



## **EARLY ELLICOTT CITY BLACK HISTORY, A HISTORIC AFRICAN AMERICAN CHURCH, A LOG CABIN, AND LYNCHING**



**February 2022**

*An Initiative and Report Sponsored by  
Howard County Lynching Truth & Reconciliation, Inc.*

If you attended our launch event on February 10, 2022, and liked what you saw and heard, please consider supporting the work we do to research early, local Black history. Our donation link is:

<https://secure.givelively.org/donate/howard-county-lynching-truth-reconciliation-inc>

The material you will read in the following pages is a small part of the entire 180+ page publication being published by us. The entire publication took our Truth lab team nearly six months to research and compile. Trying to ascertain what information to reveal at our public launch (February 10, 2022) of it was challenging to do. We are sharing snippets of our publication in these pages, in order to provide takeaway information for those of you who have shown interest in our work and this topic. Once published, the entirety of our publication will be available to everyone. We are also seeking a grant based upon our publication. In these pages, you will find:

Truth Lab's Conclusions

Info on the A.M.E. Church Trustees (original 1860 ones)

Message from HCLTR's President

If you'd like to be notified when the publication is available, please email [marlena@hocoltr.org](mailto:marlena@hocoltr.org)

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This research effort could not have been done without the time, talent and commitment of the following people:

Marlena Jareaux, *researcher and facilitator*

Lynn Mumma, *co-facilitator*

Christine Bulbul, *researcher*

Wayne Davis, *researcher*

Early members of the research team:

Rita Hamlet

Kara Lampasone

## CONCLUSIONS

We began our inquiry with the knowledge that Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks referenced the cabin's name "Thomas Isaac" to be a misnomer. One definition of misnomer according to Merriam-Webster is, "A use of a wrong or inappropriate name." We agree that it is a misnomer and question whether it should be called Thomas Isaac's Log Cabin, given the history we uncovered. If a deliberative process involving the public exists for naming properties in the county, we are unaware of it.

One of our researchers found another article in the Howard County Historical Society, Inc.'s vertical files that contained a newspaper clipping from The Howard County Times written prior to the original dedication of the cabin. It had a very appropriate headline, given our inquiry: "Merryman? Isaac? Stanton?"



The 1988 article stated: "According to land records, Thomas Isaac would become the cabin's first documented owner when he registered the structure in 1878." As our report shows, he was not the first documented owner, nor do we know of any 1878 registration involving the cabin in land records or anywhere else.

The log cabin that had been originally located on Merryman Street was on property that had an ownership chain of title that was at least comprised of: Balderston>Brown>Fisher>Gillis before it came to be owned by Thomas Isaac. Thomas Isaac purchased and received title to the 96 square perches property from Levi Gillis, a Mulatto male, on May 7, 1860. Thomas was the owner until his death in 1887. He and his wife lived elsewhere in the county. The Isaac family descendants, who spent most of their time living in Baltimore County, sold the parcel of land upon which the log cabin was located to John Henry and Fannie Stanton in 1947. Isaiah Mercer (Sr. nor

Jr.) were never owners of the land on which the Merryman Street cabin had been located.

Before its dismantling from Merryman, it was referred to in county and state documents as Merryman Street Cabin and/or Stanton's Log Cabin. It was not referred to as "Thomas Isaac's" on the county Convention-Visitors Bureau Ellicott City walking tour brochure while it was still on Merryman and owned by the Stanton family. Immediately prior to Stanton's donation of the cabin to HEC, it was referred to as "The Stanton Log Cabin" in a June 1980 newspaper article. Thomas Isaac was mentioned in the same article to have been the 1878 owner (the Hopkins map date). While that is accurate, settling on the name "Thomas Isaac" for the cabin (who did not build nor reside there) ignores important history that has implications for an expanded narrative that visitors, residents, and those who are interested in the rich history of early Ellicott City Black residents, would likely find to be exciting. The 1860 Martinet Map shows one structure on the Levi Gillis land, labeled "L. Gillis." It is in the location from which the log cabin was removed.

No documentation could be located to support the widely circulated statement that the cabin existed in the 1700s. The cabin was most likely built during the time that Thomas Fisher or Levi Gillis owned it (1834-1860). Thomas Fisher (a Black, male Baltimore County resident) was never recorded on a Howard District census and likely did not live on the land. It is possible that Thomas Fisher may have had a cabin on his land that he rented to Levi Gillis, since the Gillis family had been recorded by the 1850 census taker to be near other residents of the Merryman Street area in Ellicott's Mills. However, no recorded lease agreement between them could be located. It seems more likely that the cabin was built during the Levi Gillis era. Levi Gillis purchased the parcel in 1851 for \$100, which was \$40 more than Fisher had purchased it for in 1834. The next year in 1852, it was assessed a value of \$400 by officials. Nine years later in 1860, Levi Gillis sold it to Thomas Isaac for \$400. The increase suggests that an improvement of a dwelling was made by Gillis during his ownership, which seems likely since he had a family of seven in 1850 that grew to nine by 1860. A Gillis-era construction date is consistent with other Howard County cabins that historians have indicated were built during that time period. It also supports the dating assessments recorded by both Jean Hannon and Murphy-Williams's Master Plan map that was submitted for the National Register of Historic Properties. Neither recorded a 1700s date. We were not

able to ascertain which party or historian first determined the 1700s date, nor what methodologies were used to fix the date, if any were.

What Thomas Isaac did do was sell 12.5 square perches of the land he had purchased from Isaiah Mercer, Jr. in 1858 to the church Trustees, including nearby homeowner Levi Gillis, two years later in 1860. Those church Trustees were very likely part of the same church congregation that was using (possibly renting, since the 1860 Martenet map did not depict only owners) the "Colored Ch" building that is shown on the map at the end of Merryman. It is unknown at this time how long they may have been worshiping there. That land was owned by Isaiah Mercer, Sr., who purchased it from James Bricard, a Black male, in 1841. Mercer, an Emory Chapel minister, is known to have leased a nearby house to George Hesser. It is entirely possible that he leased a building to the church before they eventually bought the 12.5 square perches of land to construct one they would own.

A frame church was constructed by the church Trustees on the 12.5 square perches between 1860-1861. That property was sold to Mary Ridout (an African American female) in 1896, when the church no longer needed it due to their acquisition of land for a new church on Main Street (their current home) in 1889. Ridout resided on the 12.5 sq perches property, but it was likely rental property for those who owned it after her. The foundation ruins that currently exist on the Stanton parcel may be associated with the structure the church built upon the 12.5 sq perches, but no specific effort to conclusively determine this was made by this Truth lab team. A Howard County employee by the name of Alice Mordoh made a request of Maryland Historical Trust in 2002 to assign a number for the "African-American Episcopal Church" on Merryman Street. On July 9, 2002, HO-766 was assigned. No documentation was ever submitted to MHT from the county, leaving us unable to determine at this time if it may have been the foundation ruins still visible or something that aligns with the structure depicted on the 1860 Martenet map. Either way, it relates to James Bricard.

We were unable to account for how the Isaac descendants were able to bundle the 12.5 square perches parcel into the land that they sold to the Stantons. The April 1947 survey made by the engineer "J.R. Curtis" that was referenced in the May 26, 1947 deed to the Stantons would be useful in deciphering how it happened, as no deed was located to explain it.

## A.M.E. Church Trustees (original 1860 ones)



*When the 1860 Martenet map of the county was published, a "Colored Ch" was noted as being on Merryman Street. On the 1878 Hopkins map, a "COLORED CH." was again noted to be there. Today, St. Luke's A.M.E. Church can be found on Main Street in historic Ellicott City.*

Many men were involved in the purchase and maintenance of the church, which began its existence on Merryman Street and eventually moved to the current Main Street property.

What could be located about the original 1860-61 Trustees, follows...

### **Levi Gillis (the expanded version)**

In 1850, 29-year-old Levi, along with his wife and children, was recorded to be a family of Mulattos on the Ellicott's Mills census. They were visited by the census taker after a store merchant named Mr. Forrest and before a dentist named Mr. Sykes. The next year, in May of 1851, Levi purchased a lot containing 96 square perches for \$100 from Thomas Fisher (a Free Black male) and his wife Ellen. On May 7, 1860, Levi participated as a church trustee to purchase 12.5 sq perches of land for \$75 beside the lot he had owned. He sold his personal lot to Thomas Isaac for \$400 the same day. Levi and his family were next recorded by the 1860 West Chester, Pennsylvania census taker on June 23rd.



United States Census, 1850 Maryland Anne Arundel  
Ellicotts Mills

Source Box Attach to Family Tree

Image 14 of 25

Print Download

134 131	Abner	4	M	Merchant		
	John	54	M			
	Mary	45	F			
	Abraham	15	M			
	Sarah	10	F			
	Thomas	7	M			
	Mary	61	F			
	Abraham	28	M			
134 131	Levi	29	M			
	Sarah	22	F			
	George	8	M			
	Thomas	7	M			
	Thomas	5	M			
	Thomas	3	M			
	Levi	3	M			
135 132	Stephen	37	M	Merchant		
	Abraham	27	M			

Image Index Information

United States Census, 1860 Pennsylvania Chester  
West Chester

Source Box Attach to Family Tree

Image 90 of 120

Print Download

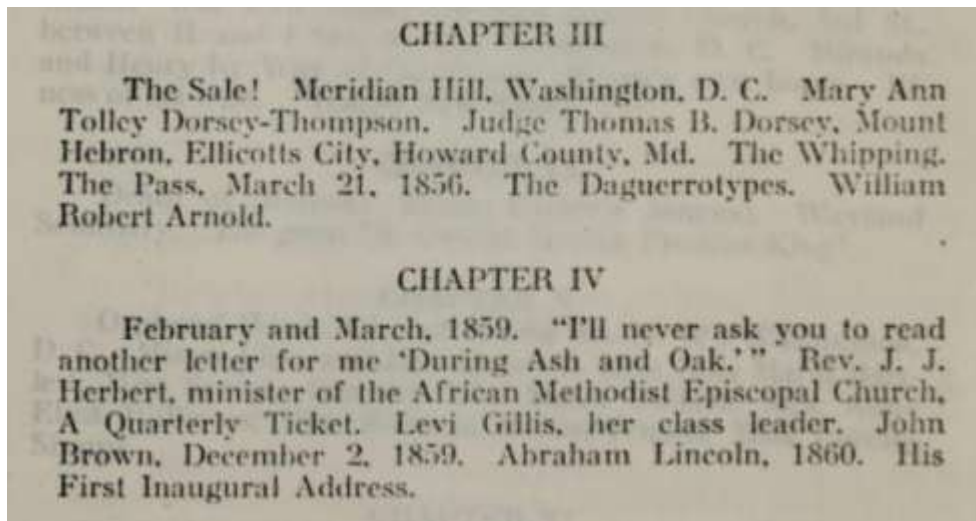
719 722	Levi	31	M	Day Laborer		
	Eliza	41	F			
	Sarah	14	F			
	George	10	M			
	Thomas	10	M			
	Oliver	12	M			
	Levi	10	M			
	Oliver	8	M			
	Catharine	3	F			
720 722	George	40	M	Day Laborer		
	Levi	40	M			
	William	14	M			

Image Index Information

Courtesy of FamilySearch.org

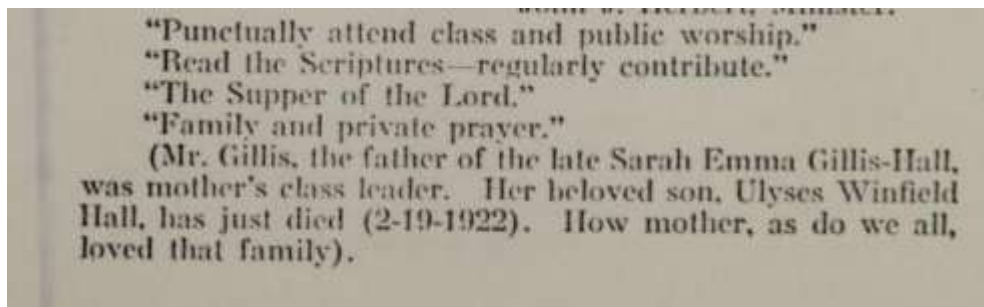
Newspaper accounts report him being the founder of Gillis Methodist Church in Baltimore in the 1860s. Gillis Memorial Church still exists today and lists 1860 as its founding date. The church was contacted for verification, but no response had been received by the time this report was completed.

Gillis was mentioned in a book written by Nellie Arnold Plummer titled, *Out of the Depths or The Triumph of the Cross*. The book contains excerpts from her father Adam Plummer's diary. Adam was married to Emily Saunders, and Emily would eventually be enslaved in Howard County by a member of Maryland Court of Appeals judge Thomas B. Dorsey's family at his Mount Hebron plantation and then at the nearby Woodlawn plantation of his daughter. Levi was noted to have been Emily's class leader. It is not known whether Levi taught Emily at one of the Dorsey plantations or if Emily came to Missionary Bottom.



From Nellie Arnold Plummer's book titled, *Out of the Depths, or The Triumph of the Cross*; Courtesy of Internet Archive. Accessible via:

<https://archive.org/details/outofdepthsortri00plum/page/n15/mode/2up>





await further processing, and eventually freed, in part by Adam's efforts.



*From Nellie Arnold Plummer's book titled, Out of the Depths, or The Triumph of the Cross; Courtesy of Internet Archive. Accessible via:*

<https://archive.org/details/outofdepthsortri00plum/page/n27/mode/2up>

By 1870, Levi and some of his family members were recorded in a Baltimore City household. His youngest son, Charles, was recorded to have been born in Pennsylvania nearly a decade before. Levi was listed on a Freedman's Bank account record in 1870 for another Maryland

church (Allen A.M.E.) that is associated with his wife. He was recorded in the 1880 Baltimore City census.

United States Census, 1870 Maryland Baltimore  
Baltimore, ward 19

Source Box Attach to Family Tree

Image 155 of 342

Print Download Tools

1277	Mary A	35	D	W	Keeping House	clerk	
1278	John Jeremiah	27	m	W	Blacksmith	clerk	
	Mary E.	20	D	W	Keeping House	clerk	
1279	Gillis Levi	50	m	m	Porter in Store	clerk	
	Elija Anne	50	D	m	Keeping House	clerk	
	John James	17	D	m		clerk	
	Catherine	13	D	m	At School	clerk	
	Chas H.	9	m	m		Pence	
1280	Boston Moses	25	m	m	Driver carriage	clerk	
	Rhoda	21	F	m	Keeping House	clerk	
	John N.	1	m	m		clerk	
	Nelson John W.	20	m	m	Porter in Store	clerk	
1281	Gilkey John	40	m	W	Labourer	clerk	1
	John	40	F	W	Keeping House	clerk	1
		18	m	W	Labourer	clerk	1

Image Index Information

United States Census, 1880 Maryland Baltimore Baltimore

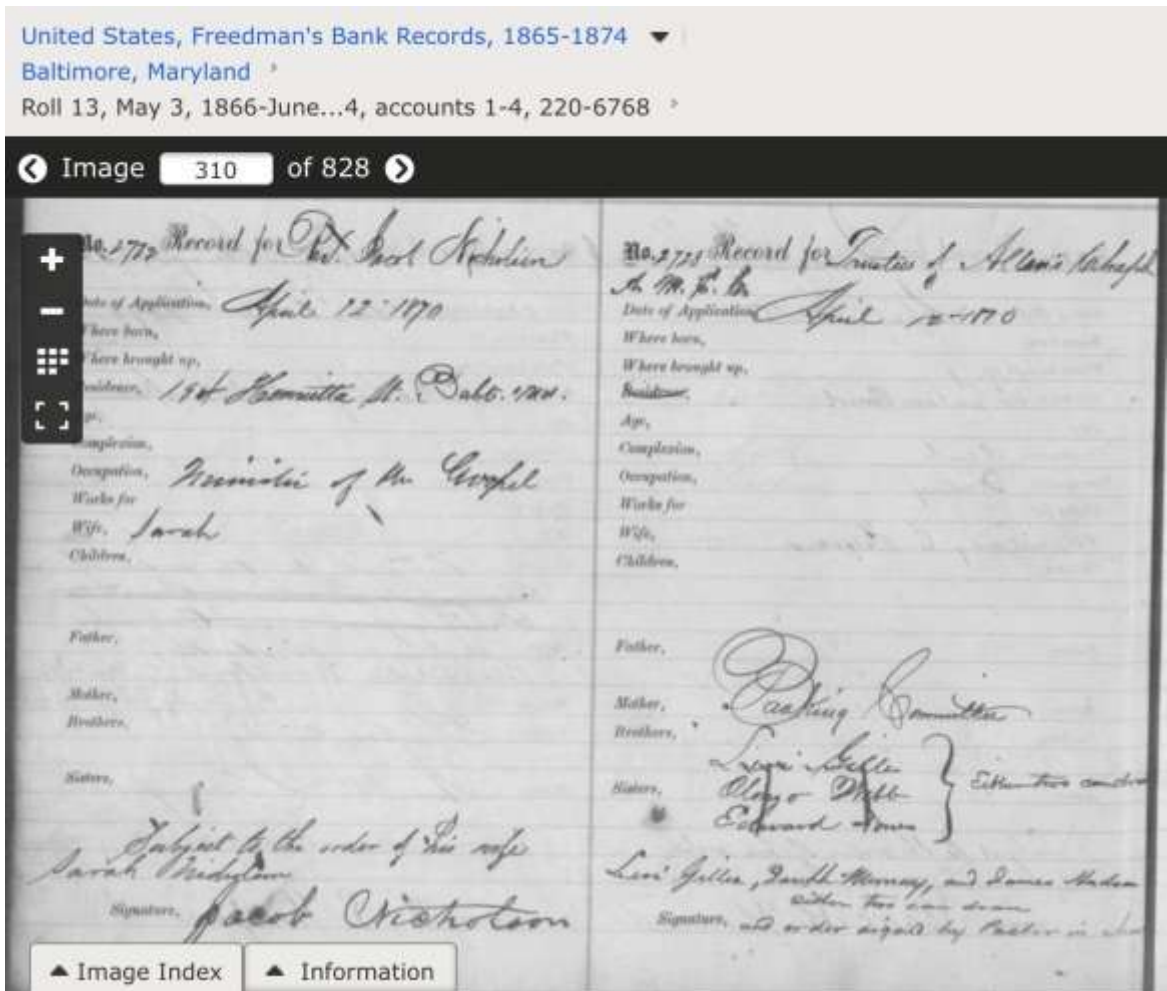
Source Box Attach to Family Tree

Image 15 of 19

Print Download Tools

	Bethel	18	D	W	Daughter	1	
	Boston Robert	18	D	W	Daughter	1	Ward Driver
	Elizabeth	18	D	W	Daughter	1	Ward Driver
	Grant	18	D	W	Daughter	1	Ward Driver
1281	Gillis Levi	50	m	m	Porter	1	
	Brian	18	D	W	Wife	1	Keeping House
	Spinnie	18	D	W	Daughter	1	Ward Driver
	George	18	D	W	Daughter	1	Porter
	Elizabeth	18	D	W	Daughter	1	Servant
	Levi	18	D	W	Daughter	1	Ward Driver
	Miriam	18	D	W	Daughter	1	At School
	Levi	18	D	W	Daughter	1	Ward Driver
	Catherine	18	D	W	Daughter	1	Ward Driver
1281	William	18	D	W	Daughter	1	Labourer
	Levi	18	D	W	Daughter	1	Keeping House
	Miriam	18	D	W	Daughter	1	

Image Index Information



Courtesy of FamilySearch.org

Of additional historical note is a descendant of Levi. His daughter Catherine married Hezekiah Russell (son of George Russell), and they had a daughter named Annie. Annie went on to marry Dr. Herbert M. Frisby, the 2nd African American arctic explorer to reach the North Pole and the historian of Matthew Henson, who was the first African American to reach the North Pole. The Banneker-Douglass museum in Annapolis currently holds the Herbert M. Frisby Collection. More on Frisby's work: <https://www.mdhistory.org/sitting-on-top-of-the-world/>

### **Malachi Decoursey**

On September 19, 1860, Malachi Decoursey purchased Lot 294 on the Baltimore Frederick Turnpike for \$25. (Note: misspelled on the deed as "Mallaki DeCorsey" (Liber WWW No 21, Folio 112)). On the 1870 census (misspelled as "Molki Corsey"), he was recorded as being a Mulatto, age 45, with the profession of "keep provision store." His wife

Jane (full name Mary Jane) was also recorded with their sons, W. H. (William), age 16, and J.T. (James), age 14. By the 1880 census, a son Charles was added. It is noted that Jacob Henson, Sr. (also a later Trustee) and his family were the 3rd family visited by the 1880 census taker after the DeCourseys. Malachi was listed in the September 2, 1884 Baltimore Sun as a circuit court grand jury participant. Malachi died in 1900, and his sons and wives deeded the property to Mary Jane. In 1904, she sold it to John H. Barnes of Atlantic City. In the 1910 census, she was recorded in her son William's house on Rose Street in Baltimore City. She died two years later in Philadelphia and was buried in Baltimore, MD.

Records Images Family Tree Genealogies Catalog Books Wiki

United States Census, 1870 Maryland Howard District 2 Source Box Attach to Family Tree

Image 80 of 94 Print Download Tools

1	Thomas 11 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
2	John 18 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
3	Charles 6 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
4	Malachi 4 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
5	Robert 1 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
6	John 18 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
7	Charles 6 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
8	Malachi 4 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
9	Robert 1 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
10	John 18 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
11	Charles 6 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
12	Malachi 4 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
13	Robert 1 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
14	John 18 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
15	Charles 6 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
16	Malachi 4 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
17	Robert 1 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
18	John 18 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
19	Charles 6 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
20	Malachi 4 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
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24	Malachi 4 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
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28	Malachi 4 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
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32	Malachi 4 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
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36	Malachi 4 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
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44	Malachi 4 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
45	Robert 1 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
46	John 18 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
47	Charles 6 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
48	Malachi 4 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
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51	Charles 6 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
52	Malachi 4 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
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56	Malachi 4 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
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76	Malachi 4 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
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78	John 18 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
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80	Malachi 4 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
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83	Charles 6 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
84	Malachi 4 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
85	Robert 1 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
86	John 18 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
87	Charles 6 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
88	Malachi 4 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
89	Robert 1 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
90	John 18 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
91	Charles 6 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
92	Malachi 4 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
93	Robert 1 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		
94	John 18 M	Lab House	1000	Poland	11		

Image Index Information



United States Census, 1880 Maryland Howard District 2 ED 102

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Print

Philip	W. 45	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married
Robert John	W. 44	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married
Robert	W. 43	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married
William	W. 42	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married
Robert	W. 41	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married
Robert	W. 40	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married
Robert	W. 39	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married
Robert	W. 38	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married
Robert	W. 37	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married
Robert	W. 36	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married
Robert	W. 35	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married
Robert	W. 34	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married
Robert	W. 33	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married
Robert	W. 32	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married
Robert	W. 31	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married
Robert	W. 30	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married
Robert	W. 29	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married
Robert	W. 28	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married
Robert	W. 27	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married
Robert	W. 26	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married
Robert	W. 25	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married
Robert	W. 24	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married
Robert	W. 23	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married

United States Census, 1880 Maryland Howard District 2 ED 102

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Print Download Tools

Robert	W. 45	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married
Robert	W. 44	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married
Robert	W. 43	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married
Robert	W. 42	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married
Robert	W. 41	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married
Robert	W. 40	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married
Robert	W. 39	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married
Robert	W. 38	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married
Robert	W. 37	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married
Robert	W. 36	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married
Robert	W. 35	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married
Robert	W. 34	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married
Robert	W. 33	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married
Robert	W. 32	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married
Robert	W. 31	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married
Robert	W. 30	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married
Robert	W. 29	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married
Robert	W. 28	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married
Robert	W. 27	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married
Robert	W. 26	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married
Robert	W. 25	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married
Robert	W. 24	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married
Robert	W. 23	Male	1	Unemployed	Married	Married

Courtesy of FamilySearch.org

## Lemuel Govans

Lemuel was recorded to be a 45-year-old Free Black male on the 1860 census, living in the Ellicott's Mills household of Henry R. Hazelhurst (mechanical engineer for B&O Railroad). The next record found is of him being drafted to fight in the Civil War; however, no military service records have been found for him. Quite possibly, it was determined that he was too old to enlist. Lemuel's wife (Ann) and children were enslaved by Mary A. Hazelhurst (wife of Francis Hazelhurst and daughter of Dr. Allen Thomas). Though Francis was recorded to be enslaving four people in 1860, it was his wife Mary who made the claim for financial compensation in 1867 for her perceived "losses" due to the abolishment of slavery. Her claim included Ann Govans (38), Delia Govans (15), and Harry Govans (7). According to

MHT historical inventory HO-356 (on PDF pg 7), Mary turned over land and slaves in trust to her brother before marrying Hazelhurst. They included "Ann and Harry, her child, Matilda, Delia and James." On the 1880 census, Lemuel and Ann Maria Govans were recorded in Catonsville with two sons and a daughter.

United States Census, 1860 Maryland Howard  
Ellicott's Mills 2nd District

Image 29 of 36

Name	Age	Sex	Color	Profession	Value	Value	Value	Value
James	7	M						
Henry A. Hazelhurst	45	M		Richardson Engine				
Elizabeth	32	F			300	300	Maryland	
Ellen	12	F						1
Georg B.	4	M						
Katharine	2	F						
Charles	1	M						
Ann H. Hays	25	F		Servant			Beland	
Lemuel Govans	45	M	B				Maryland	
Ann Gladden	28	F						
417417 E. P. Hazen	48	M			3000	1000	Pennsylvania	
Henrietta	24	F		Teacher	1500	1000	Maryland	
Charles B.	15	M			1500	500		
John W.	14	M			1500	700		
Alfred	12	M			1500	700		1
John Hanson	23	M		Servant				
1001001 W. H. H.	41	M		Chapman			New York	
	30	M					Maryland	

Image Index Information

Courtesy of FamilySearch.org

Maryland State Archives  
HOWARD COUNTY  
COMMISSIONER OF SLAVE STATISTICS  
(Slave Statistics)  
msa\_c957\_1-0074  
Enlarge and print image (3M)

Jump to page 100

PREVIOUS NEXT

52

Mary A. Hazelhurst

Name	Age	Sex	Color	Profession	Value	Value	Value	Value
James Jackson	1	M	Black	Healthy				
Ann Govan	2	F	Black					
Matilda Jackson	3	F	Black					
Delia Govan	4	F	Black					
Harry Govan	5	M	Black					

Test of the Jackson  
William B. Thomas Sec. Table of 1862

HOWARD COUNTY COMMISSIONER OF SLAVE STATISTICS (Slave Statistics) 1868 C957-1; Courtesy of the Maryland State Archives. Accessible via [http://mdhistory.msa.maryland.gov/msa\\_c957/msa\\_c957\\_1/html/msa\\_c957\\_1-0074.html](http://mdhistory.msa.maryland.gov/msa_c957/msa_c957_1/html/msa_c957_1-0074.html)



United States Census, 1880 Maryland Baltimore Catonsville ED 223

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Print Download Tools

151	Mary Ann	B.F. 6	daughter	attending school
152	~ Sophie	B.F. 2	daughter	at home
153	~ Ida	B.F. 3	daughter	" "
154	Thomas Geo	B.M. 72	and Boarder	" "
155	Loren Sennett	B.M. 62		laborer
156	~ Ann Maria	B.F. 55	Wife	keeping house
157	~ William	B.M. 15	Son	attending school
158	~ Ella	B.F. 13	daughter	at home
159	~ James	B.M. 7	Son	attending school
160	151/52 Ryan Charles	B.M. 45		farm hand
161	~ Elizabeth	B.F. 43	Wife	keeping house
162	~ Jos Wesley	B.M. 21	Son	waiter
163	~ Charles A	B.M. 18	Son	waiter
164	~ Emma	B.F. 14	daughter	at home
165	153/154 Tamm Solomon	B.M. 35		porter
166	~	B.F. 33	Wife	at home

Image Index Information

Courtesy of FamilySearch.org

Lemuel resided in the Winter's Lane neighborhood, a historical African American community on the National Register of Historic Places.<sup>1</sup> He was reported in the Baltimore Sun in the March 23, 1883 edition to be the President of the Colored Republican Voters of the First Election District of Baltimore County. As an indication of his importance, it made the news in September 1897 that he filed his will.

### **William Dorsey**

There was some initial uncertainty regarding the identification of William Dorsey. A William Dorsey (age 35, Free Black male) was recorded on the 1860 census in the household of William H.G. Dorsey (son of Court of Appeals Judge Thomas Beale Dorsey). Another William appeared on the 1880 census, a 42-year-old Black male, along with a wife named Sarah and a son. They were not the same men.

<sup>1</sup> [https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/PDF/NR\\_PDFs/NR-1454.pdf](https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/PDF/NR_PDFs/NR-1454.pdf)

United States Census, 1860 Maryland Howard  
Ellicotts Mills 2nd District

Source Box

Image 4 of 36

Print

209	209	Amie O. Howard	33	F	Private	2,170	1,500	Maryland
		Mary I. "	25	F	"			"
		Harriet W. "	21	"	"			"
		Bertha R. "	18	"	"			"
		Lizzie Hall	17	B	Account			"
209	209	William H. Dorsey	41	M	Attending at Law	6,000	2,000	"
		Comfort W. "	30	F				"
		Mary R. "	4	"				"
		Comfort W. "	3	"				"
		John J. W. "	1	M				"
		Mary Cady	30	F	Scam? Help			Melund
		Harrison Davis	75	M	Account			Maryland
		William Dorsey	35	M	"			"
210	210	Annay Carey	54	M	Leabaw?		50	"
		Sarah "	52	F				"
		"	28	M	"			"

Image Index Information

Courtesy of FamilySearch.org

William Dorsey was found in an 1842 Maryland State Archives record, 19 years old and free. He was placed into an indenture contract with Evan Scott (a white blacksmith) by the Orphan's Court judges (one of whom was the grandson of Charles Carroll of Carrollton, signer of the Declaration of Independence) to learn blacksmithing. This William was the church Trustee.

June 1<sup>st</sup> 1842.  
Court met according to request.  
Present  
Charles Carroll  
Edw<sup>d</sup> C. Alexander } J<sup>cs</sup>.  
McLane Brown.  
Ordered, That William Dorsey, a negro boy aged about 19 yrs.  
and 6 months, be bound an apprentice to Evan Scott, to learn  
the art, trade, and mystery of a Blacksmith from this date,  
and shall be free to be entitled to a suit of wearing apparel,  
and thirty dollars in cash.

HOWARD DISTRICT REGISTER OF WILLS (Orphans Court Proceedings) 1840-1851, Liber WG1, page 61, MSA CM500, CR406-1. Courtesy of the Maryland State Archives.

[illegible]

## Abraham Porter

In 1850, Abraham Porter was recorded as a Free Black male cooper in the Ellicott's Mills household of George Johnson (age 51, Free Mulatto male cooper). (Note: a cooper was someone who made and repaired wooden barrels and tubs.) George Johnson owned his property. In 1860 Ellicott's Mills, Abraham was recorded as being 30 years old, with a woman in the household named Debby Porter, and boys named Charles and Thomas Porter. By 1880, Abraham Porter was living in District 4 of the county with a wife named Harriet, three sons and a daughter.



United States Census, 1850 • Maryland • Anne Arundel • Ellicotts Mills

Image 10 of 25

Print Download Tools

Henry	6 M			One	1
Harriet	4 F				
Louisa	2 F				
David Morgan	62 M	Iron Miller		Wife	✓
Geo. B. Johnson	51 M M	Cooper	2500	Wife	
Ann B.	34 F M			"	
John "	23 M M	Cooper		"	
Mary "	17 F M			"	
Abraham Butler	21 M B	Cooper		"	1
Robert Bennett	12 M B	"		"	

United States Census, 1850 • Maryland • Howard • Ellicotts Mills 2nd District

Image 24 of 36

Print Download Tools

John A. Walker	40 M	Shoe Maker	100		
Sarah "	42 F				
John B. "	17 M				
Elizabeth Gray	37 F	Seamstress	50		
Thomas Robinson	32 M	Painter			
Abraham Foster	31 M	Cooper	50		
Lizzy "	25 F	Wash Woman			
Charles "	9 M				
Thomas "	3 M				
Ellen Brown	11 F				
Nancy Pauls	24 F	Wash Woman			
Anna Howard	35 F	" "	12		
Caroline Davidson	25 F	" "	18		
George Collins	30 M	Seamstress			
Le Sage Lyons	7 F				
William Foster	36 M	Stone Cutter			
Elena "	20 F				
William B.	2 M				
Charles	25 M	Cooper	25		

United States Census, 1880 • Maryland • Howard • District 4 • ED 104

Image 52 of 52

Print Download Tools

Emma	11	Wife	At School
William Edward	5	Wife	
Abraham	60		Laborer
Harriet	28	Wife	Washing House
Martha	7	Son	
George	5	Son	
Margaret	4	Daughter	
Jacob	1	Son	
John	40		Laborer
Harriet	38	Wife	Washing House
John W.	11	Son	At School
James B.	9	Son	
James	7	Daughter	
John	6	Daughter	
Leah	3	Daughter	
John	1	Son	

Courtesy of FamilySearch.org

## Daniel Hopkins

Daniel was recorded as a Trustee on the 1861 church mortgage. He was recorded as a 40-year-old Free Black laborer on the 1850 Ellicott's Mills census, along with his wife Mary, two children, and 60-year-old Lily Carr. In 1860, they were again recorded to be living in Ellicott's Mills, though without Lily in the household.

United States Census, 1850 Maryland Anne Arundel Ellicott's Mills

Image 19 of 25

1	Rachel	38 F W			1
2	Louisa	17 F W			
3	Harriet	15 F W			
4	Annanda	10 F W			
5	Almina	6 F W			
6	John A.	3 F W			
7	William A.	1 M W			
8	237 237 Daniel Hopkins	40 M B Laborer			1
9	Mary	37 F B			1
10	Daniel	4 M B			
11	Mary	2 F B			
12	Lily Carr	60 F B			1
13	238 238 John Barrett	38 M Machinist	Barrett		1
14	Mary A.	37 F	Wid		
15	William	12 M			1
16	Walter	10 M			1
17	Richard B.	8 M			1
18	James E.	4 M			
19		1 M			

Image Index Information

United States Census, 1860 Maryland Howard Ellicott's Mills 2nd District

Image 7 of 36

9	Phyllis	15 M B			
10	Ann	13 M B			
11	William H.	11 M B			
12	John Hoale	25 M B	Washerman		1
13	237 237 Daniel Hopkins	51 M B	Laborer	40	1
14	Mary	38 F B	Wash. Winder		1
15	Daniel	15 M B			
16	Margaret	6 F B			
17	238 238 Charles A. Reid	37 M	Math. Chuggman	30	Virginia Maryland
18	Elizabeth	35 F			1
19	Wm. R. Davis	14 M			
20	Rachel Linn	14 F B	House Winder		
21	239 239 Anna Campbell	31 M	Carpenter	57	
22	Rogers	28 F			1
23	Samuel H.	8 M			

Image Index Information

Courtesy of FamilySearch.org

It is believed that Lily was Daniel's mother. A Daniel Hopkins had been manumitted (set free) by Mary Israel via her recorded Deed of Manumission dated September 9, 1818. He was to be freed when he turned 25 years old. The deed recorded that Daniel was born in 1810, making him eight in 1818. A Lily (spelled "Liley" on the record) who was noted to have been born in 1788, had also been manumitted by Israel via the same deed. Daniel asked that a Certificate of Freedom be issued to him, which he received April 1, 1837, at the age of 27.



To all whom it may concern: Be it known  
that I, Mary, daughter of James Arundel County and  
Maryland for divers good causes & considerations  
thence moving have released from slavery & limited  
servitude and set free and by these presents  
do release from slavery & limited servitude the  
following named negroes freed and after the  
period that they respectively shall arrive to twenty  
four years of age: viz. Liley born 16<sup>th</sup> April 1788 to  
be free from and after the date hereof, Lyleton  
born 6<sup>th</sup> December 1801, Henry born 15<sup>th</sup> March  
1806, George born 16<sup>th</sup> September 1807, Edwin born  
15<sup>th</sup> April 1809, Daniel born 20<sup>th</sup> March 1810,  
Charles born 10<sup>th</sup> December 1812, Caroline born 5<sup>th</sup>  
April 1816, Robert born 12<sup>th</sup> June 1818, and I do  
hereby declare and stipulate and covenant and  
negate to be free from and after the day that  
each may respectively accomplish their twenty  
fourth year of age. In Testimony Whereof I have  
subscribed my name and seal at the County of  
Anne Arundel this 9<sup>th</sup> day of September 1818.

85  
at my hand and official seal this ninth day of  
September 1818.  
Signed, Sealed & Delivered in the  
presence of Charles Gifford } Mary Israel  
Nicholas Westlington of the }  
On the back of the foregoing deed was thus written  
to wit: Ann Arundel County Court: On the 9<sup>th</sup>  
day of September 1818 before Mary Israel before  
the subscribed & justice of peace for the County  
aforesaid and unknown to her the within instrument

Anne Arundel County Court (Manumission Record) MSA C109-3, Book C3, pg 84-85.  
Courtesy of the Maryland State Archives.

*Handwritten text on a certificate of freedom from Anne Arundel County, Maryland. The text is written in cursive and includes the following details:*

*Maryland Anne Arundel County Court*  
*William Lewis Clerk of said County*  
*do hereby certify that the person named*  
*Leah Hopkins aged about twenty years*  
*about five feet high and a quarter inch high*  
*black complexion has a scar on the back of*  
*the head none of the person named*  
*Mary Israel by deed dated the 9<sup>th</sup> day of*  
*September in the year four thousand*  
*and eight hundred and thirty seven*  
*and that he was raised in the County*  
*of said*  
*Issued the 1<sup>st</sup> day of April 1837*

Anne Arundel County (Certificates of Freedom, 1806-1851) C46-4, pg 253. Courtesy of the Maryland State Archives.

Lily requested that a Certificate of Freedom be issued to her on October 13, 1818 when she was 30 years old.

*Handwritten text on a certificate of freedom from Anne Arundel County, Maryland. The text is written in cursive and includes the following details:*

*Maryland Anne Arundel County Court*  
*do hereby certify that the person named*  
*Lily aged about thirty years*  
*about five feet high and half an inch*  
*high black complexion a remarkable scar upon*  
*the breast and several scars upon the right arm*  
*is the identical person named by Henry Israel*  
*by deed dated the 9<sup>th</sup> day of September*  
*thousand eight hundred and thirty seven*  
*and that the said person*  
*was named Lily was raised in the County of said*  
*Issued the 13<sup>th</sup> day of October 1818*

Anne Arundel County (Certificates of Freedom, 1806-1851) C46-3, pg 123. Courtesy of the Maryland State Archives.

## **LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT, HOWARD COUNTY LYNCHING TRUTH & RECONCILIATION, INC.**

Once upon a time, its address was 38 Merryman Street. Maybe someone alive today has heard the story of when that was so, but most people who today live in Howard County's county seat of Ellicott City have not. While the postal service changed the addresses on the street to have four digits at some point, and the now-paved road only has eight residential properties, there was once a time when it was a dirt road in a community that was a beacon of African American hope in the county during the pre-Civil War era. While there are likely some people in the county who have carried this knowledge to the present day, the early history in this report is known to very few.

Historians, researchers, and community residents have expended significant resources over time digging up any and all facts, artifacts and properties that had a close or remote association with the Ellicotts, after whom the county seat for Howard County was named. While this is understandable, it is important to note that it has been at the cost of not learning about other early residents who also contributed to building the county. For decades, Benjamin Banneker, a Baltimore County resident, has been acclaimed as the local Black person of historical significance in Howard County. I mean no disrespect to Banneker, who was a self-taught Free Black man whose father Robert was a Free Black landowner in the 1700s. He should be celebrated, and he is large enough of a figure to be shared among counties. However, it shouldn't be at the cost of other noteworthy African Americans who resided in the county.

It is significant that Banneker (who lived in the area for 40 years before the Ellicotts arrived) sold 72 acres of his land to the Ellicotts in 1799, which increased their Baltimore County land holdings. It is equally significant that one of the prior owners of the land on which the log cabin once sat on Merryman Street was a Black man who was about 15 years old when Banneker died in 1806. Like Banneker, he had been born Free, and later in life inherited ten shares of stock in Union Manufacturing (where he would work for more than 45 years) in the company president's last will and testament. His name was Thomas. Around 1803, when Thomas was still a teenager, another boy was born, this one white and also named Thomas. One Thomas was memorialized and celebrated when the county renamed the Merryman cabin after him (Thomas Isaac) more than one hundred years

after his death in 1878. The other Thomas, owner of the property four years before the white Thomas first became a landowner elsewhere, had faded into obscurity until this report. A stock-owning, Black male landowner who lived 30 years prior to the Civil War debunks myths that prior historians have not done enough to eliminate.

You will read about both of the men named Thomas in the pages herein. The cabin that was reconstructed and re-created on Main Street was designed and styled by 1980s officials to show visitors to our county what the "settler" lifestyle entailed. On the state's tourism webpage for the cabin, visitors are told that they will experience a "Period-appointed cabin." The county tourism website listing for the cabin alerts visitors that it "...commemorates the early stages of European development in the Patapsco River Valley," language that the county's Recreation and Parks website duplicates. The cabin was created to reflect the heritage of people who look like white Thomas, who are celebrated to be the "settlers" who tamed the frontier that we all are supposed to celebrate. Do we all celebrate this settler history? It is time to ask this question.

One of the founders of Howard County Lynching Truth & Reconciliation (HCLTR) (which is now a nonprofit) once told me a story about a Columbia high school student that has stayed with me. It involved a history book being reshelfed in the school library. A student had written inside of it something to the effect of, "I can't find ME in this book." This is a powerful statement from someone who is possibly now an adult living in the county... perhaps YOUR neighbor, coworker or pharmacist. Understanding where you come from is a desire that is innate in all of us, and it is well-known that it is usually much more difficult to find African Americans in the historical records than it is to locate white people. The people in this report were not hard to find. They simply were not valued by historians until now.

Howard County government employees completed historical site inventory forms beginning in the 1970s and forwarded them to the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT), which maintains them with an internet presence. Internet search engines pick up the forms' contents and display them in user search results, which are then amplified when someone cites the content. Though the architecture of buildings is documented in the inventories, it is the history narratives contained in them that are frequently cited as sources of fact. That history is anchored by the "Significance" area of the form that is mandatorily completed and is frequently made to be correlated to people

deemed to be historically significant. Who is deciding who is historically significant? Would their knowledge (or lack of) local African American history impact the representation of African Americans in the MHT inventories? Has it already?

There is no question that in a county like Howard that was recently (2021) declared to be "majority-minority" by its first African American County Executive, historical significance should no longer center primarily around white "settlers" and large/wealthy landowners. All people should be able to find themselves in the historical places they visit and study. I do not disparage existing historical inquiries that have been made by people who quite possibly did their best, but rather demand more from the historical methods that shape and form the sources of information put out for the public's consumption.

History evolves, necessarily, when more information is discovered that should then augment the public narratives. This report focuses on the **People** who actually lived on Merryman who deserve to be finally recognized and more fully understood, if the collective goal is to have more inclusive historical narratives for the public to consume.

Why did HCLTR sponsor and facilitate the Roundtable that yielded this rich trove of historical research?

When Maryland's legislature mandated that public hearings occur in places where documented lynchings occurred, I wondered how a county that has largely steered clear of the mention of its enslaving past would react. Very little circulates in county classrooms about local history of the time period of enslavement to Jim Crow. This was the case when I attended high school in the county, as well as when my son did almost thirty years later. Each jurisdiction, in preparing for the public hearings, has autonomy to decide how to examine its lynching history. Those who subscribe to the Equal Justice Initiative's guidelines adhere to it being community-driven, centering the voices of the victims' descendants which includes the people who lived in the community at the time and to whom the lynching was intended to deliver a clear message. The last known recorded lynching in Howard County - and the incident most frequently discussed by those who have held the power to drive historical narratives - occurred in 1895. It is important that we all know that this was not the county's only lynching activity. Lynchings are not random events that are isolated from the community culture and climate that enabled them to happen, though some treat them that way. I

had already found that the 1895 victim's father, Jacob Henson, Sr., was a Trustee of the church currently located across the street from where the log cabin now sits. I also found that the person who was Howard County's first "near-lynching" subject in 1884 had led meetings at that same church, along with Jacob Henson, Jr.'s legal counsel in the case that concluded with a lynch mob taking the law into its own hands to end his life. The lynching of Nicholas Snowden in 1885 occurred a short distance from where the log cabin once sat on Merryman, once he had been taken from the jail. I expected that the history of the church building would involve both Jacobs. I did not expect the history of the cabin at 38 Merryman Street to be intertwined with another near-lynching in the county!

Clearly, the climate that empowered county citizen violence against African Americans was still alive in the county in 1911, when the Washington Post reported about an incident at Missionary Bottom. Whether "several hundreds" actually gathered on that thin, dirt side street off Main Street is a question that may never be answered. Even if fifty people were there, what would the effect have been on the predominantly African American community living there?



*September 3, 1911 Washington Post via ProQuest Historical database*

Samuel Young had been a 22-year-old boarder in the 1910 Ellicott City household of Eugene Henson on Frederick Turnpike, but he was not a stranger to the Merryman Street area. (Incidentally, Eugene Henson was the



son of Nicholas Henson, who was Jacob Henson, Sr.'s brother.) In 1900, 13-year-old Samuel and his brother Charles were recorded to be living with their father, John H. Young as renters on Merryman Street. (Note: "R" indicated renting). They were visited by the census taker shortly after Mary Ridout was visited, owner of the church parcel near the cabin as you will read in our report.

A "Henry Young" was reported to have been leasing the cabin, according to information in a newspaper article titled *History on the Move* that was published in the Howard County Times on December 4, 1980. James Young reported for the newspaper that his uncle "Henry" had lived in the cabin with four young children at some point in time and for some duration.

In 1910, there was a significant presence of Youngs on Merryman Street. John H. Young was married to his second wife, Hattie, and lived there with their children and his brother, Clarence, who was his ward. John had three other siblings: Charles, Julia and Ida. His sister Ida lived on Merryman, as did their parents, David and Rachel Young. Youngs continued to live there at least up until the 1930 census, when John and his youngest children were living in a household nearby with his oldest son Charles and his family. Most of the Youngs over the years were renters. I don't believe value should only be publicly given to people who own property and have wealth, though the people in our report had some.

As the tagline on HCLTR's website reads, "Truth FIRST, Then Reconciliation." The material in the pages that follow is designed to educate current and future county populations about communities of people whose stories are not commonly told in the county. The county may or may not decide to do something about the name of the "Thomas Isaac" log cabin that it owns and named. Regardless, the building and property on which it was constructed were and still are significant to generations of African Americans, who have handed down the stories to their descendants. I invite you to scrutinize and confirm our Truth lab findings. Maybe you, too, will find this history to be significant and will pass it on.

*Marlena Jareaux*