church was constructed in the late 1870s, and in 1892 Mrs. Thomas Berry deeded an additional one-acre lot adjacent to the church for use as a cemetery. It was during the 1890s that the small African-American community described by Pearl coalesced around the church, and subsequently a school and lodge were constructed. The original church building was destroyed by fire, but a new church was constructed in 1921 (MIHP PG:72-5). By 1927, the original schoolhouse was replaced by a Rosenwald Fund school known as the Ridgely School (MIHP PG:75A-28) or Colored School 1 in Election District 13. It was built on a lot immediately adjacent to the former schoolhouse. The newly constructed school had two classrooms, each serving three grade levels (Pearl 1996:120).

Mutual aid societies and fraternal orders were another mechanism used by the newly freed African-Americans in community building. The organizations typically provided resources to families in need and offered social and educational opportunities. At times associated with the African-American churches, and at times independent of them, benevolent organizations fostered a sense of community and provided benefits to black communities after the Civil War (Skocpol and Oser 2004). Skocpol and Oser (2004) present an overview of the role of such organizations within the African-American communities

nationwide, while Doyle (2007) discusses the role of benevolent fraternal lodges in rural black communities, and many of the points raised apply to more urban areas as well. These organizations generated and sustained social networks that reinforced local bonds and created links with other localities, states, and regions. Many of the societies paralleled white organizations, while others were distinctive to the black community. Women tended to play a more active role than did their white counterparts, and a higher proportion of blacks were engaged in the societies than their white counterparts (Skocpol and Orser 2004:372).

Although many African-American benevolent societies were organized in Prince George's County (see Thornton and Gooden 1997), only two of the halls of these organizations remain (Figure 17). One is the St. Mary's Beneficial Society Hall located in Upper Marlboro. According to Pearl (MIHP PG:79-25), the society was the center of black Roman Catholic charitable, social, and religious



*St. Mary's Beneficial Society Hall (PG: 79-19-25).*

activities in Upper Marlboro. It was organized in 1880 to provide emergency financial assistance and death benefits to its members. Sufficient funds were to be maintained for the relief of the sick and the burial of the dead, with members paying a membership fee as well as monthly dues. The benefits granted to members provided a type of insurance not available to the black community at that time. The other surviving example is the Abraham Hall, constructed in Rossville in 1888. Known as the Rebecca Lodge #6, this structure was purchased by the Benevolent Sons and Daughters of Abraham, chartered in 1877 by the local black community that was for the most part employed at the nearby Muirkirk Furnace. Similar to the St. Mary's Beneficial Society, the Benevolent Sons and Daughters of Abraham provided emergency financial assistance and death benefits to its members (MIHP PG:62-7).

## **Communities**

Pearl (1996:11) discusses the origin of many African-American communities in Prince George's County, and Denny (1997) and Benson et al. (2003) provide many details on individual communities. Pearl (1991d, 1991e, 1995) has also produced individual histories on Glenarden, North Brentwood, and Fairmount Heights, all African-American communities. In general, African-American communities included areas where black populations were already established or in newly created subdivisions. Other factors included proximity to job sites and residential segregation practices (Benson et al. 2003:105).

Well-established black populations coalesced around churches, schools, and, later, lodges, especially in southern parts of the county near Croom, Brandywine, Aquasco, and Piscataway (Figure 17). Rossville, near Laurel, grew up near the Muirkirk Iron Works and around a Methodist meeting house, Queen's Chapel, built and used by African-Americans in 1868 (see also Benson et al. 2003:89). Similarly, churches founded in more urban settings, such as St. Paul's Baptist Church, became a focus for the African-American community in Bladensburg. Rather than detail each community (see Pearl 1996 for more extensive coverage), three communities have been selected that amply illustrate the overall trends in black communities in Prince George's County: Croom, a rural village; Bladensburg, a more urban area; and North Brentwood, a black subdivision of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century. Although the genesis of each differs, many of the key elements of community formation—access to church and school—remain the same.

Croom illustrates the consolidation of a rural black community in Prince George's County after the Civil War (Figure 17). Prior to the war, the area was already a small rural village that developed around a chapel built in the 1740s. By the early-nineteenth century, a blacksmith shop, wheelwright, general stores, and cobblers' and carpenters' shops had been established in the vicinity, and in 1857 a post office was opened in one of the general stores. The post office remained in operation through 1948. As important for the genesis of the African-American community at Croom, this area had the highest proportion of slaves in the county in 1860, and Pearl (1996:100) states that many remained in the area after the Civil War, finding employment as tenant farmers. The African-American community of Croom may be traced to the founding of two schools for black children, one just north and the other just south, of Croom, after the Civil War. Two churches were also established in this area, providing a focus for the African-American community. A third school, a private institute, was later created. Opening in 1903 was the Croom Industrial and Agricultural Institute. The institute taught sewing, home economics, cooking, dressmaking, and agriculture to children in the local African-American community. Beset by financial difficulties, the institute closed in 1952 (see MIHP PG:86A-24). A few small frame buildings were present at the site of the institute as late as 1986.

Bladensburg provides a contrast in some ways to the coalescence of a rural population at Croom around schools and churches (Daniels 1990:111–112; Pearl 1996:37–39) (Figure 17). Bladensburg already had a long history at the close of the Civil War, being established by an act of the General Assembly in 1742. Subsequently, Bladensburg became a port town, tobacco inspection station, and a services center. Although the silting of the East Branch of the Anacostia River eventually foreclosed its role as a port, the B&O Railroad was built through the town during the 1830s, further boosting its importance. Bladensburg always had a substantial black population, consisting of both free blacks and slaves. However, although large in numbers, the proportion of African-Americans to whites was less in Bladensburg than in the county as a whole. The black community in Bladensburg concentrated on the east side

of the Anacostia River after the Civil War. Several churches and a Freedmen's Bureau school were built in the vicinity, and the population of the community expanded during the late-nineteenth century.

North Brentwood is one of several examples of African-American suburbs newly constructed during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries in Prince George's County (Pearl 1996:24–36) (Figure 17). North Brentwood was a segregated suburb, with its white counterpart, Brentwood, located to the south. In 1898 a streetcar began operation, linking the community to Washington, D.C. By 1904 a schoolhouse and 23 residences were present in North Brentwood, and in 1907 a church was added. Fire protection was initiated in 1908. By 1924, North Brentwood became the first incorporated African-American community in Prince George's County, and in 1929, with the opening of Rhode Island Avenue, it was connected to Washington, D.C., by adequate automobile routes. North Brentwood prospered because of the transportation links, and by 1940 the community counted 138 residences, 2 churches, 1 school, 1 firehouse, 3 stores, and 1 lumber yard.

### **Freedmen's Bureau, Rosenwald Schools, and Public Education**

With the conclusion of the Civil War, the first state-sponsored provisions for the education of newly emancipated African-American children were enacted. In 1865, the state assembly passed an act that allowed part of the taxes paid by African-Americans to be used to construct schools for their children (Thornton and Gooden 1997:129–130) (Figure 18). As Prince George's County proved slow in implementing this legislation, the federally funded Freedmen's Bureau was authorized to establish schools for African-American children in Washington, D.C., and the contiguous Maryland counties. One of the earliest schools, organized by Charles Coffin, owner of the Muirkirk Iron Works, obtained Freedmen's Bureau funds for operation. Freedman's Bureau schools then opened in Bladensburg and 1868 in Clinton (Daniels 1990; Thornton and Gooden 1997:132). In 1867, Major George Henry, head of the Freedmen's Bureau in Prince George's County, stated:

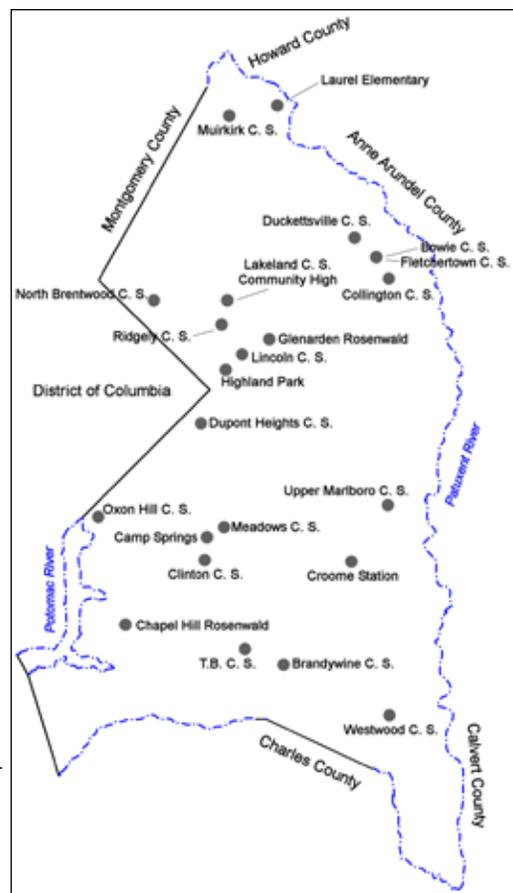


Figure 18: African-American schools discussed in text.

*...there are at present two Freedmen's schools in operation in this county, one at Bladensburg and the other at the Muirkirk Furnace, with some 100 scholars. The lumber of the school house at Bladensburg was furnished by the Bureau. The one at Muirkirk was erected by a Mr. Coffin of Boston.... Lands have been obtained for school purposes at the following places, and school houses will be erected during the fall, as soon as harvesting is over; Beltsville near Laurel, Oxon Run, Marlboro, Nottingham, and Piscataway. (Report of Major G. E. Henry to Lt. Col. William Rodgers, 22 October 1866; quoted in Benson et al. 2003:86).*

By 1872, prior to the period of county control of schools for African-Americans, 13 schools for black children had been established compared with 42 for white children (Pearl 1996:12).



*Camp Springs School (PG: 76B-15).*

In 1872 Prince George's County assumed control of the education of African-American children from the Freedmen's Bureau (Banks 1948; Thornton and Gooden 1997:133). At that time the county officials voted to establish one or more schools in each election district for African-American children. Thornton and Gooden (1997:133) describe this as a coordinated system of Jim Crow-based education. The first school constructed and opened by the county was the T.B. Colored School in 1872, followed by a school near Brandywine in 1873. This latter school, housing grades one through seven, was totally financed by taxes. Schools continued to open during the 1870s and 1880s, all of which were one-room schools with one teacher.

Violence was directed against the schools, as the Croome Station School, opened in 1883, was attacked by arsonists in 1892. The school was not rebuilt by the county until 1903 (Thornton and Gooden 1997:135). By 1882, 22 schools for black children had been constructed and 23 teachers employed. In 1890, the number of schools had increased to 28, compared with 60 for white children (Pearl 1996:12). There would not be a high school for African-Americans until 1928, when Lakeland High School, using Rosenwald funds, was constructed. Rosenwald funds were also used to replace African-American grade schools during the early 1900s.

The Rosenwald fund has been documented in *A School in Every County: the Partnership of Jewish Philanthropist Julius Rosenwald and American Black Communities* (Sosland 1995), among other sources. Julius Rosenwald, the son of a German-Jewish immigrant, rose through the ranks in Sears, Roebuck and Company due to his success with the Sears mail-order catalog, eventually

becoming CEO of the corporation. In 1913 Rosenwald teamed with Booker T. Washington to create a matching grant program. Rosenwald would donate cash if the particular rural black community would contribute (either in cash or in-kind contributions such as land, lumber, and labor), and if the local school board would agree to operate the facility. The fund also provided architectural plans, included in the pamphlets *The Negro Rural School and its Relation to the Community* (Taylor and Hazel 1915) and *Community School Plans*.

The schools were intended to be community enterprises between citizens and officials and between blacks and whites. Most common in the early days of the program were two- and three-teacher facilities, although larger buildings were constructed after the mid-1920s. By 1932, when construction grants ended, over 5,300 schools had been erected, including 153 in Maryland. A total of 23 of these structures was built in Prince George's County, and 9 of the buildings are still in existence. Schools were constructed at the newly suburbanized areas, such as Bowie, Brandywine, Glenarden, Lincoln, and North Brentwood, within older communities, including Laurel and Upper Marlboro, and in rural cross-roads communities, including T.B., Duckettsville, and Camp Springs, among others (*italicized schools indicate building is still in existence*):

- Bowie Colored School
- Brandywine Colored School
- *Camp Springs School*
- Chapel Hill Colored School
- *Clinton Colored School*
- *Collington Colored School*
- Duckettsville Colored School
- Dupont Heights Colored School
- Fletchertown Colored School
- Glenarden Colored School
- *Highland Park School*
- Community High School at Lakeland
- Laurel Elementary School
- *Lincoln Colored School*
- Meadows Colored School
- *Muirkirk Colored School*
- North Brentwood Colored School
- Oxon Hill Colored School
- *Ridgely Colored School*
- *T.B. Colored School*
- Upper Marlboro Colored School
- West Wood Colored School
- *Lakeland Colored School*

However, by the 1950s, many of the Rosenwald schools were closed as the increased use of buses led to the consolidation of small schools. Many of the surviving Rosenwald school buildings in Prince George's County have been significantly altered (Pearl 1996). Most are described as being of wood-frame

construction, roughly square in plan, and one-story with a hip-roof. The Clinton Colored School was constructed on the site of an earlier Freedmen's Bureau schoolhouse, as were many of the Rosenwald schools in Prince George's County (Pearl 1996).

On the eve of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, Prince George's County had 24 schools for black children headed by a "Black Supervisor for Colored Education" (Thornton and Gooden 1997:144). In essence, the county ran a dual school system: separate schools, buses, teachers associations, and Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs). It was only in 1952 that the educational opportunities for African-American children were increased from 11 grades to 12. County schools continued to be segregated after the Supreme Court decision until 1972. County school officials created a system, later ruled unconstitutional, whereby parents could apply to the School Board and request the transfer of their child to a school closer to home. Few black children were granted such transfers under this program (Thornton and Gooden 1997:146).

## **Research Questions and Topics**

Until quite recently, most archeology projects that approached the African-American experience in the United States focused on aspects of slavery. More recently, there has been an expansion of work that includes the postbellum experience of African-Americans. In Prince George's County, most archeologists have addressed the African-American experience as an antebellum phenomenon, and although not lessening the importance of that work or historical period, the postbellum experience of African-Americans provides equally fertile ground for those engaged in understanding and disseminating the history of this county. The transition from slavery to freedom and the impact of Jim Crow are compelling and important avenues of historic and archeological research. Provided below is a list of possible research questions and general topics on the African-American experience in Prince George's County.

- The use of investigations at African-American sites to provide a critique of American society
- The use of investigations at African-American sites to help inform about the past of a marginalized people
- The use of investigations at African-American sites to stimulate a dialogue regarding the interpretation of history
- Are there material and spatial continuities at African-American sites with African antecedents?
- Did African-Americans utilize domestic space differently than others?
- Does the material culture differ from their white neighbors?

- Can we identify archeological evidence of Jim Crow? Is it definable in terms of material culture?
- Can we identify differences in material culture that are not based solely on economics? Are differences based on access to certain goods? Are de facto prohibitions against the purchase, use, or consumption of certain goods evident?
- Can we identify avenues of resistance to Jim Crow in the archeological record?
- Did the Jim Crow laws alter the spatial organization of public space? Can archeological deposits associated with segregated areas or activities be identified?
- How did Jim Crow alter settlement and choice in the county?
- Are there instances of resistance to segregation of settlement? Does the archeological record inform us as to the nature of that resistance and the white community's response?
- Do more integrated areas reveal different patterns, of material culture, spatial organization, and other material aspects of everyday life, from segregated areas?
- Can deposits associated with African-American churches, benevolent societies, and schools be used to better understand the social activities in which these organizations were engaged?
- Can we identify forms of resistance or accommodation to Jim Crow at African-American churches, benevolent societies, and schools?
- Are there differences in terms of material culture between African-American rural, suburban, and urban communities? In terms of spatial organization, settlement, foodways, consumer choice, or resistance to Jim Crow?
- Can we use archeology to better understand the transition of most African-Americans from enslaved to free peoples? To free members of a capitalist society?
- How did any changes differ from those experienced by free blacks?
- Do the local Rosenwald schools differ from those depicted on plans? If so, why?
- How did African-Americans organize segregated schools, and how were they integrated into their communities? How does this compare with white schools?

## ***Data Requirements***

**Archeological:** Features with depositional integrity and a wide variety of identifiable associations; deposits with sufficient quantity and variety of materials to support statistically valid analyses; features such as foundations indicating spatial organization or sheet refuse indicative of activity areas or landscaping remnants; family burial plot; specialized activity areas

**Primary Documentary Sources:** Census, agricultural census data; tax assessment; probate; newspapers; vital statistics and legal records; personal papers; oral histories; photographs; financial records (lease, rent, chattel mortgage); maps; church, school, or fraternal organization membership lists and records

**Contextual Sources:** Social history; contract reports on similar property type; gender-based studies; relevant historical and anthropological literature; oral history

**Artifacts:** A range of artifacts attributable to modified South (1977) categories from identifiable contexts (feature or midden); an adequate quantity of distinctive artifacts to support interpretations

**Ecofacts:** Faunal analysis: wild versus domestic species; preference in species or meat cuts; floral analysis: botanical remains (seeds, pits, pollen, kernels) indicative of diet; special studies: parasite analysis