

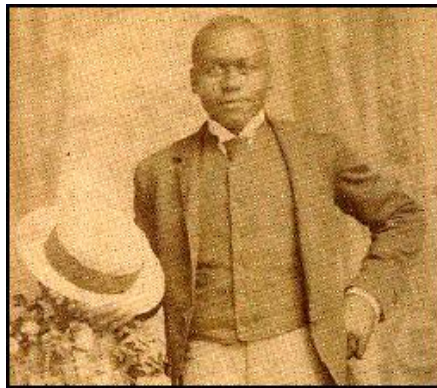
erected Hosanna School on land sold by Joseph Peaco. Alexander Berry, a son-in-law of Cupid Paca, was one of the original Trustees for the school. The second floor of the school was used for church worship until in 1880, when Paca's heirs donated land for the current Hosanna AME Church. In 1887, Robert Peaco's widow, Rosa sold land to help set-up the Hosanna Cemetery Company.

Other family members may have contributed to the establishment and operation of the McComas Institute, another Freedmen's Bureau School on Singer Road near Mountain Road. Many "Peaker" family members are buried in the cemetery adjoining the school.

Passing on the Torch

For a man, likely born a slave who signed his name with an X, Cupid Paca possessed great insight and initiative. He and his family left a rich legacy that deserves to be a part of Harford County's historical narrative.

References to Cupid Paca and more details of his life will appear in future pamphlets.



Stephen Nathaniel Peaker, Jr. is the great grandson of Cupid Paca. (≈1890)

Information on Cupid Paca came from the following sources:

1. Application for Hosanna School to the National Register of Historic Places. 1988
2. Constance Beims and Christine Tolbert, *A Journey Through Berkley*. 2005
3. Samuel Mason, *Historical Sketches of Harford County, Maryland*. 1955
4. Ann Waters, *Paca Peaco Peaker Family*. n.d. [c. 2007]
5. Chris Weeks, *An Architectural History of Harford County, Maryland*. 1996

Civil War to Civil Rights: A CONCERT

February 13th, Saturday, 1-3 PM
Hosanna School Museum
Tickets: \$10; Students \$5; 12 & U, Free

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African American History of Harford County, Maryland

Cupid Paca (? – 1847)

February 5, 2016
Pamphlet 0005



Campaign 42



Bringing Communities Together Through Sharing History



This is a brief introduction to the life and works of Cupid Paca. Despite being unable to read and write, Paca was a real estate investor, farmer, cobbler and mason, in the Darlington area, who built a personal fortune. Paca and his family invested their wealth in promoting spiritual and educational opportunities for Harford's black population. After his death, some of Paca's children continued carrying on the family responsibility of improving the social status of the county's black community.

Over time, the "Paca" name gradually interchanged with "Peaco" and "Peaker." Today, hundreds, possibly thousands, of descendants of Cupid Paca, under a variety of names, live in and contribute meaningfully to Harford County.

In the Beginning

The circumstances of Cupid Paca's birth, the story how he became a free man, and the history of his surname remain a mystery. Some writers logically speculate that he descended from slaves of the well known Paca family of Harford

County. Records of Cupid Paca date back to the early 1800's, when he was a free man conducting real estate transactions in the Darlington area. Paca's earliest land deal, dated 1816, documents his buying a lot for \$50 from Moses Harrison, another free black. Later, in 1822, Paca became a major land owner by purchasing 50 acres of land from Cassandra Rigbie Corse and her husband John for the sum of \$700.

While in Darlington, Paca became well known for his skill in building stone fences. Some of these fences stand today. Paca lived and dealt with some of the elite families of Darlington. He sold some land to Isaac Wilson, was a neighbor with Benjamin Silver, and did business with William Worthington, a well documented abolitionist.

According to Samuel Mason's *Historical Sketches of Harford County, Maryland*, William Worthington owned property along the Susquehanna River where he was active in transporting runaway slaves. Historical documents at the Hosanna school speculate that Paca, an enterprising man who was a close neighbor of Worthington, would

have been part of this Underground Railroad operation.

Educational &, Spiritual Needs for the Community

Cupid Paca and his family felt a responsibility to help provide for the spiritual, educational, and social needs of the local black community. They held church services in their home, and in 1835, their son Robert Peaco, donated land on which to build a log structure used as the first Hosanna Church in Berkeley.

James Peaker, another son of Cupid Paca, held church and school activities in his family home in the late 1840's. Later, around 1850, Mount Zion AME Church was erected in the Gravel Hill area. The church was later renamed St. James A.M.E Church in his honor.

Paca descendants continued their social activities after the Civil War. In 1867, the Mt. Zion AME Church and Joseph Peaco, another Cupid Paca son, provided land for the Alliance Institute, the first school for black children in Havre de Grace.

In 1868 the Freedman's Bureau