

PANEL 9

The Catoctin Furnace Cemetery was all but forgotten until the 1970s, when highway construction restored attention to this 200+ year-old burial ground. Now, a group of concerned community members and scholars work to preserve and interpret the cemetery. Searches for the descendant community continue.



Cemetery map: courtesy of Robert Wanner, EAC/Archaeology, Inc.

PANEL 10

Researchers found 271 names of enslaved workers in diaries, runaway ads, wills, and land records. Notice the number of names listed simply as “unknown” and the absence of any last names. As we read their names, these people are remembered.



Silhouette: courtesy of © Sally Wern Comport Art at Large Inc.: George Washington's Mount Vernon, 2016

PANEL 11



The location of the Catoctin Cemetery tells us something about how its inhabitants were viewed. It was situated next to an active ore pit and had a pathway running through it. The cemetery would have been visible to traveling strangers as well as to the community itself. What does the noisy and very public nature of this space tell us about the life and death of enslaved ironworkers?

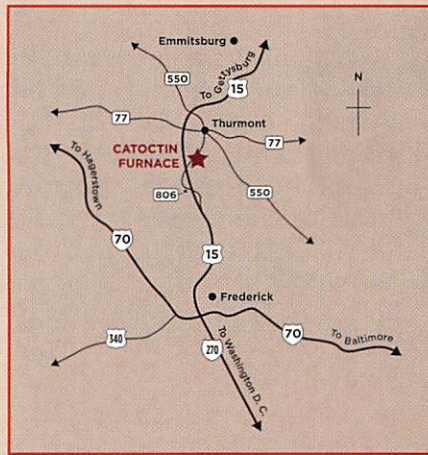
Artist's recreation of the cemetery showing in situ markers: Lucy Irwin, watercolor, 2018

Audio recording of interpretive panels available at catoctinfurnace.org

Continue your journey on the Catoctin Furnace Iron Trail which begins at the Ironmaster's Mansion ruins and leads into Cunningham Falls State Park.

Catoctin Furnace represents, in microcosm, the American Industrial Revolution. From 1776 to 1903, iron companies cast both raw pig iron and iron implements, and the furnace site grew into a village complex. By the middle of the 19th century, the early population of enslaved workers had declined, replaced by European immigrants.

The “Isabella” stack and its reconstructed casting shed form the focal point of the Catoctin Furnace remains. The restored Collier's Log House and the Museum of the Ironworker are open for visits. The restored Forgerman's House can be rented overnight. The Catoctin Furnace Historical Society commemorates, studies, preserves, and interprets this important industrial site.



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African American Cemetery Trail

CATOCTIN FURNACE



Catoctin Furnace Historical Society, Inc.
12610 Catoctin Furnace Rd
Thurmont, MD 21788

Catoctin Furnace African American Cemetery Interpretive Trail

Beginning at the furnace parking area, 12698 Catoctin Furnace Rd

PANEL 1

At least 271 enslaved people of African ancestry worked at Catoctin Furnace between the 1770s and the 1840s. Panels along this trail tell the story of the furnace and village. They also provide a window into the lives of the people who lived and labored here and were buried in the cemetery.

Furnace photograph: courtesy of the Robert S. Kinnaird Collection

PANEL 2

Step inside the casting shed and imagine the noise, smoke, flames, and molten iron of this dangerous and dirty trade. The skilled African American workers at Catoctin Furnace bore the brunt of this physically demanding work.



Furnace illustration: courtesy of Hopewell Furnace NHS, National Park Service (NPS), Kenneth Townsend

PANEL 3

With the ironmaster's mansion looming over enslaved housing, it is apparent that furnace owners designed the community's layout to reinforce control over all aspects of enslaved workers' lives.



Photograph of the village: Unknown photographer, collection of the Catoctin Furnace Historical Society

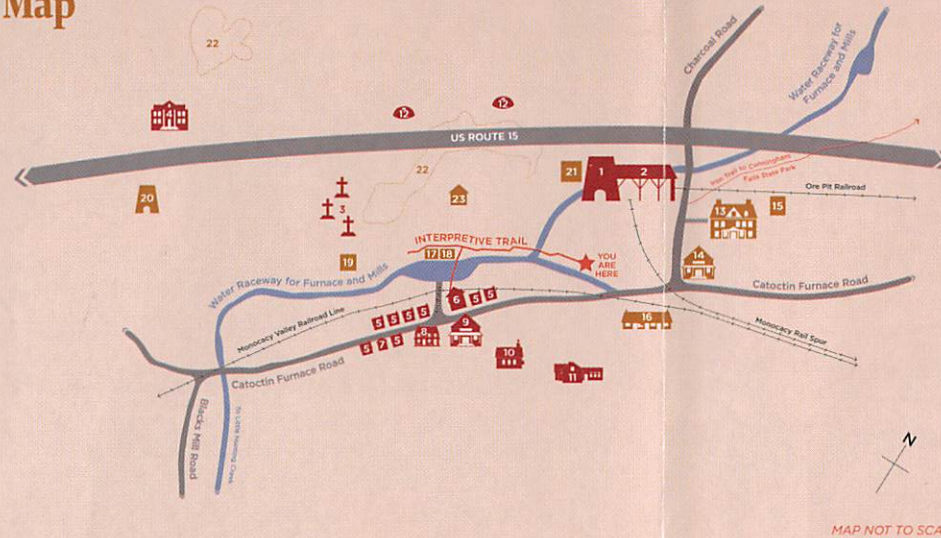
PANEL 4

Many types of workers were required to make the furnace a self-sufficient concern. Some of the enslaved were identified by their furnace jobs such as collier Sam and waggoneers Henry and Harvey. These workers helped lay the foundation of present-day Maryland.



Teamsters: Lucy Irwin, watercolor, 2020

Village Map



MAP NOT TO SCALE

EXISTING

- 1 FURNACE
- 2 FURNACE CASTING SHED
- 3 AFRICAN AMERICAN CEMETERY
- 4 AUBURN
- 5 DWELLING HOUSES
- 6 MUSEUM OF THE IRONWORKER
- 7 FORGEMAN'S HOUSE
- 8 COLLIER'S LOG HOUSE
- 9 FRALEY STORE
- 10 HARRIET CHAPEL
- 11 RECTORY
- 12 CHARCOAL HEARTHES

RUINS & KNOWN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

- 13 IRONMASTER'S MANSION
- 14 COMPANY STORE
- 15 MANSION SLAVE QUARTERS
- 16 SLAVE QUARTERS / LATER MULE BARN AND BLACKSMITH SHOP
- 17 GRISTMILL
- 18 SAWMILL
- 19 ORE WASHER
- 20 POSSIBLE LOCATION OF EARLIEST IRONWORKS
- 21 FOUNDRY
- 22 ORE PITS
- 23 PAINT MILL

PANEL 5



Furnace operations relied on vast amounts of iron ore, wood, water, and limestone, which were available in the 11,000+ acre landholdings around the Catoctin complex. The furnace community engaged in sustainable forestry and building material reuse. Gothic arches in the chapel were built using stone from the furnace casting shed. Reuse even included clothing stuffed into the eaves of the Forgerman's House as insulation.

Colliers at Work: Painting by Cindy Doerzbach, courtesy of Furnace Town Foundation

PANEL 6

The Catoctin community was more than just an industrial operation. It included worker housing, stores, and churches. Descendants of the later wave of European workers still live in the village. The remaining buildings, some of which are rare and important examples of vernacular architecture, represent the lives and skills of all village residents over two centuries.



Worker Housing: Francis Benjamin Johnston, courtesy of the Library of Congress

PANEL 7



Industries other than ironmaking also operated around the village. These included a grist mill for grain and a sawmill for lumber. A paint mill used pigments found in the native clay, and bark was sold to tanneries for use in leather production. A railroad moved iron ore to the furnace and hauled pig iron and other finished products to market.

Gristmill watercolor: courtesy of National Park Service, Robert Sivard

PANEL 8

Preserving the Catoctin Furnace complex has not always been a priority. Parts of the village have been lost over time due to removal or neglect. It was not until the mid-20th century that the Catoctin Furnace Historical Society, Inc. was founded. Its mission, which continues today, is the preservation and interpretation of Catoctin Furnace.



Log House photograph: courtesy of Joel T. Anderson, 1984