

reforms. In 1928, the school board added an eighth and ninth grade to the HdG Colored School. Two years later it developed a curriculum that encompassed eleven grades. In 1935, Bel Air Colored High School - opened.

Finally, in 1950 and 1953, Harford County Public Schools made a long-overdue move that afforded all black students the opportunity to attend a high school. Under pressure from protests from the local black community about substandard facilities and from federal courts examining a pattern of such inferior systems, HCPS erected two new regional schools, grades 1 through 12, that provided a modern setting for all students of color. HdG Consolidated Colored High School and Central Consolidated Colored High School remained open until the mid 1960s, educating black students in a more pleasant but ongoing segregated method.

Sixty six (66) years ago today, February 12, 1950, Clayton Stansbury Sr. spoke on HdG radio station WASA (1330 AM) in

Page 4

celebration of Negro History Week. As part of his talk, Mr. Stansbury said, "Someday the tide will turn and the peoples of the world will see and will welcome with ungrudging gratitude the contributions of the Negro, then all will be proud of him and his achievements. When this day comes, we will not celebrate Negro History Week but will celebrate American History Week."

Clayton Stansbury Sr., died on July 27, 1962, from complications associated with diabetes. County residents remember him as a family man, church trustee, mason, and a tireless activist for social justice—not to mention a man of great vision.

Details about Clayton Stansbury's life came from Clayton C. Stansbury Jr., *Portrait of a Colored Man: Clayton C. Stansbury Sr. (A Black Moses of Harford County, Maryland)*, 1977, and from interviews with his sons Marcus, Russell and Wardell.

Page 5

Author: Jerome L. Hersl, Jr.
Reviewed: Jim Chrimer, Gwyn Howard
AAH Committee: Evelyn Clayon, Sarah V. Robinson, Sarah Smith, Ann Waters
Contact: harfordcampaign42@gmail.com

African American History of Harford County, Maryland

A Weekly Publication



Clayton C. Stansbury, Sr.
(1893 – 1962)

Pamphlet 0006

February 12, 2016



Bringing Communities
Together Through
Sharing History

Introduction

As a young man, Clayton C. Stansbury Sr. struggled to get an education with the limited resources that Harford County afforded children of color. Later, as a young father, Mr. Stansbury sought to advance his learning and dreamed that his children would have better opportunities for advancement than he had experienced. As he pursued his vision of better schools for black children, Mr. Stansbury realized that he needed to organize the Black Community to work together in common cause. Mr. Stansbury worked diligently to make such a goal a reality, which, in turn, permitted his original dream to succeed.

The Struggle

Clayton Stansbury was born on February 3, 1893 on Spesutia Island (currently part of APG). Getting an education in rural Harford County at this time was difficult for all children but even more so for Negro children. Because Sidney Park Colored School was four miles from his home, young Stansbury seldom attended school between the months of December and March. In 1911, the family moved to Baltimore

where he attended night classes at Douglass Colored High School. Upon finishing the night school curriculum, Stansbury received a certificate acknowledging his completion of the equivalent of two years of high school.

The Dream

Clayton Stansbury met and married his wife Mary (nee Vessells) in Baltimore on December 23, 1915. The young couple moved to Havre de Grace (HdG), where they raised their family. They became active members of Union Methodist Church located near Swan Creek. Lacking any form of transportation, the family had to walk nearly 4 miles along the railroad tracks from HdG to Swan Creek in order to attend church services. These walks went on for about two decades, and provided many opportunities for Stansbury and his wife to reflect on the sad state of education of black school children and the need to organize the colored communities of Harford County to push for improvements.

The Organization

Finally, in 1930, Clayton Stansbury succeeded in getting Black county residents to turn to action. On March 30th of that year, parents and teachers of colored students of Bel Air and

Havre de Grace met at the Swan Creek School to press Harford County government to establish a high school for their communities. Led by John Leo Jones (a close neighbor of Mr. Stansbury), the group called for parents of the 18 colored schools in Harford County to join forces in creating a Harford County Colored PTA. Clayton Stansbury served as president of the PTA for its first twelve years. The organization spearheaded the drive to get a high school and promoted other changes for the social betterment of Negroes. Among these were to permit Negro access to public libraries, end biased reporting of Negroes in the news, advance public awareness of activities for Negro Health Week, and encourage the organization of the Republican Club (then more the historic party of Abraham Lincoln) for Colored Residents of Harford County. Clayton Stansbury led or had a hand in all of these activities.

Better Education

The most important aspect of Clayton Stansbury's leadership was his ability to inspire others to take up the cause. During and after 12 years as PTA president, many other leaders came forward to continue his tireless and courageous efforts in pressing for