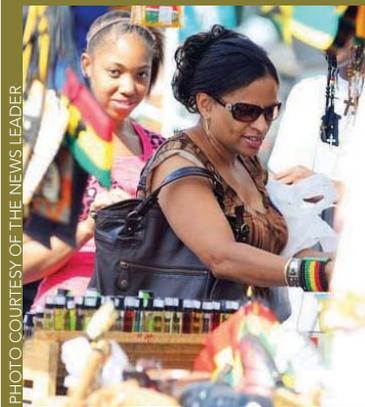


# Attractions

## The West African Farm exhibit at the **Frontier Culture Museum**

explores the cultural contributions of African captives who were brought to Virginia in the 1700s.

[frontiermuseum.org](http://frontiermuseum.org) >> (540) 332-7850



“Anyone who likes soul food should be there.”

— LAURA WAYLAND,  
FESTIVAL PAST PRESIDENT

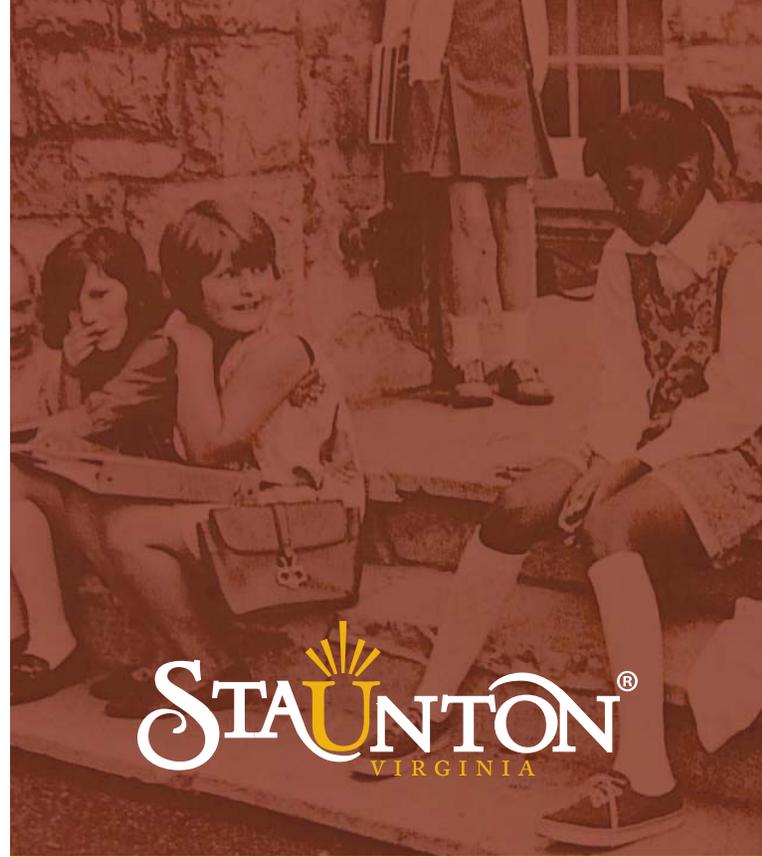
## Stanton’s African-American Festival

is the largest event of its kind in Western Virginia. The two-day festival, held annually on the third weekend in September, features regional artisans, historians, and entertainment. On Sunday morning, area churches gather for an old-fashioned “under the tent” worship service followed by gospel music all afternoon. This event is FREE and open to the public.

## Want to learn more?

Sign up for the African-American Heritage Driving Tour, available from Staunton Guided Tours

[stauntonguidedtours.com](http://stauntonguidedtours.com) • (540) 208-1741



**STAUNTON**<sup>®</sup>  
VIRGINIA



# African-American HERITAGE

STAUNTON, VIRGINIA



STAUNTON VISITOR CENTER  
35 South New St. | Staunton, VA 24401 | (540) 332-3971

[VisitStaunton.com](http://VisitStaunton.com)

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THE HAMRICK PHOTO COLLECTION, AND THE AUGUSTA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



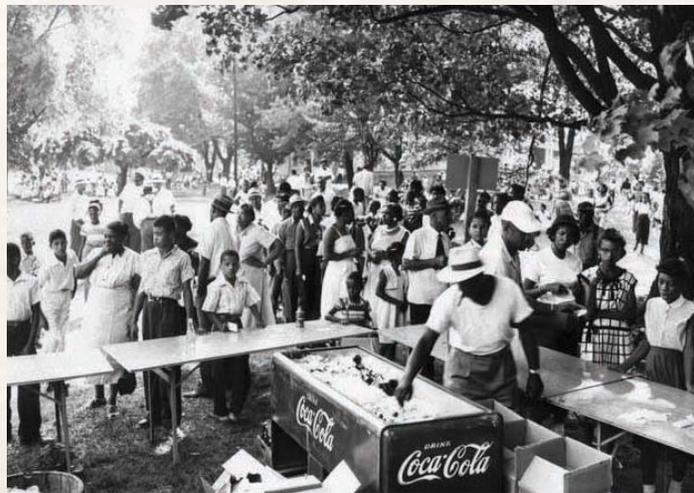
## Staunton's "Other Park"

During segregation, whites were able to enjoy city-owned Gypsy Hill Park but Staunton's black residents were only allowed to visit the park one day each year. Shortly after World War II, leaders in the black community requested more use of Gypsy Hill Park. In response, the city of Staunton purchased a historic 148-acre farm called Montgomery Hall for \$42,500 in June of 1946, placing the operations of the park in the hands of the black community. Montgomery Hall Park became one of only two parks created specifically for the African-American community in the entire state of Virginia.



"I know of no other park property that can trace its history from a plantation made successful by the efforts of the enslaved people who lived there between 1822 and 1865 to a park created as a haven for and run by the African American community..."

— JANE GRAY AVERY (HISTORIAN)



## Notable People and Places

- **Robert Campbell**, one of the wealthiest African Americans before the Civil War in Virginia, amassed a considerable sum of property as a barber. According to the 1860 census, he held real estate valued at \$10,000.
- In 1865, the **first black church** to be organized west of the Blue Ridge Mountains was Allen Chapel A. M. E. (African Methodist Episcopal) on West Beverley Street. Allen Chapel's members later organized the **first black choir** in 1886 and opened the **first black school** for adults in the city.
- **The Cabell log house** at 654 E. Beverley Street was built by a "free man of color" in 1869. It is the only remaining exposed log structure in Staunton.
- Staunton's "**Colored Masonic Mount Zion Lodge, no. 18**" was incorporated in 1882. Located at the corner of East Beverley and Market Streets, it is one of the oldest African-American masonic lodges in the United States that was purpose-built and is still in use.
- **Fairview Cemetery** is a historic six-acre, predominantly African-American cemetery located in the northern part of Staunton.
- **Dr. Charles J. Waller**, born 1898, practiced medicine in Staunton for many years without hospital privileges. He was later invited to apply for membership on the King's Daughters' staff and was accepted. He was elected president of the staff in 1968 and also served as a regional vice-president of the National Medical Association.
- **Captain William Green Jr.**, born 1920, was one of the famed Tuskegee Airmen. He flew 123 wartime missions in Europe and earned a Distinguished Flying Cross, an Air Medal with six oak leaf clusters, E.T.O. ribbons with three battle stars, and the Purple Heart.
- **Rita Wilson**, born 1940, was Staunton's first African-American councilwoman. She served 16 years on City Council.
- **Willis Carter** was an educator, NAACP leader, editor of an African-American newspaper in Staunton. He and his wife Serena are buried in Fairview Cemetery.



### DESPERATE NEGRO WOMAN

A fine looking negro woman aged about 28 years, belonging to Mr. Joseph Cline, living about four miles from Staunton, becoming unruly, he determined to bring her to town and sell her. While she was going to get her clothes, she picked up an axe that she had concealed, and deliberately cut three of her fingers off, taking two licks at them. ... She did the act for the double purpose of preventing her sale and taking revenge upon her master.

— PUBLISHED 1861  
(STAUNTON VINDICATOR)

PRE-CIVIL WAR

During the years leading up to the Civil War, many farms throughout the Shenandoah Valley relied upon slave labor.

1830

By 1830, approximately one-sixth of the African-American population in Staunton was free.

1848

In 1848, Staunton's free black population included at least five blacksmiths (one of the most prestigious and profitable jobs that a manual worker could have during this era), a shoemaker, a number of laborers, domestics and barbers.

1861-1865

The American Civil War

1863

Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation legally frees all slaves in the Confederacy.

1865

On February 1, 1865, Abraham Lincoln signs the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution outlawing slavery throughout the United States.

1891

In 1891, Staunton boasted some 26 black-owned businesses including six grocery stores, a variety store, a cabinetmaking shop, three cobblers businesses, one restaurant, one boarding house, five barbershops, and several laundries.

1904

By 1904, there were at least 46 black-owned businesses including a newspaper, hotel, restaurants, a meat market, an insurance company, a jewelry store, professionals such as physicians and an attorney.

1936

Booker T. Washington High School was completed in November 1936.

1954

In *Brown vs. Board of Education*, the Supreme Court rules unanimously against school segregation.

1966

Staunton desegregates schools in 1966.

★ Today, about **12%** of Staunton's population is black.