



Jasmine Bacon, 5 months, is a part of the ninth generation of the Howard and Holland family.

spected citizen.”

Other relatives of Enoch Howard owned by the Gaither family escaped to Canada on the Underground Railroad and changed their name to Holland.

“I think this history and this area symbolize roots, family unity and family heritage,” said Thomas, who still lives in Cloverly, where she grew up. “We have reunions every year because we want the young people to know they have family even if the family is scattered across the county and Canada.”

Thomas, along with other relatives, started the family reunions in 1982 and the event has attracted hundreds of people over the years.

For the past few years, Thomas, a descendant of one of Enoch Howard’s sisters, and other family members have been caring for the cemetery grounds because county and state officials don’t have the funds to continue the upkeep.

“I do wish they would put a fence around the cemetery because at least 12 headstones have been stolen,” Thomas said.

John Smith, a descendent of a nephew of Enoch Howard who works as an adviser to County Council member Philip Andrews (D-Rockville), said he looks forward to the family reunions—which alternate between Montgomery County and Canada—because it continues the family connection and reminds the younger Howards and Hollands about their legacy.

“This history is so important, and important for young people, because it grounds them in their roots,” said Smith, standing in front of the cemetery and proudly displaying a photograph of a recent family reunion in Gaithersburg attended by more than 400 family members.

“It says to me—and others—that there is a great tradition here that has been hidden, but now it is coming to the surface,” he said.

Copies of the map, “African American Heritage, a Journey Through History: A Guide to African American Sites and Attractions,” are available at Montgomery County’s Conference and Visitors Center, libraries, regional services centers, the county executive’s office and the Lincoln Park Historical Foundation/Society. For more information, call 240-777-2500 or 301-251-2747.

incaster Mill and slave quarters and Underground Railroad stops in Colesville, Whites Ferry, ckerson, Germantown, Rockville and Hyatt-

own. Many of the sites are indicated by name only on e map because buildings and identifying landrks no longer exist.

Ross M. Kimmel, a supervisor with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, who first learned the Howard Chapel site about 20 years ago, said searching Montgomery County’s black history is allenging but rewarding.

“It’s great history and it’s out here, you just have dig for it,” Kimmel said.

Michele Naru, a preservation planner for the ontgomery County Historic Preservation Comssion, started surveys of Howard Chapel in 1999 d began formulating a history of the property.

Howard Chapel, she said, is “an important Afri- n American resource within the county,” but one many significant historical sites Powell was able uncover.

“It’s a wonderful evolution of where we’ve been d where we are now,” Naru said.

The Howard Chapel property is on 204 acres owned by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and is part of the Patuxent River State Park, near the Howard County line. The site includes the cemetery, a primary residence, known as the Gaither/Howard house, which was built in 1790; two additions to the original house; and a second stone residence. The property once included Howard Chapel Church.

The property originally was owned by the Gaither family. In 1857, a slave and field foreman of the Gaither family, Enoch George Howard, bought freedom for himself and his wife, Harriet, with \$3,000 of his savings, obtained from selling produce he cultivated from a small plot of land that had been given to him.

Later, the couple bought freedom for their five children. A few years later, they bought the Gaither/Howard house and 289 acres of land from the Gaither family. During his lifetime, Enoch Howard acquired at least 600 acres of land and donated some of it for a school.

When he died in 1895, the Montgomery County Sentinel wrote that “he was an old and highly re-