Moving Out, Moving In, Moving Up
THE STORY OF BLACK MIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION IN PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY
M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George's County
Annual Black History Month Poster
30th Anniversary Edition
Migration has been a defining characteristic of the black experience in the United States since the arrival of the first enslaved Africans to the American colonies in the early 1600s. But the early 20th century marked a new and important phase in migration as an unprecedented number of African Americans moved from the rural South to urban areas in the North, Upper South, and West in search of a better life. Multiple waves of this “Great Migration” would continue during the course of the 20th century and into the 21st century as blacks within the United States, as well as black immigrants moved to and within this country. This migration had a profound impact on Prince George’s County, transforming it into the nation’s most affluent majority black county in the nation. In fact, it is the only county in the nation where an increase in education and wealth accompanied the transition from majority white to majority black.

The history of the Great Migration as reflected in Prince George’s County and across the nation does not represent just one person’s story, but rather it is a collective journey to a better life. Similarly, this mixed media poster includes creative works from multiple people with varying life experiences and family histories. Each artist offers their unique view of events, experiences, and memories of the Great Migration in this year’s M-NCPPC Black History Month Poster, a rich tradition combining art and history dating back to 1989.

In honor of the 30th anniversary of the poster, this year’s art work uniquely combines the works of young artists with the work of celebrated mixed media artist Curtis Woody. The four young artists who worked on this project were students who participated in the 2018 M-NCPPC Black History Program Visual Arts Summer Internship. Working under the supervision of Resident Artist Nikki Lavi, these young artists created individual pieces of art that reflected the information learned during the course of the internship. Using this foundation, Curtis Woody evolved the poster into a collective piece that unites a variety of images, objects, and stories in order to celebrate and honor this important history.

ARTISTS

Curtis Woody

“The painting is a research-based, collage with layers fabricated in a variety of ways. I used an assortment of old books, aged photographs, buttons, fabric, and rusty door knob back plates combined with an assortment of artistic mediums. I highlighted three impactful watercolor images supplied by the art students. Two of those images were inserted into a vintage roller chain resembling a railroad track. Passports of people of color were added to emphasize the changing demographics. Because of the folk-art style of the students’ work, I chose to create a map of the County using a simple vintage pattern. Inserted into that map were postmark patterns of countries representing recent immigrants. Using the folk-art style, I created a train station depicting people coming and going. Replicas of vintage train tickets, a railroad travel map, and photographs of early County immigrants employed by the railroads, as well as travelers, were added. The buttons and fabric are primarily decorative. The hardware plates provide an aesthetic to the painting symbolic of a new beginning.” — Curtis Woody

MacKenzie Elizabeth Dixon

is an Oxon Hill resident and sophomore at Suitland High School. Her interests include photography and drawing.

Ryan Mesidor

is a Laurel resident and sophomore at Eleanor Roosevelt High School. His interests include drawing and animation.

Clarence Hollis Edwards

is a Laurel resident and freshman in high school. His interests include drawing and fashion design.

Cameron N. Minor

is a Cheverly resident and senior at Elizabeth Seton High School. Her interests include drawing, painting, and photography.

RESIDENT ARTIST

Nikki Lavi (Nicole Banks)

is a native of Washington, D.C. who migrated to Clinton. She served as Resident Artist for the 2018 M-NCPPC Black History Program Visual Arts Summer Internship. Ms. Lavi works in a variety of mediums, including, but not limited to, oil, pencil, chalk, watercolor, and acrylic.