

or unintentional.

Fifty years later, an *Aegis* article entitled “A ‘key’ stop to JFK victory” made no reference to Smith’s being with Sen. Kennedy at the party headquarters on May 14, 1960. Cornelius Smith, once again, found himself eliminated from the county’s history.

It would have been nice to know how C.J. Smith felt about that day. His daughter, Ann Williams, says he never talked about it and never mentioned his being excluded from the newspaper. When JFK died on November 22, 1963, Ann remembers her father’s staring at the TV for two hours without saying a word. That horrible day had to bring back memories. And to make the tragedy more painful, November 22nd was Mr. Smith’s birthday.

In a statement for this pamphlet, former U.S. Senator Joseph D. Tydings said, “I remember C.J. Smith very well. He worked with me for JFK and for me on all my campaigns. He was a fine citizen. I did not know he was cut out of a picture I was in. Had I known it, I would have raised a major fuss!!! Smitty was a leader in bringing AA

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citizens into active political participation in Havre de Grace Democratic Party Politics.”

Cornelius Smith Sr., may have been left out of the Kennedy picture in the newspapers, but remains unforgotten. A twenty year retired Army veteran, he was a realtor/ builder and a District Court Commissioner, who was the subject of numerous newspaper articles in his lifetime.

The AAH Project hopes to learn more about the life of Cornelius Smith Sr., his political activities, and the Kennedy pictures for future pamphlets.

Conclusion

There is a tremendous amount of history yet to be told as records of various sorts sit in the attics and basements, and unrecorded recollections of residents across the county. Please consider digging those old pictures, documents and stories out and sharing them with the AAH project.

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African American History of Harford County, Maryland

Introduction Part 2 – Forgotten Histories January 15, 2016 Pamphlet 0002



Campaign 42



Bringing Communities Together Through Sharing History



Mary Bristow, county sage and activist, in her insightful poem below, alludes to the narrowly selective nature of many written accounts of Harford County history.

History

according to the history books
no Blacks
no Jews
and only one Woman
ever lived
in Harford County
Maryland

Yet in the records they
are alive beings
blood and brains
brawn and guts . . .
and the graveyards are full of them
who never lived

in the history books

Mary Bristow - 1980
nurse, poet & *Aegis* columnist

In 1990 Shelly Dolan, a graduate student at Goucher College, reproduced Ms. Bristow's poem in her paper titled "Harford's Black Heritage (1773-1880)". Ms. Dolan pointed out that the most prominent book on Harford County history, *Our Harford Heritage* by C. Milton Wright, lacks any substantial

reference to the county's African American (AA) communities, despite the ready availability of primary sources such as tax lists, manumission records and slave trade documents. Readers can find a copy of Ms. Dolan's paper in the library of the Historical Society of Harford County.

Kennedy Pictures

On Saturday, May 14, 1960, U.S. Senator John Kennedy, accompanied by city native Delegate Joseph D. Tydings, arrived in Havre de Grace at the start of a two day campaign swing through the state of Maryland. The first stop was at the Democratic Club on North Washington Street, where pictures were taken. The picture clearly shows an African American man, Cornelius Smith, Sr. (also known as C.J. or Smitty) standing several feet to the Senator's left.



This was a very momentous occasion for Harford County as JFK went on to win the election and become the 35th President of the United States.

Looking back at the past, it can be said that this image represents, symbolically, Harford County's introduction to the 1960's Civil Rights movement. By including Mr. Smith in the group photo, Senator Kennedy suggested the need to be racially inclusive.

Both the *Aegis* and *Record* newspapers reported the event in their May 19, 1960 issues. Despite the two papers being totally independent at the time, each used the same photo, shown below, that omitted Mr. Smith.



It is unknown who made the decision to exclude Cornelius Smith, and whether the omission was deliberate