

# A Guide to the Gum Springs, Virginia Collection, 1915-1991

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A Collection in The Fairfax County Public Library MSS 03-10

## Title Statement

A Guide to the Gum Springs, Virginia Collection, 1915-1991

**Subtitle:** Gum Springs, Virginia Collection

**Collection:** MSS 03-10

## Publication Statement

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## Profile Description

**Creation:** Machine-readable finding aid created by Ross Landis, March 17, 2024

**Language Usage:** Description is in English

## Descriptive Summary

### Record Group Number

MSS 03-10

### Language

English

### Abstract

The Gum Springs, Virginia Collection consists of .5 linear feet and spans the years 1915-1991 and consists of correspondence, a book manuscript, consulting reports, minutes, newspaper clippings, oral interview, blue prints, and cost estimates. Subjects covered are freedman; African-American community life; Gum Springs black history museum study including related community meetings; and the War on Poverty.

### Creator

Virginia Room staff

### Extent

.5 linear feet

### Repository

Fairfax County Public Library

## Administrative Information

### Access Restrictions

None

### Use Restrictions

Consult repository for information

### Acquisition Information

Virginia Room staff artificially created this collection over the years. The majority of the collection came from unknown donors. Frank Kulesza donated the photocopied Colored Citizens Protection League Minutes.

## **Processing Information**

Carol Abrams, 2015

EAD generated by Ross Landis, 2024

## **Preferred Citation**

Virginia Room, Fairfax County Public Library. Gum Springs, Virginia Collection. Box 1, Folder #.

# **Adjunct Descriptive Data**

## **Separated Material**

None

## **Historical and Biographical Information**

Gum Springs is Fairfax County's largest African-American community. It is located at the intersection of Richmond Highway and Mount Vernon Road on the northern boundary of the original Mount Vernon property. In 1829, West Ford, an antebellum freedman, purchased the land tract that comprises most of what is now Gum Springs. Ford who was born a slave, gained his freedom under the terms of the will of Hannah Bushrod Washington, a relative of George Washington. Ford farmed his land while he continued to work and live at Mount Vernon. Similar to Ford, many of Gum Springs' earliest black residents were associated with Mount Vernon. After the Civil War as the number of free blacks swelled, Gum Springs' population grew. The history of the black community in Gum Springs spans over 150 years and is characterized by economic struggle and aspiration as well as African-American community building. In the 20th century, its residents struggled to maintain their rural livelihoods in the face of post-World War II suburbanization. It was the first community to receive anti-poverty funding under the federal "War on Poverty."

In 1984, the Fairfax County Park Authority issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Feasibility of Developing and Maintaining a Black History Museum in Fairfax County. The RFP solicitation specified that the museum had to be in the Gum Springs area of Fairfax County. The resulting feasibility study became known as the Gum Springs Black History Museum Study. Through the RFP process, the Center for History Now was designated as the study consultant. The scope of work included recommendations for an effective, cost-efficient concept and plan, and implementation plan, and an evaluation of its benefits. The Gum Springs Historical Society's Museum & Cultural Center opened on November 24, 1996.

## **Index Terms**

African-American Community life

The Center for History Now

Fairfax County Park Authority

Ford, West

Freedman

Post-Civil War South

Saunders B. Moon Community Action Association

## **Container List**

**Box 1 Folder 1: Gum Springs Monograph - Corbin, 1980**

**Box 1 Folder 2: Gum Springs Study Correspondence, 1980-1985**

**Box 1 Folder 3: Gum Springs Black History Study Comm. (Minutes, Notes, etc.), 1984-1985**

**Box 1 Folder 4: Gum Springs Study Minute Books, Notes, 1919-1967**

**Box 1 Folder 5: Colored Citizens Protection League Minutes (photocopy), 1915-1916**

**Box 1 Folder 6: Gum Springs Study Newspaper Clippings, 1968-1982**

**Box 1 Folder 7: Newspaper. "Gum Springs News" [two copies], 1965 February 10**

**Box 1 Folder 8: Program - Dedication of Martin Luther King, Jr. Park, 1968**

**Box 1 Folder 9: Gum Springs Historical Society, Bethlehem Baptist Church, 1865-1990 brochure, 1990**

**Box 1 Folder 10: Gum Springs, VA - Dedication of Historical Marker, programs, 1991 November 2**

**Box 1 Folder 11: Gum Springs Feasibility Study - Black History Museum, 1985**

**Box 1 Folder 12: Saunders, Mrs. Bruce. Oral Interview., 1968 May 8**