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Contact: C. Jane Cox, janecox@aacounty.org, 410-222-7444

Explore the Civil Rights Era in Anne Arundel County, MD

Annapolis, MD (February 1, 2022) – In celebration of Black History Month, Anne Arundel County’s Cultural Resources Section is excited to unveil a new virtual tour that explores the Civil Rights Era in Anne Arundel County, MD.

This online story map features more than 50 oral history interviews collected from residents across the County, and is presented as a tour of local places, people, and everyday experiences during a time of segregation. It documents spaces of leisure and recreation, where people of color could gather and enjoy solidarity and empowerment; places like stores, ballfields, beaches, juke joints, movie theaters, beauty salons, and barber shops.

The project began in 2017 with funding from the National Park Service’s Civil Rights Grants Program. A team of historians from Anne Arundel County in partnership with the non-profit Lost Towns Project, Inc worked with citizens who generously shared memories of what life was like during segregation, and uncovered their compelling stories of injustice, resistance, and sacrifice, perseverance and triumph. Lyndra Marshall (née Pratt) was the lead historian on the project, supported by Dr. John Kille.

The project has also resulted in a ground-breaking partnership between Anne Arundel County and the Maryland State Archives. The Archives has established a dedicated Special Collection where the full length oral history footage and transcriptions are to be housed in perpetuity. These often under-represented voices are now publicly accessible as a part of the State’s permanent archival record. Oral histories are an important sources of first-hand information that will provide an opportunity for students, teachers, and residents to learn about and appreciate the experience of local African-American communities and their legacy.

Katara West from the Office of Equity & Accelerated Student Achievement and the Social Studies Office at Anne Arundel County Public Schools lauded the tour as a “valuable resource for learners of all ages. The AACPS Local History Initiative plans to utilize this site to educate students and staff about the stories of perseverance, triumph, and strong community bond of African Americans in Anne Arundel County during the Civil Rights Era and beyond! This site will serve as another valuable tool in building social studies and other curriculum that is inclusive of Anne Arundel County history.”

To view the virtual tour and experience local history through the eyes and stories of those who lived it, visit www.aacounty.org/Civil-Rights-Era.

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