



2023 Grant Recipients of the Miller History Fund Announced

BALTIMORE, Md. (February 27, 2023) – The Maryland Center for History and Culture (MCHC) is honored to present the ten winners of this year’s Thomas V. “Mike” Miller Jr. History Fund, re-granting \$200,000 in funding statewide to Maryland’s historical collections stewards.

The Miller History Fund is made possible by an annually recurring allocation from the State’s Preservation of Cultural Arts Fund, proposed by late Senate President Emeritus Thomas V. “Mike” Miller Jr., for which the fund was renamed in 2021. Over its first four years, this grant program has invested a total of \$800,000 to 43 historical organizations throughout Maryland.

The Miller History Fund’s core objective is to build the capacity of history organizations. MCHC ensures this program is adaptable and responsive to the needs of Maryland’s diverse public history sector through open conversations with applicants and ongoing survey efforts. The 2023 funding cycle brought several changes including special consideration of projects that support Maryland’s efforts to develop an innovative and inclusive commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution in 2026.

“MCHC refined the program’s funding priorities to our state’s historical societies, museums, community archives, and other stewards who care for historical collections and share them with the public. Since our rebrand in 2020, we’ve worked to restructure the institution slowly and deliberately to better meet the needs of our community, and supporting our state’s network of history museums and archives remains key in expanding and maintaining this mission,” said Katie Caljean, President and CEO when asked about changes to this year’s eligibility criteria.

Within Maryland’s larger public and private network of cultural funders that includes special support for historic preservation and the fine arts, the Miller History Fund is the only grant program with a special focus on historical collections. “Historical collections are the foundation of heritage tourism, new research, social studies education, and countless opportunities for creativity and discovery. These are irreplaceable resources that take investment to share and preserve.” said Caljean.

David Belew, Vice President of Grants and Government Affairs spoke on the continued need for funding saying, “While increased support for Maryland’s history museums and archives is needed, MCHC is proud to showcase our sector’s resourcefulness, innovation, and the ways historical collections build community beyond the archive. This is especially evident in this year’s grantee projects, ranging from more traditional collections care initiatives, to larger scale projects like the launch of new fundraising initiatives.”

Dr. Iris Barnes of Hosana Community House Inc., a Harford County group focused on the region’s African American history, said, “We know that working with proven professionals is key for the success of our capacity-building goals. We appreciate the Miller History Fund helping us to keep this important history and culture alive for the next generation to know and grow.”

Several projects integrated collections inventorying and conservation efforts with community outreach.

"Since we acquired our 1,600 16mm titles in 2015, we have wanted to be able to share them with a wider audience but costs for proper storage, transfer, and presentation were prohibitive," said Caitlin McGrath, Executive Director of Friends of Greenbelt Theatre, Inc. "We are thrilled that the Miller History Grant funds will enable us to share these films both publicly in our theater as well as launch our latest educational venture, taking these films into schools with a mobile AV unit to enhance arts integration learning in classrooms around the county," said Caitlin McGrath, Executive Director of Friends of Greenbelt Theatre, Inc. and 2023 awardee with big plans for expanding public access to film in Prince George's County.

With over 300 history museums sharing Maryland's irreplaceable heritage, MCHC is honored to continue to uplift passionate work in every corner of the state.

Awarded projects for fiscal year 2023 are:

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY

- **The Lost Towns Project** - LTP is committed to increasing public knowledge of 13,000 years of Native American Heritage by expanding public access to authentic artifacts and academic discoveries at and around Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary - an Anne Arundel County Public Park.

BALTIMORE CITY

- **African American Fire Fighters Historical Society** - AAFHS plans to transform a 20-year abandoned, 115-year-old firehouse in East Baltimore into The International Black Fire Fighter Museum & Safety Education Center. This organization works to fill the void of valuable contributions from African Americans in fire service history.
- **Mid-Atlantic Regional Moving Image Archive** - The Mid-Atlantic Regional Moving Image Archive (MARMIA) strives for equity, bringing on a professional consultant to conduct an equity audit and provide recommendations for MARMIA's governance to align with their mission and values.
- **Pennsylvania Avenue Black Arts and Entertainment District** - The Black Arts District established The Historical Photography Project (HPP), an initiative tackling the historical disinvestments that have worsened the loss of cultural memory of historic sites for communities in West Baltimore. They will optimize funding to sustain their organizational values by increasing public engagement to prevent the further loss of Black cultural memories.

HARFORD COUNTY

- **Hosana Community House** - Hosanna Community House Inc. will revitalize their organizational goals for programmatic growth and sustainability. Using public programs, exhibits and related research, site tours and other historic and cultural events, the organization will facilitate sustainable and prolonged community engagement.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

- **Bethesda Historical Society** - Bethesda Historical Society will optimize their cataloging, digitization, preservation and exhibition of their collection of Bethesda artifacts. With their thousands of items, BHS is eager to properly preserve their collections for continued public enjoyment and education.
- **Sandy Spring Museum** - Sandy Spring Museum will address historical inequities in their cataloging practices by establishing an Equity in Metadata strategy. The intent of this project is to access the Black history contained in documents created by whites as part of a national

- **Montgomery History** - Montgomery History will digitize thousands of property insurance policies from the records of Mutual Fire Insurance Company of Montgomery County, between 1848-1925, solidifying some of the only written evidence of physical infrastructure and personal property from the time. These records have the potential to provide unique historical context from which archaeologists, genealogists, historians, and preservationists can understand the physical landscape during this time.

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY

- **Riversdale Historical Society** - Riversdale Historical Society will digitize the papers and letters of Rosalie Stier Calvert, George Calvert, and Charles Benedict Calvert, from Rosalie's earliest letters in 1803 to the death of Charles Benedict Calvert in 1864. These papers serve as the primary source documents for the interpretation, exhibitions, tours, and educational programs for children and adults in Riversdale.
- **Friends of Greenbelt Theatre Inc.** - The Friends of Old Greenbelt Theatre will properly store their 16mm film collection, incorporating a digital transfer station to stabilize the collection. Additionally, the organization will develop educational field trips for local school children, mobile classroom visits with the 16mm projector and films from their archive, and public events connecting some of the rarer films back with the communities from which they originated.

The fifth cycle of Miller History Fund grants for fiscal year 2024 is scheduled to open this coming fall 2023 with a series of applicant workshops. For more information as it becomes available, visit the [Miller History Fund page](#).

ABOUT THE MARYLAND CENTER FOR HISTORY AND CULTURE

The Maryland Center for History and Culture (MCHC) collects, preserves, and interprets the history, art, and culture of Maryland. Originally founded as the Maryland Historical Society in 1844, MCHC inspires critical thinking, creativity, and community through its Museum, Library, and education programs. The Museum is open to the public Wednesday-Saturday, 10am-5pm, and Sunday 12pm-5pm. The H. Furlong Baldwin Library is open 10 am-5pm, Wednesday-Friday, and the second Saturday of each month. Learn more at mdhistory.org, or find us on social @mdhistory.

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