



M A R Y L A N D

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***Anne Arundel County's Office of Planning and Zoning and the Lost Towns Project launch a new 'virtual' tour, exploring the county's African American heritage***

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

Annapolis, MD (July 9, 2019) – Anne Arundel County Government and the *Lost Towns Project* will launch a new online "virtual" trail, highlighting nearly 200 historic sites about African American life in Anne Arundel County's Four Rivers Heritage Area. The project, ***'African American Voices, Memories and Places: A Four Rivers Heritage Trail'***, was created by local and professional historians, genealogists, and citizens. Funding for the online tour was provided through a grant from the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority.

Website visitors to the virtual heritage trail will discover local history through videos, images, and maps, sources which reveal information about the lives of African Americans in the county. Unique historic sites, places and buildings serve to document the communities and special places significant to African American heritage (some still standing, and others now gone.) The sites highlighted in this virtual trail also touch on sometimes challenging histories, which can help us all better understand both our past and the present.

"The people of Anne Arundel County and the city of Annapolis must confront the racism that has driven our history," said County Executive Stuart Pittman, whose family were once slave owners. "It's the story of the African American experience in the county, but it's also the story throughout America. Now that these stories are finally documented in county history, they will not be forgotten."

"The Four Rivers Heritage Area", one of Maryland's 13 Heritage Areas, is an outstanding resource which is invaluable for the entire region,' said Four Rivers' Executive Director, Carol Benson. "I am very excited to be a part of this important project that shares brand-new discoveries as well as well-documented achievements, makes them readily accessible to anyone with a computer, and encourages additional input from the community on an ongoing basis."

"We explore and reveal sites not previously thought of as "historic," said C. Jane Cox, Chief of the Historic Preservation for Anne Arundel County. "Many have heard of Carr's Beach, or the "Old Fourth Ward", but who recalls the "Upshop" juke joint in Lothian and Lady Ellen's Beauty Corner in Galesville? I hope that knowing more about this history will instill citizens with an enhanced sense of place, and a deeper connection to their communities and to our shared past."

The heritage trail acknowledges and celebrates contributions by African Americans over the County's 370-year history; its families, people, historic places, events, struggles, and accomplishments through, slavery, emancipation, voting rights, desegregation and the continued fight for Civil Rights today.

On Saturday July 20, 2019 at 4pm, the public is invited to join Anne Arundel County Government, the Lost Towns Project, and the Four Rivers Heritage Area at Annapolis High School (2700 Riva Rd, Annapolis, MD 21401) for the public reveal of ***'African American Voices, Memories and Places: A Four Rivers Heritage Trail.'***

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