



**Sumner Hall
July 31 2017**

This spring Kent County, Maryland paid tribute to the workers who have made our community what it is today. Inspired by the Smithsonian’s traveling exhibition, ***The Way We Worked*** – which traced the contributions of American workers across the county in the over the past 150 years – our local institutions, organizations, businesses and individuals told stories of the ***Way We Worked in Kent County***. Lectures, discussions, exhibits, musical performances and dramatic presentations were featured across the county, from rural farmlands, to waterfront venues to in-town churches and stores.

Sumner Hall presented its local exhibition – ***The Black Work Experience in Kent County*** – on the first floor of the building. It included the following sections: (1) Free and Enslaved: the story the work of free blacks and slaves; (2) Founders and Soldiers: the documentation of the 471 African American soldiers and sailors from Kent County who served in the Civil War and the 28 who founded G. A. R. Post #25; (3) Tools of the Trades: an exhibit of antique farming, fishing and household tools contributed by community members and curated by a class of Washington College students; (4) Oral Work Histories: video and audio recordings compiled by high school and college students. The C. V. Starr Center for the Study of the American Experience at Washington College, Sumner Hall’s principal partner in bringing the Smithsonian to Kent County, produced three events: (1) a Keynote Lecture by Barbara Ehrenreich, author of *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*; (2) Walking Tour Though Working Chestertown which detailed historic work sites; and (3) Choppin’ at the Shop, a multimedia work of music, oral history, the art of conversation, and photography exploring the lives of black Americans who have lived and worked in Kent County.

Ancillary Programs and Exhibits took place across the county. During three months of programming, Kent County witnessed an explosion of 39 free public humanities and arts programs presented by more than 20 community partners. Hosted by local churches, businesses, storefronts, galleries, environmental groups, and government agencies, these programs included lectures, exhibitions, poster contests, book discussions, school field trips, and local history projects.

MUSEUM ON MAIN STREET (MoMS) IN KENT COUNTY: QUICK FACTS

- Kent County Population: 20,000**
- Chestertown Population: 5,252**
- Public School Enrollment: 2,106**
- Number of Volunteers Supporting Activities of Sumner Hall and Starr Center: 145**
- Number of Volunteer Hours contributed by the 145 Volunteers: 3,355**
- Value of Volunteer Hours: \$74,280**
- Attendance at Exhibition & Events Produced by Sumner Hall & Starr Center: 2,318**
- Attendance at all *Way We Worked* Events: 15,778**

A Note on Cost and Value for Sumner Hall to Produce MoMS	
Designated Grants and Donations	\$ 12,050
Sumner Hall General Donations	\$ 5,810
Cost to Sumner Hall to produce MoMS Exhibition	\$ 17,860
Value of In-Kind Support Raised by Sumner Hall through MoMS	\$ 89,470
Total Cash and In-Kind Value of MoMS Exhibition	\$107,330

**PARTNERS, VOLUNTEERS AND DONORS:
MUSEUM ON MAIN STREET IN
CHESTERTOWN**

Sumner Hall Leadership Team

Executive Committee, Board of Directors,
MoMS Co-Coordinator, Curator & Executive
Director:

1. Robert Ingersoll, President
2. Barbara Foster, Vice-President
3. Cheryl Vauls, Secretary
4. Yvette Hynson, Treasurer
5. Carolyn Brooks, MoMS Co-Coordinator
6. Lani Seikaly, Exhibition Curator
7. Nina Johnson, Executive Director

Consulting Team

1. Erin Counihan
2. Nathan Fackler
3. Thomas Hickman
4. Bill Leary
5. Jeanette Sherbondy
6. George Shivers
7. Francoise Sullivan
8. Cornell Taylor

**Starr Center for the Study of the American
Experience at Washington College**

Leadership Team

1. Adam Goodheart, Director
2. Patrick Nugent, Deputy Director
3. Jean Wortman, Assistant Director
4. Michael Buckley, Program Manager
5. Amanda Ceruzzi, Office Coordinator

Starr Center Volunteers

1. Amber Neely
2. Jeff Sade
3. Marianne Sade

MoMS Program Coordinators

1. Carolyn Brooks, Sumner Hall
2. Jean Wortman, Starr Center

Exhibition Curators

1. Jean Wortman
2. Lani Seikaly

Exhibition Construction Crew

1. Raven Bishop
2. Carolyn Brooks
3. Amanda Ceruzzi
4. Genevieve Croker
5. Marc Dykeman
6. Barbara Foster
7. David Foster
8. Yvette Hynson
9. Robert Ingersoll
10. Sam Moore
11. Gary Murray
12. Milford Murray
13. Dan Seikaly
14. Jean Wortman

Research / Education Team

1. Barbara in den Bosch
2. Erin Counihan
3. Nathan Fackler
4. Armond Fletcher
5. Barbara Foster
6. David Foster
7. Airlee Johnson
8. Nina Johnson
9. Susan Kenyon
10. Bill Leary
11. Kate Livie
12. Lucy Maddox
13. Davy McCall
14. Pat Nugent
15. Lani Seikaly
16. Jeanette Sherbondy
17. George Shivers
18. Ed Stack
19. Tom Timberman

Donors of Tools

1. Carolyn Brooks
2. Rick Elliott
3. Charles Fithian
4. Barbara Foster
5. Allen Johnson
6. David Keating
7. Rosalie Kuechler
8. Brenda Lyons
9. William Schindler
10. Richard Scofield
11. Mary Tazewell
12. James Vorhees
13. Chip Williams
14. Bernard Wilkerson

Tool Curators

1. Felicia Attor
2. Maria Betancur
3. Cherie Ciaudella
4. Mairin Corasaniti
5. Nick Gottemoller
6. Kathryn Kissam
7. Emily Kreider
8. Kim Lifton
9. Alyssa Longenecker
10. Mari Mullane
11. Alex Ramos
12. Emilie Sanborn
13. Alex Searles
14. Molly Shannon
15. Emily Van Driel

Washington College Student Interns

1. Isabela Antonio
2. Maria Betancur
3. Danielle Bing
4. Elizabeth Cassibry
5. Margie De La O Cedillo
6. Cherie Ciaudella
7. Mairin Corasaniti
8. Nick Coviello

9. Christopher Irving
10. Patrick Jackson
11. Cullen Joyce
12. Juliet Kaczmarczyk
13. Melissa Sue Lopez-Neely
14. Elijah McGuire-Berk
15. Maria Rodriguez
16. William Sade
17. Saoirse
18. Rose Stevens
19. Jessica Steves
20. Sara Underwood
21. David Ruano Velasquez
22. Gillian White
23. Stephaney Wilson

**Chopping' At the Shop
Musical Performers**

1. Lester Barrett
2. Irene Moore
3. Marlon Saunders
4. Karen Somerville

Receptions / Hospitality Team

1. Jane Barrett
2. Airlee Johnson
3. Ruby Johnson
4. Betsy Mohler
5. Cinda Pitcock
6. Daniel Smith
7. David Sobers
8. Sue Shawhan
9. Cheryl Vauls

Exhibition Hosts

1. Isabela Antonio
2. Maria Betancur
3. Danielle Bing
4. Jim Block
5. Barbara in den Bosch
6. Carolyn Brooks
7. Sarah Brown
8. Elizabeth Cassibry
9. Margie De La O Cedillo
10. Marin Corasaniti
11. Peggy Christie
12. Cheryl Hoopes
13. Yvette Hynson
14. Patrick Jackson
15. Nina Johnson
16. Ruby Johnson
17. Cullen Joyce
18. Sue Kenyon
19. Diane Klingelhofer
20. Shelia Lomax
21. Alice MacNaw
22. Nancy McCloy
23. Joyce Moody
24. Jennifer Moore
25. Carol Niemand
26. Vic Pfeiffer
27. Maria Rodriguez
28. Larry Samuels
29. Sue Shawhan
30. Christina Showalter
31. Rose Stevens
32. Sara Underwood
33. David Velasquez

34. Cheryl Vauls
35. Mary Walker
36. Jocelyn Williams
37. Stephaney Wilson

**Oral History Interviewees,
Students & Coordinators**

1. Valerie Anderson
2. Margie Baker
3. Jamie Barrett
4. Marcellene Beck
5. Catherine Boyer
6. Thomas Boyer, Jr.
7. Carolyn Brooks
8. Leslie Joe Brown
9. Michael Buckley
10. Margie De La O Cedillo
11. Jennifer Christie
12. Cherie Ciaudella
13. Shelly Clothier
14. LaMonte Cooke
15. Henry Emerson Cotton
16. Fernanda Dean
17. Ralph Deaton
18. Anna Mae Dorsey
19. Mary Fisher
20. Shontere Freeman
21. Clyde Freeman
22. Laurretta Freeman
23. Shonteze Freeman
24. Jay Goodman
25. Joan Groce
26. Tom Groce
27. Charles Pat Hackett
28. Mary Harmon
29. Charles Hilton Jr.
30. Joyce Hopkins
31. Olythea Hunley
32. Dorothy Hutchins
33. Charles Hutchins
34. Christopher Irving
35. Wesley Jackson
36. Airlee Johnson
37. Allen Johnson
38. Darius Johnson
39. Nina Johnson
40. Nivek Johnson
41. Ruby Johnson
42. Sam Johnson
43. Avon Jones
44. Crystal Jones
45. Xavier Jones
46. Cullen Joyce
47. Juliet Kaczmarczyk
48. Judith Kennard
49. Sherise Kennard
50. Dianelle Laney
51. Kristen Lindsey
52. Faye Little
53. James Little
54. Melissa Sue Lopez
55. Shelly McMath
56. Elijah McGuire-Berk
57. Rosa McGreer
58. Lisa Moody
59. Irene Moore
60. Robert Miller
61. Gary Murray
62. Sheba Needam-Thomas
63. Stephen Neukam

64. Monique Saunders Patrick
65. Joan Phillips
66. Gloristeen Powell-Pinkett
67. Charlotte Potts
68. John Queen
69. Alison Ramiaka
70. Wilford Rochester
71. Maria Rodriguez
72. James Sampson
73. Saoirse
74. Marlon Saunders
75. Cheryl Saunders
76. James Saunders
77. Sylvester Sewell
78. Ruth Shoge
79. Brenda Shorter
80. Chris Shorter
81. Chris Singleton
82. Betty Smith
83. Jessica Steves
84. Earl Taylor
85. Sherrie Tilghman
86. Howard Tiller
87. Kyra Tiller
88. Paul Tue
89. Pierre Tue
90. Jane Tunis
91. Gabriel Warner
92. Stephaney Wilson
93. Mary Walker
94. Morris Walker
95. Margaret Wallace
96. Elise Walley
97. Joyce Walley
98. Robin Watson
99. Erica Wicks
100. Amy Wilson
101. Darlene Wilson
102. Dorothy Wilson
103. Keith Wilson
104. Jean Wortman
105. Evelyn Young

**Community Institutional & Business
Partners for Programming and Events**

1. African American School House
2. Amy Ferris Lynn Senior Center
3. Atlantic Tractor, LLC
4. Bayside HOYAS
5. Betterton Heritage Museum
6. Big Mixx
7. Bookplate
8. Bordley History Center
9. Chestertown Arts & Entertainment District
10. Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum
11. Chestertown Main Street
12. Cliffs School Museum
13. Downtown Chestertown Association
14. Emmanuel Episcopal Church
15. Enoch Pratt Free Library
16. Freeman Brothers Masonry
17. Garfield Center for the Arts
18. Greater Chestertown Initiative
19. Historical Society of Kent County
20. Kenneth Walley Funeral Services
21. Kent County Arts Council
22. Kent County Board of Education
23. Kent County Public Library
24. Kent Museum
25. Knocks Folly Visitor Center

26. Massey Air Museum
27. Massoni Gallery
28. Mt. Olive AME Church
29. New Christian Chapel of Love
30. Radcliffe Creek School
31. RiverArts
32. Rock Hall Marine Heritage Center
33. Rock Hall Museum
34. Sultana Education Foundation
35. Tolchester Beach Revisited Museum
36. Upper Shore Workforce Investment Bd
37. Walley Funeral Services
38. Waterman's Museum

**Washington College Partners - in addition
to Starr Center**

1. Academy of Lifelong Learning (WCALL)
2. Assistant Dean's Office
3. Center for Career Development
4. College Relations and Marketing
5. Department of Anthropology
6. Department of Education
7. Department of English
8. Human Resources
9. Kohl Gallery
10. Miller Library & Academic Technology
11. *The Elm* – student newspaper

Media and Marketing Partners

1. Benchworks
2. Chestertown Spy
3. College Relations and Marketing,
4. Washington College
5. Kent County News
6. Kent County Office of Tourism
7. WKHS 90.5 FM
8. WYPR 88.1 FM

Patrons and Friends of MoMS

1. Barbara & David Foster
2. Gayle & Robert Ingersoll
3. Marguerite & Larry Samuels
4. Lani & Dan Seikaly
5. Jean & James Wortman

**Corporate and Institutional Donors to
MoMS in Chestertown**

Emerald Level: Benchworks
Ruby Level: The Peoples Bank
Opal Level: Phoenix Initiatives & Silver Hill Farm
Topaz Level: Chesapeake Bank and Trust, Dixon Valve and Coupling Company, Grasmick Lumber Company, Kent County Arts Council, Shrewsbury Parish Church The Finishing Touch

Sumner Hall would like to express its appreciation to the following organizations for the support that made it possible to offer *The Way We Worked in America and in Kent County Maryland:*

- Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Services
- Smithsonian *Youth Access Grant* Initiative
- Maryland Humanities
- Eastern Shore Heritage, Inc., Stories of the Chesapeake
- Kent County Commissioners
- Town of Chestertown



Attendance: The Way We Worked in America and in Kent County, Maryland

This spring Kent County paid tribute to the workers who have made our community what it is today. Inspired by the Smithsonian’s traveling exhibition, *The Way We Worked* – which traces the contributions of American workers across the county over the past 150 years – our local institutions, organizations and businesses told stories of the *Way We Worked in Kent County*. Lectures, discussions, exhibits, musical performances and dramatic presentations were featured. Note that the events produced by Sumner Hall and its principal partner, the C. V. Starr Center of Washington College, are shaded in light blue on the following table.

Kent County Population: 20,000
Chestertown Population: 5,252
Public School Enrollment: 2,106
Attendance - The Way We Worked Events Across Kent County: 15,778

MoMS Events – At Sumner Hall and Across Kent County			
Date	Time & Location	Event Description & Attendance Notes	Attendance
1/1 – 4/15	Sumner Hall, Kent County High School, C.V. Starr Center and Other Sites in County	<i>Oral History Project.</i> Students from Kent County High School & Washington College and Marlon Saunders conduct oral histories about work experiences of African American in Kent County	106
3/1 - 4/30	W-S 10:00 am – 3:00 pm Historical Society 301 High Street, Chestertown	<i>Made in Kent County.</i> Exhibit sponsored by the Historical Society of Kent County	400
3/15 – 3/31	Poster Contest Kent County Middle School 402 E. Campus Ave., Chestertown	<i>Poster Contest: The Smithsonian Comes to Chestertown.</i> Teacher Ed Stack produced contest and than posted the 10 “best” at schools in the county.	30
3/3	4:00 pm Bordley History Center 301 High Street, Chestertown	<i>Maryland’s First Workforce: Indentured Servitude in the Chesapeake</i> , lecture by Alexa Silver, sponsored by the Historical Society of Kent County. Reception follows the lecture.	55
3/3	10:00 am – 3:00 pm Garfield Center for the Arts 210 High Street, Chestertown	<i>School Houses of Kent County.</i> Exhibits by Radcliffe Creek School students presented at the Garfield Center for the Arts. (90 students (100% of the student body attended)	180
3/24 - 4/9	W-F 1:00 - 6:00 pm Sat. & Sun 11:00 am - 4:00 pm Kohl Gallery, WC, Chestertown	<i>100 Proof: Art Works</i> student exhibition at Washington College’s Kohl Gallery. Exhibition reception: March 31, 5-7 pm	66
3/29	6:00 pm – 8:00 pm Sumner Hall 206 S. Queen Street, Chestertown	Exhibition host & docent training by Maryland Humanities’ consultant, Kate Livie.	18
3/30 - 5/20	Ongoing Check kentcountyartscouncil.org for methods of accessing the “Work Poem of the Day.”	Kent County residents have recorded poems that address the topic of work. The Kent County Arts Council has produced audio recordings of original and classic poems released daily, with a different reader and poem for every day of the Smithsonian Exhibitions’ stay in Kent County. (No count available.)	
3/31	5:30 pm - 7:00 pm Sultana Education Foundation 200 Cross Street, Chestertown	<i>Reception and Preview Party</i> for exhibition organizers, sponsors and volunteers at the Sultana Education Foundation. Guests may walk to Sumner Hall to witness the ribbon cutting and preview the exhibition. This was the official opening of the exhibition	200
3/31 - 5/19	W-S 1 0:00 am – 3:00 pm Historical Society 301 High Street, Chestertown	<i>Women in the Workforce.</i> Exhibit sponsored by the Historical Society of Kent County	400
3/31 - 5/19	M-F 8:00 am - 6:00 pm Sat. 8:00 am -3:00 pm 621 Morgnec Rd., Chestertown	<i>Agriculture on Display: 1900 – 1950.</i> Exhibit offered by Atlantic Tractor, LLC. – antique farm machines. 10% of the customers during this time period stopped to look at exhibition.	400

4/1 - 5/20	T-Th, 9:00 am - 1:00 pm Friday, noon - 7:00 pm Saturday, 9:00 am - 4:00 pm Sunday noon - 4:00 pm Sumner Hall 206 S. Queen Street, Chestertown	Sumner Hall was open to the public for 30 hours per week during the exhibition. The Smithsonian's <i>The Way We Worked</i> traveling exhibition was displayed on the second floor along with a Kid's Activity Corner. First Floor: <i>The Black Labor Experience in Kent County: Free and Enslaved; Founders and Soldiers; Tools of the Trades, and Contemporary Work Stories</i> . The oral histories were housed at Sumner Hall in form of videos and audiotapes.	1,436
4/1 - 4/30	M, T, Th, 9:00 am – 6:00 pm W, 9:00 am – 8:00 pm F, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm S, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm Kent County Library 408 High Street, Chestertown	<i>A Pictorial Look Back at Work in Maryland</i> . Sponsor: Kent County Public Library. Exhibit features how work was done in several key Maryland Industries. Materials courtesy of the Maryland Department, Enoch Pratt Free Library / Maryland's State Library Resource Center.	500
4/1- 5/20	Mon-Thurs: 8:00 am to 2:00 am Friday: 8:00 am to 10:00 pm Saturday: 10:00 am to 8:00 pm Sunday: Noon to 2:00 am Washington College, Chestertown	" <i>The Way We Worked</i> " at Washington College, presented by The Library & Academic Technology Group was displayed in the cases in the entrance to the library. The exhibit was there for 49 days and an average of 100 people came to the library each day.	4,900
4/3 - 5/20	Weekdays 9:00 am – 3:00 pm Saturdays 10:00 am – 3:00 pm Amy Ferris Lynn Senior Center Morgnec Road, Chestertown	<i>Black Baseball – Post World War II in Kent and Queen Anne's Counties</i> . Sponsor: Ralph Deaton. Exhibit was displayed in a prominent place where all visitors to the Center would see it. Exhibit was there for 40 days with average of 50 people per day.	2,000
4/3 - 4/20	Weekdays 9:00 am – 3:00 pm Saturdays 10:00 am – 3:00 pm Amy Ferris Lynn Senior Center Morgnec Road, Chestertown	<i>Scenes Around Kent County – Past and Present</i> . Sponsor: Jane Tunis, Home Schooling Program. Exhibit was displayed in a prominent place where all visitors to the Center would see it. Exhibit was there for 40 days with average of 50 people per day.	2,000
4/5	10:00 am – noon Sumner Hall 206 S. Queen Street, Chestertown	Exhibition host & docent training by Maryland Humanities' consultant, Kate Livie.	16
4/5	7:00 pm – 8:30 pm Sultana Education Building 200 Cross Street, Chestertown	<i>The Multi-generational Workplace</i> , a panel discussion and workshop led by Dr. Andrea Lange, Interim Provost, and Carolyn Burton, Director of Human Resources, Washington College, with panelists from WC-ALL.	35
4/7	5:00 pm Kohl Gallery Washington College, Chestertown	<i>100 Proof: Art Works</i> Gallery Talk by Washington College sophomore and student artist Madi Shenk.	45
4/7	4:00 pm Bordley History Center 301 High Street, Chestertown	<i>Against All Odds: African American Businesses in Chestertown before the Civil War</i> . Lecture by Dr. Lucy Maddox sponsored by the Historical Society of Kent County. Reception followed lecture.	40
4/8 & 4/22	10:00 am – 4:00 pm Quaker Neck Road, Chestertown	<i>Cliffs School Museum</i> open for visitors.	10
4/8, 9,29,30, 5/6,13	Noon – 2:00 pm African American Schoolhouse Chestertown	<i>African American One Room Schoolhouse Museum</i> . Sponsors: Irene Moore, Elizabeth Hynson and Edna Phillips. Extended Hours were arranged with advanced notice.	20
4/12	5:00 pm Kent County Public Library 408 High Street, Chestertown	"Man of All Work" – <i>Black Men and Women's Work in Richard Wright's Fiction</i> . Dr. Alisha Knight, Associate Professor of English and American Studies at Washington College, joins the Book Group at Kent County Public Library to lead a discussion on the complex themes in Richard Wright's short story: "Man of All Work." New members are welcome to join the book club t an time. Refreshments served.	16
4/14	5:30 pm Hynson Lounge, Hodson Hall Washington College, Chestertown	<i>Keynote Lecture by Barbara Ehrenreich, author of Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America</i> . Sponsor: The C.V. Starr Center for the Study of the American Experience, WC	156
4/16 - 5/20	Sat. & Sun.: 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm 4/17: 11:00 am – 2:00 pm Emmanuel Episcopal Church Cross & High Streets, Chestertown	<i>Freeman Brothers Masonry</i> . Sponsors: Clyde Freeman, Mt. Olive AME Church & MOTA/CATS Team.	300
4/29 & 5/6	10:00 am -12:00 pm Other Times as Arranged Sumner Hall 206 S. Queen Street, Chestertown	<i>A Walk or Bike Tour Through Working Chestertown</i> , hosted by the C.V. Starr Center for the Study of the American Experience. Tours start and finish at Sumner Hall. 4/29: 18; 5/6: 16; Gunston Walk: 25; WC Alums: 14; Bike Tours: 8	81
4/29 & 5/6	10:00 am – 4:00 pm Kent County Public Library Annex 408 High Street, Chestertown	<i>A History of the Kenneth Walley Funeral Home</i> . Sponsors: Joyce & Elise Walley.	70

4/30 5/6	4/30: 1:30 pm – 3:00 pm 5/5: 10:00 am – 4:00 pm Emmanuel Episcopal Church Cross & High Streets, Chestertown	<i>Black School Bus Drivers of Kent County: Past and Present.</i> Sponsors: Anna Mae Dorsey and Mary Fisher.	300
5/3 - 5/27	T-F: 11:00 am - 4:00 pm Sat 10:00 am - 4:00 pm Sun 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm Chestertown RiverArts 315 High Street, Chestertown	RiverArts' <i>At Work</i> exhibition provides a snapshot of the work we do and have done in this community. Stories and photos of employees of Vita Foods, a pickling plant where many African Americans worked in the 1940's through 1973, were featured along with current employees at Dixon Valve. Artist renditions of workers were also featured. Opening: 387; Other days: 876.	1,263
5/6	10:00 am - 4:00 pm Various Locations in Kent County	<i>Driving Tour of the Museums of Kent County:</i> Historical Society of Kent County at the Bordley History Center, Sumner Hall, Massey Air Museum; Kent Farm Museum (agriculture, rural heritage); Knock's Folly Visitor Center (farming, native American Tockwogh tribe); Betterton Heritage Museum (fishing and old recreation resorts); Cliffs School Museum; Rock Hall Museum; Rock Hall Waterman's Museum and Rock Hall Marine Restoration and Heritage Center.	90
5/5	4:00 pm Bordley History Center 301 High Street, Chestertown	<i>Eastern Shore Women at Work during World War II</i> , a presentation by Dr. Kara French, sponsored by the Historical Society of Kent County	57
5/10	2:00 pm – 5:00 pm Kent County Public Library 408 High Street, Chestertown	<i>The Way We Work Job Fair</i> , hosted by the Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board.	79
5/10	6:00 pm Kent County Public Library 408 High Street, Chestertown	<i>Those Were the Days: The Golden Age of the Rock Hall Watermen.</i> Tom McHugh, Director Emeritus of The Mainstay in Rock Hall, and Ron Fithian, Rock Hall Town Manager, showed selections from their award-winning project: <i>Those Were the Days: The Golden Age of Rock Hall Watermen.</i> Refreshments served.	35
5/18	7:00 p.m. Garfield Center for the Arts 210 High Street Chestertown	<i>Choppin' At The Shop</i> - A multi-media work of music, the art of conversation, and photography as it relates to Black Americans who work or have worked in Kent County. Live performance: 250; video shows at Sumner Hall during following week: 55	305
5/5 & 5/7	10:00 am – 4:00 pm Emmanuel Episcopal Church Cross & High Streets, Chestertown	<i>African Americans' Education System in Kent County Prior to Desegregation.</i>	250
5/20	5:00 pm -7:00 pm Place TBD	Closing "Thank You" Reception to honor everyone who made <i>The Way We Worked</i> a success in Kent County.	55
TOTAL COUNTY-WIDE ATTENDANCE			15,914

Reflections

Hosting the Smithsonian's Institution's *The Way We Worked* at Sumner Hall, Chestertown, Maryland

Descendants of the African American veterans of the U. S. Civil War built the Charles Sumner Post of the Grand Army of the Republic (G. A. R. Post #25) around 1908. After several decades of intensive use, the building fell into ruin in the mid 20th century and was scheduled for demolition. Rescued from the wrecking ball by a coalition of preservationists, foundations and philanthropic citizens, the building was lovingly and authentically restored to its original condition. Sumner Hall is one of only two African American G .A. R. buildings still standing; it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In July 2015 the 501(d)(3) nonprofit corporation owner of the building set up a small exhibit describing the renovation process and the role of the G.A. R. in the Community. It also offered a variety of educational programs, civic discussions, musical events and art exhibits at the hall, often in collaboration with other arts and civic organizations.

When Sumner Hall, and its principal partner, The C. V. Starr Center for the Study of the American Experience at Washington College, learned that it had been awarded the Museum on Main Street exhibition, a new chapter in the life of the historic site opened. Sumner Hall seized this opportunity as way to develop meaningful exhibits that would better stake its place as a crucial site of remembrance and reflection in the community – a historic site, a museum, a meeting hall and performance space. Sumner Hall is supported by a diverse group of citizens committed to exploring the unique and universal experiences of African Americans in Kent County as a lens onto American culture, past and present.

With a year to prepare, the leadership teams of Sumner Hall and the C. V. Starr Center combined forces to mobilize the community to celebrate *The Way We Worked in Kent County, Maryland*. Sumner Hall also took the opportunity to develop exhibitions that could become part of its permanent collection. The collaborative process and program is described as follows by Patrick Nugent, Deputy Director of the C. V. Starr Center:

“Having applied and been granted a Smithsonian Institution’s Museum on Main Street traveling exhibition entitled, *The Way We Worked*, Washington College and Sumner Hall together mobilized a three-month, county-wide series of citizen-produced programs and exhibitions encouraging thousands of participants toward historical reflection and community dialogue. Supporting Sumner Hall’s mission “to celebrate the black cultural heritage of the past in order to create bright possibilities for the future,” Washington College contributed its strengths in liberal arts education, research, and public programming to catalyze inter-generational and inter-racial explorations of race, class, work, and community planning.

Exhibitions were co-curated by community tradition-bearers, scholars, and college students, empowering citizens of diverse backgrounds to work together to tell their own often-untold stories. Across three months of programming, Kent County witnessed an explosion of 39 free public humanities and arts programs presented by more than 20 community partners. Hosted by local churches, businesses, storefronts, art galleries, environmental groups, and government agencies, these programs included lectures, exhibitions, walking tours, poster contests, book discussions, school field trips, and oral history projects. This wide-ranging and grassroots approach to fostering civic dialogue created a moment for the community to pause and reflect – to consider together its diverse work experiences and shared economic histories while also discussing the county’s economic potential and planning policies moving forward.

By bringing so many diverse partners into the process, Sumner Hall and Washington College have significantly increased their potential for future partnerships and outreach. Sumner Hall itself welcomed over 1,400 guests between March 30 and May 20, considerably expanding its mailing lists and membership totals. In addition to visitors, the museum developed relationships with 8 contributing sponsors, 43 institutional partners, and

many media outlets. Welcoming over 250 students on K-12 field trips, this emerging museum also developed promising partnerships with several local schools in the area, working with teachers to integrate the museum's historical materials into lesson plans and writing assignments.

Likewise, Washington College provided its students and faculty rich opportunities for civic engagement and experiential learning. 11 academic departments across the campus, from business management to art history, incorporated Sumner Hall's materials into curriculum and internship opportunities. A public history lecturer, for example, trained her first-year composition students to research and write exhibit labels for the Sumner Hall exhibition, while a literature professor hosted a book-club conversation on Richard Wright's *Man of All Work* at the local library. Furthermore, the Starr Center created 23 paid student internships dedicated to exhibition research, promotion, and production – a list including 8 students who worked with community members to record over 90 oral history interviews on the subject of work and race in Kent County.”

On February 24, 2017— just one month before the exhibition was to open—Dr. Lonnie Bunch, Founding Director of the National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC), paid his second visit to Sumner Hall. During his participation in a roundtable discussion that included the key individuals and organizations developing the exhibition, he said:

“Let me tell you how humbled I am that you're doing all this. I was one of the people involved years ago with the Museum on Main Street, and the hope was that a museum is a safe space, a place that people trust and where people can cross lines and cross boundaries and come together.

What you have done is really the best of what this could be. This is something that allows us to not only focus on what divides us, but to let us remember what brings us together – the things we share, the common stories. You've recognized the most important thing a community can do is to remember. Because by remembering you not only honor the past, you shape the future. I am just so pleased the way you are doing this. You've taken all the right steps; you've got enough people around the table! The key is to really figure out how to make sure this ripples long after. . .what are the things you're going to do that are going to allow this to live on?”

This exhibition has created a solid foundation that will better enable Sumner Hall to become a viable modern museum, committed to preserving and promoting the rich African American history of Kent County. The task ahead is to find ways to answer Dr. Bunch's challenge: What are we going to do to allow this history, this engaged citizenry and this community momentum to live on?

The answer is very much on the minds of Sumner Hall and the community that supports and surrounds its mission. With such engagement, the organization's vision will no doubt continue to evolve into the future. However, the Museum on Main Street project has certainly given Sumner Hall a concrete sense of its power and potential moving forward. It knows that it is critical to maintain close partnerships with local and regional schools, business owners, churches, colleges and museums. It recognizes the critical importance of public participation in designing and producing future exhibitions and programs. It realizes that rich collaborative opportunities are likely to come from partners across the region. It believes that the future of Sumner Hall – like its past – is very rich indeed.

On Visiting *The Way We Worked* at Sumner Hall
James Dissette, Writer and Contributing Editor, *Chestertown Spy*
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I visited Sumner Hall the other day to look at the new Smithsonian exhibit, “The Way We Worked” and its allied display, “The Black Labor experience in Kent County: *Free and Enslaved; Founders and Soldiers; Tools of the Trades and Contemporary Work Stories.*”

I wanted a break from the interminable news about chemical warfare, battle armadas and the ever-widening divisions between countries, political groups, ethnicities and the kaleidoscope of social classifications that ake up the human race.

It was quiet that afternoon in the small building on Queen Street as I walked among the artifacts on the first floor, looking at tools of the trades and read about the lives of some of Kent County Africans who had succeeded in building businesses and lives, many within a few hundred feet of Sumner Hall’s location.

I tried to imagine even the faintest outline of the black experience in America. It’s easy to read history or watch documentaries about the past, but easier for that experience to lack a connection to the core of our empathy. If we have it at all. After all, what has the past to do with us? But a continuum of time and its events is still part of the whole and the voice of the American and world narrative is still being spoken – at least today – in every activity from Johannesburg to Cincinnati.

It’s there in “imagining” that for me a kind of discordance begins. It starts with the geophysical, sitting in a building restored to honor free blacks and slaves who fought and died for the North during the Civil War, on a block of town that for generations had been the home of African American families, a town that held slave auctions overlooking a river often teeming with sailboats. I doubt a black man or woman in the 18th century would delight as much seeing a white sail on the horizon. We are a long way from the kidnappings in Senegal and the depravity of the middle passage. Or are we? If 150 years after the Emancipation Proclamation human bondage is no longer the coin of the realm, its consequences—the constant re-igniting of discrimination against “the other”—still poisons us.

But what is the dissonance, the clattering of voices—not only ours, but the ones we inherited—that keep me listening as if to locate by some magical sonar a clear narrative about the things that divide us and make our lives smaller by suffocating us with prejudice, fear and disdain?

I see my father sitting at a desk in the corner of the room but it’s 50 years ago. He is in his Navy Captain’s uniform and I hear laughter around him as he tells a racist joke. The party fades, the laughter dissolves.

The two exhibits at Sumner Hall are related but different in their scope. The first floor personalizes the black work experience with names and excerpts of historical records of their lives. The second floor is a lens pulled back to a panoramic shot of the wider American work experience. Here, a labyrinth of photo panels has been set up, each panel depicting people at work —black, white, Asian, men, women—all doing their jobs: women switchboard operators and train mechanics, astronauts, watermen. While it is impossible to overlook the photograph of an African-American waiter entering a train dining car filled with well-dressed white passengers, it does not close my self-enquiry.

The Smithsonian, by deftly widening the scope shared work, has invited local organizations to share in some of the historical heavy lifting, at least as far as the sharper focus on the African American experience and although the stories reveal many successes of overcoming harsh indignities it should not be lost upon us that, like a good photographic image, negative space defines it.

And there is my father, sitting at his desk behind one of the Smithsonian panels. It is 1965, 20 years after submarine combat in the Pacific and he is opening a letter, reading it, thinking about it. "It's from one of my torpedo men, thanking me for saving his life. One of the best damn black torpedo man's mate in the g'dam Navy," he says. But 'black' is not the word he uses.

I'm confused. Praise, derision, and contempt are a bewildering choir of messages. How do we unlearn the voices within us? And where did they come from?

Like a primitive abacus, the brain calculates and classifies the differences: other, not other, good, bad, less than, equal. The book of natural selection and adaption explaining the difference in skin color and nutritional metabolism, tribalism, and in-group trust. The human genome project even points back as far as the Pleistocene era as a marker for human discrimination between the loved in-group and the feared out-group. We have to look no farther than the recent immigration ban to feel the ancient sting of fear of otherness.

For the two exhibits at Sumner Hall to work synchronously, to walk back and forth in our minds between a 19th-century ex-slave and a white woman astronaut—Sally Ride is displayed—is to enter the cardinal inquiry. For a few minutes we can begin to sense that in our endeavor to survive we are the same, building things with our hands, working as mechanics and farmers, physicians and taxi drivers, whatever it takes to get along, to succeed, to advance, Walt Whitman's universal man. I walk through the gauntlet of the Smithsonian installation and stare into the faces of people at work. They are us. Working to live.

It is 1954, my father, mother and I are driving to Florida. At a rest stop, there is an African American, old to my 6 years. On his bicycle, he has all his worldly possessions wrapped in cloth. My father gets out of the car, talks to the man for some minutes, reaches into his pocket and gives the man some money. He returns, says the man migrates to Florida every year on his bicycle.

Tomorrow he will tell a racist joke but for a moment I saw an act of kindness override his inherited attitude. It gets complicated like that and it's up to us sort through and re-evaluate our own biases and open our minds to the understanding that we are all passengers. Otherwise, we continue to throw fuel onto the burning cross.

The Smithsonian, Maryland Humanities, Sumner Hall and Washington College's C.V. Starr Center for the Study of the American Experience exhibit give us a place to have this kind of meditation. It's a serious gift and Sumner Hall is the perfect place to unwrap it.

Additional Comments

Ben Joiner, Teacher, Radcliffe Creek School. “The Radcliffe Creek School community was very excited to have the opportunity to partner with other organizations and to be a part of the MOMS project. The Smithsonian has generated a great way for communities to come together in a shared experience. We had all 90 of our students participate in this project. The students learned quite a bit about local history and how schools functioned throughout the years. The exhibits included not only displays of art works, replicas of artifacts, models, and pictures, but a student produced video and a drama performance. It also allowed the students to explore some of the values that we try to instill in our students, encouraging positive citizenship, kindness, and collaboration.”

Elise Walley, Owner, Kenneth Walley Funeral Home. “It was nice to know and see what the black community has to offer in Kent County. You hear about it, but to see different exhibits for yourself was most uplifting and heartfelt. Although it’s black history, it is all our history, because it is what our county was built on. On behalf of my mother and I, we really appreciate your committee included the Kenneth Walley Funeral Service in “The Way We Work” exhibit. Thank you so much for thinking of our business. That was the first time we’ve been back in the old funeral home since we had it.”

Julie Markin, Washington College professor of Anthropology. “My Anthropology course (ANT 137-10: Cultures and Environments of the Chesapeake) visited Sumner Hall and the Smithsonian exhibit on May 2. Jeanette Sherbondy was very generous in hosting us and guiding us first through the lower floor, Kent County exhibit. The goal of the visit was to enhance the course material related to the experience of African Americans in the region primarily through the 19th century [but also as a means of understanding the foundations of 21st century issues]. Class readings addressed the work and cultural life of Africans as slaves but also as freed men and women. The exhibits at Sumner Hall, and especially the depth of experience and passion that Jeanette brought to the displayed items and texts, absolutely enhanced the course material, bringing it to life and making something more tangible and thus more digestible and memorable.”

Amanda Tuttle-Smith, Curator Historical Society of Kent County. “I thought it was well-organized, well-managed, and great publicity for Sumner Hall and C.V Starr. It definitely brought the town, and the non-profit organizations of the county together in a way I have not witnessed prior. I thoroughly enjoyed contributing. The best part of the project was the teamwork the event and exhibit created.”

Daniel P. McDermott, Executive Director, Upper Shore Workplace Investment Board. “The MoMS project provided the impetus for us to hold a job fair in Chestertown. We have been talking about doing this for a few years and MoMS gave us a reason to do so. The impact on our organization is that MoMS pushed us to be responsive to both job seekers and employers. The event was held at the Chestertown Library; 12 employers that were actively hiring and 67 job seekers met to discuss employment opportunities. We do not know how many jobs were filled as a result of the job fair. This event raised the profile of our organization and the way that the community was able to come together in the MoMS initiative was exemplary.”

Andy Goddard, Executive Director, Chestertown RiverArts. “MOMS provided a wonderful opportunity to create other exhibits and activities around the theme of Work. It allowed the whole town and county to market events as part of a package. Attaching our activities to the Smithsonian exhibition upgraded the marketing possibilities for all of us. RiverArts gained by having additional avenues for promoting our event and we had a larger than usual viewing audience with a greater diversity of attendees - including many folks who had never been in the gallery before. MoMS unified the community in positive ways as over 30 organizations staged companion exhibits and events.”

Kent County News Editorial Board. “We applaud the efforts of everyone in going all in to broaden the Smithsonian’s “The Way We Worked.” The exhibits serve to remind us of the integral role hardworking men and women played throughout history in building our community and of the progress we have made. Let us take inspiration from these stories and use them to continue shaping a better future for all.”