Question

Between 1790 and 1860, enslaved and free blacks comprised about one-third of the total population of Montgomery County. These individuals lived, worked, socialized, created businesses, and died in the county. However, only select historical figures are even mentioned today when discussing Montgomery County's African American history. How can we do a better job of uncovering, documenting, and disseminating the history of African Americans in Montgomery County?
“We must go beyond textbooks, go out into the bypaths and untrodden depths of the wilderness and travel and explore and tell the world the glories of our journey.”

- John Hope Franklin
Artifactual Journey of Montgomery County, MD

Philip J. Merrill
CEO & Founder
Nanny Jack & Co, LLC
Artifacts courtesy of Nanny Jack & Co Archives
“General” James Jackson  
(c. 1778-1883)

• “John Fowler of Patapsco had been murdered by three of his Negroes: Dennis, Ned, and Kate, who were executed yesterday in Annapolis, May 9, 1805. “ (Baltimore American, May 13, 1805)

• Escaped from Beall’s Manor, Beallsville, Montgomery County, MD (estate of his second master Benjamin Waters) Christmas Day between 1811 and 1813

• “Whereas my negro man Jeff has absconded and is now absent. It is my will and desire that if he should be taken that he be made to serve until he should have made up all lost time and pay all expenses in getting him home.” (Will of Hannah Waters, 1825)
“Lucy, 1844”

- Cross stitch of a pot of flowers gifted to Lydia Staley-Phelps in 1844 by Lucy, a 10-year-old enslaved girl who was taught to read by Lydia.

- James K. Phelps and wife, Lydia Staley Phelps, were married in Montgomery County, MD in 1829 and the family lived there until they moved to Ohio in 1849

- In 1872, Montgomery County began to provide public education to Black students.
Grand United Order of Sons & Daughters, Brothers & Sisters of Moses (GUOSDBS of M)
Racial reckoning, new development reignite tension over commemoration of historic Black cemetery in Bethesda
Bayard Rustin
(1912-1987)

From Bayard Rustin Elementary School, 332 W Edmonston Dr, Rockville, MD to Washington Monument, Washington, D.C.
35 minutes (20 miles)
from Bayard Rustin…

"Through our ambrosia struggle for civil, political and economic rights in America, we face learned a fundamental lesson: the battle against human misery is irresistible. Our struggle for economic and political freedom is eternally linked to the struggle of Indians and Negroes who also seek freedom. If our government lacks compassion for these dispossessed human beings, it is difficult to believe that the same government can have much compassion for America's black minority, or for America's poor."


"Continuing black economic progress and equal opportunity are not contingent on the government providing "special treatment" to blacks. Any preferential approach postulates doing race, ethnic, religious, or sexual lines will only disrupt a multi-cultural society and lead to a backlash. However, special treatment can be provided to those who have been exploited or punished. If solutions are predicated on class lines, progress is halted because of inertia and fear of self-rooting, because all ethnic, religious, and racial groups have a stake in the solution."

"The King To Come"

The New Republic, March 9, 1987

"... coalitions are inescapable, answer to these problems may be... The issue in which coalition will join and how to make it responsive to your program. It will be the compromise. But the difference between a program and reality is the distinction between setting out to a principle and making smaller concessions to settle larger ones. The leader who shreds this task makes not his party but his lack of political sense."

"From Protest to Politics: The Future of the Civil Rights Movement" Corning, February 1965

"We need to protest the notion that our integration into American life, at such a long delayed, must now proceed in an atmosphere of competitive scarcity instead of in the security of abundance which technology makes possible."

"From Protest to Politics: The Future of the Civil Rights Movement" Corning, February 1965

"Nonviolence as a method has within it the demand for tolerance; it is a method and it is just. It is nonviolent, but as Gandhi has said, "freedom does not drop from the sky. One has to struggle and be willing to die for it"."

"The Negro and Nonviolence" Fellowship, October 1942

"Americans must understand that if our interest is simply to abolish apartheid, then virtually any tactics and strategies will do, including the liberation, revolts. But if our goal is democracy and the elimination of all forms of discrimination and exploitation, then the solution must be achieved through peaceful means and the legislative process."

"My Turn," Newsweek, October 20, 1966
Bayard Rustin’s
West Chester, PA Home