

Black Women United for Action in Fairfax County

Black Heritage Quilt Squares Identification

February 18, 1990

1. **Cardinal** — Virginia State Bird
2. **Edwin B. Henderson**, a descendant of Fredrick Foote, was born in Falls Church in the late 1800s. An avid sportsman, he always strived in sports as well as for academic excellence. He was a Physical Education teacher and was also the author of the book, *The Negro in Sports* (1939), and wrote numerous sports articles. As a community activist, he was a founder and served as the first president of the Fairfax County Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). He was best known for writing fiery editorials denouncing racial injustices.
3. **Colored Dairies**, owned by the Coates, Lee, and Burke families, produced milk for the Chestnut Farms Dairy Distributors. The Coates Family farm, located in Chantilly, operated for two generations (1901 - 1964). A portion of the farmland was sold for the Dulles Airport runway. The Dairy Barn remains visible from Sully Road in Chantilly. The Alta Lee Farm (1945 - 1957) was located in Herndon near Chantilly. The land sold in 1957 to the Army Navy Country Club. Today, the Oak Hill Elementary School sits on the Lee Farm property. The Gus Burke Dairy Farm was located on Braddock Road between Fairfax and Centerville. All three farm families were members of the Maryland and Virginia Dairyman's Association.
4. **Praying Hands** symbolized religion as the great sustenance of the black family. It was the very fiber of its existence. Around the County, churches were the center of the community. Four ministers are remembered for practicing their religion through community service. Reverends Milton Sheppard of Mt. Pleasant, Annandale, Roger Bush of Shiloh, McLean, and Wallace Costner of Second Baptist, Falls Church were instrumental in Luther P. Jackson High School becoming an educational center for black children. Reverend Samuel Taylor, a runaway slave from Carolina County, divided his land among blacks and sold it at cost to allow them to build homes in the area. An outstanding example of Christian life, Reverend Taylor was a founder of the Joint Stock Club, which provided an opportunity for blacks to own homes in Gum Springs.
5. **Cardinal** — Virginia State Bird
6. **Center of Family Life.** Fairfax County had several "Black Communities" where many extended families existed. These homes often consisted of many family members including aunts, uncles, and grandparents. The Church was the center of the community and became the springboard for spiritual growth. The school was a major institution in preparing the student for survival after schooling. In the early years (1800s) Quakers and members of the Methodist Society instructed the black children of the community and encouraged competition. Every year between 1911 - 1926, the Fairfax County Colored School Fair Association hosted an event. Students competed in every category including sewing, carpentry, and academics at the Fairfax County Courthouse grounds. In these black communities, children were surrounded by the extended families who nurtured self-esteem in the young. Fairfax County Public Schools were integrated in 1959. Ollie Tinner, Wallace Costner, Milton Sheppard, E.B. Henderson, William West, and J. Sidney Holland all assisted in the transition from segregated to integrated schools.
7. **The Holy Bible** was often the first book slaves learned to read. From God's word the slaves gained the strength to survive the bonds of slavery and to forge the path to freedom. Today the Bible is no less important in continuing our quest for a better quality of life. It is a constant reminder that "we've come this far by faith."

8. **Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church**, located in Floris, was organized in 1866, on land donated by Henry Cook. It still stands today at its original location on Coppermine Road in Herndon, Virginia.
9. **James Lee School**, earlier known as the Falls Church Colored School, was built in the early 1900s on land donated by James Lee, a slave who became a landowner and civil rights activist. Mrs. Nellie Henderson, wife of E.B. Henderson, was a teacher and principal.
10. **Clifton Church**, Old School Primitive Baptist Colored Church, located on Main Street, Clifton was built in 1874 on land donated by William Beckwith. Mr. Beckwith, a carpenter by trade, also assisted in building the structure.
11. **We Serve Our Community**. These community organizations are committed to service for the betterment of mankind: NAACP, National Council of Negro Women (NCNW), Jack & Jill, Northern Virginia (NOVA) Urban League, Delta Sigma Theta, Reston Links, IBPOE Fidelity #384, Black Women United for Action (BWUFA), Pan Hellenic Council, and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.
12. **Trailblazers** — These courageous pioneers, both men and women, were the pillars of strength in their communities. They paved the way in yesterday's struggles for today's progress.

Ester Honesty, a devoted community worker, was dedicated to helping educate young people. She raised funds for many community projects, particularly the Louise Archer School. She was viewed by many as the "little Mary McLeod Bethune."

Eliza Hawkins, born in 1906, was a strong, Christian parent and a community child care guardian. During the 1940s, she organized the Black Voters League and the Black Volunteer Chapter of the American Red Cross. She was also active in the NAACP.

Lutie Coates, born in 1907, was an educator. She taught for over 32 years and was both a teacher and a principal in the Floris area. She often had a pot of soup warming on the "pot belly" stove for students during winter months. Mrs. Coates provided financial assistance for several of her students aspiring to higher education.

Annie Smith, born in the late 1800s, is remembered as a beloved, dedicated spirit. She was the first black teacher at Little Hunting Creek in the Gum Springs area. She walked from Gunston to Gum Springs to teach her students. She instilled Christian principles in her students and demanded academic excellence.

Mary Stewart, born in Clifton, taught school for almost 50 years in Floris. She is best remembered for her commitment for excellence from her students. She was a foster mother for many, as well as a devoted Christian education teacher.

Lillian Carey, educator in the Mt. Pleasant and Bailey's Cross Roads area, was a pioneer in educating black children. She taught three generations of students. She was best remembered for her unselfish love of mankind.

13. **BWUFA**, in Fairfax County, was founded in 1985 by Sheila Coates and a dedicated group of women. BWUFA was organized to give blacks, particularly black females, representation in the political arena. BWUFA's purpose is to act as a vehicle to bring about social, political, and economic growth in Fairfax, thus improving the quality of life for blacks.
14. **Trailblazers #2**
William West, a lifelong resident of Vienna, was born in 1874. He was the son of a freed slave and he lived to be 104 years old. An educated man, he worked continuously to improve educational opportunities for black children. He unsuccessfully ran for town council in 1952, losing by one vote. He also was a notary public and the town barber for black patrons.

14. Trailblazers #2 (continued)

Fredrick Foote, a slave of the Minor family, rose to prosperity by acquiring land in the Falls Church area. He taught his people the importance of becoming economically secure by investing in real estate.

West Ford, a former slave, born in 1788, was willed 211 acres by Bushrod Washington, George Washington's nephew. He divided his land among relatives to begin the settlement called Gum Springs.

William Beckwith, born in 1885 in Clifton, inherited large portions of land from his foreparents who were slaves on the Beckwith Plantation. He donated parcels for the Old School Primitive Baptist Colored Church. He was a skilled carpenter who constructed many buildings in the Fairfax, Clifton area.

Cyrus Carter was born in Lancaster, VA. He settled in Odricks Corner after purchasing 17 acres of land. In 1865 he organized the first permanent colored baptist church. Although he sold an acre to build the church, he donated land for the cemetery. He later organized the Shiloh Baptist Church.

Sydney Holland, born in 1907, came to Fairfax County in 1926. A highly respected, dedicated community activist, he has fought for the inclusion of black citizen participation in every facet of community life in Fairfax. He was, in 1975, the first black in Fairfax County to receive the *Washington Evening Star* newspaper's annual Citizen of the Year award. He continues his active community participation.

James Goins resides in Fairfax on Zion Drive. He has fought hard and diligently for inclusion of blacks, particularly in his community of Greater Little Zion. He is best remembered for his emphasis on voter rights and voter education.

15. **The Gum Springs settlement** came into existence around the mid 1800s. After the Civil War, black soldiers enroute to the south by train stopped in Alexandria and settled there. West Ford, a former slave to George Washington's nephew Bushrod, purchased many acres in that area. Bethlehem Baptist Church, built in 1863, was located in Gum Springs. Built on land donated by Rev. Samuel Taylor, the church also served as a school for black children where they were taught by Quakers from Philadelphia until Ms. Annie Smith was prepared for teaching. Gum Springs became known by that name because it was located near Hunting Creek where a huge gum tree stood tall under a gushing spring. George Washington and other travelers enroute to Richmond often stopped there for a cool drink and to water their horses. George Washington referred to Gum Springs when he spoke of the boundaries near his property line.
16. **Trading Post.** The Falls Church Black Community were direct descendants of slaves on nearby plantations. Fredrick Foote, a shoemaker, born in Burke was a slave of the Minor family. After freedom, he joined the Union Army and served in the Fairfax unit. By saving his money, he later bought his first piece of land from his former owner, Daniel Minor. By 1889, the distribution of labor among the male workers was remarkable in this new Falls Church community. Foote served on the town council. Other prominent blacks were Charles Tinner, an entrepreneur, and James Lee, a gentleman farmer. This site had been a trading post run by Indians who traded food, skins, furs, and jewelry with the early settlers. Today the Seven Corners Mall sits on the Foote property.
17. **Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority**, the first Greek letter service organization for black women was founded in 1908. Its Lambda Kappa Omega Chapter was formed in Fairfax in 1976, continuing the organization's international focus on improving the social and economic conditions of all black females as well as serving all mankind.
18. **Vienna Colored School** was located on Lawyers and Malcom Roads in Vienna. It was the second building to house black students (First Baptist was first). It was a one room building constructed around the 1890s. In 1924, two additional rooms were erected. Later in 1939, the Rosenwald Foundation donated money to complete a new school on Nutley Street. It remained a three room school until 1947 when it was enlarged with five additions. In 1950, it was dedicated and the name changed to the Louise Archer School.

19. **The First Baptist Church**, located in Vienna on Lawyers Road, was erected in 1867 on land deeded by Major O.E. Hines. It was also used as a school. During the early 1900s, the church split and formed a new church, Union Baptist. In 1957, a new church was built on Orchard Street. Today, the Knights of Columbus occupy and own the original church building on Lawyers Road.

20. **Fairfax County Farm Life**

Odricks Corner Farm was named for Alfred Odrick, a former slave of the Coleman family. Although he was a skilled carpenter, in 1872 he purchased 30 acres of land to begin work as a farmer. He built a school on his property and donated the land for Shiloh Baptist Church. Church services were also held in the school building. By 1880, this black settlement had grown from nine to ten families. Many were large land owners who later portioned off land to relatives increasing the size of the community in Odricks Corner. Carpentry was a trade together with the sale of produce they harvested.

The Clara Williams Family Farm (Heads Farm) of Vienna consisted of about 150 acres. The farm was in the Williams family from 1878 - 1962. The family raised livestock and supplied meat products to the Briggs Meat Company in Baltimore. They also raised and sold cows to dairy farmers who supplied milk to the Chestnut Farm Dairy. In addition, the family owned and operated the Old Courthouse Inn on Heads Farm adjacent to Freedom Hill Road. Currently the land houses the Westbriar Elementary School and its housing development.

The Quander family of Alexandria farmed the land from the late 1800s until 1964. Charles Quander, a freed slave, began the farm on two acres of land where he lived in a two room, two story house. At his death he had acquired 80 acres on which he operated the dairy farm. As a dairy farmer, he provided milk products for patrons in south Alexandria. In later years, the family ceased the operation of the dairy farm and became producers of farm products for the Alexandria City market (1896-1964). Today, portions of the Quander farm houses Belle Haven Meadows, the West Potomac High School, and the Quander Road School.

21. **Cardinal** - Virginia State Bird
22. **Omega Psi Phi Fraternity** was founded in 1911. It established its Psi Nu Chapter in Fairfax to continue the ideals of the national organization; to unite thousands of men in aim, thought, and loyalty.
23. **The Slave Memorial** is located on the Mt. Vernon Plantation near George Washington's tomb. Designed by Howard University's School of Architecture students, it was dedicated in 1983 to enhance the site of the 1929 marker noting the slave burial site. The monument is a broken granite column set above three circular levels. Each level of the monument has the words, Faith, Love, Hope engraved in the granite.
24. **Committee Members - Dedicated Workers:**
Lillian Blackwell - Vienna - Chairperson
Betty Fields - Ft. Belvoir - Chairperson
Guin Jones - Historian
- Ora Lawson - McLean, Johnnye Sims - Alexandria, Lucy B. Coates - Chantilly
Lois Reed - Springfield, Sonia Porter - Annandale, Donna Blackwell - Vienna
Margery Robinson - Dale City, Sheryl Sims - Alexandria, Sheila Coates - Chantilly

Other Quilt Workers:

Gladys Lewis - Washington, D.C., Viola Hudson - Falls Church
Eloise Smith - Great Falls, Joanne Blackwell - Vienna
Joyce Trulcar - New Jersey

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