

Witnesses of Wallville

Documenting a Rural Southern Maryland Community



*A Collaboration Between Wallville Community Members and Descendants
and Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum*



**Witnesses of Wallville:
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Westley Moore, Governor

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Foreword

As silence comes to life, it is reflected upon the shoulders we stand on. Generations of hard work, struggles, and love. Go there as you read this book; let's continue to pray for we would not be where we are today if not for our ancestors of Wallville. As our legacy continues, thank you mother Glenda Spears Wallace, daughter of Pauline Gross Wills, for the strength you received and gently passed on. Thank you to our Steering Committee for their hard work in bringing this book to fruition.

Roxanne Colbert Parker

Great granddaughter of
Everett and Eliza Gross



Wallville Project Committee. Seated, left to right: Debra Rantanen, Shelia Montague Parker, Roxanne Parker, and Sonseeabray Hopkins. Standing, left to right: Patricia Samford, Lauren Canty, Andre Brown, Kirsti Uunila, Chester Gross, Shelton Brown, Alberta Brown, Scott Strickland, and Alex Glass.

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A great many people have been crucial in the success of the Witnesses of Wallville project and the writing of this booklet. When the project steering committee reached out to the larger Wallville community of current residents and descendants, we were overwhelmed by the knowledge people were willing to share. Whether it was the sharing of photos, mementos and stories, tours of family cemeteries, or the chance to record oral histories, each encounter provided us with information that made the Wallville story more complete. We thank each and every one of them for their generosity. We would like to recognize in particular the following individuals: Michael Block, Tamira Boyne, Kevin Brady, Liz and Phil Briscoe, Anne Browne, Delma Bourne-Parran, Shannon and David Campbell, Wayne Clarke, Rod Cofield, Christa Conant, Shelby Cowan, Emmanuel Crupi, Ron Crupi, Richard Dodds, Dr. Ralph Eshelman, Mary Farmer, Mark Flemming, Dr. Joni Jones Floyd of the University of Maryland Libraries Special Collections, Carolyn “Christine” Gray, Beverley and Carl Griffith, Carol Gross, Victoria Hall, Jim House, Robert Hurry of the Calvert Marine Museum, Patricia Johnson, Clarke Jones, Michael Kent of the Calvert County NAACP, Danielle Knight, Alice Merkel, Randi Parker Niles, Lorenzo Parker, Michael Parran, Theodore Parran, Tom Parran, Jennifer Pitts, Andrew Prins, Rachel Reese at the Calvert Marine Museum, Mary Rockefeller of the Calvert County Historical Society, Lili Sheeline, Michael Smolek, Gail Stevens, Geoff Strayer, Isabel Tonkavitch, Barry Voithoffer, Glenda Spears Wallace, David Walton, Beatrice Butler Washington, and LaTonya Winters.



Introduction

The booklet you are reading is part of the “Witnesses of Wallville” project, which was undertaken by Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum (JPPM), a unit of the Maryland Historical Trust, which is a division within the Maryland Department of Planning. Support for this project was funded in part by an African American Civil Rights grant from the Historic Preservation Fund administered by the National Park Service, Department of Interior. The National Park Service’s African American Civil Rights Grant Program funding helps preserve sites and history related to the African American struggle for equality.

Additionally, the project has received an outpouring of support from within state government and the local community.

“This type of project defines my Leave No One Behind vision. By sharing your knowledge of the small town of Wallville...this rural Black community can better understand its history and connections to our shared past.” - Wes Moore, Governor of Maryland

Although the specific topics and stories told in this booklet are local, the Wallville community was a microcosm of changes occurring throughout the United States following the Civil War, as Blacks during Reconstruction sought employment and educational opportunities and established themselves as citizens with voting rights and political power. These community members, the leadership of churches and other community organizations, and actions of self-sustainability provided Black residents of Wallville a way to assert their own civil rights, which were often disregarded politically and socially by those in positions of power.

The content you will explore draws from oral histories, historical research, archaeological evidence, and (perhaps most importantly) from the community of people that call and have called this place home. Today, the Wallville community remains rural, containing numerous small residential properties, as well as some larger farms. Once predominantly Black, the makeup of this community has changed greatly over time. Many people who grew up here have relocated to other parts of the state and country as part of social and economic shifts both local and national. Join us as we take what has been learned and shared to explore Wallville's past and present.

It should be noted that while the geographical placename on maps, census records, and postal records refers to the community as Wallville, people living within the community knew it as Wallsville. For consistency and modern familiarity with the community, this booklet will stick with the name Wallville except as quoted by former residents.

What is Wallville?

Wallville is a community located near St. Leonard in Calvert County, Maryland. The exact historical boundaries are difficult to define, but in a general sense the area collectively known as Wallville covered roughly 7 square miles (Figure 1). Sometimes referred to as Chitron, Chittering, Chickering, Chittling, Chilly, or Chili Neck, the community is situated on a peninsula or “neck” of land surrounded by water on three sides. To the west lies Island Creek, to the south, the Patuxent River, and to the east, St. Leonard's Creek. Various hypotheses of the origin of the Chitron Neck name abound, depending on who you ask, but it can be traced at least to the 19th century and possibly earlier (Figure 2).

One of the earliest references to a name resembling Chitron Neck comes from the 1859 novel *The Old Plantation* by James Hungerford (b. 1814, d. 1883). Hungerford's fictional story is set on the Eastern Shore of Maryland but is partly based on his experiences growing up in Calvert County. The Hungerford family owned property just to the south of Wallville, somewhere between St. Leonard's and Hungerford Creeks. Although fictional, Hungerford cheekily described the mannerisms of the people of “Chickering Neck,” stating:

It may be remarked here, that at the house of every planter in Chickering Neck, and indeed in the whole county, all commoners are hospitably entertained; high and low, rich and poor, the polished and the rude, all are courteously welcomed.

The kind of courtesy extended toward them depends, of course, to some extent on the characters manners of the persons entertained.

While the origin of the name of the neck of land is unknown, the name Wallville, like many rural communities, is derived from the name of the post office or postmaster. In the heart of Wallville stood the homestead of James T. and Margaret Wall (Figure 3). The Wall family operated a post of-

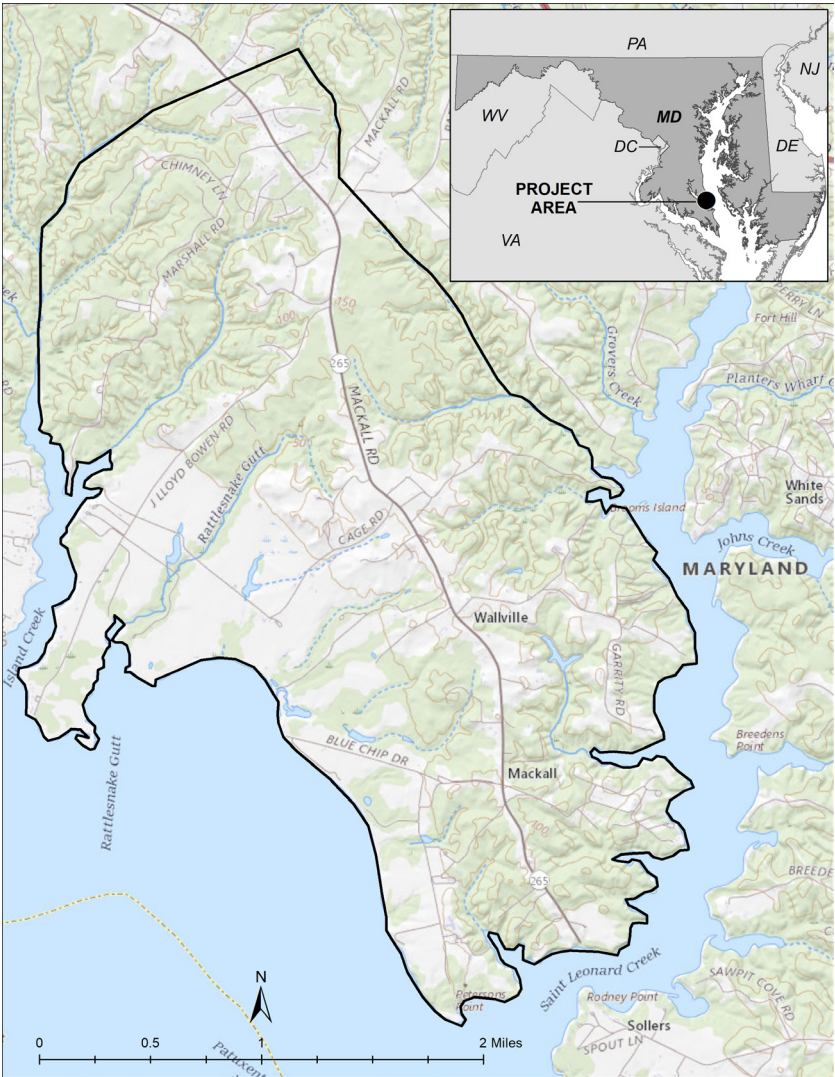


Figure 1. Bounds of the Wallville Community, Calvert County, Maryland. Map created by Scott Strickland, Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum.

fice (in operation between at least 1879 and 1908) and general store from their property. There was another local post office at the southern end of the peninsula at the Mackall's Wharf steamboat landing beginning around the same time, but the community as a whole was referred to as Wallville.

Wallville did not have a developed center as you might expect when you picture a village or town. Rather, Wallville was spread out and consisted of farms (both large and small) occupied by wealthy landowners, single families with farming plots, tenant farmers, and sharecroppers.

Mackall Road served as the main artery of the community, linking farms with stores, schools, Sunday schools, churches, social organizations, leisure spaces, and even baseball fields! Perhaps equally as important were the waterways surrounding the neck as well. Many Wallville residents earned a living not just by farming but through work on the water. Community members worked as watermen, boat captains, and shuckers/packers at local oyster packing facilities in addition to farming small plots of land.

While many people have called Wallville home over the years, this project has focused

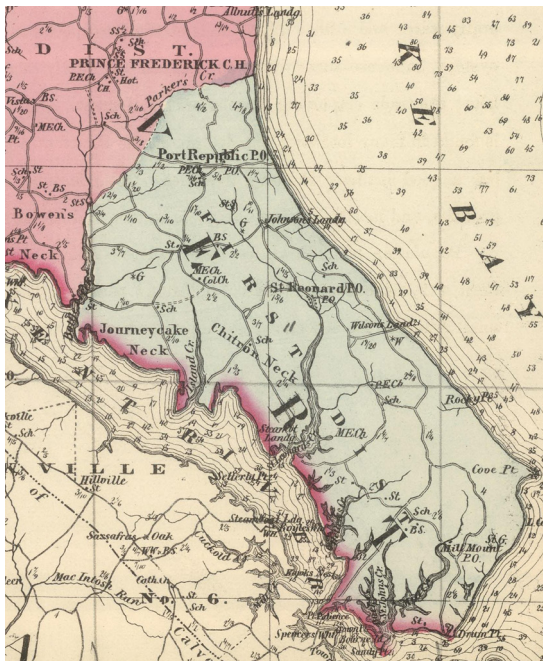


Figure 2. Detail of 1866 Martenet Map of Calvert County showing Chitron Neck. David Rumsey Map Collection, David Rumsey Map Center, Stanford Libraries.



Figure 3. Postmaster James T. Wall (1804-1870). Photo used courtesy of Patricia Johnson.



Figure 4. Delilah Janey Straiten in front of her home at the Wall family farm. Photo courtesy of Patricia Johnson.

primarily on families who resided at the southern end of Mackall Road. Prominent White families in this part of Wallville during the 19th and early 20th centuries included the Petersons, Mackalls, Walls, Bowens, Turners, Sedwicks, Broomes, and Parrans. These families intermarried over the years, creating a close-knit community. Anne S. Wall's mid-19th-century diary contains many instances of socializing with nearby families.

Prominent Black families included the Bannisters, Butlers, Coates, Grosses, Rawlings, Straitens, and Washingtons (Figure 4). These families also intermarried with frequency, creating an extensive network of economic and emotional support.

Today, the southern end of Wallville, near Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum, is home to none of the Black families whose ancestors used to reside there. Starting in the 1930s, families began to leave due to various factors: changing technologies in the oystering industry made this way of life less profitable, the economic hardships of the Depression meant that some families lost homes due to tax foreclosures; or some moved further north to be closer to jobs in urban areas. While some of the White families, like the Walls and the Petersons, trickled out of the Wallville area over the years, others remained. Descendants of the Parrans are still farming in Wallville on land owned by their families for many generations.

Patterns of Historical Settlement & Landholdings

The land along St. Leonard's Creek and the Patuxent River that now forms Wallville has been home to humans for around 9,000 years or more. Semi-nomadic native peoples traveled seasonally through the area, hunting, fishing and gathering wild plants. Around three thousand years ago, they relied less on hunting and gathering and began settling in villages and practicing agriculture. Archaeologists have found evidence of seasonal camps and villages on the grounds of Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum.

The Native people of the Patuxent were noted by Captain John Smith in 1608 as living in more centralized villages and not as dispersed as those else-

where in the Chesapeake. Substantial Native settlements remained along the Patuxent throughout much of the colonial period. Increased settlement by English colonists led to the dispossession of the ancestral lands of the Piscataway, whose villages in areas along the river near Wallville were known as Opanient, Quomocac, Acquintanacsuck, and Pawtuxent (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Patuxent River settlements, Captain John Smith's map of the Chesapeake, published in 1612. Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division.



Figure 6. 17th-century landholdings at the south end of Wallville. Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum is where the Stone and Taylor tracts were located. Image by Scott Strickland, Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum.

During the colonial period, the Wallville area consisted of several large patents issued beginning in the 1640s, a little over a decade after the founding of the Maryland colony in 1634 (Figure 6). Landholdings within what is now JPPM began as a patent known as St. Leonard, which was issued to William Stone, the son of Governor Thomas Stone, in 1651. Other large adjacent patents included the lands of Robert Taylor (1658) at the northern end of JPPM and the Brewhouse tract, originally patented to Peter Johnson in 1658 and expanded by Roger Baker in 1672, located just to the east. North of JPPM lies Cage Farm, which has been in the possession of the Parran family for hundreds of years, having first been patented to William Parrott and his wife Elizabeth Parran in 1649.

Consolidation of family landholdings during the colonial period included the expansion of the St. Leonard tract by the Smith family in the 1680s to include all of the land that encompasses JPPM. The St. Leonard tract was occupied by the Smith family well into the 18th century. Confusion between the boundary between the Smith family land and the Brewhouse property of Thomas Johnson led to resurveys of the boundaries in 1769 and 1771 (Figure 7). Thomas Johnson would later go on to serve as the first elected Governor of Maryland following the American Revolutionary War.

Like much of southern Maryland, large landholdings such as St. Leonard, Brewhouse, and Cage Farm served as vast tobacco plantations. The cultivation of tobacco then, as it still is now, was a very labor-intensive process. By the beginning of the 18th century, the primary source of that labor among the landholding class came in the form of enslaved Africans. By the end of the 17th century the mass production of tobacco was flooding European markets, causing the price of tobacco to plummet. Economic success within regions like southern Maryland was therefore predicated on how much land



*Figure 7. 18th-century Brewhouse, the home of the Mackalls.
Photo courtesy of the Maryland Historical Trust.*

and labor were owned by wealthier families. Lowering the cost of labor to maximize profits solidified the institution of slavery throughout the region.

Tobacco plantations of all sizes made use of enslaved labor. Smaller tobacco planters, with fewer laborers, sought to consolidate quarters of enslaved families in small groups, while larger landowners dispersed quarters throughout their landholdings, as was the case at plantations such as the St. Leonard tract. The Smith family maintained a tight cluster of quarters for the enslaved near a complex of outbuildings adjacent to the Smith home during the 18th century. Probate records noted that quarters of other enslaved families were located elsewhere on the property or on other nearby landholdings.

A shock to the plantation system came following the Revolutionary War. With the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1783, British creditors were granted access to collect pre-war debts between plantations and British merchants. While trade between the former colonies and Britain resumed, tobacco was over-produced by planters to satisfy some of these debts, which in turn lowered the price of tobacco. By the 1780s southern Maryland had fallen into a severe economic depression. The overproduction of tobacco also contributed to a decline in the quality of the land itself.

These conditions persisted into the close of the 18th century. Traveler Isaac Weld described southern Maryland's seemingly barren landscape as "Nothing is to be seen here for miles together but extensive plains, that have been worn out by the culture of tobacco, overgrown with yellow sedge." Weld further remarked that "In the midst of these plains are the remains of several good houses which show that the country was once very different to what it is now." As a result of these conditions persisting into the early 19th century, many White southern Maryland families immigrated west.

Between 1790 and 1810, the population of Calvert County declined by 7.5%, from 8,652 to 8,005 (Figure 8). The free population (both Black and White) versus the enslaved population during that period remained fairly consistent with a roughly even split, although the number of enslaved and free Black people made up a slight majority by 1810. The number of free Black people in Calvert County would increase in the decades leading up to the Civil War, from just under 5% of the total population in 1810 to nearly 18% by 1860. From 1820 to 1860, the free and enslaved Black population in Southern Maryland counties increased from 101,328 to 121,064.

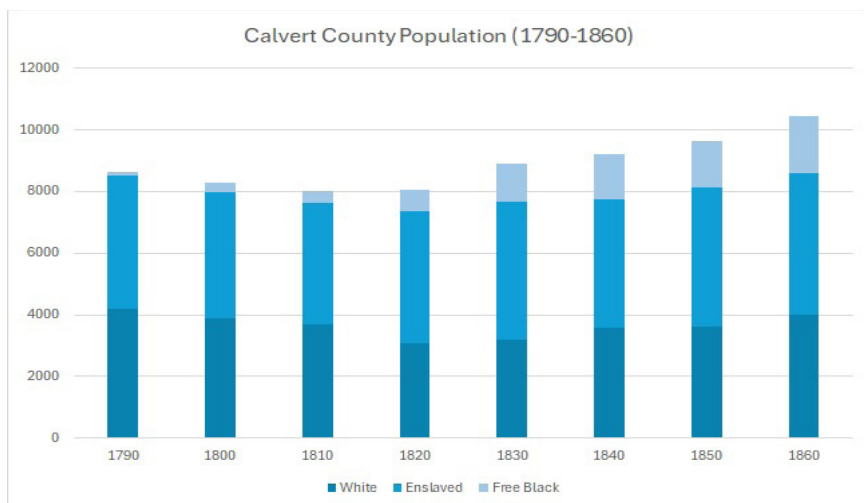


Figure 8. *Calvert County Population, 1790-1860.* Chart created by Scott Strickland, Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum.

Pro-confederacy sentiments contributed to United States Army troops being stationed throughout Southern Maryland during the Civil War. One result of this presence was the recruitment of enslaved men as soldiers (Figure 9). Roughly 44 enslaved men from the Wallville area joined the Union Army, including William Coates and William B. Jones, enslaved on George Peterson’s farm, and Benjamin Brooks and William Dorsey, enslaved by Martha Stanforth. The proximity of Wallville to Camp Stanton, roughly 13 miles from the mouth of St. Leonard’s Creek by water, may have played a role in the number of Wallville men who were able to join the Union army. Locations as close as Mackall’s Wharf were also identified as places for enlistment on United States Colored Troops records.

At the end of the Civil War, Blacks expected the same rights enjoyed by the White population—schools, churches, voting, judicial equity, and the right to work for themselves. The Freedmen’s Bureau was created to assist newly freed Blacks with the transition to freedom, assisting with construction and providing funding for schools, serving as advocates in legal disputes, and helping administer freedmen’s camps. While Blacks were hopeful and eager to create a new reality of biracial equality, Whites responded with resistance to subvert Reconstruction.

After the end of the Civil War, some Blacks chose to leave the area, while many remained in Wallville or nearby Mutual and Island Creek. For every formerly enslaved person who left Southern Maryland for employment in

Washington or Baltimore, about a dozen remained in place. U.S. Federal Census records show that the Black population in Calvert County in 1860 was 6,450, shrinking to 5,533 in 1870 and labor shortages were evident in Southern Maryland. Freedmen's Bureau representative Seldon Clark noted in August of 1865 that "the complaint of a scarcity of labor is well-founded", and "not more than half the usual amount of land is cultivated this year for that reason." This challenge continued for at least another several decades, as shown in this September 17, 1887 article in the *Calvert Gazette*:

Wallville Items.--Many farmers in this section are experiencing great difficulty and some serious loss on account of the scarcity of farm labor. One farmer told me he would lose at least one third of his crop of tobacco and nearly all his fodder because he could not get hands to save it. During the summer months labor is abundant, and farmers are tempted to pitch large crops, but as soon as the first day of September arrives every one who owns or can in any manner get possession of a boat goes oystering. The time is fast approaching when white labor will have to be introduced in this part of the county, or the cultivation of tobacco abandoned except in a small way.

Black Landholding in Wallville

Labor shortages placed Blacks in a good position to negotiate wages and hours and to create better conditions for their families. The focus of Black Wallville residents' work changed from meeting the needs of employers to that of themselves and their families. Tax assessment records show by the 1890s roughly 18 Black families in Wallville were able to purchase tracts of land for farming and for establishing homesteads.



Figure 9. Detail from U.S. Colored Troops recruitment poster showing soldier recruitment in Southern Maryland. Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Alfred Whital Stern Collection of Lincolniana.

Males Names of the free people of Calvert in Calvert County Maryland	No. of Persons	Age of Person	Persons living in house as wife	Worth in Property	Males Names of the free people of Calvert in Calvert County Maryland	No. of Persons	Age of Person	Persons living in house as wife	Worth
Joseph Murry	1	40	"	"	amond brot up	30	"	"	"
Robert Murry	"2	34	"	"	Edmund Hancock	31	45	"	"
Gustavus Murry	"3	17	"	"	Joseph Moland	32	30	"	"
Joseph Gurry	"4	45	"	"	Benjamin Mason	33	13	"	"
William Gurry	"5	25	"	"	Augustus Mason	34	8	"	"
Frederick Grofs	"6	24	"	"	Joseph Mason	35	60	"	"
Thomas Grofs	"7	80	"	"	Robert Norris	36	71	"	"
Frederick Grofs	"8	30	"	"	Thomas Norris	37	35	"	"
Henry Whittington	"9	25	"	"	Saml. Grofs	38	60	"	"
Saml. Whittington	10	40	"	"	William Robertson	39	70	"	"
James Whitt	11	35	"	"	Jeremiah Grofs	40	30	"	"
Isaac Whitt	12	35	"	"	Henry Grofs	41	40	"	"
Philip Cooney	13	45	"	"	Saml. Turner	42	40	"	"
William Coats	14	80	"	"	Charles Grofs	43	30	"	"
George Coats	15	35	"	"	Jacob Grofs	44	20	"	"
Andrew Coats	16	30	"	"					
Thomas Coats	17	80	"	"					

Figure 10. Detail from the 1832 Census of [Free] Negroes—Calvert County in the Maryland State Colonization Society Papers. Common Wallville surnames like Gross and Coats are shown on this page. Maryland Historical Society.

Unfortunately, due to a fire at the Calvert County Courthouse in 1882, no deed records survive that reflect individual landholdings of free Blacks in the time leading up to the Civil War. A census made in 1832 of the free Black population in Calvert County contained surnames associated with the later Wallville community – names such as Gross, Coates, Mackall, Hardman, Rawlings, Johnson, and Parran.

Surviving records are only those deeds which were re-recorded and date primarily to years just before the courthouse fire. Some of these deeds contained many of the same surnames seen in the 1832 census (Figure 10). Although the original deed does not survive, one of the earliest known tracts of land owned outright by a Black resident of Wallville was acquired by James Boom in 1869 from Jacob and Margaret Gore. James Boom was formerly enslaved by John B. Mackall of the Brewhouse tract and served in the Union Army during the Civil War. Boom's land consisted of 13 acres located on the east side of Mackall Road, just south of the Wall family farm and north of Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum.

A landholding of a possible earlier date across Mackall Road from James Boom was the land of Commodore Barney Gross, who left the Wallville area and was living in Baltimore with his family by 1867. His son John later moved back to Commodore Barney Gross's land in Wallville. Parts of this parcel remained within the Gross family (the Alfred Gross Homeplace) until 2002 when it was sold to the State of Maryland, where it is currently managed by Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum.

The Gross family was quite prominent among Black families throughout the Wallville community in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. While many Gross family members owned property at the southern end of the peninsula, others were recorded in land records towards the northern fringe near the intersection of Mackall and Parran Roads.

In 1882, following the courthouse fire, a deed was re-recorded for McCol-
lum Gross for a 14-acre tract. Originally recorded in 1880 between McCo-



Figure 11. Land parcels at the southern end of Mackall Road, circa 1910. The numerous smaller plots on the northeast side of Mackall's Cove were originally part of the tract associated with the Brewhouse and were sold to Black Wallville residents by Mackall heir Elizabeth Mackall Bowen and her husband Isaac P. Bowen between 1889 and 1925. Image created by Scott Strickland, Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum.

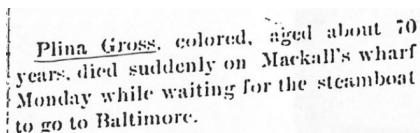
llum “Mack” Gross and James and Sophia Duke, the land was described as part of a property known as “Old Knell’s Tract,” located on the east side of Mackall Road. Another part of the “Old Knell” tract on the west side of Mackall Road was sold by the Dukes to a group of Black Wallville trustees for the founding of the Chitron Neck Colored School and a church known as the Chitron Neck Mission (later known as Alexander Church). McCollum Gross resided at this property until his death in the 1930s. His heirs would establish a baseball field that was in use for several decades in the old agricultural field on the property. McCollum’s tract remained within the Gross family for over 100 years, until it was sold in 2011.

Many Black landholdings during the late 19th and early 20th centuries in southern Wallville trace their origins to the lands formerly owned by the Mackall family of the Brewhouse (Figure 11). Following the death of her mother, Elizabeth L. Mackall inherited an 80-acre parcel of the Brewhouse tract in 1885. Her two siblings, Louisa and John Mackall also each received a parcel subdivided from the original Brewhouse tract. Elizabeth and her second husband Isaac P. Bowen sold several parcels from her inheritance beginning in 1889.

Neither Elizabeth nor Isaac resided on the inherited 80 acres which was located east of and adjacent to the land of John W. Peterson, now Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum. Elizabeth was already in possession of property inherited through her previous marriage to George R. Williams. This land was at the northern end of Wallville, on both sides of Mackall Road just south of Parran Road and near the intersection of Lloyd Bowen Road. It was on this northerly tract that Isaac and Elizabeth would establish their home, later known as Holly Spring. An oral history by Mabel Mackall Briscoe noted that at some point prior to moving to Holly Springs, Isaac P. Bowen built and resided at the home now known as the Asbury House, at the northern end of JPPM. Bowen had purchased the waterfront property from Martha Stanforth in 1891. Isaac P. Bowen and his second wife (also niece to Elizabeth L. Mackall Bowen), Helen Victoria Mackall Bowen, sold the tract purchased from Stanforth to Dorsey Frost Asbury in 1918.

In 1889, Isaac and Elizabeth Bowen subdivided and sold four 4.5 to 5 acres tracts from Elizabeth’s inheritance. These sales were recorded in the county record books. An additional six tracts were portioned from the 80-acre parcel from the 1890s into the early 20th century.

Pliana Parker Gross, whose name is spelled several different ways in records, does not appear in the Federal Census prior to 1870, like most of the families who eventually purchase land from the Bowens. It is likely these families had been residing in the Wallville area and had been enslaved on the surrounding larger farms.



Plina Gross, colored, aged about 70 years, died suddenly on Mackall's wharf Monday while waiting for the steamboat to go to Baltimore.

Figure 12. Newspaper announcement of Plina Gross's death in the December 15, 1900 edition of the Calvert Gazette.

In 1889, Pliana purchased 9.5 acres total from the Bowens and added stipulations to the deeds that her sons, Edward and John F. Gross, were to inherit the parcels at her death. These two parcels are located at the top of a high knoll overlooking both St. Leonard Creek and the Patuxent River. In 1870, Pliana, her husband, and her children were residing near Mackall's Wharf, possibly even living on the parcels she later purchased. Her husband, John W. Gross, and four of her sons were listed as farm laborers in 1870. By 1880 it appears her husband was working for himself as a farmer and their sons are laborers on their home farm. Pliana was recorded as a widow on the 1900 Federal Census and died in December of 1900 while waiting for the Baltimore-bound steamship at Mackall's Wharf (Figure 12).

In 1895 and 1896, two more of Pliana's sons purchased land from the Bowens. Stephen Gross purchased a 12.25-acre parcel and in 1896, Alexander Gross purchased the first of two tracts he'd come to own directly from the Bowens (he held additional land purchased from family members in the same area).

William and Sophia Gross also bought land from the Bowens in 1889, and like Pliana and her family, may have been living on the property prior to purchasing it. In 1870, William was living with his father, Levin, and other siblings further north, possibly in the Ben's Creek or Island Creek area, based on the names of their surrounding neighbors. His father and brother worked as watermen. By 1880, William had married Sophia, and they were listed as neighbors of John W. and Pliana Gross. While they share the same last name it is unclear how closely related William and Sophia might have been to John and Pliana. William continued to work as a waterman until around 1920 when he was recorded in the census as a farm laborer.

Everett Gross Jr. purchased 5.75 acres at the end of Mackall Road from the Bowens in 1890. Although not recorded on the 1900 Federal Census, in 1910 it appears he was living on the property with his wife, Eliza and their seven children (Figure 13). Everett was self-employed as an oysterman on the Patuxent and his children would later work as waiters, as a servant in a private house, and in the oyster industry. Everett's son, William Lawrence, later developed the property into a recreational beach front area for the Black community (Figure 14).

Bannister Family

In 1889, Jesse and Amelia Jackson Bannister purchased their 5-acre parcel from the Bowens

on the eastern side of the road to Mackalls Wharf. In 1860, Amelia lived with her mother Louisa Jackson near the Sedwick family on Garrity Road in Wallville, and by 1870 was working alongside her mother and brothers as a servant in the household of Dr. John Sedwick. Jesse Bannister is further away, working as a laborer on Nathaniel Wilson's farm. Sometime between 1880 and when they purchased the Wallville property, Amelia and Jesse married. Their nearest neighbors are William and Sophia Gross, and later Maria Dare and Alexander Gross. Jesse's brother, Thomas, married the aunt of neighbor Everett Gross Jr. In 1902, Jesse Banister died, and Amelia continued to live on the property until sometime between 1910 and 1915



Figure 13. Colorized image of Eliza Dawkins Gross and her daughter-in-law Etheline Gross Tate Thompson, taken in the 1950s. Photo used courtesy of Chester Gross.

when she and her son moved to New York to live with her daughter. The Bannister family retained the property until the 1930s when it was sold back into the Mackall family.

Rawlings Family

Prior to purchasing property from the Bowens, Edward Rawlings lived with his father, David, who had purchased a one-acre parcel from John Peterson just to the east of Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum. Edward worked as a farm laborer and in 1903, he moved to the 7.25-acre parcel bought from the Bowens, built a house with his wife Mary, and worked as an oysterman until at least 1930. His sister Sarah Elizabeth Rawlings purchased part of this parcel from Edward in the same year and resided there until the 1940s. Edward's home, located about 450 feet west of Sarah Elizabeth and her husband William D. Gross's home, was within visual and calling distance.

Dare and Coates Families

Maria Dare also purchased her parcel of land in 1903, although the deed was not recorded until 1909. She and her husband, son, mother, and brother are shown living in Wallville in the 1880 Federal Census. Her husband, James H. Gross, was a son of Pliana Gross and brother to Alexander, Stephen, Edward, and Joseph. James H. Gross worked as a laborer and his mother-in-law, Mary A. Dare, was recorded as, "keeping house". Later census records do not show a James or Maria Gross in Wallville, although in 1900 Joseph Dare and his wife Margaret are recorded in approximately the same location. It is possible they are the same people as Maria and James Gross and the census taker made an error in recording the names. By the time the property deed was officially recorded in 1909, Maria had retaken her maiden



Figure 14. Aerial image of the Everett Gross Jr. property, 1938. Photo used courtesy of Maryland Geological Survey.

name of Dare. Maria Dare lived in the area until at least June 9, 1906 when she gave a deposition related to the Civil War pension records of Rebecca Savoy Coates which stated Maria, “has stayed with her [Rebecca Coates] most nights since the death of her husband.” Rebecca Coates lived slightly north of Maria in Wallville. In 1907, Maria married William Jefferson and presumably moved to his home in the Soller’s area. Emma Coates and her husband Benson were recorded as living on the property shortly thereafter in the 1910 Federal Census. In 1944, when the property was sold to Jefferson Patterson, Emma was recorded as Maria Dare’s sole heir. Maria Dare’s and later Emma and Benson Coates’ neighbors included Alexander Gross and John Peterson.

While there were several Black families living in Wallville over the years following the Civil War and into the mid-20th century, four key families—the Grosses, the Rawlings, the Straitens, and the Coates—were present in multiple households and over multiple generations. Evident in primary documents like wills, deeds, and census records was the importance of extended family relationships and cooperation between friends and neighbors (Figure 15). As shown in the preceding pages, many people purchased land in the same neighborhood and others chose to live close to family and friends with acreage for mutual assistance. Federal Census records for the year 1910, for example, showed several closely related Gross and Rawlings households living at the southern end of Mackall Road. Some families owned the land on which they lived, while others were renting small parcels from nearby White landowners. Oystering and farming were the primary occupations for men and boys of working age (generally over 10), while women were listed as keeping house or working in private households.

Family structure tended to be multi-generational and extended: Joseph and Georganna Gross, living on rented property on the west side of Mackall Road were recorded as having 14 people in their household. In addition to themselves and nine children ages 4 to 19, their household included a stepson, Joseph Coates and his wife Florence, as well as two grandchildren Bertha Rawlings and Andrew Weems. Children aged ten and up were employed and brought wages home to support the family.

Second marriages were common, creating many opportunities for blended families, with children and relatives from previous marriages living in households. William D. Gross and Sara Elizabeth Rawlings Gross were newly married in 1910. Their household contained seven stepchildren ranging in age from almost two years old to 15 from Sara Elizabeth’s first marriage to

In Cities	Name of Street	House Number	Dwelling house numbered in order of visitation.	Family numbered in order of visitation.	The Name of each Person whose place of abode, on 1st day of June, 1880, was in this family.	Personal Description.			If born within the Census year, give the month.	Relationship of each person to the head of this family, — whether wife, son, daughter, servant, boarder, or other.	Civil Condition.				Occupation.	
						Color—White, W.; Black, B.; Mulatto, M.; Chinese, C.; Indian, I.	Sex—Male, M.; Female, F.	Age at last birthday prior to June 1, 1880. If under 1 year, give month in fractions, thus: 1/2.			Single, /	Married, /	Widowed, /	Divorced, D.	Profession, Occupation or Trade of each person, male or female.	Number of months this person has been unemployed during the Census year.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14			
	243	243	Gross John F	B M 58												
			— Elizabeth	B F 58	Wife											
			— Lerin	B M 28	son											
			— Robert	B M 22	son											
			— Benj.	B M 21	son											
			— John B.	B M 18	son											
			— Stephen	B M 19	son											
			— Edward	B M 17	son											
			— Alexander	B M 15	son											
			— Thomas	B M 12	son											
			— Martha	B F 10	Daughter											
			— Mary	B F 10	Daughter											
			Maynard Saml.	B M 40	Boarder											

Figure 15. Detail from 1880 U.S. Federal Census showing the household of John W. and Plina Gross.

George W. Washington, Jr. This was a second marriage for William too; his first wife, Alberta Rawlings, sister to Sara Elizabeth, died in 1906 after a long illness.

Land sold by Isaac and Elizabeth Bowen to the Gross, Bannister, Rawlings, and Dare families consisted of small tracts located in areas not generally conducive to large-scale farming like their White neighbors. Much of the 80 acres inherited by Elizabeth consisted of terrain bisected by steep ravines and gulleys. Most of the tracts sold by the Bowens to these Black Wallville families were less than 10 acres in size and were sold at a relatively consistent rate of about \$17 per acre of land.

More than half of this land consisted of steep slopes and was not highly desirable for building or planting. Soil types and characteristics as defined by the US Department of Agriculture are a good way to gauge the agricultural value of land. USDA maps draw on both soil characteristics and estimated crop yields on particular types of land. Within the tracts sold off by Isaac and Elizabeth Bowen to various Black Wallville families, less than a third could be considered good farmland.

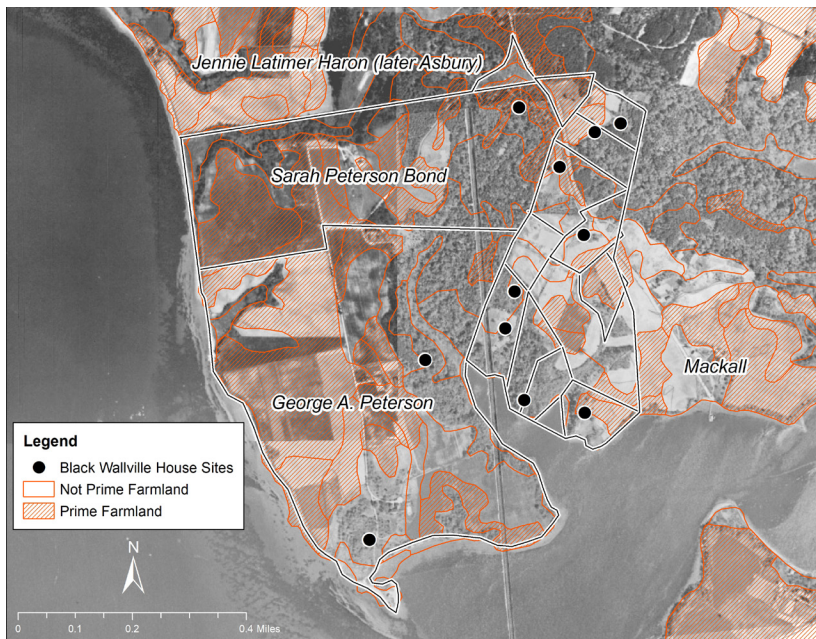


Figure 16. White landowners were more likely than Black landowners to own prime farmland, which is shown hatched in red. Image by Scott Strickland, Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum.

Near the turn of the 20th century, much of the prime farmland in Wallville was taken up by larger White-owned farms (Figure 16). The Peterson, Freeman, Duke, and Bowen lands were within the bounds of JPPM. Towards the southern-most end of Wallville were the Mackalls at the Brewhouse and the Wall family homestead, while the Parran, Bowen, and Turner farms were at the more northern end of Wallville. These families, many of whom had owned the land for centuries, had been able to build wealth and could afford to expand their properties through purchases and inheritance. They could also control access and affordability of property depending on the persons involved. As a comparison, when Isaac Bowen purchased 153.15 acres of Patuxent waterfront farmland from Martha Stanforth in 1891, he paid \$1,500, a value of under \$10 per acre. Around the same time Bowen himself was selling smaller tracts of less desirable land to Black families at almost double the rate of \$17 per acre.

In 1886 John W. Peterson sold to David Rawlings a small portion of his land adjacent to the tracts sold by Bowen to other Wallville families. Peterson sold just over one acre of land to Rawlings for \$75, a rate far higher than even that of Bowen's transactions, but likely indicative of existing

improvements on the land. In comparison, James Boom, formerly enslaved by the Mackalls, and among the first Black Wallville residents to acquire land, sold his holdings in 1892 to another Black Wallville family, the Chase's, at a seemingly fairer rate of less than \$3 per acre (although the land had the same characteristics as acres sold by Bowen).

The relatively small lot sizes being acquired by Black Wallville families and the locations of houses on secluded knolls surrounded by steep slopes mirrors the patterns seen in the placement of quarters for the enslaved before the Civil War. As the goal of a plantation was to produce and farm as much arable land as possible, dispersed quarters were often located in areas adjacent to steep slopes, field edges, or somewhat secluded knolls that were more costly to farm and less profitable owing to their inferior soils.

In his biography, first published in 1836, Charles Gross, more famously known as Charles Ball, described individual plots surrounding the quarters for the enslaved in Calvert County. Charles Gross described his grandfather as having "...a small cabin of his own, with about half an acre of ground attached to it, which he cultivated on his own account and from which he drew a large portion of his subsistence." Aerial photos of Wallville from 1938 reveal primarily small plots of land adjacent to homes, likely used for growing food for the household (Figure 17). Some people were employed as farm laborers, which likely took place on nearby White-owned farms, given the lack of arable land on the tracts they owned themselves. Charles Gross described others supplementing their diet and producing income through work on the water. Common occupations for Wallville families following emancipation included a mix of both farm labor and work on the water, fishing, and oyster tonging.

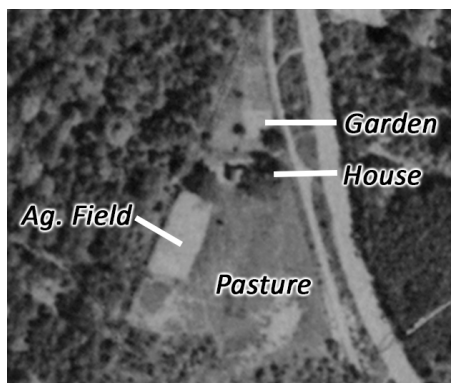


Figure 17. Small plots of land adjacent to Wallville homes shown on 1938 aerial. Image by Scott Strickland, Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum.

Black-occupied houses were small compared with today's standards and archaeological investigations and 20th-century aerial photographs revealed that the houses were generally two-story frame structures constructed either

on piers or continuous foundations made from locally sourced stone. Chimney bases were built of the same stone, with upper stacks of brick. Cast iron stoves were used for cooking and heating; stove pieces have been recovered from several Wallville house sites. Portions of a late 19th-century New Emerald brand cast iron stove were present on the ground surface at the house site of Elizabeth and William Gross (Figure 19).

Later in the 20th century, economic shifts led to a transformation of rural areas such as southern Calvert County. Even land that was once seen as less valuable because of the lack of arable planting space became valuable for completely different reasons. The Great Depression greatly



Figure 18. Archaeological work at the homes of Wallville farmsteads found ample evidence of food preservation in the forms of canning jars, jar lid liners, and stoneware crocks. This image was taken in 1940 in St. Mary's County, Maryland. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, FSA/OWI Collection, [reproduction number, LC-USF34-041017-D].



Figure 19. Archaeologist Scott Strickland holding a piece of a New Emerald cast iron stove from the Elizabeth and William Gross site. Image courtesy of Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum.

affected people who were sharecroppers or tenant farmers, especially so in Black communities. A phenomenon known as the Great Migration, which had begun in the decades preceding the Great Depression, saw millions of Black Americans move from rural areas to urban centers, such as Washington, D.C. and Baltimore. Land in rural areas became quite affordable for individuals less impacted by the economic



Figure 20. Aerial view of Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum, once the Point Farm estate of Jefferson Patterson. Image by Michael Smolek and courtesy of Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum.

downturn, such as those working in government. Wealthy White families, particularly ones connected to centers of power in Washington, purchased large estates throughout southern Maryland, including the land that is now Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum.

Jefferson Patterson purchased what would come to be called Point Farm in 1932. He and his wife, Mary Marvin Breckinridge Patterson, reshaped the farm that was once owned by the Peterson family and others since the 19th century into an idealized country retreat and working farm (Figure 20). The Pattersons grew many types of crops aside from the usual tobacco and also raised livestock such as cattle. They hired local Wallville residents, both Black and White, who had also worked on the Peterson farm. The Patterson's vision of Point Farm transformed the landscape with the help of renowned architect Gertrude Sawyer and landscape architect Rose Greely.

Shelton Brown recalled that some of these newcomers like the Pattersons "...weren't farmers, but they liked the water...they didn't know anything about farming, where you let someone else raise the tobacco and they get half of it, and you keep half of it." Shelton Brown described it as a win-win, but gradually even the smaller plots of land became more desirable to

others moving to the area. Over time, as more people were attracted to the rural landscape and access to the waterfront, Black families began selling off their lands – oftentimes below its market value. Andre Brown recalled that families “...were offered what seemed to them to be large sums of money...but if you look at the value of the properties that they owned, and what it’s worth now, you realize how undervalued it was.”

Work

The economy in rural southern Maryland was primarily agriculturally based for centuries, with tobacco providing the principal income for residents (Figure 21). Wallville was no exception and in the decade prior to the Civil War, out of the roughly 38 families—predominantly White—18 family



Figure 21. Tobacco farming in Calvert County, circa 1940s. Image courtesy of Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum.

heads were recorded as farmers or farm managers in the 1850 Federal Census. Although farming dominated much of the Wallville economy, other professions, such as sailor or captain, seamstress, cook, gardener, fisherman/waterman, and laborer were common through the end of the 19th century and into the 20th century. These occupations were much more likely to be held by Black Wallville community members. Although most Black people prior to emancipation were enslaved, several free Black families resided in Wallville working as farmers, laborers, sailors, carpenters, seamstresses, and mechanics.

By the 1920s, occupations in Wallville had become slightly more diverse and included professions such as freight vessel laborer, shipyard laborer, coal pier laborer, oiler,

factory laborer, waiter, grocery clerk, and mechanic. Farming and oystering also remained common. By the 1940 Federal Census, many of the industrial occupations seen earlier are no longer listed, an effect of increased move-

ment to urban areas and other economic factors. Nearby oyster packing houses employed 14 local individuals and there were 3 watermen living in Wallville, all at the southernmost end of Mackall Road.

Agriculture: Farming in Wallville

Like other communities in southern Maryland, many Wallville residents supported their families through farming and working the water. Tobacco was the principal crop for Wallville planters and farmers for centuries. Just before the start of the Civil War over 16 million pounds of tobacco were grown in Calvert County alone, the second highest amount in the state. Much of this tobacco was grown by enslaved Blacks. The 1850 Federal Slave Census recorded 265 enslaved people in the Wallville area with the number growing to just under 300 by 1860.

By 1870, tobacco production had been reduced to nearly half of what it was in 1860, largely due to labor shortages. Corn, and to a lesser extent wheat and fruit, were also widely grown. Towards the end of the century, as the market price of tobacco decreased, some farms further diversified their crops including adding orchards. Annie Wall wrote of her father purchasing fruit trees in her journal in the 1850s, and the 1880 Agricultural Census recorded peach and apple orchards on the Turner and Sedwick farms (Figure 22). The mid-twentieth century saw an improvement in the market price of tobacco due to an increase in popularity after World War I. Tobacco remained a staple in the region until the state Tobacco Buy-out was implemented in the early 2000s.



Figure 22. Wallville resident Anne Wall kept a journal between 1852 and 1863, where she recorded details of life in the community. Image courtesy of Patricia Johnson.

Sharecropping and Tenant Farming

After the Civil War many formerly enslaved people remained in the areas where they had been held in bondage, sometimes working for the same landowners. Everett Gross, Sr. enlisted in the Union army in 1863 and served until 1866. After the war, he returned to Wallville for a short period, until at least 1870, and lived on the Turner farm, where he had been enslaved prior to joining the Union Army. By 1880, he had moved to Baltimore County and was working as a farm hand. He resided there until his death in 1899.

Everett's return to the plantation he formerly served on was not an uncommon occurrence. The January 6, 1865 edition of the *Baltimore American* newspaper stated, "large numbers of these freedmen will remain at their former homes and make the scenes of their compulsory toil at their continued dwelling place." Even so, labor shortages were a very real concern of White farmers as they found themselves without bound labor.

This shortage was in part due to the coming of oyster season, when many Blacks took the opportunity to make better money and work for themselves. To large White-owned farms, this spoke to the challenge of retaining farm laborers when other opportunities arose. The labor shortages placed Blacks in a good position to negotiate wages and hours so that they could create better conditions for their families. Nevertheless, some White landowners did not hesitate to cheat newly freed Blacks. Freedmen's Bureau agent William L. VanDerlip wrote of Calvert and Anne Arundel Counties that "So many freedmen were cheated in 1865, that when they were asked to hire for 1866, they refused, and the planters were obliged to engage them on shares." Some also refused to accept yearly agreements and would only agree to more flexible monthly contracts.

Several avenues for agricultural work existed after the Civil War. Blacks could work for wages, they could purchase or rent land outright and farm for themselves, or they could engage in sharecropping. Sharecropping, commonplace after the war, was a system in which a tenant rented a plot of land and in place of paying money for rent, a portion of their crop was due to the landowner every year. Landowners also sometimes provided equipment, fertilizer, and seed to the tenant which incurred additional costs, further indebting the tenant to the landowner. This system was often corrupt and manipulated in a way that kept tenants tied to the landowner's property through inescapable debt. In a survey taken for the 1909 Agricultural Census, Frank Bowen of Calvert County stated, "the system of renting land

in my county [Calvert County] is one half of the tobacco, one third of the grain. Tenant furnishes the labor and pay one half of the fertilizer."

Changes in the farming industry and economy at the turn of the 20th century led to a decrease in family farms and movement into more urban areas for some. Roads and access to vehicles improved, making it easier and more lucrative to take up jobs based in urban areas such as Baltimore, Washington, and to a lesser extent,

Annapolis. Although Wallville today remains a rural area, less farming is undertaken and done by fewer people.

Working the Water: Sailing, Oystering, Crabbing, Fishing

Although tobacco was the principal source of wealth in Wallville, the mid-19th century brought several changes that resulted in a growing seafood industry. Advances in canning and transportation, and other technologies became more efficient and the oyster industry increased in local economic importance (Figure 23). Wallville was well suited to the oyster and fishing industry since it was flanked on both sides by water—the Patuxent River and St. Leonard's Creek—with access to the Chesapeake Bay a few miles to the south.

Water related employment was nothing new to the Black community of Wallville. In 1850, when the Federal Census first began recording individuals' occupations, five Wallville individuals were employed in maritime related activities (fisherman, captain, sailor). Of these five men, four were recorded as Black or Mulatto. As the Chesapeake oystering industry grew

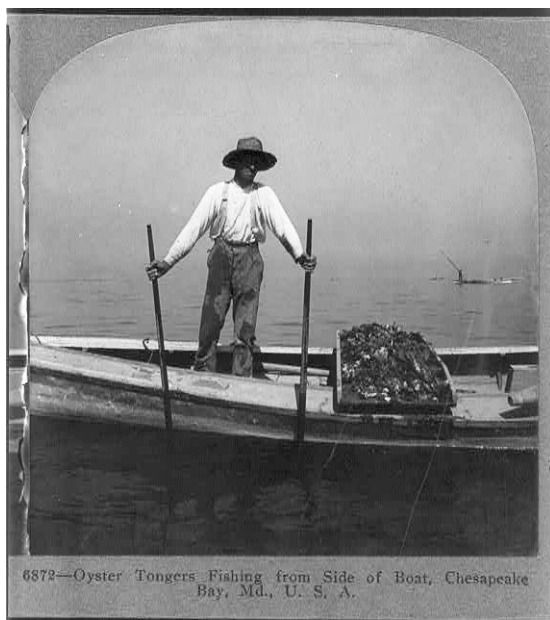


Figure 23. Maryland oyster tonger, circa 1905. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, [reproduction number: LC-USZ62-66452].

Personal Reflections on Wallville

by Shelton Brown

February 10, 2024

The “Wallville Project” has motivated me to revisit the community where I spent the first twelve years of the eighty-six that I have been alive. As I reminisce about those early years, I vividly recall the one room school-house that accommodated the Black children. There were seven grades and one teacher and approximately 25-27 students. (This was truly an “Open space” classroom!) I still remember my teacher who was named Mrs. Blanche Wilson. She was very well organized and she taught reading, writing and mathematics, and she adequately gave us guidance in other areas of daily living. In that era, the teacher taught one grade at a time, while the other students quietly worked on their assignments.

It is significant to note that these students had no public transportation. It was the policy of Calvert County that in Wallville only White children would have access to public transportation. Consequently, Black children walked from distances that varied from seven miles south to three miles north of the school.

I am also reliving my experiences of attending St. Luke Sunday Church Services. I distinctly recall my aunts, Hilda Gross and Etheline Gross teaching us in Sunday School. Once a year, we had to learn parts for a dramatic production. I also remember the spirited religious services wherein my mother, Octavia Brown and my aunt, Margaret Brown would sing solos. I also have a clear memory of what we called Camp Meetings.



Shelton Brown (right), pictured, with his cousin Hilton Johnson, 1941. Image courtesy of Shelton and Alberta Brown.

At those events, we would attend church activities every day for an entire week all day long. These activities would include breakfast, worship services, lunch, dinner, games, and, of course ice cream! It was a wonderful time. In Wallville, St. Luke and other churches along the east coast were following the customs of the Methodist Church that had been brought from England!

I also think about the “busyness” of the adults in the community of Wallville. I also keenly remember my father, Daniel Brown, being a farmer and a union steward on construction jobs. Other adults in the community were oyster shuckers and fishermen. The Warren Denton Oyster House was the employer for the oyster shuckers on Broomes Island. The women were involved in gardening, canning, and caring for their families. For the most part, families were self-sufficient – with provisions coming from the farms. Kerosene, sugar, flour and ice for the ice boxes (before electricity) were purchased from stores. Families raised cows, pigs, chickens and turkeys, and they garnered clams, crabs, oysters and fish from the waterways.

Wallville was definitely not a community where there was all work and no play! There were definitely provisions for play and relaxation. There was a beach front property operated by Lawrence Gross. It had been purchased by my great-grandfather Everett Gross in March of 1890. This property was located at the mouth of St. Leonard Creek and consisted of 5 acres. It began to be operated as a beach and as a thriving business. This was the only beach for African Americans in Calvert County. As the operator, Lawrence Gross charged a small entry fee and the Black people in the community enjoyed this beach that was on high bank overlooking the water. Lawrence Gross Beach Front had a kitchen and a dining area. Patrons came from Washington, D.C., Baltimore and surrounding areas by way of boats and automobiles.

Another favorite pastime for the men of Wallville was the sport of baseball. The Gross family owned the ballfield for over 100 years before it was sold. I do recall the unfortunate incident that occurred at the ballpark. One player, Buster Graham, died as a result of being struck in the head during one of the games.

Certainly, the “Wallville Project” has motivated me to re-visit my heritage. As such, I have an even greater appreciation for my background, and those treasured memories that I have of my family and friends. More importantly, I am motivated to continue to “tell the story”!

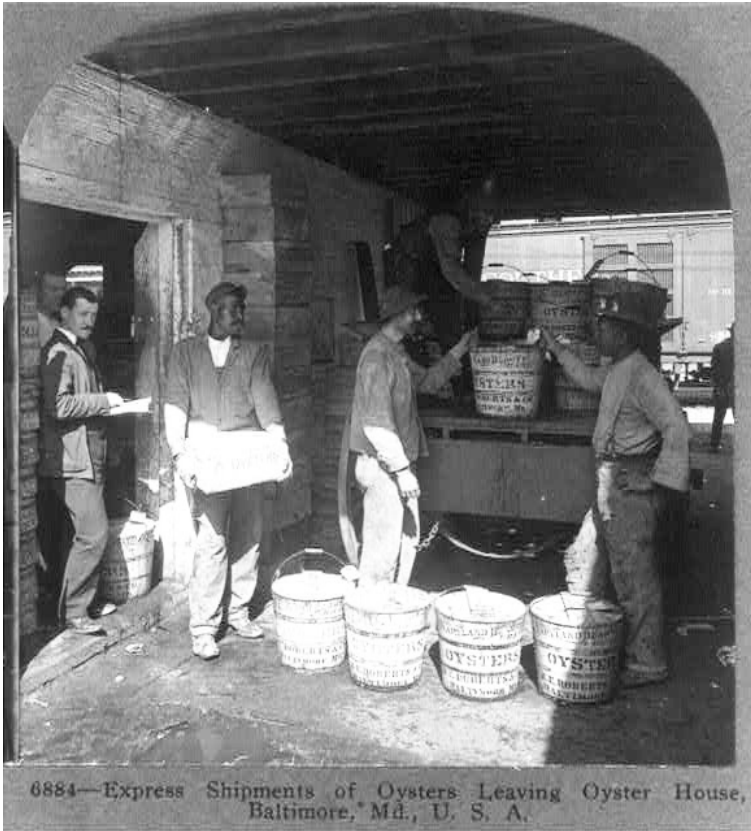


Figure 24. Oyster processing in Baltimore, Maryland, circa 1905. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, [reproduction number: LC-USZ62-56649].

during the second half of the 19th century and into the 1920s, the number of Black watermen in Wallville ranged from 8 to 17, while during the same period only one or no White men were employed as watermen. In the mid- to late 19th century, through oystering and fishing, Black families were able to work for themselves or other Blacks. This afforded them better opportunities to acquire and sustain themselves on smaller parcels of land that could be purchased more cheaply—most often on land that wasn't well suited to agriculture.

In 1920, a shift from being out on the water harvesting oysters to working for oyster packing houses occurred (Figure 24) and for the first time there were greater numbers of Black men working as sailors on freight vessels than in the oyster industry. By 1930, the number of Black watermen in

Wallville had dropped from 17 in 1910, to seven (Figure 25). In the late 19th-century and into the 20th-century, methods for harvesting oysters shifted to a greater reliance on dredging rather than tonging. Tonging could be done alone or with a small support crew and required few supplies other than a small boat and tongs. In contrast, dredging required larger motorized boats that could carry the dredge equipment and additional crew needed to staff it, consequently necessitating more capital to start and keep it running.

By the 1940 U.S. Federal Census 15 Black people in Wallville employed in the oyster industry

worked at packing houses as shuckers or packers, with only three, all over the age of 40, still employed as watermen. Warren Denton and Sons, on Broomes Island and Sollers and Dowell Oyster House were two of the nearest packing houses to Wallville, although it wasn't uncommon for people to travel further than their neighborhood for work. Several names listed on the U.S. Federal Census

also appear on a list of

shuckers from the Warren Denton Oyster House. The Sollers and Dowell Oyster House was located at the mouth of St. Leonard's Creek opposite Mackall's Wharf and would have been very close via water for Wallville community members to reach. Individuals working in the oyster houses were paid per gallon of shucked oysters. During the summer, outside of oyster season, the packing houses continued to employ packers for fish and crab.



Figure 25. Captain Alexander Butler, who lived just north of Wallville in Mutual, was the captain of the schooners Annie Bell and W. H. French in the 1920s and 1930s. Image courtesy of The Calvert Marine Museum, Solomons, Maryland.

The decline of people employed on freight vessels may be related to the closure/privatization of Mackall's Wharf in the 1930s, making it more difficult to access Baltimore and other vessels which would have carried freight

to the wharf and provided employment. This reduction in employment opportunities likely also contributed to the shift in employment to packing houses and outside of the area. At the same time, waterfront property was becoming more sought after, reducing access to the water in the area, especially for Black people.

Working Out

Although World War I created a boom in the value of agricultural products, prices fell again after the war. At the same time, increased mechanization of farming and equipment meant farming required fewer hands. As fewer laborers were needed for farming, Wallville residents turned to other occupations for their livelihood. Working in the cities could be more lucrative, where wages could be quadruple that of farm labor. Oral histories from Wallville descendants recall themselves and family members working for oyster packing houses, in construction locally and in Washington, D.C., at Patuxent River Naval Air Station, and in federal jobs in D.C. and at the Pentagon.

In 1927, Route 4, the main road through Calvert County and connecting at the northern end to Washington, D.C. was constructed. This route enabled easier and more reliable transportation to more urban parts of Maryland. Coupled with the closure of the Baltimore and Virginia Steamboat Company and Mackall's Wharf in the 1930s, traveling to Washington, D.C. became more feasible than traveling to Baltimore.

The quickly growing economy of southern Maryland, first as a resort area known for its beaches and water access, and then as the PAX River Naval Air Station developed, also provided opportunities for construction work and related employment.

Places of Wallville

Worship, Churches, and Sunday Schools

Residents of Wallville could attend services at Episcopal and Methodist churches. Christ Church Parish, an Episcopal denomination, was founded by 1672 and since 1684, the congregation has worshipped in the same location in Port Republic. The third and current church was built in 1772. The history of the Methodist church in the Wallville area is a little more complicated. Island Creek Church, located north of Wallville in Mutual,

was in existence by 1827. White congregants sat on the first floor and enslaved Blacks worshipped in the balcony. Black congregants eventually broke away after about thirty years of worshipping together, prompted when Rachel Bannister saw “the devil” from the balcony one morning. Sewell Davis Waters donated an adjacent parcel of land for the Black congregants to build their own house of worship; initially also called Island Creek Church, this church later became known as Brooks Church (Figure 26). The Island Creek Church attended by White congregants is today known as Waters Memorial United Methodist Church.



Figure 26. Brooks Church in 1976. Image courtesy of the Maryland Historical Trust.

Unlike the churches described above, three additional former houses of worship were physically located in Wallville.

Chitron Neck Mission Church/Sunday School – In 1883 and 1885, James and Sophia Duke sold a $\frac{3}{4}$ acre tract of land to the trustees of Chitron Neck Colored Sunday school and the trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church for Chitron Neck Mission. The church and the Sunday School were constructed adjacent to one another on this parcel, located on the west side of Mackall Road, near the Parran Road intersection. Chitron Neck Mission later became known as Alexander Church, likely named for Reverend R. H. Alexander, a Black Methodist Episcopal circuit minister in Calvert County from 1883–1885. In 1903, the trustees of Alexander Church sold the three-quarters acre church property to Benjamin Parran, Sr. A search of early 20th-century Methodist Church records yielded no additional information about the church or the Sunday School. It is unknown when these two structures disappeared from the landscape, although oral histories suggest that at least one of the buildings was later reused as housing.

St. Luke’s Methodist Episcopal Church – In July of 1905, a small plot of land near the southern end of Mackall Road was acquired for the found-

ing of St. Luke's Methodist Episcopal Church (Figure 27). Incorporated in 1909, St. Luke's was yoked with Brooks Church, located several miles to the north. Yoked congregations maintained separate congregational lives, but shared a pastor, usually due to financial constraints. Since records for the two churches were maintained together, it was not possible to determine the separate membership for each church; in 1907, the two churches had 475 full members and 28 probationers.



Figure 27. St. Luke's Methodist Episcopal Church. Photo probably taken in the early 1980s. Image courtesy of Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum.

The white frame church measured three

bays across the south facing gable end and was lit by pointed arch two-over-two windows and a round four pane window over the arched transom doorway.

Former member Shelton Brown (born 1938) remembered going to St. Luke's as a child:

Oh, we went to church every Sunday...And then every summer, we have what you call a camp meeting...And it was very festive. You would go to church and stay all day long. You would eat brunch there, and maybe lunch. And they would have ice cream and bring it down from Baltimore; Good Humors.

Mrs. Beatrice Washington remembered that there was a small kitchen structure on the church grounds and that food for the picnics was prepared there. St. Luke's remained an active church into at least the early 1950s. The church property was sold in 1971 and by the late 1980s, the church was in ruins. Many members of St. Luke's began attending Brooks United Methodist Church once the St. Luke's property was sold in 1971.

St. James Chapel on School House Hill

— A small branch chapel of Christ Church, located adjacent to the Wall family cemetery, was consecrated in 1896 and named St. James Chapel (Figure 28). This chapel was set up to create a place of worship convenient for White Wallville residents, especially younger people,



Figure 28. Wall Family Cemetery on School House Hill. Image courtesy of David Walton.

according to Mrs. Evelyn Parran Mackall (1890-1987). Christ Church pastor Heber Murphy reported in August of 1895:

Last night (feast of the Transfiguration) I held a service eight miles from Church or chapel in the Sunday school chapel in Chitron Neck, where I had a congregation of over fifty, of whom one half were children; and the responses were excellent and the singing of chants and hymns was good.

In 1896, Margaret R. Wall (1818-1897) deeded to Christ Church a one quarter acre parcel of land known by the name “School House Hill”. Conditions of this transfer were that the church keep the building there in good repair and make it available as a place of public worship and Sunday School. Correspondence from 1924 suggests that the chapel was moved. No photos are known to exist of this building. A large stone that may have been part of a foundation pier for the chapel remains on the hill, but no other physical traces remain.

Schools and Education

In Wallville, as in many places throughout America in the 19th and early 20th centuries, schools were segregated. Throughout this period, within Wallville, there stood at least one White school and one Black school at any given time. The last of these schools were separated by over a mile in distance. The remains of the last of these school structures still survive

today - though repurposed to different ends. Also surviving is a building known as the Teacherage, which was home to one of the Wallville school's Black teachers.

Calvert County schools were identified by number within each school district. Wallville was located within District 1. Although both Black and White schools were in different structures at different times, the White school was always known as School 5 and the Black school as School 6. The first iteration of both the Black and White schools were also referred to locally as the Chitron Neck School.

First Wallville (Black) School No. 6 (aka Chitron Neck School), 1876-1887 – Established in 1876, the Chitron Neck School for Black students was located on the west side of Mackall Road, near its intersection with Par-ran Road. The school adjoined the property of the Chitron Neck Methodist Episcopal Church (also known as the Alexander Church). After a new school was built for White students on Mackall Road, Black students transferred to the former White school on Lloyd Bowen Road, where they remained until 1949. The Board of School Commissioners sold the former Chitron Neck Schoolhouse to the Eureka Lodge No. 36, A. F. & A.M., Chitron Neck Masons in the fall of 1887.

Second Wallville (Black) School No. 6, 1887-1949 – The original Wallville school (originally used for White students) began serving in 1887 as a schoolhouse for Black students (Figure 29). White students had by then moved to a newly built schoolhouse on Mackall Road. Located on Lloyd Bowen Road near the intersection with Mackall Road, students in grades 1 through 7 received an education in this one room structure. The school continued in use until 1934, when it was replaced by a slightly larger building. The old school building was moved to a nearby private property, where it remained for the next sixty plus years.

Edith Gray, a long-time Wallville resident, remembered the pot-bellied stove used to heat the school when she was a student in the 1910s. Former student Carolyn Christine Washington Gray (born 1940) remembered several boys were sent out each morning to retrieve a bucket of spring water and each student had a glass with their name on it. One teacher was responsible for teaching all seven grades. In a 2005 interview, Allen Brown remembered:

And you had one teacher; my teacher was named Miss Wilson. And if you were in the first grade...she taught you first. And after that teaching, you sat and you

listened to her teach the other class. So the time you got like to the third or fourth grade...you got a jump on next year's work. I remember...the first thing you did when you got there was if it was cold weather, you made the fire.

Today the Old Wallville School is located on the grounds of Calvert Elementary School on East Dares Beach Road (Route 402) in Prince Frederick. It was moved here in 2006 after a successful effort by historic preservationists and local citizens to save the crumbling structure. Calvert County Public Schools use the renovated schoolhouse in educational programs that teach about Black life after the Civil War, education, and segregation.



Figure 29. Second Wallville (Black) School No. 6, located on Lloyd Bowen Road. Edith Gray and her husband are pictured with the school after it had been moved to their property. Image courtesy of Edith Gray.

Wallville Teacherage — Located on Mackall Road near the Perigeaux Vineyard, this two-story clapboard structure was identified by former

teacher Elizabeth Gross as the teacherage for the Old Wallville School (Figure 30). Mrs. Gross lived in the house when she taught at the school in the 1930s. At the time, the Coates family owned the property. The structure is significant because it is one of the few extant teacherages in Calvert County.

First Wallville (White) School No. 5 (aka Chitron Neck School), 1865-1887 — Also known as the “Old Wallville School,” the Martenet 1865 Map of Maryland shows a school in the approximate location of the Chitron Neck School for White students, so it is likely this school was in existence at least by 1865. Joseph Peterson was listed in 1868 as the teacher at the school, which had an enrollment of between 16 and 22 students. A new schoolhouse was built at the same address during the 1871-1872 school year and served the student population until 1887.

Second Wallville
(White) School
No. 5, 1887-1940

– In 1887, White Wallville residents petitioned the Calvert County School Board to construct a new school closer to St. Leonard Creek. Private funds from residents assisted the School Board with the purchase of the lot from William A. Peterson, who was also paid to build the new school (Figure 31). Construction had been completed by September of 1888.



Figure 30. This structure, now abandoned, once served as housing for teachers at the Second Wallville (Black) School No. 6. Image courtesy of Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum.

Consolidation of one room schools in Calvert County took place between 1925 and 1932, but the Wallville School remained open until 1940. The building was sold and used for many years as a private residence. Today, it is being renovated for use by the Wallville Vineyard.

Post Offices

Rural post offices, such as those that served Wallville residents over the years, were important communication links between a rural community and the outside world. Many post offices operated out of an existing residence or store and were often located at key transportation locations, such as river landings or crossroads. Post offices were often built with private money by individuals with either philanthropic leanings or an interest in bringing customers to their store or landing. Rural post offices began to disappear in the third quarter of the twentieth century, when the United States Postal Service improved rural free delivery, allowing residents to receive mail at their own homes.



Figure 31. Second Wallville (White) School No. 5, located on Mackall Road. Image courtesy of the Maryland Historical Trust.

The St. Leonard post office, established in 1796, served the residents of the Chitron Neck peninsula for many years. The Wall family operated a general store from their property as early as 1852 and at some point, the function of post office was added. James T. Wall Jr. was appointed postmaster on December 22, 1879, and served in that capacity until 1886, when his sister Margaret Broome assumed the responsibility (Figure 32). According to Evelyn Mackall's recollections, the first post office was located at or near the Wall House and was in operation between 1879 and 1908.



Figure 32. James T. Wall, Jr. was postmaster at Wallville between 1879 and 1886. Image courtesy of Patricia Johnson.

Wallville had several postmasters and postmistresses between 1879 and 1921, including some (The-

odore M. Fricke, Mary S. Gott, and John M. Gott) who ran stores in the community. In early 1909, the post office opened in Gott's Store, which was on the opposite side of Mackall Road and nearer to Cage Farm. The post office at this store remained operational until November 15, 1939, when Wallville was placed under the jurisdiction of St. Leonard and lost its designation as a separate township.

Mackall's Wharf had a post office as early as 1876 operating under the direction of the Mackall family at the Brewhouse property. The post office at Mackall's Wharf operated concurrently with the Wallville post office. The structure that served as the final post office at the Brewhouse was constructed in 1914 and originally sat along Mackall Road, west of the house. It was moved to its current location between a corncrib and a shed north of the house in the 1930s. During the period between 1914 and 1956, Thomas B. Mackall, followed by his wife Evelyn P. Mackall, served as postmasters. In April of 1956, the post office was closed and the service transferred to St. Leonard.

Wharf and Stores

Mackall's Wharf, in addition to housing a store and post office, was also a steamship landing where people and goods were transported throughout the region (Figure 33). By the mid-20th century, with the advent of auto-



Figure 33. Mackall's Wharf, unknown date. Image courtesy of The Calvert Marine Museum, Solomons, Maryland.

Personal Recollections

by Chester Gross
March 2024

At the time that I resided here in Calvert County, it was basically a rural tobacco, cattle and a lot of farm animals that people raised and it was that way for quite a long time. And I don't think it really started changing until they built the nuclear power plant down at Calvert Cliffs. And there were no fast-food restaurants.

I attended elementary school in Island Creek. Miss Blanche Wilson was my first-grade teacher. She's taught just about everybody in Calvert County. There were other teachers by the name of Miss Mason and Fletcher and Miss Wilson. The Whites went to one school and the Blacks went to another school and [it] remained that way until about 1964 or 1965, thereabouts.

Up until the age of 10—that's the age I was when my father passed—I would work helping him in tobacco and just little odds and ends around the house. You know, things a normal 10-year-old kid would do. And then after he passed, everything changed. And I did cut a little grass too. You know, before my father passed, I cut grass for George Gross, a neighbor that lived across to field from our house. And then after my father passed, I started working on Garrity farm. And I worked there up until the time that I graduated from high school. I would work sometimes in the mornings before I went to school. I would ride my bicycle over there. And that was how I basically go back and forth. We would cut tobacco, spear tobacco, hang tobacco in the barn. And I would also feed the cattle too in the morning, right before I would go to school. I worked for years at Garrity Farm. But it was good because it helped me to buy my school clothes. And that meant a whole lot. And I was known as one of the best dressers in my classes. So, I took great pride in my clothing.

Just before you get to the Garrity Road turn, there was a store on the right-hand side and it still sits there today. The man who ran the store was Morris Barnes. And that's where I used to go for my lunch every day, eating all that junk food. That was one of the main stores that we used to go to. And there was another store up the road further on the left-hand side. The man that owned that property name was Gott. And it was a little

small store. It wasn't a whole lot in there. But it still was a little mom and pop store. And him and my father were very good friends. And as you go up the road further, about three or four miles on the right-hand side of Parran Road, there was another store, which was a larger store, the Noel Hardesty store. And that sat right there on the corner of Mackall Road and Parran Road. And we used to go there frequently also. But none of the stores were very big. They were small mom and pop stores. And there was another store over there in Island Creek right there on Broome's Island Road. That was also Gott's store. And we used to go over there more to pick up larger things. And then eventually we started going up to either St. Leonard or Prince Frederick for a large grocery shopping.

I attended St. Luke's Church growing up. When my mother would attend the church, she would take all of us, myself, and my younger sister and my older brother. And the others, I think they had already left as far as I could remember, but I do remember the three of us going. Oh, she was a faithful attendant of St. Luke's Church. She was also a Sunday school teacher there. And she also played the piano there. And eventually, the church, the membership sort of dropped off and they just decided to just join up with Brooks's Church and then we started attending Brooks's.

After I graduated high school in June, I went into service in July of 1963. I signed up for three years in the United States Army. And I served a year and a half in Fort Hood, Texas, and the other year and a half I spent in Germany. I served up from 63 to 66, which was during the Vietnam era.

When I first came back home from the service, my first stop was home right up here in Wallsville at 9855 Mackall Road, at the home place. My mother wasn't home and I knew where she worked right down at Cape Leonard. And so I drove down there where she worked and we were both so happy to see each other and the lady she worked for gave her the rest of the day off. So we spent that time off together and it was really nice just to be home and see my mother again. She had remarried by that



Chester Gross and his mother, Etheline Tate Gross. Image courtesy of Chester Gross.

time and my stepfather got me a construction job. I worked there until I got my applications filled out for the different jobs in DC. I first started working for the Department of Buildings and Grounds and from there I went to the GSA as a special police officer. And then from there, I took the test and became a Washington, DC firefighter. And I worked there for 27 years, until I retired. And I also spent one year on an ambulance too.

Wallsville was mostly a predominantly Black community at one point. And as time went on, you know, the demography changed. But it was a tight knit community. And I think St. Luke's church was probably the focal point of the gathering and of people coming together. And we used to have camp meetings and things of that nature and then of course, going down to my Uncle Lawrence's that was a gathering place of the family and people outside the family also. At one point there was an issue going on about getting electricity back into my Uncle Lawrence's place because Tom Mackall didn't want to give Uncle Lawrence the right of way to put electricity in there.

And that went on for years and years. So eventually though, my uncle did get electricity back in there. And I will say as I was growing up, my main mode of transportation was a bicycle. And I worked and saved \$10. And my mother gave me 20 so I could buy this bicycle. And I used that to go to work and to the store. I used to ride all the way over to Island Creek. And my grandfather lived in Island Creek. Jack Mills. I used to ride to see him sometimes. So I got quite a workout riding that bicycle.

When I came out of the service, Calvert County really hadn't changed that much. But it really hadn't changed much in the 60s; I think it was probably in the 70s where it started to change. Around the late 30s or early 40s my father managed somehow to get enough money to have that house built. It was a place where our immediate family would come and have our get-togethers and Mother's Day dinners and so forth--birthdays and all that. And the Browns, the Parkers, all used to come here from other side of the families, and it was quite nice to have everybody come there and get together and enjoy themselves as a family. I kinda miss the place, I really do, but everything changes...gotta move on. And then eventually we sold the place to the State of Maryland/Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum. Before it was sold, I used to come at least once a week to cut grass and do a little maintenance on the house. And I was retired then at that time, so that gave me time to do that too.



Figure 34. Theodore “Ted” Parran on Mackall’s Wharf, 1930s. Image courtesy of Dr. Theodore Parran.

mobile transportation, wharves and stores fell into disuse. Changing modes of transportation altered the way in which communities accessed goods, services, and jobs, which led to people and their sources of income moving to other locations within Calvert County.

From the 19th to the mid-20th century, twenty steamboat landings or wharves operated throughout Calvert County. At the southern-most end of Mackall Road, the wharf functioned as a social and economic keystone for the community. Mackall’s Wharf connected Wallville’s rural residents and their goods, such as oysters and agricultural produce, to the city (Figure 34).

By the 1890s, the Weems Line, a steamboat company operating out of Baltimore, owned the 0.2 acre property and operated a stop at Mackall’s Wharf. The steamboats carried both freight and passengers to and from Baltimore with multiple stops along the way. Travel from Baltimore took several hours, and passengers boarding in Baltimore in the evening could awaken the next morning in Wallville, stay the day and then return to the city in the evening. The wharf also served a social function within the community where family and neighbors could meet.

The wharf itself was constructed in either a T or L shape with the pier extending far into the creek so ships could dock safely in deeper water. To expedite the transfer of goods, the pier had a rail cart for moving freight to and from shore. At the end of the pier was a small barn used to house livestock before being loaded onto the steamships.

Once off the boat, several local Wallville stores and boarding houses provided passengers and locals with entertainment and fare. Boarding houses, advertised in *1896 Summer Homes and Historical Points Along the Routes of the*

Weems Steamboat Company, were run by Mrs. J.W. Peterson, Mrs. J.B. Mackall, and Mrs. C. R. Belt. Mackall's Wharf functioned as a steamboat wharf until the 1930s when the Baltimore and Virginia Steamboat Company went bankrupt and the property was sold.

Various stores operated throughout Wallville in the 19th and 20th centuries. Many consisted of small general stores located in the homes of shopkeepers, who would sometimes double as postmasters for the community at different times.

Mackall Store — This store was located at the southernmost end of Mackall Road near the wharf. The first store was located close to the original Public Road and after being torn down in the 1930s, a new store was built to replace it. Theodore Parran remembered the store as, “always a favorite place for the kids, of course, because we were always cadging a bottle of Coca-Cola or some cookies from the stores.” Mackall's store also sold staples like flour, sugar, stove black, boot laces, and pick axes.



Figure 35. Fricke Store shortly before demolition in 1988. Image courtesy of Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum.

Fricke Store — Run by Theodore Fricke during the early 20th century, the Wallville General Store was

located on the western side of the road at Garrity and Mackall Roads from the early 1900s to circa 1930 (Figure 35). The store was a two-story structure with a one-story addition. Mrs. Lloyd Bowen recalled details of the store's interior, which she frequented as a child. The store was heated by a potbelly stove, which stood in the center and was surrounded by sand. Fricke sold “barrel of molasses, coal oil, a big wooden box with a hinge top with ginger snaps-most anything you needed.” After its use as a general store, the building served various purposes including as tenant housing and

hay storage. The store later fell into disrepair and was torn down in the late 1980s.

Wall Family Store — From the mid to late 19th century, James T. Wall operated a general store near his home in Wallville. In 1856, James T. Wall's daughter, Annie, wrote that her father had, "just been called to go in to the store, and is unwilling to go, as it is late" suggesting that the store was located away from the Wall house. The store offered goods to the Wallville community as late as 1882 when, "a stock of goods now in the store on the premises", was mentioned in a mortgage record in the county land record books.

Gott's Store — The Gott store was run by Mr. John M. Gott, whose occupation was listed as proprietor of a retail grocery store on the 1940 and 1950 US Federal Census. The store was located on the west side of Mackall Road and also served as a local post office until 1939. A little bit of everything was sold in the Gott store including candy which cost 2 cents. During World War II the store accepted ration stamps from local patrons.

Hardesty Store — This store was considered a landmark in Wallville. Everything along Mackall Road to the south of this store was considered Wallville. Everything north was known locally to some as "The Forest." Hardesty's Store was owned and operated by Norris G. Hardesty and his wife Lola M. Hardesty from 1942 to 1967. Afterwards the property was owned by Edward and Elizabeth Denton. The Hardesty store is now a single-family home at the intersection of Mackall and Parran Roads.

Myers Barnes Store — By 1950, W. Myers Barnes was operating a small store on the east side of Mackall Road. Barnes and his family lived in Wallville by the 1910s and he worked for himself as a waterman and painter before becoming a storekeeper in 1950. Barnes' store still stands today as a residence. Situated on a wooded hill behind the house stands the Wall family cemetery, which was once called "School House Hill."

Clubs and Fraternal Organizations

Fraternal organizations, a form of civic and community aid and engagement, were quite popular throughout the country in the 19th century and into the early 20th century. The Great Depression ultimately led to the demise of many fraternal organization chapters and lodges—later to be replaced in part by social safety net programs passed through New Deal

legislation. Within Wallville there were two such fraternal organizations: the Knights of Pythias and the Masons.

Knights of Pythias of Chitron Neck Lodge (Lone Star Lodge #26) – The Order of Knights of Pythias, a non-sectarian fraternity, was founded in Washington, D.C. in 1864, and remains active today, supporting charitable, benevolent, fraternal, and social activities. There were two national groups of Pythians—one for White members and another for Blacks. The Black organization, founded in 1880 in Vicksburg, Mississippi, went by the name Knights of Pythias of North America, South America, Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia. Black men who could pass for White infiltrated White Pythian lodges in order to learn the rituals and rules of the organization.

In 1910, a Wallville branch of the Colored Knights of Pythias was established and land for the lodge was purchased adjacent to St. Luke's Church (Figure 36). Trustees for the organization and land purchase were prominent Wallville community members William Gross, Joseph Baragus, and Alexander Gross.

In 1936 the Knights of the Lone Star #26 Lodge (all Black Wallville residents) voted to disband and sell the property to Leona Bolles. Lodge trustees at this time were John Gross, James Coates, Wheeler Straiten, James Straiten, and Walter Grahame. The Great Depression decimated fraternal organizations nationwide, and this disbanding coincides with that trend.

While no traces of the lodge building survive to the present day, the JPPM collections contain a Knights of Pythias sword that may have come from the Lone Star 26 Lodge (Figure 37). The 36" long sword has a substantial blade and the handle contains several decorative elements. The sword has a knight's head with a lion on top at the handle terminus, signifying Knighthood and leadership. There are three levels within the organization: Page - Esquire - Knight. Someone who becomes a full member is called a Knight. On one side of the sword are the letters FCB, which signify the group's motto "Friendship, Charity, and Benevolence". On the other side is a Knight holding a shield that also depicts the letters FCB.

Like White fraternal societies, Black organizations began to emerge in the decades preceding the Civil War. Barred from membership in White secret societies, Blacks formed fraternal organizations that paralleled their White counterparts, including the Masons, Elks, Knights of Pythias and Odd Fellows. In addition to providing community support and financial aid, these

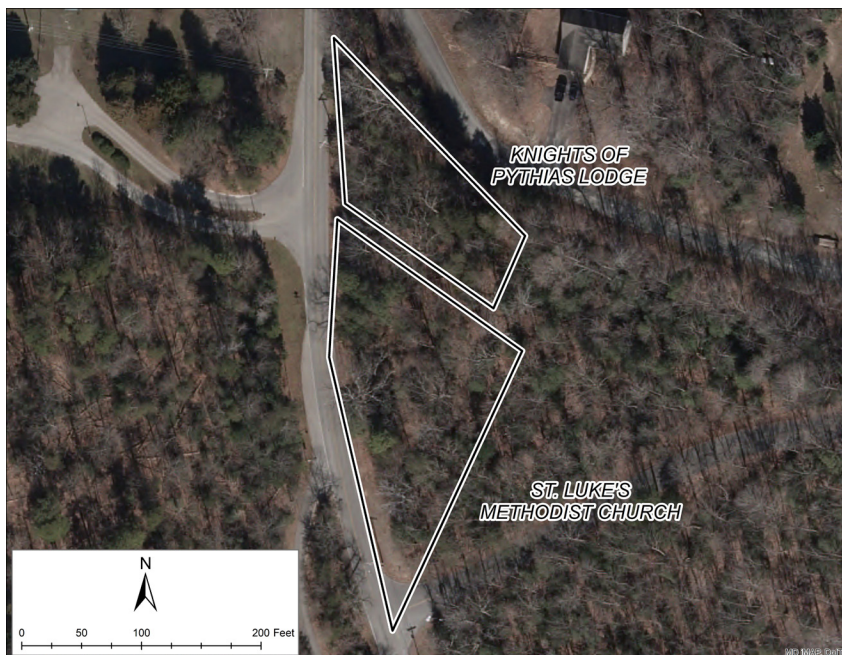


Figure 36. Location of the Knights of Pythias Lodge, shown in relation to the St. Luke's Methodist Episcopal Church. Image by Scott Strickland, courtesy of Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum.

groups helped shape Black identity, and supported social change leading to the rise of the modern civil rights movement.

At the end of Reconstruction in the 1880s, societies began to proliferate, as Blacks began to lose many of the political rights that emerged at the end of the Civil War. This increase in societies occurred again in the early twentieth century in the wake of Jim Crow. The formation of the Wallville lodge fell into this time frame.

Mutual aid societies were often tied to particular neighborhoods or churches. While the Lone Star #26 Lodge was located next door to St. Luke's Church, it is unknown if it was connected with the church.

Eureka Lodge No. 36 – The Calvert County School Board sold the first public school for Black students in Wallville to the Eureka Lodge No. 36, A.F. & A. M. Chitron Neck Masons in September of 1887 after the students moved to a schoolhouse on Lloyd Bowen Road. The payment of \$50 plus \$7.30 in interest was received in full for the property in April of 1890. The Eureka Lodge had a Black membership.

The Ancient Free and Accepted Masons formed in Maryland in 1787. Independent Black Masons organizations paralleling White organizations began in the United States in the 18th century among free Blacks. By the early 20th century, there were 150,000 Black Masons in the United States.

In 1949, the Eureka Lodge moved to a new location several miles north, directly across from Brooks Church, and the old lodge building became the home of Samuel and Annie Washington. The concrete block two story building served as the primary meeting place for the Eureka Lodge members until 1968, when the property was sold to Brooks Church. Prior to its purchase by the Freemasons, the property was owned by the Calvert Lodge of Grand United Order of Odd Fellows No. 2171.

The original Eureka Lodge building was destroyed by fire sometime in the late 1940s, while it was serving as the Washington residence. Christine Washington Gray, who grew up in the house, remembered that one of her siblings accidentally set the house on fire while playing with matches.

Social Life and Entertainment

Wallville was not just a place of school, work, and worship, it was also a place to unwind. Owing to its location along the water, a day at the beach was one of the past-times enjoyed by people of Wallville. For Black residents, the hottest spot was the beachfront property owned and operated by William Lawrence Gross at the end of Mackall Road.

Sports, particularly baseball, were also popular among residents of Wallville and nearby communities. Two baseball fields in use at different times from the 1930s to 1980s were located on the opposite end of Wallville from the



Figure 37. Knights of Pythias sword, found near the site of the former lodge in the 1980s. Image courtesy of Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum.



Figure 38. 1982 aerial showing the Lawrence Gross beachfront. Lawrence Gross's house and the screened shelters are shown in the lower portion of the photo, at the end of the long driveway. The Eliza and Everett Gross Jr. house, known as The Homestead, is at the upper left, just to the right of the grove of trees. Aerial Photo Single Frame image courtesy of the U.S. Geological Survey.

Lawrence Gross property at the community's northern extent. Both ball fields were located on properties owned by the Gross family of Wallville.

Lawrence Gross Beachfront – In March of 1890, Isaac P. and Elizabeth L. Bowen sold to Everett Gross, Jr. (1861-1932) for \$97.75 a 5 ³/₄ acre tract of land near the mouth of St. Leonard Creek on north side of Creek (Figure 38). Everett Gross, Jr. married Eliza Ann Dawkins (1879-1965) in 1897. The same year the two were married they were assessed taxes for 5 acres of land with improvements valued at \$150. There, the family raised their fifteen children.

Later, Everett and Eliza's eldest son William (known as Lawrence) Gross (1898-1982) resided on the property and ran a beachfront business. In a



Figure 39. Party shelters at Lawrence Gross's beachfront. Image taken by Orlando Gross and used courtesy of Tamira Boyne.

2023 interview, Shelton Brown remembered “down in the south...the only place for Blacks to go was Gross’s property beach and they would be coming in by water or by car...it...had a lot of traffic.”

Guests were charged a small entry fee and could spend long summer days and evenings enjoying the waterfront (Figure 39). Lawrence sold food and beverages to the crowds who came to enjoy the sandy beach along the cove that went by the name of “Donkey’s Ears” (probably derived from the name Doncaster’s or Dunkerson’s Cove). According to his nephew Chester Gross, the beach could be accessed either by a ladder or by descending a steep path from the high bluff that overlooked the river. Unable to gain access to electricity for many years, Gross used a generator to power a jukebox and a soda machine. Its popularity was described by Beatrice Washington as “...the get out place for Sunday evening. If you had dinner and everything, you going to the beach.”

As is often the case when there’s a good time involving maybe a little too much to drink, this popular spot was not short on great stories. Andre Brown described an episode where Lawrence Gross and another of Shelton’s uncles had been “out on one of their binges.” During the course of that evening the pair “got in the backseat instead of the front seat” of a car and one of the men said “Somebody done stole our steering wheel. We can’t go anywhere. They done stole the steering wheel.” To which the other



Figure 40. Ball field south of Parran Road. The diamond is visible in the center of the photograph, on the right side of the road. This aerial image dates from 1957. Aerial Photo Single Frame image courtesy of the U.S. Geological Survey.

leaned over and replied “You know, they done stole the brakes, too.”

It wasn’t all just fun and games for Lawrence Gross, as there was money to be made. In addition to his revenue from the beach property, Lawrence Gross also drove around the county selling fish and crab from a truck. This earned him the nickname locally as “Fishman.”

First Ball Field – The first Wallville baseball field sat on property owned by the heirs of McCullum “Mack” Gross, who purchased the property from relatives in 1924. Mack lived with his daughter Liza/Eliza and her young children on the property until his death in the 1930s. Formerly an open agricultural field, after Mack’s death a field close to Mackall Road was turned into a baseball diamond, which can clearly be seen in the 1957 USDA aerial photograph of the area (Figure 40).

While remembered mostly as a place for fun, tragedy came to the field during a game. A man named “Buster” Graham was struck in the head with a baseball and died as a result of his injuries. Buster’s first name is unknown, but a man named Herbert Graham was buried at the nearby Brooks cemetery in 1969 at the age of 45 years old.



Figure 41. Outline in white of the second ball field, superimposed over a current photograph of houses along Mackall Road and Peace Court. Image created by Scott Strickland, Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum.

When exactly the baseball field fell out of use is unknown, but a second ball field was present less than a mile north by the 1970s and remained in use into the 1980s. Whether the death of Buster Graham contributed to its abandonment is unknown. The property remained within the Gross family until 2011, after nearly a century of ownership by that family.

Second Ball Field — Located less than a mile north of the first Wallville ball field, the second field appears to have been in use beginning in the 1970s until it was sold by members of the Gross family in 1989 (Figure 41). By the early 1990s, the field began to be overgrown. It is often considered just beyond the bounds of Wallville, which traditionally terminated at Hardesty's Store located nearby.

When the ball field was established, it belonged to the heirs (names unknown) of William Gross, who had acquired the property in 1871. Prior to that, the land had been owned by the Dawkins family since 1682. After over 100 years of ownership by the Gross family, it was sold and subdivided.

Many people associate both Wallville ball fields with Hardesty's Store, describing where they were in relation to it. The store was located in between the two ball fields at the intersection of Parran and Mackall Roads.

Segregation and Discrimination

Instances of discrimination and racism towards Black Wallville residents continued in the aftermath of the Civil War and into the 20th century and were plainly visible in sources used for this project. The earliest postbellum reports were from Freedman's Bureau representatives, who had been sent to Southern Maryland to assist newly freed Blacks and to report on local conditions. In 1866, Freedman's Bureau field officer William VanDerlip reported that in Calvert County "large numbers of young men...who have served in the rebel army threaten Negroes and any who may come here with a helping hand."

White landowners, faced with labor shortages, sometimes resorted to what was essentially re-enslavement of children. Daniel Chase, who had moved to Washington from Calvert County gave a statement that, "when he left said Virgil Gant, in 1863, he left with him his five children." Gant hired out two of the children to Daniel Bowen and when Chase returned to Gant's property to collect his children and take them to Washington, D.C. with him in 1865, Gant refused to relinquish custody of them.

Land transactions discussed in preceding pages illustrate the higher prices charged to Blacks for inferior land. More detailed accounts of discriminatory actions, both large and small, appear in oral histories describing life in the mid-20th century. In a 1996 interview, Daniel Brown recounted that in the late 1930s, Jefferson Patterson's farm manager, Stanley Houghton, would toss surplus milk and clabber to the hens or hogs, rather than give it to Daniel for his young children. Houghton's wife took a kinder view and often sneaked leftover dairy to him when her husband's attention was elsewhere. Houghton also routinely shorted the wages of Black women who shucked corn at the Patterson estate. The women were paid 25 cents a barrel for the shucked corn; Houghton insisted that a full barrel contained ten gallons of corn rather than the standard nine gallons.

In addition to these everyday affronts that stole nutrition from growing children and robbed wallets of honestly earned wages, there were broader institutional racist actions that affected the health and well-being of Black Wallville residents. In some Wallville land deeds, the wording specifically

stated that property could not be sold to Blacks (Figure 42). This practice, in theory, was rescinded by the 1968 Fair Housing Act.

Together with the buidlings and improvements thereupon erected, made or being and all and every the rights, alleys, ways, waters, privileges, appurtenances and advantages, to the same belonging, or anywise appertaining, including a right of way for the purpose of ingress and egress through the land of the aforesaid grantor, [REDACTED] over the present roadway as now located leading from the land hereby intended to be conveyed to the Mutual - Mackall State Road.

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the said lot of ground and premises, above described and mentioned, and hereby intended to be conveyed; together with the rights, privileges, appurtenances and advantages thereto belonging or appertaining unto and to the proper use and benefit of the said parties of the second part, and to the survivor of them, his or her heirs and assigns, in fee simple, as tenants by the entireties, subject however, to the following covenants and restriction, which is entered into by the aforesaid grantees, for themselves, their heirs and assigns, and forms a part of the consideration of the purchase price of the land hereby intended to be conveyed, to wit:

Restriction 1. That the said land, or any part thereof, shall never be sold, conveyed, leased to, or occupied by any persons not of the Caucasian race, except that domestic servants not of such race may be employed on the premises.

And the said party of the first part hereby covenants that he has not done or suffered to be done any act, matter or thing whatsoever, to encumber the property hereby conveyed; that he will warrant specially the property granted; and that he will execute such further assurances of the same as may be requisite.

Witness the hand and seal of the said grantor.

Figure 42. Portion of a Wallville deed from 1948 with a restriction that limits the sale of the land to Whites.

Jefferson Patterson brought electricity to this part of Calvert County in 1932, running cable under St. Leonard Creek to electrify his new home. This service, which would have lighted homes and powered home appliances and equipment like electric ranges and well pumps, was denied to Black residents. Lawrence Gross was unsuccessful for years in getting electricity at the waterfront recreation area he ran, even though the pole carrying electrical wires ran across his property. Another Black farmer was finally frustrated enough by the late 1960s to threaten to cut down the electric pole on his property unless he was allowed access to electricity.

Responses to discriminatory behavior varied—some, like Daniel Brown, left employment at the Patterson estate and found farm work a mile or so north at the Garrity Farm. In the early 1940s, he took a construction job building the Pentagon—employment that took him farther from home, but probably paid significantly better than farmwork.

Wallville 1950—Present

While Wallville today is still a rural community, the signs of change are evident in the new homes cropping up on the southern stretch of Mackall Road and the two vineyards and tasting rooms that have opened in recent years. The old and now historic homes of White families like the Mackalls, Walls, Sedwicks, and Parrans (the old Turner homeplace burned in 2004) are still standing, but with one exception (the Alfred Gross Homeplace), the homes of Black farmers and watermen have long-since disappeared.

In 2000, archaeological excavations at the Sukeek's Cabin site, sparked by conversations with former Wallville residents Daniel and Octavia Brown, began Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum's collaboration with the Wallville descendant community. Descendants of Black Wallville residents still feel a special connection to the land, visiting when they can and sometimes holding family reunions (Figure 43). Allen Brown, in a 2005 interview, recounts a visit to Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum:

But family life...in Wallsville down on Mackall Road was just great. And like on a day like yesterday, it was one of the best days I've had in a long time. Cleo and I...went back to Patterson Park, back to my roots...We had a picnic basket and Cleo had fixed everything. I mean, we had fried chicken, potato salad, you name

it—ice tea, cake. We ate. And then I went out on the lawn under the trees. And I lay down on the grass and Cleo lay there beside me. And I went to sleep. That's something that I don't think I've done on the grass since I left Mackalls Road. I don't recall going to sleep out on the lawn since I've left them down. But it was so peaceful.



Figure 43. Christening gown made in 1904 by Eliza Dawkins Gross for daughter Nellie May (1904-2003). Image used courtesy of Andre Brown.

The “Witnesses of Wallville” project has been a rewarding example of collaborative research. It is our hope that this booklet serves as a stepping stone for further research and interpretation. There is so much to learn about the Wallville community that remains to be told. Continued study and documentation of the Wallville community will be pursued by Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum in the years to come. We look forward to what future collaboration brings as we continue to learn more about Wallville’s past.



Figure 44. The mouth of St. Leonard Creek at the south end of Wallville. Image used courtesy of Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum.

Faces of Wallville



Pictured clockwise from upper left: LaTonya Winters & Christine Gray; Alice Wall; Patsy Gordon, Lorraine Ross, & Louis Gordon, Jr.; Randi Parker Niles & Patricia Johnson; Mary Farmer; David & Shannon Campbell; Alfred Gross.

