



2024 Grant Recipients of the Miller History Fund Announced

BALTIMORE, Md. (February 22, 2024) – 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 five years, this grant program has invested a total of \$1,000,000 to 53 historical organizations throughout Maryland.

The Miller History Fund’s core objective is to build the capacity of organizations to care for historical collections and make them accessible and relevant to the public. This year’s cohort includes organizations in six counties caring for collections spanning multiple specialties from technology, to natural history, to community oral histories.

“As we approach the 250th anniversary of our nation’s independence in 2026, now is the time to invest in our historical collections and empower organizations to tell all the diverse stories that make Maryland unique. This commemoration is an opportunity to explore our state and country’s expansive and complex history in forward-thinking and inclusive ways. The breadth and depth of Maryland’s story is so apparent in this round of grantees,” said Katie Caljean, President and CEO.

Making visible the typically behind-the-scenes work of collections care was a common theme in this year’s group. “With this grant, we will create a video-based marketing campaign highlighting our archival processing project which is currently underway, inspiring interest in archival research and professions, and illustrating the importance of the AFRO American Newspapers Archives to a wider audience,” said Savannah Wood, Executive Director of Afro Charities.

Andrew Stout, Executive Director of the Washington County Historical Society, shared that funding will support “a comprehensive cataloging and curation project of the Society’s entire artifact and archival collection. Eventually, all of the information from the collection complete with pictures, will be available online to the public for free. This very impactful fund will have positive results for the Society, the residents of Washington County and the general public that will last in perpetuity.”

Karen Gasior, Grants Officer at MCHC and newly appointed as administrator of the Miller History Fund, spoke to the rigorous process through which selections are made, “Our pool of applicants this year was extremely competitive – all the proposals were thorough, carefully crafted, and did an incredible job demonstrating the value of investing in Maryland’s historic communities. Multiple days of panelist evaluation and discussion were needed to select awardees. I cannot congratulate our winners enough! Their commitment to the sector is so impressive and we are so looking forward to seeing the results of these projects.”

The sixth cycle of Miller History Fund grants for fiscal year 2025 is scheduled to open this coming fall 2024 with a series of applicant workshops. For more information as it becomes available, visit the [Miller History Fund page](#).

With over 400 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 2024 are:

Baltimore City:

Afro Charities, Inc.

- In partnership with Wide Angle Youth Media, Afro Charities, Inc. will produce a video-based marketing campaign designed to highlight the AFRO American Newspapers Archives, our work to maintain them, and the history of both the AFRO and Afro Charities. Through this campaign, we aim to make our archival labor visible to the public, to inspire interest in archival research and professions, and to illustrate the importance of this collection to prospective funders for our organization's long-term sustainability.

Baltimore County:

National Electronics Museum, Inc.

- NEM is establishing gallery space at its new location to enhance the showcasing of artifacts and hands-on STEM demos to create an aesthetically pleasing artifact-safe environment conducive to immersive learning. NEM seeks funding assistance for its gallery enhancement plans and aid in reinstating its archival material exhibits for public education and research. The Gallery Enhancement Project will involve acquiring digital interactive signage, cabinetry, and display showcases for exhibits and archives. Enhanced audio enabled signage will provide a more engaging visitor experience as well as inclusive disability access. Updated and innovative cabinetry and display showcases will help to utilize NEM's new space more effectively and will provide for the best possible display and preservation of its artifacts.

Natural History Society of Maryland

- As the Natural History Society of Maryland approaches its 100th anniversary, they are strengthening our capacity to professionally manage their collections. A grant from the Miller Fund is supporting a new, part-time Collections Manager to work with the support of our curatorial volunteers, ensuring that the entire collection is documented by museum standards. With their capital project slated to begin this summer, this collections work is an essential readiness step towards our subsequent reopening in our newly renovated building.

Harford:

The Havre de Grace Maritime Museum, Inc.

- This Miller History Fund grant will support two exhibitions, creating new permanent interpretive displays. "Untold Stories of the Conowingo Dam" will present a more comprehensive history of the impact of the Dam. Strategic planning identified information gaps in our current exhibit regarding impacts of the Dam on the workers building it, local residents displaced from flooding, and the destruction of Native American artifacts, and this project will expand that information. Research topics include histories of Italian immigrants, African Americans, stonemasons and laborers who died building the dam. The original village of Conowingo and surrounding settlements were flooded or displaced. Native American petroglyphs were destroyed,

with only a few preserved. The separate but related "Petroglyphs of the Susquehanna River" exhibition will be revised to include more details about the Bald Friar rock artifacts. We shall create a companion booklet containing information from the exhibit. This innovative project complements our Native American heritage exhibit.

Montgomery:

Gaithersburg Parks, Arts & Recreation Corporation (G-PARC), on behalf of Gaithersburg Community Museum

- The written histories of Gaithersburg have not always included the whole of its community, telling some people's stories and leaving others' out. In order to better understand and represent the history of the diverse cultural groups that make up the City of Gaithersburg, the Museum launched the Gaithersburg History Project (GHP). This ongoing project aims to research and record the important community stories – contributions, challenges, dreams, and everyday life – essential to sharing a fuller history of our city. This Miller History Fund grant supports the second phase of GHP delving into the history of Latino Gaithersburg, a demographic that presently accounts for approximately 29 percent of the City's population.

National Capital Trolley Museum

- This Miller History Fund grant is supporting the project "Collection to Connection." This project's goals are twofold: I) To improve the overall health of our collection practices and set a standard for future efforts. II) To develop and support an annual schedule of small exhibitions which tell nuanced, inclusive stories of local streetcar history.

Prince George's:

Accokeek Foundation

- The Accokeek Foundation's "Accokeek Reimagined" vision in Piscataway Park is a collaboration with Piscataway tribal leadership, citizens, and other community stakeholders to emphasize black and Indigenous voices in interpretation and education programming, and to apply Indigenous values-based stewardship plans to restore a healthy environment for people, plants, and animals. In 2024, the Foundation will build on recent work with partners to formalize agreements, protocols, and expectations; to invest in building community capacity to address their self-identified priority of cultural documentation and education; to expand partnerships and build unity for broader impact; and to share experiences that create greater understanding of Piscataway history and culture. The Foundation is seeking support for cultural documentation focusing on the culture and traditions of the Piscataway people, a project completed in collaboration with community partners. We anticipate this collaboration will serve as the basis for interpretive planning in 2024-25.

Field of Firsts Foundation, Inc.

- The Field of Firsts Foundation will hire a part-time cataloguer to assist the College Park Aviation Museum's (CPAM) curator, the project lead. This stewardship project has already unveiled a forgotten story of one of the first female Airmail Office employees who was married to the first Airmail pilot, in 1918. With a collection spanning the entire history of powered flight, there are many similar impactful stories to tell. Duties will include cataloguing, digitization, database record creation, rehousing objects, updating locations and completing condition reports. By performing this inventory, the collection will be more accessible to staff to craft relevant exhibits catered to our diverse, local community. We would also be able to begin putting our collections online for public use and research.

Lakeland Community Heritage Project

- Since 2005, the Lakeland Community Heritage Project (LCHP) has built a 6000+ item digital archive to document Lakeland, College Park, MD's historic African American community. The LDA has an uncatalogued backlog of 1500+ items as well as cataloged items for which we need more metadata to enhance the findability and usability of collections. Metadata identifies the "who, what, where, when, and why" for each item. Our project will build LCHP's capacity by leveraging the expertise of the LDA team to fund summer apprenticeships that prepare community members/students to enter metadata into the collection's customized Airtable database. Apprentices will facilitate sessions with community elders to add and enrich descriptions of items in the collection. The project will conclude with an informational gathering where apprentices produce digital poster/video presentations summarizing what they learned from providing metadata for historical archival materials.

Washington:

Washington County Historical Society

- The WCHS Collection Cataloging and Curation project seeks funding to conduct a total collection inventory and catalog of the 10,000+ artifacts, and additional archival collection, while also organizing and storing the collection in accordance with professional guidelines. This project will enable WCHS to gain physical control of the collection for the first time ever, update existing records with current images and information, assess the current condition of each item, rehouse and store the item as needed, and upload this information to PastPerfect for public use and consumption. In addition to simply cataloging the collection, this project involves assessing, inventorying, rehousing and storing the collection using archival materials. The project will be conducted over a two-year period and will involve oversight by professional museum staff. Volunteers and interns who are trained in cataloging will assist. The project is a central part of WCHS's larger collections-based initiative for 2023/2024.

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, or find us on social @mdhistory.

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