



Historical Marker Five Located at the western edge of the churchyard, in front of a cemetery marker placed in 1972, and a plain stone placed in the nineteenth century. The marker acknowledges that most burials of enslaved and free persons of African descent took place on private property at the farms and plantations where they were held, where they lived, and where they died. At death they were oftentimes buried unceremoniously with perhaps a fieldstone or wooden post to designate where burial occurred. More than likely there were no markings. At Walnut Hill

located one-half mile away from the church along St. Margaret's Road, many unidentified formerly enslaved persons are reportedly buried near the barn. There are no markings. Only five formerly enslaved persons who were freed in 1788 are known in records by their first names but without any other marking.

Also nearby SMC is Asbury Broadneck Methodist Church (started in 1851 or earlier as Asbury Broadneck African Methodist Episcopal Church) with a churchyard where there are many more buried than the 300 persons for whom the burying grounds were intended. Asbury Broadneck has done extensive work to identify all buried therein.

Trust Reconciliation Reparations — Four Focus Areas

The small task group charged with preparing this report, after examining the past and placing appropriate focus upon the future, recommends four focus areas to SMC as the parish begins its work in 2021.

Reconciliation will demand trust in God, trust in a process that may not be well understood nor well described. Reconciliation will require reparations of some type. Reparations will take work and will require parish leadership. Reconciliation will require leadership from those who are in positions of leadership. Leaders in name only and titular leaders cannot take the parish forward.

Reparations will not necessarily be monetary. Non-monetary reparations may be more difficult than monetary; the reparations and reconciliation processes may be unfamiliar, uncomfortable, and require changing the way things have always been done.

Focus Area 1 **Recognition & *Invisibilia***

Focus 2 **Identifying and Marking Unmarked Graves**

Focus Area 3 **Education of Children of African Descent and Historic Rosenwald Schools**

Focus area 4 **Liturgical Services by Clergy of SMC for Persons of African Descent**



Ernie Tucker

RECOGNITION & INVISIBILIA — BROWN'S WOODS & SKIDMORE



August 2021

Dear Friends,

I have recently learned about parts of the Broadneck Peninsula that are very near to SMC and apparently have not been visible to SMC for well over 100 years. The stories of the people who live and once lived there are shrouded in the mists of our forgotten histories. The several communities in fact still exist and thrive amidst a whole superstructure of new housing developments, commercial projects, and transportation links.

Commercial and residential development have continued without interruption in these areas over the decades since World War II, especially after the opening of the first Chesapeake Bay Bridge in 1952.

This bridge, the world's largest continuous over-water steel structure at the time it was built, transformed the Broadneck Peninsula into a major east-west transportation artery. This affected both Browns Woods and Skidmore, but Skidmore much more directly, since it was right next to Route 50. As with other communities of people of color, the rules of eminent domain in constructing public thoroughfares caused properties to be sold in ways that adversely affected the structure and coherence of the community in lasting ways.

The Cold War also brought NIKE missile sites that were located in and nearby Skidmore, further impacting development in the area.

Current perceptions of the Broadneck Peninsula have been largely shaped by these recent periods of economic development. Part of seeking the truth of this land will be to discern the outlines of how these early Black communities came to be and what they meant for the people who lived there and for the people who live there now.

Two particular communities are Browns Woods and Skidmore, because they constituted among the most significant free-standing Black settlements that became communities and are very near to SMC.



Both of them emerged in their very beginnings with free Blacks living in the Broadneck Peninsula, but really expanded after Maryland declared emancipation of its enslaved slave population on November 1, 1864.

The hubs of Browns Woods and Skidmore eventually became their Rosenwald schools. These were educational institutions created in the 1920s through a partnership between local Black communities, local governments, and Julius Rosenwald, one of the owners of Sears, Roebuck & Company and a prominent philanthropist.

Land for the Skidmore Rosenwald School was donated by Timothy and Mary Harris. The Harrises had acquired land for the purposes of education as early as the 1880s. Timothy was born a slave of the Whitehall Plantation and many of the school's students were descendants of people formerly enslaved at the Whitehall Plantation.

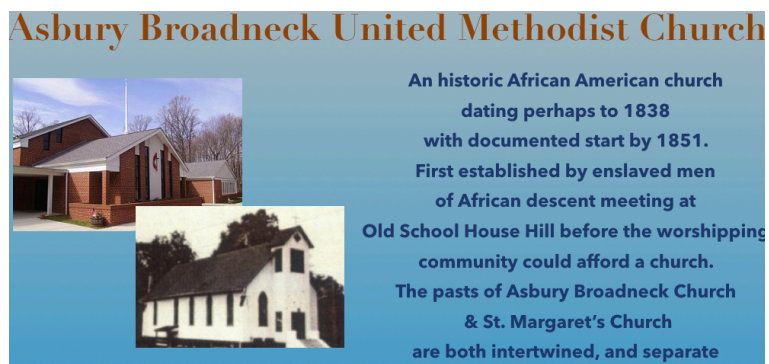
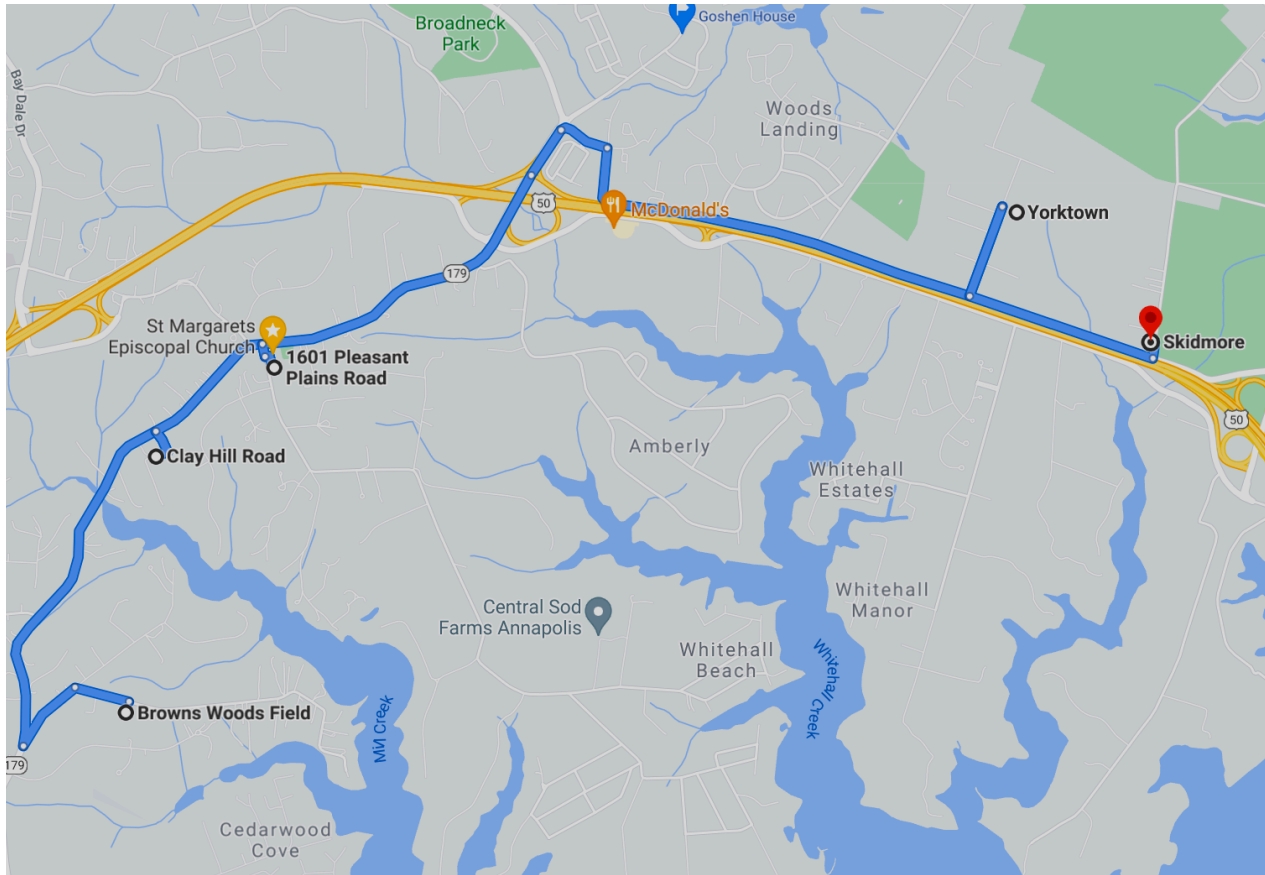
The Browns Woods school still stands but is now a private dwelling amid other houses in this neighborhood. The Skidmore school, together with the Skidmore community, has been overtaken by development alongside US Route 50.

Some descendants of their founders still live in these communities today. One of the ways that these communities stayed intact at all was through the functioning of mutual aid and benefit societies connected to local churches, particularly the Asbury Broadneck United Methodist Church. Much remains to be investigated and uncovered about these communities to be able to tell their stories more completely amid the extraordinary amount of community growth and activity constantly going on around them over the past century. The communities today are still populated by descendants of their founders in some cases.

Much remains to be investigated and uncovered about these communities to be able to tell their stories more completely amid the extraordinary amount of community growth and activity constantly going on around them and near them over the past century.

Gratefully,

Ernie



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SKIDMORE ROSENWALD SCHOOL



Year 1930

385 FOREST BEACH ROAD

BROWNS'S WOODS ROSENWALD SCHOOL



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Nike Missile Command & Control Site

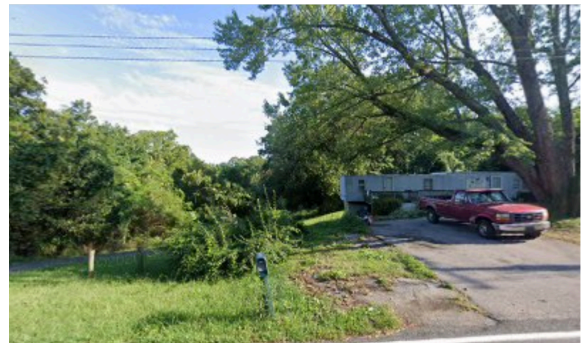


Nike Missile Launch Site



Year 2021

385 FOREST BEACH ROAD



Focus Area 1: Recognition & *Invisibilia*

What's Next ?

Until 2014 parish histories omitted and at best misrepresented records and stories of enslaved and other marginalized persons. For example, parishioners **did not** carry guns that they carefully placed under pews while attending services in the second church at Severn Heights (1731-1803).



A much studied and highly authoritative eight-part Maryland History covering 1632-1789

developed by a highly respected contemporary Annapolis-area historian only names three blacks during that entire 157 year period— citing a plaque at Banneker-Douglas Museum in Annapolis

Mathias de Sousa – And those other First Black Colonists

Plaque at the Banneker-Douglass Museum in Annapolis lists three blacks among the first Maryland settlers:

- *Mimus* – Not on passenger lists or in any known Maryland records.
- *“Black” John Price* – Probably a Welshman; Celts often termed “black” because of their darker complexion. Term used to distinguish him from another John Price on the Ark.
- *Mathias de Sousa* – Came as a servant to Fr. Andrew White; probably from Portugal or Spain; called a “mulatto” in one—and only one—Maryland record; perhaps a “Moor.”

Consistent with its history of ignoring those persons of color living in our neighborhood, SMC has since 1800 overlooked the nearby historically Black communities including Browns Woods and Skidmore , along with Yorktown and others. Instead of

practicing hospitality, instead of being opening and welcoming, SMC has found it possible to ignore its neighbors and its neighborhood for hundreds of years.

In 2021 and going forward, SMC can make efforts to get to know our neighbors, especially our neighbors in Browns Woods and Skidmore, along with our neighbors at Asbury Broadneck Methodist Church.

We must get to know our Asbury neighbors. We know from recent efforts on the part of SMC youth that we can work with Asbury. We know from recent opportunities to join with Asbury for a meal, for a celebration, that we are welcome. We must make this happen on a recurring basis. A new normal.

We must not expect our neighbors to come to us, rather we must go humbly to them. We need to be aware of and respectful of our neighbors’ history and heritage. We need be aware that they may not have not any interest in SMC. We have to be aware that what our neighbors may want. We need to know what SMC may or may not be willing, capable, and prepared to provide.

Our look at the world, our processes, and our ways of doing things have kept a shroud over our neighbors. Maybe our ways have not worked and need to change. Or we can just keep our reputation as the wealthy white church on the corner. Whatever this Focus Area costs, SMC can afford it!



name

Browns Woods Schoolhouse

description

Adetola Ajayi describes the school in Browns Woods village that his grandfather attended in 1938.