

## 2023 ANNUAL REPORT CATOCTIN FURNACE HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

In 2023, CFHS accomplished much with the assistance of our amazing volunteers and generous funders! Here are some highlights:

Purchase of the Hoke House with restoration slated to begin in 2024

Gala screening of the Smithsonian Channel documentary at the Weinberg Center

Completion and grand opening of the Blacksmith Shop

Exterior restoration of the F.W. Fraley General Store

Hired our first Descendant Communicator (funded by NEH) to work directly with descendants

Documented more than 70 African American structures and memory landscapes in northern Frederick County

Reprinted the popular Iron Road Brochure

### VISITORSHIP

Approximately 105,073 visitors came to Catoctin Furnace in 2023, visiting the ruins, walking the African American Cemetery Interpretive Trail, and visiting the village. This is an increase of 42,292 visitors! Approximately 5,969 visitors have toured the Museum of the Ironworker in 2023. This is an increase of 3,578 guests compared to 2022! The Forgemaster's House hosted 32 "stay back in time" rentals during 2023 with spring, summer and fall the busiest months.

### EVENTS

**First firing – Blacksmith Shop-** First firing occurred on May 9<sup>th</sup> and was well attended. We are scheduling area blacksmiths to use the shop and hoping to expand our use of the shop during our events throughout 2024!

**Maryland Iron Festival** - Thank you to funders and our incredible volunteers, Harriet Chapel, Catoctin Mountain Park, Cunningham Falls State Park. The event was a success by every measure. Mark your calendar now for May 18 & 19, 2024!

**Smithsonian Channel – Mission Critical Film – Forged in Slavery** premiere took place on Tuesday, June 6 at 7:00 pm. It was well attended and received! Thank you to everyone who attended the premiere and to all those who helped make the film possible!

**Fourth at the Furnace-** Fourth at the Furnace was incredibly successful with blacksmithing, children's activities, and tours each day. 233 guests joined us for the event. This is the second year for the event, and it is now an annual offering!!

**Fallfest** - Apple butter boiling went very well and there was a lot of interest in the blacksmithing demonstrations.

**Spirits of the Furnace** - Spirits was a huge success due to our amazing volunteers! The possibility of having it two nights in 2024 was discussed.

**Traditional Village Christmas** – sold 50 wreaths, 20 pine roping, 560 guests. Most successful TVC yet! Blacksmiths and vendors did well.

**Museums by Candlelight** – 49 guests enjoyed blacksmithing, museum tours, repurposing crafts, hot cider, and cookies. Guests also enjoyed the trails (including the new Iron Trail, and tours of Harriet Chapel given by church docents).

### GRANT SUCCESSES!

**Preserving America Grant - Americana Corner** – conservation and repair of an historic 19th century bellows for blacksmith shop - \$7,500

**MSAC Presenting and Touring Grant** – Music for the Maryland Iron Festival - \$5,000

**Episcopal Diocese of Maryland Social Justice and Reconciliation Reparations Grant - \$50,000-** CFHS was one of five grant awardees recognized for doing the work of restoring African American and Black communities within the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland. During the May 20 ceremony, the diocese stated: “These individuals and organizations have shown an unwavering dedication to repairing the harm caused by chattel slavery and its legacy, and we are thrilled to honor their achievements.” Watch the award ceremony here <https://bit.ly/edomlive>. **Lora Andrews of Silver Oak Academy accepted the award on behalf of the *Heritage At Work Hands-On Historic Preservation Building Trades program.***

**TRIPP – Building a larger audience** – Advertising Catoctin Furnace attractions and events - **\$6,301.32**

**TRIPP - Catoctin Furnace Gardens** – Enhancements for Heritage Tourism Visitors - **\$6,695.00**

**MHAA – Stabilization for Future Interpretation of the Ironmaster’s Mansion-** **\$80,000**

**National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Grant** - to fund a Descendant Communicator- **\$30,000**

**Frederick County Rural Historic Preservation Grant Program:**

**Beverly Hoke House** –to replace roof, install half round gutters, and reconstruct missing chimney stack-**\$41,372**

**Reed Stitely House** –to replace non-historic windows with historically accurate windows and replace the roof on the historic house. (Note: these funds go directly to the homeowner, Ken Brink. CFHS was instrumental in facilitating the grant.)- **\$38,071.92**

**Delaplaine Foundation** - Proceed with Caution: Feasibility Study of 21st Century Safety vs 18th Century Streetscape - \$

**HCWHA** – Expanded and Enhanced Event Space – adding and sharing a historically accurate tent - \$

**FY 23 Marilyn Hatza Memorial Strengthening the Humanities Investment in Nonprofits for Equity (SHINE) Grant** – Maryland Humanities - \$10,000

### **MISCELLANEOUS HIGHLIGHTS!**

In March Elizabeth Comer presented: **Reexamining Invisibility: Memories of Catoctin Furnace African American Cemetery Archaeology-** *The video recording of Elizabeth’s presentation is available on the CFHS YouTube channel.*

In April, Elizabeth Comer presented **Recovering Identity: Northern Frederick County Cultural Resource Survey-** To date, little research has been undertaken for the purpose of locating African American resources in northern Frederick County.

Doug Owsley presented: **Catoctin cemetery research results** at the Coalition to Protect Maryland Burial Sites Conference at the Frederick Evangelical Reformed United Church of Christ. - It was well attended.

**Graduates!:** Dominic Curcio and John Wilhide, both graduated with their B.A. this past spring. Anne Comer graduated with her M.A. this spring! Yoni Weldeberuk graduated with his B.A. in December. Congratulations to our four recent graduates!

In July we welcomed 3 new board members: Machele Jones, Dominic Curcio, and Crystal Emory. Machele and Crystal are members of the Catoctin Furnace skilled ironworker descendant community.

**On August 4, Catoctin Furnace's groundbreaking DNA research to find descendants of enslaved workers was published in *Science***- Companion articles, blogs, podcasts, radio, and television programs followed from news outlets all over the world including The New York Times, NPR, and the Washington Post.

**Completion of Historic Structures/Cultural Landscape report for the Carty Miller House-** Huge thank you to Tyler Wilson for this excellent work! The final report is on our website under the Village/Catoctin Furnace History/Carty-Miller House.

**Fraley Store Restoration:** Restoration of the store has been a major success!

**Colliers Log House Restoration:** A huge thank you to the park service for the fantastic restoration of the historic Colliers Log House!

**Installation of new Iron Trail Waysides-** Thank you to all who helped create and install the new waysides along the Iron Trail!

**Interns:** Five amazing interns/emerging professionals from universities across the United States worked with CFHS mentors this year: **Abigail Hucks, Dominic Curcio, Tyler Wilson, John Wilhide, and Yoni Weldeberuk.**

**New Acquisitions:** Historic shoulder yoke with hand forged chain and hooks, and wooden stirrer (possibly for apple butter boiling or butchering) from Gideon Willard. Pat Weddle provided letters and a ledger belonging to Richard Kelly. Richard (born 1834 in Ireland) died at Catoctin Furnace on September 3, 1908, at the age of 74. CFHS was able to scan the original documents and add them to the Kelly family file. A letter written from Ardmore, Pennsylvania in 1898 mentions the war in Cuba and the tragedy of the USS Maine. 2) Mary Redmon provided a copy of selected pages of the autobiography of John Francis Campbell. Campbell was born in Catoctin Furnace on February 17, 1811. His autobiography describes moving to Lewistown in 1817 because his father and Mr. Maybury were not able to agree on his salary.

### *Special Tours for visitors:*

In addition to individual visitors, we welcomed several group tours and special guests, including the following:  
**Seven visitors from the WA County Human Development Dept.**

**German Travel Writers-** Visit Frederick arranged a visit to Catoctin Furnace for 5 travel writers based in Germany. Steve Dill demonstrated in the new Blacksmith Shop and the group spent more than 3 hours exploring the village!

**NPS VIP Tour** – 22 guests were given a guided tour on Wednesday, April 26. Feedback was excellent.

**Heritage Frederick-** 6 guests were given a guided tour on Tuesday, May 2.

**Elite Bus Tour** – 40 guests

**United States Pharmacopeia (USP)-** 31 guests

**FSK Antique Car Club-** 8 guests

**Winterthur Program in American Material Culture tour** – received a lovely thank you note for Dominic's tour!

**Visit by Secretary David Brinkley and Senator Cory McCray-** Thank you, Secretary David Brinkley and Senator Cory McCray for your support and visiting the furnace!

**Hood College Coastal Studies Program tour** – 20 students from Hood College were given a tour by Chris Gardiner, Dominic, and Makala

