Freedom, A Work in Progress

City of Fredericksburg, Virginia Civil Rights Trail

Our timeline for this tour begins at the end of the Civil War in 1865. Fredericksburg's location halfway between Richmond, the capital of the Confederacy, and Washington, DC, made it the site of intense fighting as Union and Confederate armies advanced and retreated. Enslaved Black people took advantage of the shifting lines to emancipate themselves. During the summer of 1862, over 10,000 enslaved people escaped bondage by crossing the Rappahannock River in and around Fredericksburg. At a national level, in 1865, the Thirteenth Amendment was ratified by the states to abolish chattel slavery "within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction." In order to regain federal representation, the former Confederate states, of which Virginia was one, had to ratify the Thirteenth Amendment.

This tour includes sites where Black people created educational, housing, and business opportunities in the midst of Jim Crow era segregation, as well as buildings where people protested racial segregation in the 1950s and 1960s. As in the rest of the United States, Fredericksburg's Civil Rights history continues into the present and this tour includes sites associated with Black political leaders in the mid to late 20th century and the Black Lives Matter protests of 2020.

This story is not the final version. It will be updated as future stories and information are uncovered and brought forward.

Table of Contents

CIVIL RIGHTS TRAIL: PART 1

Start: Fredericksburg Visitor Center: 706 Caroline Street, Fredericksburg, VA 22401

Part 1 of the trail starts at the Fredericksburg's Visitor Center, where visitors can pick up a walking trail map of the Civil Rights Trail and review copies of the Negro Motorist Green Book. The Negro Motorist Green Book was a travel guide written by postal carrier Victor Hugo Green and remained in circulation from 1936 to 1968. It was used during segregation and informed Black travelers on which hotels, restaurants, and gas stations they could use without fear of violence.

The Visitor Center has public restrooms and staff can answer questions about Fredericksburg's attractions and options for food and other accommodations.

Short term parking is available in the lot next to the Visitor Center. Visitors can also park in the Sophia Street Parking Garage, only two blocks away on the corner of Sophia and Wolfe streets.

Stop #1: Shiloh Baptist Church (Old Site), 801 Sophia Street

Directions: The first stop on the tour is Shiloh Baptist Church (Old Site). Head out of the Visitor Center and make a left on Caroline Street. Proceed to the intersection of Hanover Street and turn right. Shiloh Baptist Church (Old Site) is on the corner of Hanover and Sophia Streets near the Riverfront Park.

Shiloh Baptist Church (Old Site) has a long history and prominent role in Fredericksburg, especially as it relates to social justice. The Black community has been worshiping at this site since 1815. The original building collapsed in the late 1800s. The current church building dates back to 1890.

Shiloh Baptist Church (Old Site)
Photo credit: Shiloh Baptist Church (Old Site)

Prominent Black citizens and pastors of Shiloh Baptist Church (Old Site's) congregation played critical roles in the struggle for civil rights, beginning in the years following the Civil War and continuing through present day.

The first example was Reverend George Dixon. Besides his duties as a minister, he was active in area politics and fraternal organizations and was highly respected on a local and state level. As one of only twenty-four Black delegates, he represented the City of Fredericksburg and attended the Virginia Constitutional Convention, in 1868, as a Radical Republican. This convention was held to enfranchise freedmen, reform local government, and establish a statewide system of free public education for all children. In 1870, he led several hundred Black citizens on a march through Fredericksburg for Emancipation Proclamation and Decoration Day (now known as Memorial Day). Six years later, he was selected by community members to be one of seven Black people to run for city council.

Through the efforts of leaders such as Reverend Dixon, Black citizens were able to receive educational instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic. Another minister of consequence, Reverend John C. Diamond, utilized his skills as an architect and builder, when the federal government provided funds to the church to repair damage caused during the Civil War. He is credited with an addition to the building in the early 1900s. While serving as pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church (Old Site), he served on the executive committee of the Negro Organization Society of Virginia. This organization worked to raise funds for a Black state tuberculosis hospital. Additionally, he served as chairman of the city's Black group that assisted in collecting money for the United War Work Fund campaign to help win World War I.

Reverend B.H. Hester
Photo credit: Shiloh Baptist Church (Old Site)

The next pastor to serve the Fredericksburg community with distinction was Reverend B.H. Hester. He was the pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church (Old Site) for 40 years from 1922 - 1961 and was a foremost leader in the Fredericksburg community and a highly sought-after speaker. A strong proponent for education, he encouraged Black people to increase their intellectual skills and overcome illiteracy. During the early days of his leadership, the church contributed funding for a new building for the Fredericksburg Normal & Industrial Institute, the region's only school for Black students. At the Institute, he served as a principal, teacher, coach, and worked with Shiloh Baptist Church (New Site's) minister, Reverend M.L. Murchison, to pay off all the debts, increase student enrollment, and regain the school's accreditation status.

Through his devotion to the community, Reverend Hester oversaw the monetary donation from the church to Mary Washington Hospital, despite the hospital's strict segregationist policies, and paying the poll taxes for Black residents to participate in elections in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Reverend Hester created a newsletter, The Shiloh Herald, which provided the congregation with not only news about the community, but also editorials about voting rights, lynchings, and other important topics.

The Shiloh Herald
Photo credit: City of Fredericksburg

The website of Shiloh Baptist Church (Old Site) quotes excerpts from Shiloh Herald editorials on the struggles to overcome segregation.

A 1927 editorial pointed with shame toward what it called the tiny "den" at the city's railway station that is "called a waiting room for colored people." And why is it, the same editorial asked, that "whenever a crime or wicked deed has been committed in a community the Negroes are suspected and their homes are searched"? In like manner, a strongly worded 1926 editorial, presumably by Reverend Hester, described those "who

> seek to keep others in ignorance and weakness" as "dangerous demagogues," cutting at the very life of the nation. "The strength of a nation does not depend," he wrote, "upon its standing armies or latent resources but upon the peace, prosperity, and satisfaction" of its "weakest citizens."

Reverend Hester's legacy continues today with the work of his granddaughter, Ambassador Pamela Bridgewater, a retired United States Foreign Service Officer. Bridgewater served as the U.S. Ambassador to Benin, Ghana, and Jamaica under Presidents William Jefferson Clinton, George Walker Bush, and Barack Hussein Obama. She has researched and written Neutral on Nothing: The Social Activism of the Rev. B.H. Hester, a book on her grandfather's legacy. It is available at the Visitor Center.

> "I remember very vividly hearing my grandfather and grandmother and people saying, "Make sure you help people read and write, but make sure they're getting the money to pay that poll tax." The other thing my grandfather did, which, again, I forgot, he started a night school to teach people how to read and write. He would ask them the question, "Do you want to be able to read and write? Do you want to be able to vote?" His bottom line was he wanted them to be able to go in there to be able to cast their votes and register. It was $1 a month. He said, "But if you have no money, then you don't have to pay anything." People learned to write. He said he could teach them in six months. It's just amazing that school thrived, and they would hold them sometimes in the basement of [Shiloh Baptist Church] New Site because seeing Rev. Murchison, who was his contemporary and Pastor at [Shiloh Baptist Church] New Site. They were both educators, and they worked closely together, cooperating to get this school running. Granddaddy founded the first school for illiterate Black people, former slaves." Quote from Ambassador Bridgewater interview conducted by Chris Williams.

Shiloh Baptist Church (Old Site) has hosted many trailblazing civil rights leaders at the church, including: W. E. B. Du Bois, Mary McLeod Bethune, Nannie Helen Burroughs, and Reverend Adam Clayton Powell, Sr.

W. E. B. Du Bois was a sociologist, editor, author, historian, activist, and Pan-Africanist, who became the most influential Black leader in the United States during the first half of the 20th century. He was the first Black person to graduate from Harvard University with a Ph.D. and a founding member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP):

https://www.britannica.com/biography/W-E-B-Du-Bois

Mary McLeod Bethune was an educator, civil rights activist, feminist, and philanthropist, who became the highest-ranking Black woman in President Franklin D. Roosevelt's cabinet. He named her as the Negro Affairs of the National Youth Administration Director in 1936. She founded the National Council of Negro Women and Bethune-Cookman College, the Historically Black College and University (HBCU), as well as leading numerous voting drives after women gained the right to vote in 1920.

https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/mary-mcleod-bethune

Nannie Helen Burroughs, born in Orange County, was an educator, feminist, suffragist, religious leader, and

civil rights activist. She founded the National Training School for Women and Girls in 1909, in Washington, DC, as a national model school for the teaching of African American women. In 1896, she helped to establish the National Association of Colored Women, along with visionaries Mary Church Terrell, Ida B. Wells-Barnett and Harriet Tubman. In 1928, she was appointed committee chairwoman by the Herbert Hoover administration for his 1931 White House Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership.

https://explorekyhistory.ky.gov/items/show/894

Reverend Adam Clayton Powell, Sr., born in Franklin County, Virginia, was a theologian, community activist, and author, who developed the Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem, New York, as the largest Protestant congregation in the United States. He co-founded the National Urban League and was an active member within the NAACP and several fraternal organizations.

https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/powell-sr-adam-clayton-1865-1953/

A member of Reverend Hester's congregation and a local dentist, Dr. Philip Y. Wyatt, Sr. was an instrumental figure in the fight for civil rights in Virginia. Dr. Wyatt was a presiding deacon, financial officer, school teacher, and preacher for the church. In 1953, he was elected president of the Fredericksburg Chapter of the NAACP and became president of the NAACP's Virginia State Conference. He served as co-chairman of the Fredericksburg Biracial Commission and was a member of the Virginia State Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. Dr. Wyatt provided support to the Walker-Grant High School Class of 1950, when Black students were first barred from using the publicly-funded Community Center for their graduation ceremonies, and then later told that they could use the building but not its front entrance. More on that story in Part 2 of the tour.

Dr. Philip Wyatt, Sr.
Photo credit: Shiloh Baptist Church (Old Site)

In July 1960, the church served as a training site for local students to prepare for the sit-ins that took place in downtown Fredericksburg. These sit-ins were in protest of the segregated lunch counters and movie theaters. Students were trained in how to deal with physical and verbal threats and abuse by White residents. The sites of these sit-ins are featured at Stop 3 of the trail.

Reverend Lawrence A. Davies followed Reverend Hester as the pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church (Old Site) from 1962 until 2012. He would be there at the start of desegregation of James Monroe High School. Roland Moore was the first Black student to desegregate the high school in 1962. Another member of the congregation, Clarence Todd, served as the first Black member of the city school board.

When recalling this era, Reverend Davies stated:

> "Fredericksburg was still segregated, but because of the fact that the Civil Rights Movement had begun, churches in this area, White churches, in particular, wanted to make sure that the people here tried to bring forth the best united Christian front that they could. They helped us in trying to establish a means of improving conditions here, segregation and otherwise. It wasn't just a church because some of the members of Mary Washington College were part of it. They established a human relations council. That human relations council met, and it consisted of members of the White and Black churches and persons from Mary Washington College at that time. We worked together to bring about changes, and we were able to get some things accomplished." Quote from Reverend Lawrence A. Davies interview conducted by Chris Williams.

Reverend Lawrence A. Davies
Photo credit: Shiloh Baptist Church (Old Site)

After the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968, Reverend Davies, in mourning with the citizens of Fredericksburg and most of the nation, sought to bring people together to commemorate the legacy of the iconic civil rights movement leader. He led a march from Mount Zion Baptist Church to St. George's Episcopal Church, where people gathered to hear Reverend Davies read excerpts from the writings of the late Dr. King.

King With March and Memorial Service

The city of Fredericksburg mourned the loss of Dr. Martin Luther King in a march and memorial church service last Sunday. A crowd of nearly three hundred people, about two-thirds black, participated in the three block march which culminated at St. George's Episcopal Church in the center of town.

Sponsored by the Fredericksburg Area Ministerial Council, the service was performed by eight different ministers. The Mayor of Fredericksburg, Josiah P. Rowe, III also participated in the service.

Though there were few MWC students at the march and service (because of Spring Break), the faculty and administration were widely represented.

The march began at the Baptist Church and proceeded silently along the sidewalk, passing the Post Office with its flag at half mast, another church with its chimes tolling, and numerous photographers.

At the service, the Reverend T. G. Faulkner of St. George's Church termed King the "Ghandi of America," and expressed hope that King's dreams would become a reality so that "every citizen has the opportunity to develop to the fullest potential for which God has created him." He further noted the appropriateness of holding the memorial service in St. George's church, because St. George was a "champion of the weak, poverty stricken, and oppressed."

The Reverend E. E. Campbell of the First Christian Church told the mixed congregation that "We are here in unity as we mourn . . ." He said that Martin Luther King died so that men and women could live together in harmony and that we must go forth to achieve this.

Towards the end of the service, Mrs. Roger Kenvin, Chairman of the Fredericksburg Unitarian Fellowship, spoke of concrete suggestions for action in the civil rights cause. She suggested that citizens urge their congressmen to pass the open housing bill, that they join the Fredericksburg City council to enact an open housing law. In general, she asked the members of the congregation to "draw your circle wider to include your fellow man" and to "take home with you a change of attitude which will change your world.

Photo Courtesy of Free Lance-Star

Citizens ascend the steps to St. George's Episcopal Church.

Fredericksburg Mourns MLK
Photo credit: Free Lance-Star

Behind the massive support provided by the Citizens United for Action, Davies was selected from the community to run for Fredericksburg City Council. He was elected and served Fredericksburg as the first Black city council member from 1966 to 1976 and as the first Black mayor of Fredericksburg from 1976 to 1996. When he won mayoral election in 1976, it was approximately one hundred years after Reverend George Dixon ran for city council. During his two decades as mayor, he was responsible for leading the charge to annex the area known as Central Park from Spotsylvania County, developing the Micah Ministries initiative, improving the financial viability of the city, establishing the FRED Transit bus system (the Lawrence A. Davies Transit Center was named in his honor), and supporting the construction of the Section 8 housing development, Hazel Hill apartments.

His wife, Janice Davies, was instrumental in advocating for the busing of school children, bringing awareness to mental health issues, and founding the Fredericksburg Area Sickle Cell Association in 1972. She is a beloved member of the greater Fredericksburg community.

We encourage you to visit Shiloh Baptist Church (Old Site) website to see the complete history of the church. https://shiloholdsite.org/narrative.html

Stop #2: Johnny P. Johnson Mural (Corner of William and Sophia Streets)

Directions: From Shiloh Baptist Church (Old Site) proceed north on Sophia Street towards the Chatham Bridge. When you reach the corner of Sophia and William Streets, turn around to view the mural.

Johnny P. Johnson mural
Photo credit: City of Fredericksburg

In addition to being a respected member of the Fredericksburg community, renowned artist Johnny P. Johnson made history as the first Black professor at Mary Washington College, (now the University of Mary Washington). Johnson inspired many students during his tenure.

A mural was dedicated in his honor to commemorate Johnson's work through Citizens United for Action, Fredericksburg Area Community Relations Council (FACRO), Council on Human Relations, and the NAACP. Additionally, he and Gilbert Coleman desegregated the Fredericksburg Jaycees.

Johnny Johnson remembers the impact of Dr. King's assassination on the Fredericksburg community:

Johnny P. Johnson
Photo credit: The Heritage Center

"When Martin Luther King was assassinated, George Van Sant, and I think Reverend Davies was involved too, I was involved, we marched to the church. I believe there were some White members, and when I say White members, White members of the march. We marched from Mount Zion back around to St. George's Episcopal Church. After Martin Luther King was assassinated, and all so-called, 'Hell broke loose.' There were riots. Rioters came down to Fredericksburg and told some of the young men that they ought to go downtown Fredericksburg and break up glasses and all that. I was told by Buddy Hamm, who was involved with the young men. Buddy was out of school then and married. We met in Brown's funeral home and that was a

situation where the young boys were talking about really doing what they had asked them, what the people, the rioters, had done. I came down, and we met. Reverend Davies came by, and you should have seen him… he was ready to fight. He said, 'They want action? If they want to do something, let them come on. I haven't always had on these priestly robes.' That's what he said. I took him by the arm, and I walked him to his car, and I said, 'You go to Mayfield, Reverend Davies. Thank you so much.' And he did." Quote from Johnny P. Johnson interview conducted by Chris Williams.

Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4UH_w-zQrkM

Stop #3: Sit-Ins (Corner of Caroline and William Streets)

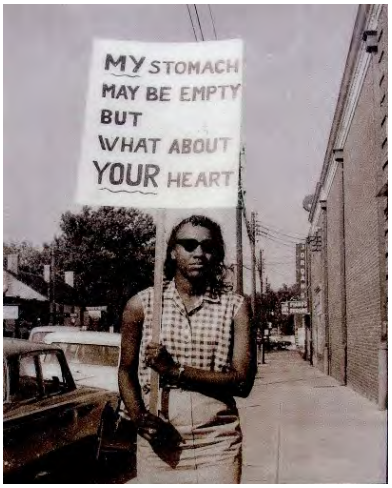
Directions: From the corner of Sophia and William streets, proceed up on William Street away from the Rappahannock River to the intersection of Caroline and William Street. See the Wayside Panel on the corner in front of Crown Jewelry Store. [Click on the labeled buildings on the map to the right to see 1960s era photographs of the buildings where the sit-ins took place].

Peoples Drug Store (Art Gallery, 922 Caroline Street), W.T. Grant's (Fredericksburg Antique Mall, 925 Caroline Street), F.W. Woolworth (R&R Antiques, 1001 Caroline Street), Victoria Theater (Fredericksburg Baptist Church, 1014 Caroline Street) were all sites for the sit-ins movement in Fredericksburg.

Up until the 1960's, Fredericksburg's lunch counters, restaurants, movie theaters, and hotels were all segregated. Black citizens could enter stores such as W.T. Grant or F.W. Woolworth and purchase items; however, they could not patronize the lunch counter. It was for White people only. Sometimes, restaurants would allow Black people to order from a separate window, but the meal had to be eaten outdoors.

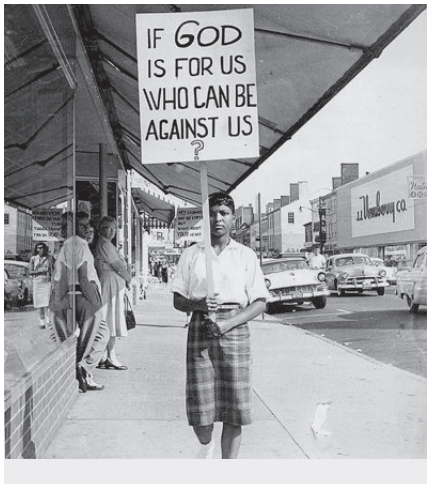
John White recollects an experience shopping in downtown Fredericksburg in the mid-1940s:

"Back in 1947, I guess it was, no '46, no, it was before that, '45, 'cause my dad was still in the military (Mr. White would have been five years old). And that day we were in downtown Fredericksburg. I'm not sure what store, but I believe it was Goolrick's Drug Store, but I'm not sure. We went in. And you could go to the counter and get an ice cream cone. My grandmother (Annie Ham Scott) was going to buy us an ice cream cone, and we had just been into JCPenney's and she'd bought suits for me and my brother (Frank). All of my other clothes had been hand-me-downs. And I saw these kids sitting at the counter. I jumped up on the stool. And somebody said, 'Get that nigger off of that stool.' And my grandmother grabbed me. But anyway, that kind of bothered me. I never understood why everyone else was sitting up there and why I couldn't sit up there. Well, I stayed with my grandmother, and I began to understand that there were certain things that you couldn't do." John A. White, 2006, Oral History, provided by his brother Frank White, Fredericksburg, Virginia.



Gaye Todd Adegbalola
Photo credit: Free Lance-Star

On February 1, 1960, a younger generation of Black citizens started to push for societal change, beginning with the A&T Four in Greensboro, North Carolina. Tired of feeling like second-class citizens, four students from North Carolina Agricultural & Technical College: Ezell Blair, Jr. (Jibreel Khazan), Franklin McCain, Joseph McNeil, and David Richmond, entered a F.W. Woolworth store and asked to be served. They were denied service, and as the day progressed with the sit-in, things took a more violent turn. The students participating in the sit-ins were verbally and physically assaulted, but they continued their protest through the end of the spring. Before the end of July, Woolworth's integrated its lunch counter.



Jerine Mercer McConnell
Photo credit: Free Lance-Star

F. W. Woolworth Store
Photo credit: The Heritage Center

Inspired by the protests in Greensboro, local students began sit-ins in Fredericksburg during the summer of 1960. Members of Shiloh Baptist Church (Old Site), including: Dr. Wyatt, Mamie Scott, and Gladys Poles Todd, trained students to handle the physical and verbal abuse that they would encounter during the sit-ins and to remain nonviolent. Students including Mrs. Todd's daughter, Gaye Todd Adegbalola, and Jerine Mercer, sat at each location for one hour and then rotated to the next location. Students only needed to take every third seat, as they knew it was unlikely a white person would sit next to a Black person. Additionally, students protested outside the stores. Throughout their sit-in campaign, signs appeared on lunch counters that said, "This Section Closed," which would be removed as soon as the students left.

> "Sometimes we had state leaders from the NAACP come to the church to help with the techniques and what we should do when we sat in. We were never to say anything if something were said to us. We were not to eat if someone offered us food that they bought, if we couldn't invite ourselves…those kinds of things."
> Quote from Ambassador Pamela Bridgewater interview conducted by Chris Williams.

W. T. Grant Store
Photo credit: The Heritage Center

Victoria Movie Theater
Photo credit: Cinema Treasures

It took one month for two stores, F.W. Woolworth and W.T. Grant, to desegregate their lunch counters in Fredericksburg. It would take the Peoples Drug Store a few more months. Along with lunch counters, movie theaters were also segregated.

During this same summer, movie theaters desegregated their seating. Gaye Todd Adegbalola continued to be a force for civil rights through her work with the Black Power Movement and as a founding member of the Harlem Committee of Self-Defense in New York City. In 1970, she returned to Fredericksburg to build on the work of her father, Clarence Todd, who founded the local cultural arts organization, Harambee 360. She taught at Fredericksburg City Schools and was named the Virginia State Teacher of the Year in 1982.

https://www.sitinmovement.org/permanent-exhibits

Peoples Drug Store

Stop #4: Fredericksburg Area Museum (Former Old Town Hall) (907 Princess Anne Street)

Directions: From the corner of Caroline and William Streets, turn left on Caroline and then take the first right to walk up the alley to Fredericksburg's Market Square. This route provides a view of the back of the Old Town Hall - now the Fredericksburg Area Museum (FAM). Cross the square and take the steps on the right of the museum up to the small plaza on the corner of Princess Anne and William streets.

If you would prefer a stairless route, simply proceed one block up William Street to Princess Anne Street. The museum will be on your left.

Outside the museum is a statue dedicated to the commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation. The statue was created by Ayokunle Odeleye. According to a newspaper article, Odeleye (then named Stanley White), grew up in Mayfield and attended Walker-Grant High School until 1968, when Fredericksburg fully integrated its schools. He was sent to James Monroe High School to finish his senior year. Odeleye took classes from Johnny P. Johnson at both Walker-Grant and James Monroe.

Additionally, Johnson encouraged Odeleye to apply to Virginia Commonwealth University. After two years, he decided to transfer to Howard University, where he earned his Bachelor's (1973) and Master's (1975) degrees in art. Odeleye was a professor of art at Kennesaw State University in Georgia from 1989 to 2018.

Fredericksburg Area Museum (FAM) houses several important artifacts related to civil rights including:

The Slave Auction Block. The block was originally located on the corner of Charles and William streets (Stop 5 on the trail) where enslaved people were sold as property and separated from their families during the 18th and 19th centuries. FAM is working on the interpretation of the auction block as part of an extensive exhibit.

The lunch counter sign, Central Lunch. Dating from 1950, this is one of the Civil Rights-era artifacts located in the museum that tells the story of the sit-ins that took place in Fredericksburg during the summer of 1960.

Lunch Counter Sign
Photo credit: City of Fredericksburg

Stop #5: Slave Auction Site (Corner of William and Charles Streets)

Directions: Cross William Street and then continue west on William Street for one block before crossing Charles Street.

There is a wayside panel and medallion marking the spot where the auction block was originally located. Today, the site serves as a memorial to the generational trauma endured by Black citizens in the community, and is a gathering site for contemporary social justice protests.

According to local historian, John Hennessy, there is evidence of at least thirteen sales of enslaved people occurring on this corner. An advertisement in the Fredericksburg News, announced one such auction that ran from January 2, 1854 to January 6, 1854. Forty-six people were available for sale and forty-three of those people were sold for $26,000. They included skilled craftsmen such as bricklayers, a shoemaker, a boy learning about the copper trade, and many house servants. Another quote from Fredericksburg News proclaimed that, "Fredericksburg seems to be the best place to sell slaves in the State."


Slave Auction Block
Photo credit: Dr. Steve Hanna

There is additional interpretive work that will be done at this site. As the Fredericksburg Area Museum examines and interprets the actual auction block, it is charged with working on interpretive materials for this site.

https://www.fredericksburgva.gov/1287/Slave-Auction-Block

During the summer of 2020, Black Lives Matter supporters marched through the streets of Fredericksburg to demand an end to police brutality and racial injustice. One of their stops included the site of the former auction block, where demonstrators held a moment of silence, with some raising their fists in the air.

https://fredericksburg.com/news/local/watch-now-protests-continue-in-fredericksburg-region/article_67b41f61-f94f-5544-bf2c-f2c39b384632.html

Stop #6: Liberty Town Neighborhood (Corner of Liberty and George Streets)

Directions: Continue west on William Street to Prince Edward Street. At the intersection cross both streets and enter Hurkamp Park. Follow the path diagonally across the park past the fountain to George Street. Turn right on George Street and walk one block to Liberty Street. Cross George Street to enter Fredericksburg's War Memorial Park and stop at the Liberty Town wayside panel.

Built by Black entrepreneur Henry Deane and his wife, Lucy, Liberty Town was a neighborhood consisting of 19 homes occupied by Black residents in the late 1800s as well as two stables. He built homes in a neighborhood that was already established.

1936 photograph of Liberty Town houses built by Henry Deane.
Photo credit: HFFI

Henry Deane was born into slavery in July 1837 and owned by Judge Finch from Powhatan County. During the Civil War, Deane was a valet to General Nathan Bedford Forrest, a Confederate Brigadier General and the first "Grand Wizard" in the Ku Klux Klan. In 1868, Henry Deane arrived in Fredericksburg and started working at a livery. A few years later, he would own a livery himself and become a prominent member of the Black community in Fredericksburg. He and his wife Lucy would have 11 children. Henry Deane died in 1908.

Since white people saw the land as unattractive and unfavorable, the Deane family was able to utilize the space to create more housing and property for Black citizens during a time when Jim Crow laws and restrictions were prevalent.

Jim Crow laws were deeply entrenched and enforced in the South by the 1890s. Jim Crow was a fictional character brought to popularity by white entertainers using blackface and singing minstrel songs that degraded the Black population. These songs and performances showed them as criminal, ignorant, oversexed, and dastardly.

At this time in our nation's history, it was considered to be the nadir of race relations due to the persistence of racist incidents against Black citizens. One of the most egregious examples was the 1896 Supreme

Court ruling that stemmed from the Plessy vs. Ferguson case, stating separate but equal facilities did not violate the U.S. Constitution, since the facilities were equal for all races. Unfortunately, this was not the case. Facilities for Black people were far inferior to those offered for white people, ranging from drinking fountains to restroom facilities. In some instances, services for Black people were not offered at all.

Examples of Jim Crow laws included:

- Separate facilities for Black people and white people including restrooms to waiting rooms at train and bus stations.
- Black People could not receive medical care a white facility.
- White nurses and doctors could not administer care to a Black person.
- Black people could not walk on the sidewalk, if a white person was walking towards a Black person.
- On buses, Black people had to sit in the back, while white people were allowed to sit in the front. Black people had to move if a white person needed a seat.
- Black people could not be served at a white restaurant. They were instructed to go outside to the back of the restaurant to order their food and then had to leave the premises.
- Black people could not address or make eye contact with a white person.

> "When I got to work at the fish market (Fredericksburg Fish Market) in the summer of 1955, June. I remember when I was in Fredericksburg, and I had to go to the bathroom. We couldn't go to the bathroom. You would have to go down under the bridge (Chatham Bridge) to go to the bathroom. And we would relieve ourselves under the bridge. Women, men, and anybody that had to go. That's where you'd go. So, while working at the fish market, I'd look and I'd see all these Black folks going down under the bridge to relieve themselves. That upset me. And that's when I said, 'Why can't Black folks go into a restroom? In a store, a restaurant, somewhere?' And so that kind of… just watching that made me an activist. 'Cause I felt that was just unjust. It just didn't seem right. Even out in the country, we had outhouses. But to have to be forced to run down under the bridge, only the Black folks, not the white folks, just the Black folks. That, that, bothered me." – John A. White, 2006, Oral History, provided by his brother Frank White.

> "Back then everybody thought that Fredericksburg was one of the peaceful places where Black people and white people got along so well. But as my mother said to me once, "I have to know my place, that's why I can get along." I ain't never forgot that, and I said, "what is she talking about knowing her place?" I know now. She had to bow and say as a grown woman, "Yes sir" to young people. "No ma'am" to younger women, and they've not given her respect. I saw my mother do that many times, and I didn't understand why. I saw my mother cross the street, move out of the way when there were three or four white people walking down

the street. One day, I was with my mother walking home from work. I was walking with her, my mother laughing, we were having a great time. Then, young white boys came down the street, she grabbed me by my hand and I had to move, turn sideways and let them walk on the sidewalk. It was a terrible feeling to see your mother like that and you not understanding why. They should be moving off the sidewalk, I'm thinking, not her". - Quote from Robert Christian interview conducted by Chris Williams.

By the end of 1955, the United States was on the cusp of a new national movement led by a young southern Baptist church minister, Martin Luther King, Jr. in Montgomery, Alabama. On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks was seated in the Black section of the bus. Because there was no more seating for the white passenger, she was asked to give up her seat and refused. She refused to give up her seat because of Emmett Till's lynching earlier that year.

https://virginiahistory.org/learn/historical-book/chapter/world-jim-crow

https://www.nps.gov/malu/learn/education/jim_crow_laws.htm

https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/freedom-riders-jim-crow-laws/

Stop #7: Colored Cemetery at Potter's Field (George and Barton Streets)

Directions: Cross back over George Street and turn left. Walk one short block and then cross Barton Street. Turn right and walk to the corner of the old Maury School Building. A sign on the wall of the old school building describes some of this site's history.

During the 1800s and early 1900s, this was the site of a cemetery where enslaved people and free Black people were interred. Unlike white cemeteries, Black cemeteries were often moved to make room for development, adding to the indignities Black people have faced in the United States. For example, the African–American Columbian Harmony Cemetery in Washington, D.C was developed into the Rhode Island Avenue–Brentwood Metro station.

As recently as August 2021, in neighboring King George County, headstones from the historic African–American Columbian Harmony Cemetery in Washington, D.C., were found along the Potomac River where they were used for erosion control. The headstones were sold in 1960, while the remains were interred to National Harmony Park in Landover, MD. The effort to identify the headstones and reunite them with the remains in Maryland is on-going.

Fredericksburg chose this cemetery as the site for a new high school built in 1920. The interred bodies were moved to The Shiloh Cemetery (a stop on the second part of the Civil Rights trail). The all-White school was named after Confederate naval officer, Matthew Fontaine Maury. The Maury School served as the city's white high school until 1952 and as an elementary and middle school until 1980.

Robert Christian remembers the hostility he faced as a Black student attending Maury School when it was first desegregated:

Robert Christian desegregating Maury School in 1962.
Photo credit: The Free Lance-Star

"I don't think I'll ever forget when I desegregated Maury School. I can remember my mother, of course, was standing out on the front. I remember that photographer when he turned and looked a little bit over my shoulder. I could see him. When I first got there, I was standing by the stairs, no kids. I could see everyone looking at me. I could hear nothing, but when I entered the doors, that was the first time people actually got close to my face. That's the first time they called the word nigger. When I entered the door. There were about six or seven kids there. They said, "Hey, here comes the nigger now." My classroom was up the hall.

When I went into the classroom up there, they just all stared, whispered, and talked. I remember the first day I sat in that classroom. When I was in school with the other kids in my all Black school, most of the time the teachers picked the seats where you sat. That teacher told me to go to the back of the class and sit. That's where I sat in every class in that first year. I felt ashamed like I was doing something wrong, and my uncle had talked to me and told me not to say nothing back to nobody in that class, when I went into that school. Because he told me that was what was going to happen. He just explained to me about being called names, and if they put their hands on me, I should go to the principal or go to the teachers and don't do anything. The first day of lunch, I went into that lunch room and there was three or four kids at the table. I ain't never forgot it, and I went to sit with my lunch. I carried my lunch in a bag. I sat at that table and every one of them got up and moved.

I was at that table lonely. Sat there through lunch and went outside. We had playtime. No one played. No one talked. No one did anything. Never said nothing. That was my first year changing classes. Whenever I changed classes, I would walk past them, and I could hear them saying, "That nigger, someone's going to get him. He's not going to be here long." These were kids that were 13 years old, maybe 14. Their parents had told them that. I could hear them saying, "Mom and daddy said he won't be here."

I told one teacher about it. When this one kid just pestered me. He pestered and he pestered.

He was all over me. I did what my uncle said. I went to the teacher. I told her, "He's bothering me and he keeps calling me a nigger." She told me, "Go sit down, young man. That's what you are. Go sit at the back."

That's what she told me. She said, "That's what you are young man. You go sit at the back." That's where I sat at. When I came out of that school, I would run home and my house wasn't but maybe 50 yards away. I would be home in like 30 seconds. I would come home and tell my mother but she couldn't do nothing. Nobody could do nothing. She said, "This is what we got to tolerate until they get used to us." Those were the worst times of my life at this school. I never felt so alone." - Quote from Robert Christian interview conducted by Chris Williams.

Stop #8: Racial Covenants and Neighborhood Segregation (600 Block of George Street)

Directions: Retrace your steps south along Barton Street to George Street. Cross over to the War Memorial island and then follow the sidewalk to the southernmost corner of the island.

Liberty Town was formerly a thriving community for Black citizens in Fredericksburg, yet after the properties on the block were purchased by W.S. Embrey, restrictive covenants were placed on the properties. These barred Black citizens from purchasing them. In one example of a racial covenant, the property could not house hogs or be sold to a Black person.

An additional Black neighborhood within the City of Fredericksburg is called Mayfield. Once known as Moorefield Farm, it was purchased and subdivided by the Fredericksburg Development Company in 1906.

"By 1906, most of the property belonged to the estate of a deceased Richmond businessman, O.O. Owens of Owens and Minor Drug Company. It was held by the Virginia Trust Company, represented by Fredericksburg Judge A.T. Embrey. Through him the trustees purchased Owens' interest containing the farmhouse and 300 lots for $1,200. Judge Embrey, disliking the name Moorefield, renamed the area Mayfield…At the time of the farmhouse purchase, there were few houses in the area. The home of William and Nannie Thurston at 214 Tyler Street was among the first built in what was to become the city's largest black residential area." Ruth Coder Fitzgerald, A Different Story: A Black History of Fredericksburg, Stafford, and Spotsylvania, Virginia, p. 136.

"Mayfield definitely was set aside as the Black community. Living quarters were set up over here, and then the 500 block of downtown Princess Anne Street, our Chocolate City. Anything beyond that, it was fearful when you ventured off into that area, because there was a restriction and the fear that anything could happen to you, if you crossed over out of the 500 block. They felt that we should stay in our place. Our place was Mayfield and that's why our educators, our leaders, and all of them lived here in Mayfield from Reverend Davies, on

up to the rest of the city council members, such as myself and Chuck Frye. We all are Mayfield residents. All the leadership came from out of the Mayfield community." Quote from Reverend Hashmel Turner interview conducted by Chris Williams.

Out of a desire for the community needs to be properly met, residents of Mayfield formed the Mayfield Civic Association in 1969. The founding members were: Lee Roy Lewis, Sr., Weldon Bailey, Margaret Durante, and Gilbert Coleman. They fought to gain proper transportation for neighborhood students to attend the new Hugh Mercer Elementary School. After being unsuccessful in their first attempt, O'Neal Mercer, president of the NAACP Fredericksburg branch, coordinated with the Association to obtain transportation for the students. Due to their collective activism, they were able to get the City Council to provide transportation from Mayfield to Hugh Mercer Elementary School. This is one of several examples of the Association's civic leadership over the past six decades.

Stop #9: National Bank Building (Now Foode, 900 Princess Anne Street)

Directions: Follow the path along the east side of the island and then past the War Memorial back to the Liberty Town wayside panel. Cross George Street and turn right. Continue for three blocks and stop just before the intersection of Princess Anne and George Streets.

The National Bank Building was one of the headquarters for the Freedmen's Bureau during the historic period known as Reconstruction. The Freedmen's Bureau was set-up after the conclusion of the Civil War to help transition formerly enslaved people to become self-sufficient, as well as offering other services, such as assisting former soldiers in receiving their pensions. The Renwick Courthouse on 701 Princess Anne Street next to Stop 10, the Fredericksburg Jail, was also one of the locations for the Freedmen's Bureau.

https://www.archives.gov/research/african-americans/freedmens-bureau

John Washington

When John Washington, an enslaved Black man, was a boy, he lived on the second floor of the National Bank Building. As the Union army approached Fredericksburg in the spring of 1862, John Washington was one of the first of over 10,000 enslaved people who gained their freedom by crossing the Rappahannock River. Eleven years later, he wrote a memoir of his experiences as an enslaved person in Fredericksburg.

https://trailtofreedomva.com/experience-the-trail-to-freedom/experience-the-trail-by-walking/

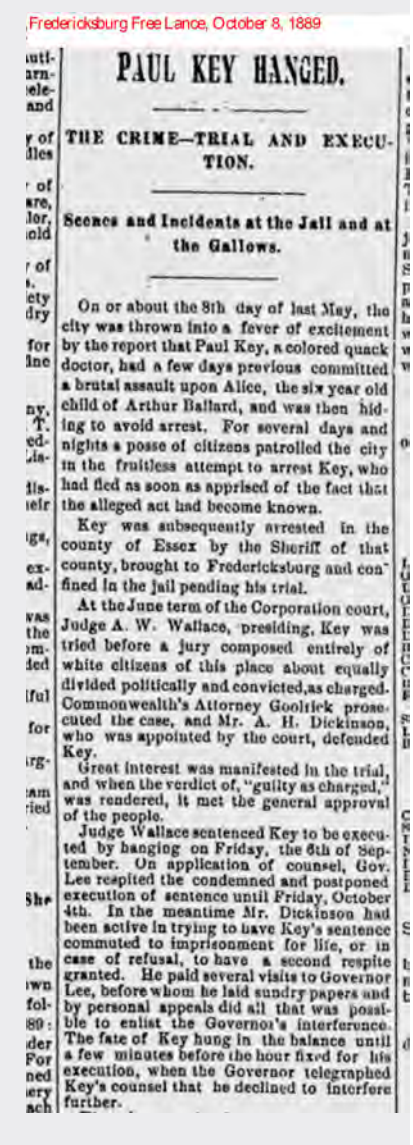
Stop #10: Fredericksburg Jail (701 Princess Anne Street)

Directions: Cross George Street and then Princess Anne Street to end up on the opposite corner from the National Bank Building. Walk south along Princess Anne Street to a driveway on the left side of the Old Courthouse. Proceed around the courthouse to the front of the jail building. Pay close attention to this part of the walkway because it is on a driveway. Be mindful of vehicles.

Fredericksburg Jail
Photo credit: Dr. Steve Hanna

If you have mobility concerns, remain here for the tour stop. If you are able to proceed, on the left of the jail, you will find the stairs to take you down to Jail Alley. You can see the outer wall of the lowest floor of the original jail - made of stones flanked by two wings made of brick. The reinforced concrete jail that sits on top of these foundations was built in 1926.

The estimated number of known lynchings that took place in the United States between 1882 to 1968 is over 6,500. It is likely more took place within those 86 years. Victims were accused of crimes and, whether or not they had committed those crimes, a mob gathered to murder the accused person without proper due process of law. Victims were shot, raped, whipped, hung from trees and bridges, and burned dead or alive. Postcards containing the barbaric acts and grisly aftermath were sold and sent through the mail, as though it was an important landmark. Victims had pieces of their clothing, limbs from their bodies, and hair taken for souvenirs. On August 28, 1955, Emmett Till was murdered in Money, Mississippi. His mother, Mamie Till, wanted the world to see what had been done to her 14-year-old son. Pictures of her son's open casket with his disfigured, bruised and bloodied face were featured in JET magazine, thrusting the Civil Rights Movement into the national spotlight.



Fredericksburg Free Lance, October 8, 1889

PAUL KEY HANGED.

THE CRIME—TRIAL AND EXECUTION.

Scenes and Incidents at the Jail and at the Gallows.

On or about the 8th day of last May, the city was thrown into a fever of excitement by the report that Paul Key, a colored quack doctor, had a few days previous committed a brutal assault upon Alice, the six year old child of Arthur Ballard, and was then hiding to avoid arrest. For several days and nights a posse of citizens patrolled the city in the fruitless attempt to arrest Key, who had fled as soon as apprised of the fact that the alleged act had become known.

Key was subsequently arrested in the county of Essex by the Sheriff of that county, brought to Fredericksburg and confined in the jail pending his trial.

At the June term of the Corporation court, Judge A. W. Wallace, presiding, Key was tried before a jury composed entirely of white citizens of this place about equally divided politically and convicted, as charged. Commonwealth's Attorney Goolrick prosecuted the case, and Mr. A. H. Dickinson, who was appointed by the court, defended Key.

Great interest was manifested in the trial, and when the verdict of, "guilty as charged," was rendered, it met the general approval of the people.

Judge Wallace sentenced Key to be executed by hanging on Friday, the 6th of September. On application of counsel, Gov. Lee respited the condemned and postponed execution of sentence until Friday, October 4th. In the meantime Mr. Dickinson had been active in trying to have Key's sentence commuted to imprisonment for life, or in case of refusal, to have a second respite granted. He paid several visits to Governor Lee, before whom he laid sundry papers and by personal appeals did all that was possible to enlist the Governor's interference. The fate of Key hung in the balance until a few minutes before the hour fixed for his execution, when the Governor telegraphed Key's counsel that he declined to interfere further.

Article: Paul Key Hanged.
Credit: Free Lance-Star

Black people were often arrested for crimes they did not commit or their accusers did not have substantial evidence for conviction. Typically, jurors were all white men who held biases against Black citizens. In 1889, one of those citizens named Paul Key was subjected to this inevitable outcome in Fredericksburg. He was accused of a brutal assault on a six-year-old white girl. Mobs of white citizens tried to locate the whereabouts of Key for several days. Days later, he was taken into custody and brought to the jail without incident. After a court trial, an all White jury convicted him of assault. His public execution by hanging took place near the city jail on October 3, 1889. Paul Key maintained his innocence until the end of his life.

In 1904, the Fredericksburg Jail was the site of a attempted lynching of Charles H. Blandford from Spotsylvania County. Charles Blandford was taken into custody, however the nature of his crime is not known. After his arrest, a local mob planned to remove him from police custody and deal with him themselves. After remaining vigilant and seeing no threat, Police Sergeant Chichester left the jail for the night. Shortly thereafter, a group of "40 to 50" attempted to break into the jail. Police Officer Hall saw what was happening and he and

Chichester quickly dispersed the mob. The fate of Charles Blandford is still unknown.

Read the full story here.

https://fredericksburghistory.wordpress.com/2011/01/04/a-lyching-foiled-in-fredericksburg-1904/

https://eji.org/reports/lynching-in-america/

To continue the tour, walk south along Jail Alley to Hanover Street and turn right. Walk up Hanover Street and then turn left on Princess Anne Street. If you did not descend into Jail Alley, follow the drive around the Old Courthouse building to its exit onto Princess Anne Street.

Directions: When leaving the City Jail and heading towards Stop 11, you will reach the corner of Princess Anne and Hanover Streets and see Fredericksburg's current City Hall building on your left.

This City Hall was the site where many racial barriers were challenged and broken during the Civil Rights Movement in Fredericksburg. The City Council held meetings here to discuss topics of racial inequality and oppression. On June 11, 1963, Mr. Clarence Todd was elected as the first Black member to the city school board. He was later followed by Reverend A. Russell Awkard, Gilbert Coleman and Harweda Terrell. Behind the massive support provided by the Citizens United for Action, Reverend Davies was selected from the community to run for Fredericksburg City Council. He was elected and served Fredericksburg as the first Black city council member from 1966 to 1976 and the first Black mayor of Fredericksburg from 1976 to 1996.

Inside the colored section of the bus station. The McGuire and Rappahannock Hotels, which served Black travelers, are visible through the window.
Photo credit: Free Lance-Star

Stop #11: Former Greyhound/Trailways Bus Station (601 Princess Anne Street, current Fire Dept.)

Directions: Continue south along Princess Anne Street crossing Charlotte Street to the Fredericksburg Fire Department. Stop at the Virginia State Historical Marker dedicated to the Freedom Rides.

The Greyhound/Trailways Bus Station was once located on the site where the current fire department building now stands. The bus station had "White" and "Colored" facilities segregating the establishment.

11 of 13 Freedom Riders
Photo credit: Johnson Publishing Company

This location was the first stop of the Freedom Rides in 1961. The Freedom Rides, orchestrated by legendary civil rights activist, Dr. James Farmer, aimed to challenge segregation of interstate travel. On May 4, 1961, a group of 13 Freedom Riders entered the bus station and were served without incident. Their names were: James Farmer, James Peck, Genevieve Hughes, Joe Perkins, Walter Bergman, Frances Bergman, Albert Bigelow, Jimmy McDonald, Ed Blankenheim, Hank Thomas, Charles Person, Rev. Benjamin Elton Cox, and John Lewis.

During their voyage down south, they encountered massive resistance from white people, particularly from the Ku Klux Klan, who were responsible for firebombing the Greyhound bus outside of Anniston, Alabama and other shameful atrocities.

https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/freedom-riders-jim-crow-laws/

Unveiling of Freedom Riders Marker (left to right)
Christopher Williams – University of Mary Washington's James Farmer Multicultural Center
Dion Diamond – Freedom Rider
Victoria Matthews – City of Fredericksburg
Frank White – Community Member

Dr. James Farmer
Photo credit: University of Mary Washington

Prior to becoming the Greyhound/Trailways bus station, the building was used as a school. Built in 1884, the school operated as an elementary-level education system for Black students in the City of Fredericksburg. These classes were formerly held in the basement of Shiloh Baptist Church (New Site), the next stop on the trail.

In front of the fire department is a state historical marker dedicated to the first stop of the Freedom Rides here in Fredericksburg. On the corner, you will find a wayside panel dedicated to the Green Book and directly across the street, from the state historical marker, a wayside panel on the Freedom Riders can be found.

Stop #12: Shiloh Baptist Church (New Site) (Corner of Princess Anne and Wolfe Streets) and the 500 Block of Princess Anne

Directions: Continue south along Princess Anne Street and cross Wolfe Street. Shiloh Baptist Church (New Site) is on the corner of Princess Anne and Wolfe Streets.

Shiloh Baptist Church (New Site) separated from Shiloh Baptist Church (Old Site) and built its church in 1890. Shiloh Baptist Church (New Site) focused its mission on education, community service, and activism, resulting in the establishment of the first Black school, the Fredericksburg Normal and Industrial Institute in the basement of the church. Years later, the Fredericksburg Normal and Industrial Institute was relocated to Mayfield, a thriving Black community in Fredericksburg. Two prominent deacons, Joseph Walker and Jason Grant, played an instrumental role in educating the Black community during the early 20th century. You will find more information about Joseph Walker and Jason Grant at the optional Walker-Grant Center stop on the trail.

In 1906, Dr. Urbane F. Bass arrived in Fredericksburg from Richmond, VA. He was the area's first Black physician since Reconstruction. Five years later, he opened the Commerce Street Pharmacy, along with Warren W. Lee. This pharmacy was located on William Street and it served the Black community. At the onset of World War I, Dr. Bass offered his skills to the Army Medical Corps.

"Realizing that patroitism and loyalty should be paramount in the breast of all American citizens at this time, and feeling (although a Negro) that loyalty for my country and the desire to serve her in this critical period, I am herewith offering my services for the Army Medical Corps should there be a need for a Negro physician for that branch of the service." Quote from Urbane Bass in A Different Story written by Ruth Coder Fitzgerald.

Shiloh Baptist Church (New Site)
Photo credit: The Heritage Center

Shiloh Baptist Church (New Site) held a reception in his honor before he left for training. On October 7, 1918 in Beausejour, France, he was tragically killed in battle. Dr. Bass was struck by shrapnel and his legs were severed. While suffering from his injuries on the battlefield, he was still able to instruct medics on how to tend to his wounds. Sadly, he passed away before being moved to a hospital. He left behind a wife and four children. For his heroism, he was given the Distinguished Service Cross, and Shiloh Baptist Church (New Site) commemorated him with a stained glass window on July 13, 1920. The stained glass window is visible from the Wolfe Street side of the church. He is buried at the Fredericksburg National Cemetery, an optional stop on your tour.

In the 1960s, Shiloh Baptist Church (New Site) was the largest Black church in the area and became a meeting place for out-of-town activists in the Civil Rights Movement including: Dr. Rev. Wyatt T. Walker, Dr. Samuel D. Proctor, Henry Marsh (Esq.), and Roy Wilkins. During this time, these leaders were supported by local activists and community stalwarts, such as: Dr. Webster Lee Harris, Dr. Philip Y. Wyatt, O'Neal Mercer, Weldon Bailey, Mamie Scott, and Mildred Queen. On June 7, 1963, a meeting was held at Mount Zion Baptist Church to discuss the possibility of adding a Black citizen to the city's school board. At this same meeting, participants requested a Biracial Commission to be formed to address racial concerns in educational opportunities and public accommodations. Almost two months later, another meeting was held at Shiloh Baptist Church (New Site), where four Black representatives were chosen to serve on the Biracial Commission: Dr. Philip Y. Wyatt, Dr. W.L. Harris, Reverend Edward Smith, and Reverend Lawrence A. Davies. After this meeting, they renamed the group Citizens United for Action. The Citizens United for Action were responsible for pushing and advocating for Black representation on civic boards. Through their actions, they were successful in achieving these goals.

Urbane Bass Stained Glass Window at Shiloh Baptist Church (New Site).


Rappahannock Hotel
Photo credit: The Heritage Center

In the late 1970s, the church purchased the Hotel McGuire, one of the places that welcomed Black travelers during segregation. The

church demolished the building to expand its sanctuary. Across the street, the Rappahannock Hotel also welcomed Black travelers. These hotels were in an addition to the several Black-owned businesses in the 500 and 600 block of Princess Anne Street. Some of the well-known businesses were: Taylor's Restaurant, Brown's Funeral Home, Paris Inn, Sonny's Record Shop and The Soda Fountain.

"As a matter of fact, my mother worked at the McGuire Hotel, and I definitely had visited when I was younger going down there to bring something home from work for her or whatever, so I was exposed to that. Then, later on, as I grew older, before I left to go to Vietnam, I got to experience and see the activities of people checking in down there from out of town and all because they couldn't stay anywhere else, unless they knew some Black family members, who put them up when they traveled through this area." Quote from Reverend Hashmel Turner interview conducted by Chris Williams.

Hotel McGuire
Photo credit: The Heritage Center

"Paris Inn was owned by a Black man named Clarence Coakley. He was like a big shot in Fredericksburg. He owned a couple of cabs. Black people worked for him. He had his own thing going. He had it going on. It was another place in the street called Spots where we could go and drink beer. A Black woman named Louise owned it. I forget her last name. I used to go there. It was a black-owned business. You would go up the street to Rob's Newsstand and his wife owned the restaurant next door to them. It was Cozy Corner. That place was owned by Olivia Hawkins. She owned that. There was a couple of Black people who had their own thing in Fredericksburg, which we know prior to desegregation". - Quote from Russell Brown interview conducted by Chris Williams.

Paris Inn
Photo credit: The Heritage Center

As part of this thriving community, the city hired its first Black police officer, Charles Dyson, a former Army veteran and counterintelligence and military police officer, in 1957. Due to persistent segregation, he was unable to arrest white residents and could only reprimand Black residents. Mr. Dyson owned two of the aforementioned businesses, Sonny's Record Shop and The Soda Fountain. He became the city's first Black DJ at WFVA Radio and created the first Black all-star baseball team. He joined the Army Reserves and was dispatched with troops to Mississippi to handle the violent protests from the admission of James Meredith to the University of Mississippi. Years later, he was called to active duty for the conflict in the Dominican Republic and Vietnam. He was killed in Vietnam on February 23, 1966 and interred at Arlington Cemetery. For his service to the country, he earned a Purple Heart, leaving behind a wife and two children.

Charles Dyson
Photo credit: Free Lance-Star

Continuing the Trail

Shiloh Baptist Church (New Site) is the last stop on Part 1 of the Civil Rights Trail. If you wish to return to the Fredericksburg Visitor Center, walk back north along Princess Anne Street and turn right on Wolfe Street. Take the first left on Caroline Street and walk one block to Charlotte Street. The visitor center will be across Charlotte Street on your left (route shown on the map to the right).

You may also choose to walk or drive to a few other Civil Rights sites near downtown Fredericksburg. If so, please see below for the Additional Sites of Interest section.

ADDITIONAL SITES OF INTEREST:

Bass-Ellison Building (608 Jackson Street)

Directions: Walk west on Wolfe Street to the intersection of Wolfe and Jackson Streets. Make a right onto Jackson Street. The Bass-Ellison building is located at the end of the block on the left hand side of the street. A wayside panel providing more information about Dr. Bass and Dr. Ellison is located in front of the building.

Dr. Richard Ellison

Now housing the City of Fredericksburg Department of Social Services, this former bowling alley is named for Dr. Urbane F. Bass and Dr. Richard C. Ellison, Sr. (See Dr. Bass above). Dr. Ellison arrived in Fredericksburg after attending Howard University Medical School. He was one of two Black doctors in the area, a charter member of the Frank C. Pratt Chapter of Mental Health, a Boy Scout leader, a Sunday school teacher, and an active participant in local, state, and national medical societies. Dr. Ellison practiced medicine in Fredericksburg for 50 years and played an instrumental role in removing racial barriers at Mary Washington Hospital and in many local businesses.

Lieutenant Urbane Bass

Urbane Bass Gravesite (1013 Lafayette Boulevard)

Directions: Follow Jackson Street to Charlotte Street. Make a left onto Charlotte Street. Continue down Caroline Street and make a left onto Spottswood Street. Make a right onto Lafayette Boulevard. Proceed straight until you reach the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park. Continue through the cemetery gates. Make a left on the first tier flat section. Dr. Bass's grave is at the end of the first row. His wife rests next to him.

Gravestone of Urbane Bass
Photo credit: City of Fredericksburg

Refer to the Shiloh Baptist Church (New Site) section for more information about Dr. Bass.

Walker-Grant School (200 Gunnery Road)

Directions: From Shiloh Baptist Church (New Site), proceed along Princess Anne Street toward the train tracks and make a right onto Lafayette Boulevard. Make a left onto Charles Street. Proceed three blocks away from downtown Fredericksburg. Make a right onto Dunmore Street followed by a left on Gunnery Road. Proceed straight until you reach Walker-Grant Center.

Walker-Grant School
Photo credit: Virginia Department of Historic Resources

The Story Behind the Name of Walker-Grant High School (An excerpt provided by Fredericksburg City Schools).

After the Civil War, schools for Black students were established in Virginia. The first school in Fredericksburg was started by S.J. Patch of the 19th Wisconsin Regiment in July 1865. Several other schools were started, including one in Shiloh Baptist Church (New Site). In 1938, the first publicly supported Black high school was established in Fredericksburg and it was named Walker-Grant High School. It was named for Joseph Walker and Jason Grant, two city residents who contributed many hours and enormous effort to the establishment of the school. Both men worked for many years to have this high school in Fredericksburg. After the city schools were desegregated, in 1968, Walker-Grant became the middle school and all city school children attended the school. A new building was built in 1988 and the name was transferred, so that proud school traditions could be carried into the future.

Joseph Walker was born into slavery in Spotsylvania County in 1854. He worked at a variety of jobs over his lifetime, carrying bulk mail for the post office, and for over 50 years was the sexton of St. George's Episcopal Church. He was also involved in several organizations. Enduring through these activities was his interest in education. He was self-taught, having learned through his jobs and observing others.

Jason Grant was born in Chatham, Ontario, Canada in 1861. Grant's father learned to read and write and was able to write a pass to allow himself to travel. He escaped from Kentucky and fled over the Ohio River and then continued to Canada. Jason Grant was born a freeman and was educated in Ontario and at Wilberforce Educational Institute in Ohio. He moved to Fredericksburg, at a friend's invitation, and began his career in the county and city schools. He retired from education after serving 42 years as a teacher and principal.

Both Joseph Walker and Jason Grant are buried at Shiloh Cemetery which is Stop 5 on Part 2 of the trail.

Excerpt from Roland Moore, a student who attended Walker-Grant in the 1950s.

> "They were really good teachers. They cared deeply about how much we were gaining and growing. Especially, if it seemed like there was any glimmer of hope that you could do rather

> well. They made sure that you got as much as you could. I was a student in Mr. Johnny P. Johnson's sixth grade class. If you were to look at their [students'] professions, you would say they were fairly successful, as any other group of people would be, even coming from a segregated situation." Quote from Roland Moore interview conducted by Chris Williams.

On May 17, 1954, the desegregation of schools was ordered by the landmark decision in the Brown vs. Board of Education Supreme Court case.

Roland Moore was the first Black student to be enrolled into the all-white James Monroe High School in September 1962. Earlier that year, a desegregation lawsuit was filed in the United States District Court in Richmond, VA on behalf of two Black students, John W. Scott, Jr. and Clarence A. Robinson. While they awaited court action, the State Pupil Placement Board assigned several Black students to previously all-white city schools in September of 1962. In January 1963, the Federal Court ordered the admission of Clarence Robinson, Navonia Nelson, and John Scott, Jr., Gwendolyn Moore, Selwyn Payne, and Warren Nelson helped to desegregate Maury School.

Roland Moore remembers the day he desegregated James Monroe High School:

> "An uncle took me to school that day and written on the sidewalk was "Nigger, go home." There were parents and children standing out protesting. Once I was in the building, there was no second-day protests or third-day protests but there was on the first day. On the first day, it was sort of like, "We don't want this to happen." It wasn't a throng of people; it was basically people who lived not too far from the school that didn't want their kids interacting. I had an understanding of that as I went in. As I said, I walked home every day for four years, with the exception of a small period of time, when I'd have surgery on one of my feet, and that was during a summer school session. Other than that, I had to walk through their neighborhoods to get home. I was never accosted on the way home. It was that one day. I think my uncle was probably more afraid for me than I was for myself. I was never ever afraid. It may have been because I was naive, but the one thing I never was afraid. I didn't necessarily always like the situation, but I encountered going there as that piece of my evolution." - Quote from Roland Moore interview conducted by Chris Williams.

https://www.fxbgschools.us/utility-pages/default-post-page/~board/district-announcements/post/interview-with-roland-moore-black-history-month

As one of the first Black students to desegregate James Monroe High School, Judge John W. Scott, Jr. was a barrier breaker during his teenage years. His mother, local civil rights leader, Mamie Scott, provided an extraordinary example of being a community activist. After graduating from James Monroe, he went to Wesleyan University, then the University of Virginia School of Law. Upon graduating from law school, he worked for the Legal Defense Fund of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Locally, he served as the president of the Fredericksburg branch of the NAACP from 1981 to 1989. In 1989, he became the Fredericksburg area's first Black judge. Seven years later, he was elevated as a circuit court judge in Fredericksburg.

CIVIL RIGHTS TRAIL: PART 2

This part of the trail starts on the campus of the University of Mary Washington (UMW), 1301 College Avenue. The walking portion is about .5 of a mile, while the driving portion off-campus is 1.9 miles.

From the Fredericksburg Visitor Center, drive four blocks north on Caroline Street and turn left on Amelia Street. Follow Amelia Street west until it ends at Washington Avenue. Turn left on Washington Avenue and then right onto William Street. At the second traffic light, turn right onto College Avenue. UMW will be on your right.

Parking is available on College Avenue or in Visitor Parking.

https://adminfinance.umw.edu/parking/visitorsguests/

Desegregation of Mary Washington College

> "The end of racial segregation came slowly to Mary Washington College. Although the epochal Brown decision in May 1954 mandated an end to racial segregation in public schools - and, by extension, in colleges as well - it was not until almost exactly ten years later that the barrier to the admission of Black students to Mary Washington was officially removed when the Board of Visitors formally approved a desegregation policy." William B. Crawley, Jr. University of Mary Washington: A Centennial History, 1908-2008 (Fredericksburg, VA: University of Mary Washington Foundation, 2008), 98-99.

In 1956, two years after the Brown vs. Board of Education decision, Gladys White Jordan was denied admission at Mary Washington College.

> Frank M. White remembers:
> Gladys' mother worked at Brompton, in the home of the president of the college, Dr. Grellet Simpson (still the home of the current University President). When they had parties or other events there, Gladys would go help her mother. Dr. Simpson knew Gladys personally and knew that she was a high school senior who had a desire to attend college. So Gladys' father asked her mother to ask Dr. Simpson, "What did he think her chances of being admitted were, if she applied as a commuter student to Mary Washington College?" Now, this was approximately two years after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in its May 17, 1954 decision, that the policy of 'Separate but Equal' was unconstitutional. Dr. Simpson was very 'frank' with her. He said that if the decision was left up to him, he would gladly admit her. But Mary Washington College was an affiliate of the University of Virginia (UVA), and he felt that the Board of Visitors at UVA would not be quite ready yet to make that school integration step. Still, he suggested that Gladys submit an application for admittance to Mary Washington. Gladys' mother brought that message home, and Gladys' father said 'go for it.' So Gladys submitted her application for admission to Mary Washington College. The application came back a couple of weeks later stamped 'not accepted for admission.' Although there was no mention of race on the

application, it didn't take a rocket scientist to determine the race of an application received from a girl graduating from the Colored high school in Fredericksburg. Gladys went on to get her Bachelor and Masters Degree from Virginia State College in Petersburg. Dr. Simpson, knowing Gladys and her parents, and believing in Gladys' ability to succeed, often provided financial support to Gladys' parents to assist with her education while she was at Virginia State College.

Gladys White Jordan eventually became a high school social studies teacher. It took another six years before the first Black student, Jacquelyn Pulliam, was enrolled for summer classes at Mary Washington College. In 1962, Kaye Estelle Savage became the first Black residential student at the institution. After two years, she transferred to Howard University. Sixty years later, the University of Mary Washington formally righted the wrong, and presented Gladys White Jordan with the Monroe Medal "in recognition of her perseverance to succeed in the face of discrimination, and her lifelong commitment to education, social justice and equal opportunity." Resolution adopted by University of Mary Washington Board of Visitors.


HONOR HOCKEY TEAM

Made up of girls who have excelled in hockey, the honor hockey team competes with other teams representing colleges in the area. In the fall the team entered the Tidewater Tournament which was held in Richmond.

First Row: T. Rowell, A. Scott, P. Kinney, M. Martin, S. Kibb, K. Savage, M. Cocks, M. Perkins, C. Potter. *Second Row:* E. Fitts, L. Richardson, S. Bess, C. Pomeroy, C. Schumacher, A. Holding, D. Marks

Mary Washington College Honor Hockey Team in 1962. Kaye Savage is circled, fourth from the right in first row.
Photo credit: University of Mary Washington

Stop #1: Combs Hall

Directions: After parking, proceed to Double Drive. Make a right and follow the path to Combs Hall.

Combs Hall was formerly the science building on the campus of Mary Washington College of the University of Virginia (now known as the University of Mary Washington). After being rejected from the University of Virginia's pre-med program for being a woman, Venus Jones was accepted as the second Black residential student in 1965. During her time at the College, she was one of five Black female students, who considered themselves "The Big Five." "The Big Five" were: Venus Jones, Christiana "Chris" Hall Worthams, Orita Whitehead, Anita Whitehead, and Claudith "Dottie" Holmes.

Left to right: Orita Whitehead, Christiana Hall Worthams, Claudith Holmes, Anita Whithead Scott, Venus Jones
Photo credit: University of Mary Washington

After attending Mary Washington College for three years, Jones was the first Black graduate from the institution, with a Bachelor's of Science degree in Chemistry in 1968. Four years later, she graduated from the University of Virginia's medical school, as the only Black woman to graduate in her class. Upon graduating from medical school, she began her medical internship by working with the Native American population in Phoenix, Arizona. A few years later, she joined the United States Air Force and became a consultant for the United States Surgeon General. After many years of service, she retired with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

To learn more about Dr. Venus Jones, you can visit a display dedicated to her in Jepson Science Center at the other end of campus.

As a Chemistry major, Christiana "Chris" Hall became the first Black graduate to become a teacher. After graduating, she taught in Arlington County public schools. A few years later, she relocated to California to become an engineer.

In 1971, another member of "The Big Five," Anita Whitehead Scott, graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Education. She taught in Charlottesville City Schools while her husband completed his law degree. A few years later, she returned to Fredericksburg and taught at Hugh Mercer Elementary school. After attending Mary Washington College for two years, Orita Whitehead moved to Denver, Colorado, and transferred to Regis University, ultimately graduating from their institution in 1971.

Stop #2: James Farmer Memorial

Directions: From Combs Hall, walk back to Double Drive and head towards the Bell Tower. Make a left onto Campus Walk. Continue until you see James Farmer Hall on your right. His bust and the rest of the memorial is on the left.

Dr. Farmer Memorial
Photo credit: University of Mary Washington

Dr. James L. Farmer, Jr. was born in Marshall, Texas in 1920. His father Dr. James L. Farmer, Sr., was the first Black person to earn a doctorate degree in the state of Texas. With the strong influence of education in his life, the younger Farmer proceeded to graduate from high school at 14-years-old in 1934. Four years later, he graduated from Wiley College. During his time at the institution, he became a highly accomplished debater. After graduating from Wiley College, he entered Howard University's School of Religion and completed his degree requirements in 1941. Upon graduating from Howard University, his father asked him, "What are you going to do now?" In response, the younger Farmer answered, "Destroy segregation."

Dr. James Farmer receiving the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1998.
Photo credit: University of Mary Washington

In 1942, Dr. James L. Farmer, Jr., founded CORE, the Congress of Racial Equality in Chicago, Illinois. Two decades later, he led the Freedom Rides in 1961, to challenge the

desegregation of public transportation in the south. (Be sure to visit the Freedom Riders State Historical Marker on Part 1 of the trail). He was a distinguished professor of history at Mary Washington College from 1985 to 1998.

https://diversity.umw.edu/jfs/who-is-james-farmer/

James Farmer Scholars Program

In 1987, the James Farmer Scholars Program was founded at Mary Washington College. It was cultivated and spearheaded by Mary Washington College administrators and local educators, who were frustrated by the small number of Black students applying for enrollment. The purpose of the program was to provide access and encouragement to historically disadvantaged Black students to consider college as a part of their future and expand their knowledge of Black history. As a way to continue the proud legacy of Dr. James Farmer, the program was named in his honor. Dr. Venitta McCall, the institution's first Black woman to earn full professorship, served as the program's first director.

"Another initiative was the James Farmer Scholars Program, established the same year as SOAR and named for the renowned civil rights leader, who by that time, was a member of the Mary Washington faculty. The purpose of the program was to identify forty-eight promising seventh-grade Black students each year - twelve each from the city of Fredericksburg and the nearby counties of Caroline, Spotsylvania, and Westmoreland - and provide them through high school with tutoring and encouragement for college. The underlying hope was that graduates of the program would choose to attend Mary Washington, but in any case, they would be better motivated (and better prepared) to attend some college or university.

The program was structured around one daylong session at the College each month, plus one week in residence on campus each summer. Those sessions, led by the director of the program, education professor Venitta McCall, (the institution's first African American female full professor), incorporated a variety of activities - lectures, field trips, and interdisciplinary seminars on writing, mathematics, science, and social studies - designed cumulatively to develop study skills, enhance awareness of Black culture, and provide an overall introduction to the college experience. It was a special treat when James Farmer himself occasionally addressed the students.

Dr. Venitta McCall
Photo credit: University of Mary Washington

The program included more than just on-campus work for the students. Each student's home school established a mentor for the Farmer Scholars; in addition, there were workshops for parents on topics such as how to apply to colleges and how to seek financial aid. To remain in the program, students were required to maintain a B average in a college preparatory curriculum. It was not an easy goal - but completion of the

program offered a significant reward: special consideration for admission to Mary Washington College." William B. Crawley, Jr. University of Mary Washington: A Centennial History, 1908-2008 (Fredericksburg, VA: University of Mary Washington Foundation, 2008), 366-367.

Stop #3: James Farmer Multicultural Center

Directions: Continue to walk along Campus Walk until you see Lee Hall on your left. The Cedric Rucker University Center, the current home of the James Farmer Multicultural Center, is on your right across Ball Circle.

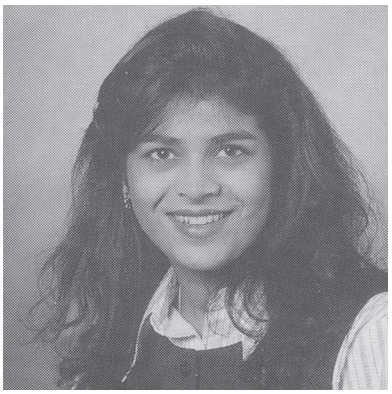
"When I gave the Commencement Speech over there (UMW) in 2006, I recalled how I would walk-by or drive-by admiring the beautiful campus but no one said it was open for me to attend because of the color of my skin. It was for whites only, and white girls only at the time." - Quote from Ambassador Pamela Bridgewater interview conducted by Chris Williams.

In response to several racial incidents on campus, an effort was made to establish a place on campus to promote diversity and improve cultural awareness among the Mary Washington College community. In 1990, the Multicultural Center was formed, led by the vice president for multicultural affairs, Forrest Parker. Under his leadership, the Center flourished and became a second home for many historically disadvantaged students on campus.

Forrest Parker, along with Ameeta Vashee, assistant dean of the Multicultural Center, expanded the cultural programming to include an annual cultural retreat, the establishment of the annual Cultural Awareness Series, the creation of multicultural student-led clubs and organizations, and a national education conference titled "Multi-Ethnic Perspectives."

Forrest Parker, Vice President for Multicultural Affairs
Photo credit: University of Mary Washington

Working with Cedric Rucker, Associate Dean of Student Activities, and Brenda King, Director of International Programs, Parker established the annual Multicultural Fair in 1990. In 1998, the Multicultural Center at Mary Washington College (now the University of Mary Washington) was renamed after one of the Civil Rights Movement's "Big Six," Dr. James Farmer, who was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom that same year. Today, the James Farmer Multicultural Center continues the work of Forrest Parker, Ameeta Vashee, and many other Mary Washington students, faculty, and staff members.


Ameeta Vashee, Assistant Dean of Multicultural Center
Photo credit: University of Mary Washington

In 2022, the Board of Visitors voted to rename the University Center in honor of Dean Cedric Rucker. In 1977, he arrived at Mary Washington College and was the first Black male to live in the residence halls. He graduated in 1981. After earning his masters degree in sociology from the University of Virginia, Rucker returned to Mary Washington in 1989 as Associate Dean of Student Activities before becoming Associate Vice President and Dean of Student Life, a position he held for more than two decades until his retirement in 2022.

James Farmer Multicultural Center website: https://www.umw.edu/multicultural

Links to recorded lessons of James Farmer: https://jamesfarmerlectures.umwblogs.org/lectures-video/

Picture left:
Dean Cedric Rucker
Photo credit: University of Mary Washington

Stop #4: Monroe Hall

Directions: Continue along Campus Walk as it curves to the left. Stop on the plaza. Monroe Hall will be on your right.

Monroe Hall is UMW's oldest academic building and has housed the departments of History, Sociology & Anthropology, Political Science & International Affairs, and Geography since the 1970s.
Another member of "The Big Five," Claudith "Dottie" Holmes majored in history and would have taken classes in Monroe Hall. Holmes was the first president of the college's Afro-American Association, founded in 1970. Their mission was to make connections so that Black students could share any concerns they had with the larger campus community. This included advocating for a Black studies program, Black male admission to the University, and an opportunity to create programming to celebrate Black culture in a meaningful way.

> "Mary Washington College is behind the times. This college is slowly losing relevance…We feel insulted by this school with its feeble excuses for courses in Black studies…Black people have been deprived of racial pride for too long…white culture has been shoved down Black college students' throats in hopes that the regurgitation of [it] would prevent future riots and uprisings." Claudith Holmes quoted in William B. Crawley, Jr. University of Mary Washington: A Centennial History, 1908-2008 (Fredericksburg, VA: University of Mary Washington Foundation, 2008), 106.

The Afro-American Association's push for a Black Culture Week in the 1970s was a precursor to

subsequent efforts to focus and support other minority groups at Mary Washington College. Claudith "Dottie" Holmes and other trailblazing students laid the foundation for what would become the Multicultural Fair two decades later.

Mary Washington Student, Faculty, and Staff Activism

"Though the Mary Washington campus was far from a cauldron of social protest in the mid-1960s - selection of the May Queen and similar traditional campus events still tended to dominate the headlines of the Bullet - there was a small cadre of activists who became directly involved in the civil rights movement, which was then in its most crucial stage. One student, Erin Simms, took the fall 1964 semester off to work with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC); three others spent their Christmas vacations that year working on biracial projects in Mississippi under the aegis of the Southern Student Organizing Committee, a predominantly white group that encouraged and coordinated student activism on campus. Closer to home, a contingent of twenty-six students led by Nan Grogan (who as Nan Grogan Orrock would eventually become a Georgia legislator) joined area residents in downtown Fredericksburg in March 1965 to protest recent incidents of police brutality against Blacks in Selma, Alabama, as well as to express support for abolition of the poll tax and for passage of the Voting Rights Bill then pending in Congress.

Mary Washington students protest with Selma, AL.
Photo credit: University of Mary Washington

The greater wariness about race relations was evident at Mary Washington, where a student poll in 1967 indicated that approximately half of the student body believed that the civil rights movement was "demanding too much, too soon". An extensive Bullet article on the subject the following year devoted several pages to the rise of Black Power, including a survey of students, faculty, and employees that "turned up a decidedly negative attitude toward the term." According to the article, most associated Black Power with "aggression calculated to put Negroes in political, economic, and social dominance. Black power means violence. It is a destructive force that angrily spurns equality and goes for…control." Within such an environment did the Black experience at Mary Washington develop.


The Negro On Campus

Mary Washington Campus, The Bullet.
Photo credit: University of Mary Washington

The Mary Washington community shared fully in the national sense of shock and subsequent mourning over

the assassination of the civil rights movement's most powerful and respected leader. Anita Whitehead Scott, one of the College's Black students, later recalled the day as the most transformative experience of her career at Mary Washington, especially the impromptu gathering of students on Ball Circle, holding hands and singing choruses of "We Shall Overcome." At a later memorial march in downtown Fredericksburg, many College personnel participated, including philosophy professor George Van Sant, who served as a marshal for the event. "We marched into St. George's Episcopal Church and filled it," he recalled. "Black and white, completely integrated. It was a beautiful service."

Because it occurred during spring break, few students participated in the march, but many were deeply moved by King's death. One of them, Claudith Holmes (who was emerging as a leader among the Black students), wrote a poignant tribute in the College paper, mourning King's loss in highly personal terms and concluding with a challenge to the community: "Those people," she said, "who have never thought of the racial problem that exists in our country today must kindle a flame in their hearts and dedicate themselves to do something today to help solve the problem…All of us can and must do something. This is not an impossible dream." For its part, the faculty passed a resolution urging that the College "strive to become more relevant in the area of human rights and dignity lest we contribute to the growing polarization of white and Black America." Specifically the resolution expressed a commitment to reevaluating the institution's policies regarding admissions, hiring practices, and curriculum.

Mary Washington students mourn MLK.
Photo credit: University of Mary Washington

Several subsequent developments offered hope that such a commitment was being fulfilled. For one thing, the College established the Martin Luther King Scholarship in the aftermath of the assassination, and the first such grant was awarded to Marsha Meekins of Richmond. Having applied for admission in late 1968, Meekins received the grant of $500 (to be available during her sophomore year), along with additional assistance, and enrolled as a freshman for the 1969-70 session. For another, the College employed its first African American faculty member in 1968 when Johnny Johnson was hired as a part-time art instructor in the Education Department." William B. Crawley, Jr. University of Mary Washington: A Centennial History, 1908-2008 (Fredericksburg, VA: University of Mary Washington Foundation, 2008), 366-367.

Stop #5: Shiloh Cemetery (Littlepage Street and Monument Avenue)

Directions: Return to your car and proceed to College Avenue. Drive south on College Avenue to William Street. Make a left on William Street and then take the first left onto Sunken Road. Proceed on Sunken Road until you reach Monroe Street and make a right. At Littlepage Street, make a left and drive one block. The cemetery is at the intersection of Littlepage Street and Monument Avenue. Park on the street near the intersection and walk to the cemetery gates that face Monument Avenue.

The Shiloh Cemetery serves as a burial space for influential Black citizens, including: 19th century educators, Joseph Walker and Jason Grant, Rev. M.L. Murchison (pastor, Shiloh Baptist Church (New Site), Rev. B.H. Hester, pastor Shiloh Baptist Church (Old Site); and original Buffalo Soldier, Matthew Garnett. Other remains were relocated to Shiloh Cemetery, from Potter's Field discussed at Stop 7 on Part 1 of the trail.

Jason C. Grant, Sr. (1861-1951) Grave site
Photo credit: City of Fredericksburg


Shiloh Cemetery gates
Photo credit: Dr. Steve Hanna

Joseph F. Walker (1856-1943) Grave site
Photo credit: City of Fredericksburg

Stop #6: Dorothy Hart Community Center (408 Canal Street)

Directions: Turn right from Littlepage Street onto Monument Street. Then turn left onto Kenmore Avenue. Take the first right onto Mary Ball Street. Turn left onto Washington Avenue. (Please note to cross over the median before making the left hand turn.) Make a right onto Maury Street and proceed to make a right onto Fall Hill Avenue. Fall Hill Avenue curves around the corner and then becomes Canal Street. The community center will be on your right.

Below is an excerpt provided by Shiloh Baptist Church (Old Site) on the events related to the 1950 graduating class of Walker-Grant High School. Learn about the protest for the right to use the front door at the community center for commencement.

> In June 1950, the high school was preparing for its largest graduating class to date (27 individuals). It became clear that the school's own facilities would be too small to host all of the students, friends, family members, teachers, and administrators who wanted to attend. On the advice of Dr. Wyatt, James Walker, the senior class president and a member of Shiloh (Old Site), approached the city. Mrs. R. C. Ellison, president of the Walker-Grant Parent Teachers Association and a member of Shiloh (Old Site), accompanied him. They asked for permission

to hold the school's commencement ceremonies at the city's spacious Community Center, customarily used only by whites.

Initially, the city refused the request. Dr. Wyatt then advised James Walker on strategies in appealing the decision. Eventually, the city relented, agreeing that the black high school could use the Community Center for its commencement but stipulating that no student, teacher, or family member could enter through the front doors. All people of color would be required to enter and exit through a small side door near the back of the building.

James Walker, the class president, reported this restriction to his class members and said that he would rather get his diploma on the sidewalk than be forced to enter the Community Center through the back door. Shiloh Baptist Church (Old Site) then stepped in and offered its facilities for the commencement. With Dr. Wyatt and Mrs. Ellison from Shiloh (Old Site) assisting with the planning and with the full backing of the Fredericksburg chapter of the NAACP, the Walker-Grant High School senior class then developed a plan to meet in caps and gowns on commencement day outside the front doors of the Community Center, holding large signs saying, "These doors closed to us."

Members of Shiloh Old Site played key roles in planning and implementing a 1950 march protesting a decision by the city that denied black high school graduates and their families the right to enter the city's publicly funded community center through the front door. A crowd of at least three hundred gathered in support of the demonstration. After the graduating class sang "Lift Every Voice and Sing," often described as "the Negro national anthem," and heard a prayer, Dr. Wyatt presented two "dummy diplomas," making a speech about how the class was "learning at the outset that life is filled with problems." They then marched peacefully from there to Shiloh (Old Site), where the actual commencement ceremony was held. Although Shiloh (Old Site)'s sanctuary was smaller than ideal, it was a church that had supported and encouraged the class in its protest, and a number of Walker-Grant's students and teachers were members of the congregation.

On February 10, 2022, the Fredericksburg community celebrated the installation of a historic panel, memorializing the Walker-Grant High School Class of 1950's protest. At that time, the City denied them use of the front doors, when they asked to hold their graduation ceremony at the center.

Picture left: William Noel and Roger Williams - Walker-Grant Class of 1950 and protest participants unveiling a historical panel commemorating the story of Walker Grant Class of 1950 and their courage.
Photo credit : Barclay Sims

RETURNING TO THE FREDERICKSBURG VISITOR CENTER

The Dorothy Hart Community Center is the last stop of Part 2 of the Civil Trail at this time. As is true in cities and towns across the United States, there are more stories of Black Fredericksburg residents that can be told and some of these may be added to this tour in the future.

To return to the Fredericksburg Visitor Center, turn right on Charles Street. Follow Charles Street for 7 blocks to George Street. Turn left on George Street for one block to Princess Anne Street. Turn right on Princess Anne Street and continue for 2 blocks to Charlotte Street. Turn left on Charlotte Street. The Visitor Center will be on your left on the corner of Charlotte and Caroline Streets.

ABOUT THIS PROJECT:

Freedom, A Work in Progress: Fredericksburg's Civil Rights Trail is still the unfinished result of a community-wide effort led by the City of Fredericksburg's Economic Development and Tourism Department and the University of Mary Washington's James Farmer Multicultural Center (JFMC), Geography Department, and Historic Preservation Department.

The trail narrative's primary authors are Victoria Matthews (City of Fredericksburg Economic Development and Tourism) and Chris Williams (JFMC). Williams also obtained many of the oral histories featured on this trail.

After attending an industry trade show and seeing the unveiling of the U.S. Civil Rights Trail, Matthews wanted to uncover the roots of the Fredericksburg Civil Rights story. After participating with the James Farmer Multicultural Center on a trip to follow the journey of the 1961 Freedom Riders, Matthews connected with Williams to partner on a City of Fredericksburg Civil Rights trail. The result is what you see here.

The story map was built by Dr. Stephen P. Hanna (UMW Geography) and UMW Geography students: John Liberty, Josephine Allamby, and Anaïs Malangu.

Dr. Christine Henry provided important historical information for the trail. Dr. Erin Devlin helped supervise other UMW student interns, as they collected and organized oral histories and archival information.

Additional thanks are due to the staff of UMW's Special Collections and Archives at Simpson Library.

Lastly, the following community members and organizations contributed their expertise, memories, time, and talents to this project: Frank M. White, Robert Christian, Ambassador Pamela E. Bridgewater, Reverend Lawrence A. Davies, Reverend Hashmel Turner, Roland Moore, John A. White, Johnny P. Johnson, Gaye Adegbalola, Marguerite Young, Jerine Mercer McConnell, Ruth Coder Fitzgerald, Historic Fredericksburg Foundation Inc., The Central Rappahannock Heritage Center, Nancy Moore, Dr. Paula Royster, Cedric Rucker, James Dyson, Sonny Holmes, and John Hennessy.

MISSION STATEMENTS:

City of Fredericksburg:

Where WE All Come Together WE means everyone. Fredericksburg is a welcoming, inclusive community that actively engages its members and embraces partnerships to ensure racial equity as a value in all aspects of city life. Everyone feels they belong and shares a sense of place. Our diversity is woven into our community fabric and is reflected in our government, businesses, and vibrant city culture. Fredericksburg is a leader and a model of racial equity. City Council Vision/Desired Future States

University of Mary Washington:

UMW embraces its obligation to serve the educational aspirations of all communities and seeks to reflect the diversities of all people in its students, faculty, and staff. This philosophical approach to diversity and inclusion strengthens our community and is essential to our academic mission and institutional excellence. UMW is committed to its responsibility to be a model of fairness, inclusivity, equity, access and equal opportunity, providing intellectual and institutional leadership regarding diversity, and maintaining a welcoming, inclusive environment of mutual respect for its members of all backgrounds and identities. In keeping with these tenets, the University is committed to a system of responsibility, accountability, and recognition of all of its members, and seeks to carry out these principles of diversity and inclusion in all of its operations, goals, and objectives.

University of Mary Washington's James Farmer Multicultural Center:

Multicultural Student Affairs strives to facilitate students' learning and personal development, including those of historically marginalized groups. By educating and engaging members of the campus community on issues of diversity, equity, inclusion and social justice, we promote a welcoming and safe campus environment where all students may thrive, succeed, and experience a sense of belonging.

CIVIL RIGHTS TRAIL

U of MW

FXBG

City of Fredericksburg, VA