



## Marylanders Invited to “Step Into History” at State and Regional Parks

**Baltimore, Md. (April 27, 2021)** – The Maryland Center for History and Culture (MCHC) invites Marylanders to “Step Into History” with interactive displays that are traveling statewide. Beginning April 27 through the end of July, the [Step Into History](#) displays are on view at Patapsco Valley State Park in Baltimore County, and at Watkins Regional Park in Prince George’s County.

The pair of larger-than-life-size frames allow park visitors to step (literally) into history and engage with the past and historic photographs from MCHC’s collection—safely outside.

The forced perspective of the photo frames encourages participation and imagination and is a natural photo-taking opportunity. Park visitors are encouraged to share their photos on social media using the hashtag #StepIntoHistory. A list of exploratory questions inside each frame invites critical thinking and dialogue, and a QR code links to the [mdhistory.org website](#), providing more historical context.

View [photos of the installed displays here](#).

“As the state’s largest museum and library of Maryland history, it is our mission to find creative ways to share and engage people statewide with the unique items in our collection,” said Mark Letzer, President & CEO of the Maryland Center for History and Culture. “Maryland’s state and regional parks are unique partners in this effort. As people have increasingly turned to Maryland’s outdoor landscape for safe recreational activities, we are pleased to connect their surroundings with stories from the past.”

Here are the stories told by each interactive display:

Interactive Display at Watkins Regional Park

301 Watkins Park Drive, Upper Marlboro (entrance to the main parking lot, along the Loop Trail)

*Paul Henderson’s Group portrait of four Baltimore Elite Giants batters*

[The image](#) in this interactive display depicts four players from the 1949 Baltimore Elite Giants (pronounced EE-light) posing with baseball bats. From left to right, Henry Kimbo, Robert “Butch” Davis, Lester Locket, and Lenny Pearson, stand in front of a scoreboard and advertisement celebrating the 200th anniversary of Arrow Beer.

Maryland was home to two professional Negro League Baseball teams: the Baltimore Black Sox (1913-1936) and the Baltimore Elite Giants (1938-1950). These teams were a haven for Black talent at a time when African Americans were barred from Major League Baseball. In many communities, amateur teams and leagues also flourished. Prince George’s County was home to several of these teams, including the Brentwood Flashes, Clinton Yellow Jackets, Deanwood Eagles, Lakeland Giants, Laurel Allstars, Mitchellville Tigers, and the Vista Yankees.

Paul Henderson’s remarkable photographs offer a vivid glimpse into the daily lives of African Americans in Maryland. Henderson was a staff photographer at Baltimore’s Afro-American newspaper, operated a freelance photography business, and participated in civic organizations. For over four decades, his lens captured scenes from the Civil Rights Movement, as well as prominent entertainers, politicians, and the vibrant African American community living in mid-20th century Baltimore.

Interactive Display at Patapsco Valley State Park’s Avalon Area

5120 South Street, Halethorpe (corner of Gun Road and Glen Artney Road)

Group portrait from the Artists’ Excursion over the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad

The people in [this photograph](#) are just a few of a larger group of some 50 artists, writers, and businessmen invited to make an 1859 excursion by Baltimore and Ohio Railroad train from Baltimore to the Ohio River Valley and back. The outing began on June 1, 1859 at Baltimore's Camden Street Station and ended four days later at the same place. Their route would have taken them northwest from downtown Baltimore, through what is now known as Patapsco Valley State Park, into western Maryland and across the Allegheny Mountains through West Virginia and on to Ohio. The excursion was orchestrated by Maryland Institute board member William Prescott Smith, as a means of promoting train travel. The photographer is unknown.

In fall 2021, the *Step Into History* displays will move to new locations in Maryland, yet to be announced, and will feature new images. For updates, follow MCHC on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), or [Twitter](#). In fall 2020, the *Step Into History* displays were on view at North Point State Park and in the courtyard at MCHC's museum and library in Baltimore.

#### **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 and H. Furlong Baldwin Library are currently open Wednesday-Saturday. Museum hours are 10 a.m.-5 p.m. and Library hours are 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Learn more at [mdhistory.org](http://mdhistory.org), including MCHC's safety procedures.

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