ANDREW WILLIAMS, right, a grandson of Nathan Williams who farmed the Fort Frederick property in the 19th century, points to the spot where a barn was located in the northwest corner of the stone wall. Howard Sussard, local historian who has researched the fort farm and the Williams family, looks on with interest.

NATHAN WILLIAMS, the white-haired freedman who bought the Fort Frederick property in 1857 and farmed it until his death in 1884, is shown with his wife Ammy, seated center, whose freedom he purchased, and with five of their seven children who continued the farm operation until 1911. In front of Nathan is Virginia. Seated, left, is Ella with John standing behind her. Standing, center, are Bettie and Silies. Not in the picture are two other brothers, Samuel and Charles, and a sister, Katherine. The picture, shared by a granddaughter, Alice Williams of New Jersey, was originally enlarged from a snapshot and then painted, giving unnatural outlines of facial features. A wall of the famous fort is the setting.

Bought property in 1857 for $7,000.
By ORA ANN ERNST

Many papers have been researched and many stories written about Fort Frederick, the stone colonial fort in Washington County that is currently being restored to celebrate the nation’s bicentennial anniversary.

But there is another tale that should be told.

It is the narrative of an extraordinary colored family that occupied the fort for a few years, a period approximating one-fourth of the life of the base.

Built in 1756, Fort Frederick protected settlers during the Revolutionary War. It was briefly housed prisoners during the Revolutionary battles. So long needed it was leased in 1782 by Gov. Horatio Sharp to Henry Heimann and later in 1791 to a Robert Johnson for $7.

The property became known as the "Bell" Johnson farm, passing into possession of Buni and Temperance Prater in 1850 and to John G. Stone and his wife in 1860 who in turn sold it to Joel W. and Rebecca Williams, a freedman whose grandchild, as a slave, had taken to the fort during the Pontiac uprisings.

“White” with his family — fate neatly had his death in 1844 when he killed two bushes and children who continued the operation until 1845.

"Big Som" in 1857 for $7,000.
Doleman Black Heritage Museum
Mrs. Peggy Doleman
540 N. Locust St.
Hagerstown Md