

For Immediate Release

BLACK HISTORY AUTHOR LOOKS AT SLAVERY-ERA ALLEGANY COUNTY

CUMBERLAND, Md. – Lynn Bowman, author of three volumes on local black history, has published a fourth book, “Everyone Counts: A History of African-American Enslavement in Allegany County, Maryland.”

Her new work increases understanding of the area’s African-American experience, which she previously explored in “Being Black in Brownsville: Echoes of a ‘Forgotten’ Frostburg,” “Crossing Into the Promised Land: An Appalachian African-American History” and “Living the Lie: ‘Separate but Equal’ in Cumberland, Maryland.”

As with these three works, which examine a displaced black neighborhood in Frostburg and document the struggles of blacks in Allegany County before and after the Civil War, the author plows new ground to provide a first-of-its-kind narrative.

For “Everyone Counts” Bowman combed through government records, especially newly available deeds for Allegany County through the Maryland State Archives, and surveyed various newspapers published locally in the antebellum period.

Slave certificates and slave lists, certificates of free birth and manumissions, or freedom papers, provided a foundation for her study. Her review of letters written by persons on all sides of the slavery question provided the important human story through the perspective of local families.

Her 160-page, self-published book, is illustrated with photographs, manumission documents, newspaper clippings of property for sale, including slaves, and offers of rewards for the return of runaway slaves.

The book also contains certificates for local freed and freeborn men who served in the United States Colored Troops and facts about their participation in Civil War battles.

Bowman revisits Brownsville, the post-Civil War black neighborhood that thrived until an ever-expanding Frostburg State University gradually erased all traces over the decades.

She recounts her contacts with descendants of Brownsville residents at an outdoor festival on the FSU campus and stories about the new lives their ancestors built in nearby Meyersdale, Pa.

Fully one-third of “Everyone Counts” is devoted to deed annotations of enslaved Allegany County residents. This is information that should be very helpful to African-Americans seeking to build on family history.

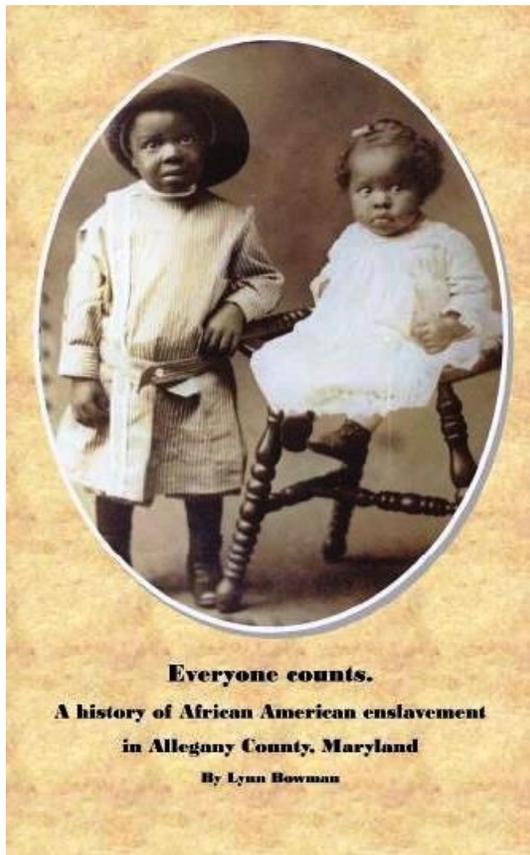
Her new book, released to coincide with African-American History Month, is available at

the Book Center in downtown Cumberland and at Main Street Books in Frostburg.

The author will discuss her work at the Gordon-Roberts House from 1 to 3 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 24. Correspondence in the museum's collection contributed source material for her research. The Gordon-Roberts House is located at 218 Washington St. in Cumberland.

Bowman will make a presentation at the Meyersdale Public Library on Wednesday, Feb. 28, giving special emphasis to African-American history in the Somerset County community. Her talk in the library's Pennsylvania Room is scheduled from 4 to 6 p.m.

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African-American life in slavery-era Allegany County is described in a new book researched and written by Lynn Bowman, an Allegany College of Maryland associate professor of English and speech. On the cover of the 160-page volume are young children from the era in a photo from the Trimble family collection.