

## **2024 Annual Report Catoctin Furnace Historical Society, Inc.**

In 2024, the Catoctin Furnace Historical Society (CFHS) was able to further its mission to commemorate, study, and preserve the rich history of the Catoctin Furnace industrial iron complex and the enslaved Africans, free African Americans, and European immigrants who lived and worked in the historic village. The accomplishments of 2024 were made possible by our amazing volunteers, partners, and generous donors!

### **Visitorship**

Over 48,000 visitors came to Catoctin Furnace in 2024! The Forgemaster's House hosted 28 rentals for a total of 68 nights.

### **Events**

**Maryland Iron Festival** – We would like to thank all our generous funders and incredible vendors and musicians, along with partners such as Harriet Chapel, Catoctin Mountain Park, and Cunningham Falls State Park. Generous funding from FirstEnergy Foundation, Visit Frederick, PNC, and the Woodsboro Bank made the free, family friendly event possible. Despite the rain on Saturday, the event was a resounding success. Mark your calendars for May 17 & 18, 2025 and the 7th annual Maryland Iron Festival!

**Juneteenth Commemoration** – In 2024, CFHS held an expanded Juneteenth commemoration. A wreath laying ceremony led by a local Scouts troop included a reading of the names of enslaved Catoctin Furnace workers. Attendees also listened to remarks by a descendant of enslaved ironworkers at the furnace and joined a FaceTime call with walking artist Kenneth Johnston who was walking from Galveston to Houston in the footsteps of the first Juneteenth. In partnership with Catoctin Furnace, a NPS ranger from Catoctin Mountain Park led a guided hike in Catoctin Mountain Park to the Hog Rock Trail overlook into Pennsylvania.

**Fourth at the Furnace** – The 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Fourth at the Furnace event included blacksmithing demonstrations, children's activities, music, and grilled hotdogs & hamburgers. While it was extremely hot, plenty of visitors still attended the event and enjoyed this family friendly fourth.

**Descendant Reunion** – CFHS and the descendant group hosted the inaugural Catoctin Furnace Ironworker reunion! Over 30 descendants gathered at the Furnace, many for the first time, to join in discussions and tours of the village & African American cemetery. During the reunion banquet, attendees watched the premiere of "Braided Lives", a documentary meant to represent

the history of enslavement at Catoctin Furnace. Harriet Chapel held a historic service for the parishioners and reunion attendees.

**FallFest** – Volunteers boiled eight bushels of apples over an open flame to make traditional apple butter. The entire stock quickly sold out! Vendors and blacksmiths also sold handmade goods.

**Spirits of the Furnace** – Spirits was a huge success because of our amazing volunteers! An additional tour was added, coming to a total of 90 available tickets. All but one ticket was sold!

**Traditional Village Christmas** – Blacksmiths and vendors sold their goods in the historic FW Fraley general store. Fresh wreaths and pine roping were available, which sold out the next weekend at Museums by Candlelight.

**Museums by Candlelight** – Guests enjoyed blacksmithing, museum tours, crafts, and children’s activities.

### **Grant Successes**

**FirstEnergy Foundation** - \$15,000 for iron education programming

**Visit Frederick** - \$15,000 for the Maryland Iron Festival

**American Corner** - \$7,500 for restoration of J.C. Onions Company blacksmith bellows

**FirstEnergy Foundation** - \$10,000 for iron programming

**Frederick County Rural Historic Preservation Grant** - \$35,845 for the replacement of the Anderson House roof

**All Saint’s Episcopal Church** - \$3,500 from the Rice Bowl Lenten Boxes

**Woodsboro Bank** – \$500 For the Maryland Iron Festival

**France-Merrick Foundation** - \$50,000 for the acquisition of the African American cemetery

**PNC Charitable Sponsorship** - \$2,000 for music at the Maryland Iron Festival

**International Coalition for Sites of Conscience** - \$500 for the UK internship stipend

**Thurmont Lions Club** - \$500 unobligated donation

**FY25 TRIPP Legacy Project** - \$25,000 for the Catoctin Furnace Living History Festival

**FY25 TRIPP Advertising** - \$8,543.31 for advertising

**FY25 MHAA** - \$100,000 for the restoration and reopening of the F.W. Fraley General Store

**Maryland State Arts Council** – \$5,000 Presenting and Touring grant for music at the 2025 Maryland Iron Festival

**Delaplaine Foundation** – \$10,000 Proceeding with Caution: Implementation of Traffic Calming Recommendations for Signage in Historic Catoctin Furnace

**HCWHA Mini Grant** – \$5,000 Virtual Reconstruction of the Slave Quarters at Catoctin Furnace

**Maryland Humanities SHINE grant** - \$10,000 for unobligated use

**African American Heritage Preservation Program** - \$150,000 to acquire the African American Cemetery

### **Miscellaneous Highlights**

**Interns** - We had five amazing interns work with CFHS in 2024: Dominic Curcio, Makala Harrison, John Whilhide, Jennifer Cooke, Drew Palmer, and Gyu Won

**Harriet Chapel** - At the end of December, Harriet Chapel prepared to welcome a new pastor. After 20 years of service, Pastor Sally Joyner-Giffin retired from her position at the chapel in November. Father Doug Smith moved away from the area at the end of December after two years of service. In January 2025 Harriet Chapel welcomed the Rev. Marti Steiner Unger to serve the parish. CFHS looks forward to working with Rev. Marti and the Harriet Chapel parishioners in the upcoming year.

**Summer** - Over the course of the summer, several videos produced by Belva King were uploaded to the CFHS YouTube channel. Belva King is a public historian focused on African American history in Frederick County. Belva has been making videos for more than 25 years and they are a treasure. More of Belva's videos will be uploaded in 2025.

**May** - The Bob's Hill Memory Landscape interpretive panel was installed at the Bob's Hill trail in Cunningham Falls State Park.

**June** – With generous funding from HCWHA, a new 20'x20' historic marquee tent arrived at Catoctin Furnace. The tent will be shared between Catoctin Furnace and Rose Hill.

**July** - Two new board members were elected, Makala Harrison (secretary) & Rhonda Tessier (board member at large)

**August** - The digital twin virtual reality reconstruction of the Ironmaster's Mansion went live after two years of work!

**Carty-Miller House & Hoke House** - The restoration of both structures is in progress.

**Ironmaster's Mansion** – stabilization of the walls of the Ironmaster's Mansion in in progress.

### **Special Tours**

DNR Museum and Furnace tour for administration staff - Feb. 20th

Frederick Co. Division of Aging and Independence "Seniors in the Park" group visit - Mar. 8th

Homewood Retirement Center guided tour - Apr. 16th

UK Travel Writers tour - May 19th

Frederick Co. Senior Recreation Council guided tour - May 30th

Ausherman Family Foundation meeting and tour - Jun. 13th

Buckinghams' Choice Retirement Center guided tour - Jun. 20th

MCHC Summer Teacher Institute visit - Jul. 15th

Black Hill Discovery Center girls camp tour - Aug. 13th

American Institute of Chemical Engineers visit - Sept. 7th

Women on the GoGo group tour - Sept. 14th

Leadership Frederick Co. History Day visit - Oct. 4th

Washington Co. Historical Society visit - Oct. 5th

Gettysburg College visit - Oct. 18th

Austrian tour operators and journalists visit - Oct. 22

Frederick Chapter DAR visit - Oct. 28th