**[Montgomery County Reflections: Honoring historic African American communities](https://youtu.be/C1bbMGYBBjU?feature=shared&t=597)**

Transcription excerpt 00:09:57 - 00:19:18

00:10:03:23 - 00:10:34:11

Narrator | Susan Kenedy

Emory Grove in Gaithersburg was settled by freed slaves between 1864 and 1870 from the Redland and Goshen areas. The initial land accumulation totaled about 123 acres, according to the 1880 census. Men worked as farm laborers and wood cutters while women were laundress domestics and midwives. Houses were laid out in a network of informal lanes, essentially dirt roads that connected them.

00:10:34:13 - 00:11:00:04

Narrator | Susan Kenedy

Eventually, about 100 homes made up Emery Grove. Although it's hard to picture today, they were small farms with livestock, corn fields and apple trees. The houses were simple structures served by outhouses and neighborhood wells. Many did not have electricity until the urban renewal of the 1960s. There was a strong sense of community in Emery Grove and families supported each other.

00:11:00:07 - 00:11:30:23

Reverend Cyrus “Glen” Taylor

I was born in 1957 and now I'm one of 16 children. My father and mother are raised in Montgomery County and my grandmother was a born slave and become a candy cane, which she live on a farm in Damascus. And as you remember the day she was liberated, liberated, all of my siblings were raised and were born in the little I grew up there and have been a part of it all of my life.

00:11:30:26 - 00:11:49:03

Carolyn Taylor

When you have a very large family and the whole everybody in the community knew each other, I think I was I have been in most of the houses that were in Emery Grove being a curious little child and formed friendships with the elderly people. And it was very safe.

00:11:49:06 - 00:12:09:26

Reverend Cyrus “Glen” Taylor

Almost everybody was a kid, you know. So maybe it felt connected, but you had a kinship in a community and ended by, in a way, an image of you when you were you in the time you'd have to go home. You know, you had a home where you are.

00:12:09:28 - 00:12:22:11

Carolyn Taylor

I started out at Longview Elementary School, which is in the center of Emery Grove, and then I transferred to Gaithersburg Elementary School when I was in the fourth grade.

00:12:22:13 - 00:12:36:14

Narrator | Susan Kenedy

The Emery Grove Colored School operated from 1879 to 1951. It was replaced with Longview Elementary School. Longview was one of four Consolidated Elementary schools for black children.

00:12:36:16 - 00:12:57:20

Reverend Cyrus “Glen” Taylor

I went to a two room school on it and segregation and I was the first class that graduated from Longview school when the new school. And we were so excited because now we had indoor plumbing and central heating and stuff like that. And all that negative thing about that. We had some good teachers I know to school who never made it to Longview.

00:12:57:23 - 00:13:27:00

Reverend Cyrus “Glen” Taylor

I came out to five inadequate. Private schools were not secondary, I mean, integrated in and people with children were most of our own people. But now we would also have to socialize with my counterparts and they would talk in the face and say things, you know, and they are reminded that they were superior to us because they had a better own their college education.

00:13:27:00 - 00:13:38:02

Reverend Cyrus “Glen” Taylor

But it was our place to be. We knew that we couldn't go and they couldn't do. But I have a sister who had to live with her sister.

00:13:38:04 - 00:14:11:03

Carolyn Taylor

It was a different time for me. And I've heard the stories from Reverend Taylor's generation, and it was very different for me. I saw the first black homecoming queen for athletes there who were who were our friends, were excelling and gave us sport. People were being accepted for who they were. More. And I know there was a lot more distress when Reverend Taylor was coming up that I didn't experience, and I'm thankful for that.

00:14:11:06 - 00:14:32:05

Carolyn Taylor

But I experienced slight things, but nothing really bad ever happened to me. And I came out of school and went and worked in an environment where it was international. AP Almost international. And so I just got to know people from around the world. You know.

00:14:32:07 - 00:15:03:00

Narrator | Susan Kenedy

Religious life was important to the community, to the anchor was and still is, the Emery Grove United Methodist Church, first built in 1874. And in 1887, Embry Grove began its famous camp meetings held at what is now Johnson Park. For nearly 100 years following the Civil War. Montgomery County was part of the religious revival circuit sponsored by the Methodist Church.

00:15:03:07 - 00:15:18:05

Narrator | Susan Kenedy

Towns such as Washington Grove and Damascus joined in. But for the black community, Emery Grove was the epicenter. People came from as far away as New York and as near as Sandy Spring for this unique form of fellowship preaching.

00:15:18:07 - 00:15:24:03

Reverend Cyrus “Glen” Taylor

Teaching, poetry, food, acting, all kind of activities.

00:15:24:05 - 00:15:47:18

Carolyn Taylor

And we would hear the banging and we'd go, they're getting ready for camp meet. And then all over the grounds out there, people would be putting their, we'd call them tents up. There was a structure there. There was a tabernacle on the church service as well. But most memorable to me is that services were held Sunday school in the morning, 11:00 service, maybe a 3:00 service, and then a night service.

00:15:47:20 - 00:16:03:05

Carolyn Taylor

And you could hear there was a sound system so that you could hear the sermons and the singing all over the park. And I remember sometimes, as I said, walking through the woods and hearing the music, it's just beautiful.

00:16:03:08 - 00:16:23:21

Narrator | Susan Kenedy

The meetings included charismatic preachers, gospel's brass bands, choirs and prayers. And don't forget the food, country, ham dinners, fried chicken, corn, potatoes, cakes and pies. Even ice cream were sold to the worshipers. Every family was assigned a table location based on its own designated tree.

00:16:23:23 - 00:16:41:08

Reverend Cyrus “Glen” Taylor

The people who the management of the camp then knew where they wanted to be, you know, and that was they would put in a bad enough, bad even though new people would come in and had the tent and they pushed and there were no put them in the beat as bad weather people normally would.

00:16:41:10 - 00:17:22:11

Narrator | Susan Kenedy

But there Johnson Park had another use as well. In 1947, Edward Johnson, an African-American businessman, purchased the property and added a baseball park for both day and night games. Local sandlot teams, as well as touring Negro Leagues, played at Johnson Park. The Negro Leagues were founded during segregation after International League Baseball banned contracts with black players. Johnson Park brought the Baltimore elite Giants and other teams, as well as prominent athletes such as Willie Mays, Satchel Paige, Jr Gilliam and Joe Black.

00:17:22:14 - 00:17:44:11

Reverend Cyrus “Glen” Taylor

But what happened here? A Negro League win at the integrated landscape prevented Vanity Fair go to the big league, and they kind of phased out the only one that they brought people out of baseball. Myself, I don't know professional level, but up all around Canada playing baseball. If a player was big enough to play baseball and everybody played baseball, it was our main activity.

00:17:44:16 - 00:18:05:05

Carolyn Taylor

And we were the only park in the county who had lighting big lights for the field where the games could take place at night. And once the county purchased the land, they removed those lights from Emery Grove. So that was quite a blow for us.

00:18:05:08 - 00:18:31:17

Narrator | Susan Kenedy

In the mid 1960s, the era of camp meetings and baseball at Emery Grove came to an end. Many of the original homes nearby were replaced with low income apartments and other types of housing. In 1984, a community recreation center was built across from the church, replacing the neighborhood market. The old school is now a new early childhood education center.

00:18:31:20 - 00:19:01:18

Carolyn Taylor

Right now of the folks who used to live at the Grove or were dispersed by urban North. And we still keep in contact that base of people. We still keep in contact. Many of them, of course, being family. The church is still something that binds us together. But the focus of the church and the hope of all of us is that we can be in relationship with the community.

00:19:01:18 - 00:19:17:13

Carolyn Taylor

That is Emery Grove today. It's very diverse. There's a lot of folks who need help, and the challenge is to get out and to be among the people that all of us working together to make sure just make it a lasting community.