

# The HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF HARFORD COUNTY, Inc.

Preserving Our Past For Your Future



143 N. Main Street  
Bel Air, MD 21014

## Society News

May / June 2014

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The Historical Society of  
Harford County, Inc.,  
headquarters.

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### NATIONAL PRESERVATION MONTH

*No age lives entirely alone; every civilization is formed not merely by its own achievements but by what it has inherited from the past. If these things are destroyed, we have lost a part of our past, and we shall be the poorer for it.*

Ronald Balfour

May is Preservation Month! As in years past, the National Trust for Historic Preservation encourages Preservation and Main Street organizations to use this month-long opportunity to showcase how they are celebrating and saving historic places year-round. This year's theme is "New Age of Preservation: Embark, Inspire, Engage". The theme is meant to excite current supporters and introduce new audiences to preservation efforts that enrich and preserve the places that make our community special.

The list of Preservation Month activities is as endless as your imagination. Each year Harford County hosts a Preservation Awards Breakfast at Liriodendron to celebrate the most outstanding preservation projects for the past year. Awards will also be presented for outstanding Preservationist and Preservation stewardship. The Town of Bel Air will conduct its annual art contest recognizing the work of area students who submit drawings of historic properties in the area. A very special celebration is planned in Havre de Grace. See the boxed section below.

Such programs will be celebrated throughout the county and the nation recognizing the importance of preservation efforts. The National Trust offers several suggestions for local groups and individuals to consider as a way to celebrate this effort. Visit the Trust's website at [www.preservationnation.com](http://www.preservationnation.com) for more information.

One of the major Historical events taking place during Preservation month will be the War of 1812 commemoration in Havre de Grace. The following article describes some of the actual events leading up to the battle. Watch for the Commemoration ceremony on **May 3, 2014**.

## PICTORIAL FIELD-BOOK OF THE WAR OF 1812

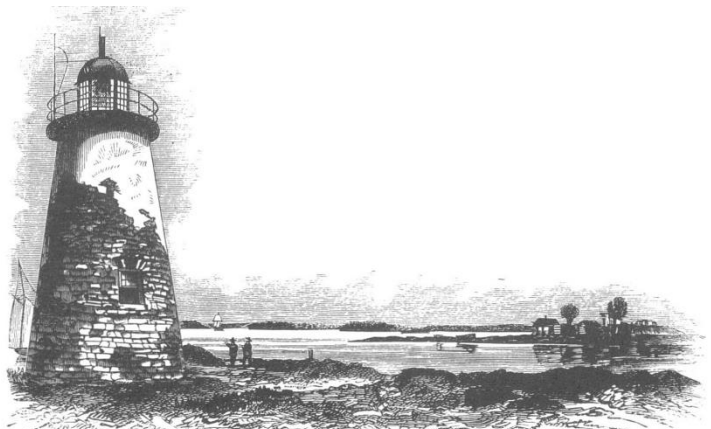
By Benson J. Lossing

Havre de Grace, near the mouth of the Susquehanna River, was the marauding knight's next object for visitation. It was a small town, two miles up from the head of Chesapeake Bay, and contained about sixty houses, built mostly of wood. It was on the post-road between Philadelphia and Baltimore, as it now is upon the railway between the two cities. For some time the enemy had been expected there, not because there were stores or any other seductions for him, but because the love of plunder and wanton destruction appeared to be Cockburn's animating spirit. Several companies of militia had been sent to the vicinity; and upon the high bank of the river, just below the village, near the site of the present (1867) iron-works of Whittaker & Co., a battery was erected, on which one eighteen-pounder and two nine-pounders were mounted. This, for reasons unexplained, was called the "Potato Battery." On the lower, or Concord Point, where the light-house now stands, was a smaller battery, and both were manned by militia exempts. Patrols watched the shores all the way to the Bay looking for the enemy, and for about three weeks this vigilance was un-slumbering. The enemy did not appear. All alarm subsided; and the spirit that brought out armed men began to flag. Some returned home, and apathy was the rule.

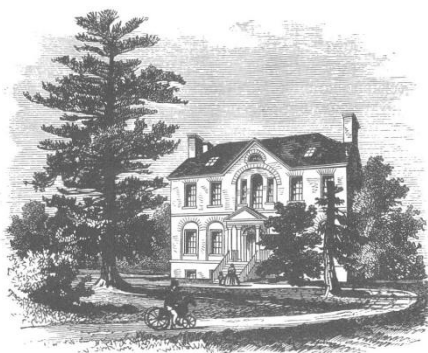
Cockburn was informed of this state of things at Havre de Grace, and prepared to fall upon the unsuspecting villagers on the night of the 1st of May. A deserter carried intelligence of his intentions to the town, and the entire neighborhood was speedily aroused. The women and children were carried to places of safety, and about two hundred and fifty militia were soon again at their posts. But Cockburn did not come. He purposely lulled them into repose by a postponement of the attack. The deserter's story was disbelieved. It was thought to be a false alarm. What is there to call the British here? Common sagacity queried. The militia again became disorganized, and many of them returned home.

### LANDING-PLACE OF THE BRITISH

On the night of the 2d of May there was perfect quiet in Havre de Grace. The inhabitants went to sleep more peacefully than they had done for a month. They were suddenly awakened at dawn by the din of arms. It was a beautiful serene morning; "not a cloud in the sky nor a ripple on the water," said the venerable Mr. Howell, of Havre de Grace, to me, in the autumn of 1861, as we stood upon the site of the "Potato Battery." He was there at the time, and participated in the scenes. Fifteen to twenty barges, filled with British troops, were discovered approaching Concord Point, on which the light-house now stands. The guns on higher Point Comfort, manned by a few lingering militia, opened upon them, and these were returned by grapeshot from the enemy's vessels. The drums in the village beat to arms. The affrighted inhabitants, half dressed, rushed to the streets, the non-combatants flying in terror to places of safety. The confusion was cruel. It was increased by a flight of hissing rockets, which set houses in flames. These were followed by more destructive bomb-shells;



and while the panic and the fire were raging in the town, the enemy landed. A strong party debarked in the cove by the present lighthouse, captured the small battery there, and pressed forward to seize the larger one. All but eight or ten of the militia had fled from the village; and John O'Neil, a brave Irishman, and Philip Albert, alone remained at the battery. Albert was hurt, and O'Neil attempted to manage the heaviest gun alone. He loaded and discharged it, when, by its recoil, his thigh was injured, and he was disabled. They both hurried toward the town, and used their muskets until compelled to fly toward the open common, near the Episcopal Church, pursued by a British horseman. There O'Neil was captured, but Albert escaped. The brave Irishman was carried on board the frigate *Maidstone*, and in the course of a few days was set at liberty.



The guns of the captured battery were turned upon the town, and added to the destruction. A greater portion of the enemy (almost four hundred in number) went up to the site of the present railway ferry landing, and debarked there. They rushed up to the open common, separated into squads, and commenced plundering and destroying systematically, officers and men entering into the business with equal alacrity. Finally, when at least one half of the village had been destroyed, Cockburn, the instigator of the crime, went on shore, and was met on the common by several ladies who had taken refuge in an elegant brick house, some distance from the village, known as the Pringle mansion. They entreated him to spare the remainder of the village, and especially the roof that sheltered them. He yielded with reluctance, and at length gave an order for a stay of the plundering.

To see the entire article visit:

<http://freepages.history.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~wcarr1/Lossing2/Chap30.html#e014d>

### May Star-Spangled Banner Replica Appearances

**May 3 | 10 AM - 5 PM | Havre de Grace  
WAR OF 1812 COMMEMORATION**

Visit Havre de Grace to commemorate the anniversary of the British invasion! There will be encampments throughout town, tours aboard *Pride of Baltimore II*, the **Fort McHenry Junior Fife and Drum Corps**, period demonstrations and vendors, and the MdHS replica Star-Spangled Banner Flag!

Price: Free

Contact: Susquehanna Museum of HdG at the Lock House

Phone: 410-939-5780

Email: [lockhousemuseum@gmail.com](mailto:lockhousemuseum@gmail.com)

Website: <http://www.thelockhousemuseum.org/>

## BUILDING RESTORATION CAMPAIGN

The Building Restoration Committee awarded the bid for the first phase of the "Leak Improvement" project, the capstone and chimney repairs and released a bid to replace the failing tin roof. Working with lighting consultants, plans are in place for necessary lighting improvements that should improve energy efficiency as well as the actual use of the headquarters building. Additionally, Preservation Maryland awarded the Society a \$1,500 grant to assist with the cost of the tin roof replacement. Unfortunately, we were unsuccessful in obtaining the much needed State Bond Bill and must continue to seek alternative means to finance the window and mortar repairs (approximately \$225,000).

### Dresher Grant News

**One last plea for your help is needed, we have until June to raise the remaining \$6,000 match for the Dresher grant. If you can help in anyway, please consider doing this now so that we will be able to take advantage of the full \$25,000 matching grant opportunity.**

To help raise additional funds, the Society is sponsoring two exciting events in the fall. Please save the dates. On September 6<sup>th</sup> from 9 AM – 4 PM, an antique appraisal fair entitled *What's in Your Attic* will be held at the Bel Air Armory featuring twenty professional appraisers. Appraisals will be available for \$10/each with a maximum of three items.

The second event, celebrating the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the end of the Civil War, will actually be a two part concert series (*Lincoln's Life & Legacy: A Musical & Historical Masterpiece in Two Parts*) The first concert entitled "Triumph & Tragedy" will occur on November 15, 2014. The concert features the music of Dr. Duke Thompson as Lincoln. Many of the arrangements have never been performed before and promise to be outstanding. Jim Chrismer, a noted historian will provide a unique understanding of the War as it affected Harford County and local photographer, Dave Gigliotti will project views of the Civil War era photographs during the concert showing the many aspects of this cataclysmic time in our country's history. A second concert, "Beyond Gettysburg" will be performed at the Bel Air Armory on April 18, 2015. Tickets are \$25/show or \$40 for both. Tickets are available at

[www.eventbrite.com/e/lincolns-life-legacy-in-concert-tickets-11079151039](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/lincolns-life-legacy-in-concert-tickets-11079151039)

Watch the Society's website and Facebook page for more information on all of these events.

### NEW MEMBERS

Patricia Dunn

Janice E. M. Grant

Mr. and Mrs. C. Ryan Clark

Sarah Kunkel Filkins

Lydia DiStefano

Judy Park

Lisa Vaught

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Although I was away for most of the month of March, I was in contact via email and telephone with the Society. Before I departed for my southern office, I represented the Society on two different occasions.

On February 28th I gave a talk to the 4th and 5th graders of Conowingo Elementary School about the old town of Conowingo that disappeared when the Conowingo Dam was completed. It was a really good experience. The students were attentive, asked questions and showed their appreciation. After the completion of the fifth grade presentation, I was handed an envelope that I took to be a thank-you for coming to speak to the students. A minute later I was introduced to the 4th graders and the narrative began again.

When I returned home I opened the envelope. As I suspected, it was a thank-you note signed by all of the teachers who brought their classes to the sessions. Much to my surprise there was a check from the school for \$100 made out to the Historical Society of Harford County. The check went into the Restoration Fund as part of the match for the Dresher Grant (we still have about \$6,000 to go) and since the donation amount met the requirement for acquiring a piece of the Post Office Puzzle, a piece honoring the Conowingo Elementary School will adorn our lobby for years to come. Thank you, Conowingo Elementary School, for your generosity.

On March 8th I went to Annapolis with Maryanna Skowronski to appear before the Appropriations Committee and offer the Society's case for their approval of the Bond Bill to assist with restoration of the headquarters building. Our appeal was clear and concise to meet the two-minute time limit. Delegate Mary Dulany James, the bill's sponsor, presented most of our case and Maryanna had only a few moments to emphasize a point or two before our time was up. Unfortunately for the Society, the Appropriations Committee didn't feel our need was compelling enough to send it to the legislature for a vote.

Another issue that members of the Society have been working on for a long, long time is getting closer to completion. While I was gone Maryanna finalized the acquisition of most of the needed building supplies to create a new foundation for the B&O train station in Aberdeen. The long-awaited moving of the station is growing near. It is hoped that by the time the next issue of the newsletter reaches you the station will have been moved, the capstones on the roof of the headquarters building will have been repaired, a contract to replace the metal roof will be signed, and matching funds for the Dresher Foundation Grant will have been raised. Through the efforts of many Society members progress is being made.

*Richard Sherrill, President*



## HARFORD COUNTIANS IN HISTORY – THE FAMOUS AND INFAMOUS

The history and contributions of many fascinating Harford County citizens are relegated to the archives of time. In this and future issues, we will share some of their stories.

### Elijah J. Bond

January 23rd 1847 - April 14th 1921

Elijah Jefferson Bond is perhaps best known for patenting the Ouija Board. Born on January 23rd 1847 in Bel Air, he was the fourth child of Judge William Bond and Charlotte Howard Richardson. Elijah and his two brothers, Frank A. and Arthur W. served in the Confederate Army during the Civil War. In 1872, Elijah graduated from the Law School of the University of Maryland and opened a law practice in Baltimore. While at the University, he became close friends with Harry Welles

Rusk, a fellow student who went on to become president of Kennard Novelty Company which incorporated on October 30, 1890. The two would meet in law school and begin their historic friendship.



Elijah J. Bond



### Patents & Trademarks

Though not officially a member of the Kennard Novelty Company, Elijah Bond would assign the original Ouija patent (No. 446,054) registered on February 10, 1891 to William H. A. Maupin and Charles W. Kennard. Further cementing his relationship with the company and its associates, Col. Washington Bowie and Elijah J. Bond were assigned two patents for water and steam boilers in 1892, No. 474,645 and No. 482,384. We aren't sure if these water boiler patents had anything to do with the Kennard Novelty Company or if it was simply a side venture.

Elijah Bond was also granted a Canadian patent (No. 36,092) for the Ouija board on March 10, 1891. Initially, this patent wasn't assigned to anyone else, although he did soon after reach an agreement with the International Novelty Company granting them the sole right to this patent and therefore the ability to manufacture Ouija boards in Canada.

Elijah Bond died on April 14, 1921 and was buried in an unmarked grave at Greenmount Cemetery in Baltimore. Robert Murch found the grave in 2007 and worked tirelessly with the cemetery to obtain permission to install an appropriate marker. After receiving permission from surviving family members, Tegeler Monuments designed the monument dedicated in 2008 where Ouija board fans can visit and pay their respects to the man who first patented a favorite piece of Americana.



## COMING EVENTS

### News From Hays House

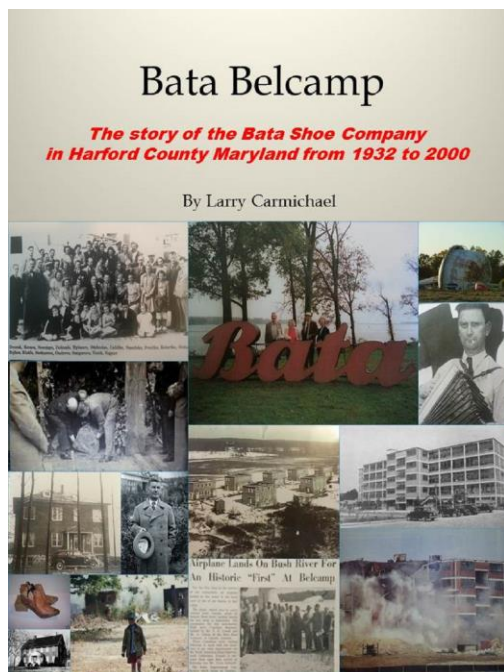
This season, Hays House Museum presents a new vintage clothing exhibit, *Whispers of White - Women of Worth, Costumes of a Changing Era*. The exhibit will run until September. Tour the 1788 Hays House and see this new exhibit. Visitors will also learn about prominent Harford County women in an era of change that shifted women's roles from hearth and home to being major influences in the community.

**On June 22 (note the date change),** visit Hays House and learn everything you ever wanted to know about spinning from Kathy Scholl, Hays House volunteer and spinning expert. Kathy gave a fabulous presentation last year. If you missed it, now is your chance to learn how a sheep's fleece becomes yarn for our sweaters, and flax plants turn into fibers for fabric in that linen suit.

This season, Hays House is open the **2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays from 1 to 4 pm**. Admission for these special events is \$5 for adults; \$3 for seniors/students; children under 4 are free.



*Weaver and Vintage Clothing at the Hays House Museum*



### Quarterly Lecture - The Story of the Bata Shoe Company in Harford County 1932-2000

The sleepy town of Belcamp, Maryland had no idea that the rise of Adolf Hitler would forever change its economy, architecture and culture. Already an established multinational shoe manufacturing company in 1933, Bata Shoe Company of Czechoslovakia was looking to the West to expand its international operations and avoid growing turmoil in Europe. In that year, Tomas Bata Jr., his mother, his uncle Jan Bata and several Bata executives traveled to the United States and to Canada to explore the possibility of establishing a new campus. Their travels led them to Belcamp, which was chosen as one of the new locations. To adequately house their facilities, Bata purchased more than 2,000 acres of historically

significant Harford County Real Estate known as Sophia's Dairy.

**On Saturday, May 17<sup>th</sup> at 2 PM**, Larry Carmichael the author of *The History of the Bata Shoe Company in Harford County 1032-2000* will be the featured speaker for the Society's Summer Lecture. He will take us back to the early days of the company and provide rare footage of the welcoming ceremony with Mr. Bata and several local politicians as well as many photos and stories about the company's impact on growth and development in Harford. Reservations are recommended.

### Historical Society Annual Yard Sale

MOVING?    DOWNSIZING?    SPRING  
CLEANING?    JUST FEELING GENEROUS?

The Society will hold its Annual Yard sale on **Saturday, June 21<sup>st</sup> from 9- 3 PM** at the Headquarters building 143 N. Main Street in Bel Air. We hope you will attend, but before that we have a long way to go to match last year's event and we are asking for your help. As always we welcome donations of any types of household items, books, furniture, glassware, clothing in good shape, decorative items, craft supplies, jewelry, antiques etc.



We are ready to accept donations of these and other items. You may drop off your contributions during our regular open hours. Items may be left after hours on the loading dock at the rear of the building. In some instances we may be able to arrange for pick up if you are unable to transport your contributions.

We are asking our members to talk with friends and neighbors to ask for donations. If you know someone who is moving, downsizing or just working on some spring cleaning please ask them to consider contacting the Society about a donation.

The success of last year's sale was in large part due to a generous contribution of antiques and other furnishings donated by Society member Judy Eagle.

Please contact the Society at 410-838-7691 or via e-mail, [DirectorHSHC@verizon.net](mailto:DirectorHSHC@verizon.net) if you have any questions or would like to make arrangements to drop off or have items picked up.

### Other Upcoming Events

Two additional events are planned for the upcoming season, a bus trip to Fort McHenry and the Carroll Mansion (**June 10<sup>th</sup> at 8 AM**) and a wine tasting and tour at Mt. Felix Winery in Havre de Grace (**May 31<sup>st</sup> time TBA**). For more information on these events check the Society website, Facebook page or call 410-838-7691.



## SPRING EVENTS HIGHLIGHTS



The Society's spring lecture featured Charles L. Robbins sharing stories from his book, *The Heavenly Waters Gang, and World War II era in Bel Air*.

## WHAT'S NEW IN THE GIFT SHOP

### NEW BOOK AVAILABLE ON THE THEATRICAL BOOTH FAMILY

This fascinating new book, *Booth History Spotlight: Articles from the Newsletter of the Junius B. Booth Society*, ed. Tom Fink, delves into the history of the theatrical Booth family and the times they lived in. The book is available at the Society gift shop for \$10 + tax.

### MA & PA RAILROAD BOOK BACK IN PRINT

The highly acclaimed book *The Ma & Pa Railroad: A History of the Maryland and Pennsylvania Railroad*, by Henry C. Peden, Jr. and Jack L. Shagena, Jr., is back in print and copies are available at the Historical Society of Harford County, 143 N. Main St., Bel Air, MD 21014. This 500-page hard cover book, with color images, is \$75 (10% discount to members) plus \$8 shipping (MD residents add 6% sales tax).

### NEW HARFORD COUNTY BOOK AVAILABLE

Harford County's Rural Heritage series continues with the new book **Harford County Place Names, Past and Present**, by Henry C. Peden, Jr. and Jack L. Shagena, Jr. This 250-page soft bound book, with black and white images, contains approximately 3,000 geological, geographical and historical places in Harford County with their locations and name derivations. The book is available at the historical society for \$20 (10% discount to members) plus \$6 shipping (MD residents add 6% sales tax).

## READERS' COMMENTS

We are always pleased to hear from our readers and hope from time to time to share some of your thoughts. In response to the "Bel Air Roller Rink: A Lost Treasure" article, Carole DeRan, the interviewee for the article, offered the following additional information about the purchase of the property.

*In 1951 Mr. Orr was operating a grocery store in Highland (Street Post Office); he was also dabbling in real estate. When a local farmer John W. Galbreath died without heirs his Executor, Chas. H. MacNabb offer a total sale of the farm at auction. Mr. Orr purchased the farm located in Mill Green (62 7/16 acre) with stock and equipment for \$28,600. Within hours of the sale, Mr. Orr had sold off the dairy herd as an entirety, as well as, most of the other live stock and equipment. From this quick sale he made a profit of \$15,000.\* Future sale of the land from this farm and the sale of the store at Highland gave the Orr's the money they need to start another business.*

*The bank still wanted more collateral and backing so my Uncle Charlie Durham offered to go into business with them. (This arrangement satisfied the demands of Forest Hill Bank.) In August, 1952 J. Milton Kelly and his wife sold 2.21 acres on U.S. Route 1 Hickory to Joseph E. Orr and his wife and to Charles B. Durham.*

*(\* Profit number taken from my mother's notes written in 1994 after the death of her brother Charles.)*

*Carole De Ran*

On reading the story about the Country Club Inn, George Harrison added to its history as follows:

*As stated, the inn was replaced by the Bel Air shopping center which included Polan's and the A&P, but that location is now the parking lot for the Risteau building. The location of the Risteau building had been a car dealership, originally The Motor Sales Co., and later, Child's Chevrolet. Both properties (the hotel and the dealership) were owned by Herbert Hanna, who built that big stone house at the corner of Ring Factory Rd and Tollgate Rd. After he built the automobile building he left the hotel standing, unused and deteriorating, for several years before selling that part of the property for the shopping center.*

To add to Mr. Harrison's comment, Mr. Hanna rented the rambling old hotel [Country Club Inn] in the late 1940s to Russell and Kate Lord, editor and illustrator of *The Land*, a nationally acclaimed magazine using the house as a residence and publishing house, an amazing history for a local property from log cabin to State office complex. When Mr. Hanna sold the property, the Lord's moved to a home on S. Main Street in Bel Air which was later demolished to make way for Friendly's Ice Cream store yet another familiar story.



## RESERVATION FORM

*All events are held at either the Historical Society of Harford County, Inc. 143 N. Main St., Bel Air, MD 21014 or at the Hays House Museum, 324 Kenmore Avenue, Bel Air, MD 21014 unless otherwise noted. For more information check the Society's website at [www.HarfordHistory.org](http://www.HarfordHistory.org), Facebook.com/Harford County Historical Society or call 410-838-7691.*

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Event</u>  | <u>Fee</u>                      | <u># Tickets</u> | <u>Amount</u> |
|-------------|---|---------------------------------|------------------|---------------|
| May 17      | Lecture on The History of Bata Shoe Company         | \$10                            | _____            | _____         |
| May 31      | Wine Tasting and Tour at Mt. Felix                  | \$call                          | _____            | _____         |
| June 10     | Bus trip to Fort McHenry<br>and the Carroll Mansion | \$call                          | _____            | _____         |
| June 22     | Spinning Demonstration with Kathy Scholl            | \$5 adult<br>\$3 senior/student | _____            | _____         |

**TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED**

\$\_\_\_\_\_

Times and descriptions of the events are more fully shown in the Coming Events portion of this newsletter. Tickets will also be available at the door on the day of event, but reservations are strongly encouraged. *Please enclose your check with your name and address and send to the Historical Society of Harford County, Inc., 143 N. Main Street, Bel Air, MD 21014. For more information, please call the Historical Society at 410-838-7691.*

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of Harford County, Inc.  
143 North Main Street  
Bel Air, MD 21014



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May / June 2014

DATED MATERIAL

The NEWSLETTER of The Historical Society of Harford County, Inc. is published bi-monthly.

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**HISTORICAL SOCIETY and GIFT SHOP HOURS**

Tuesday  
COURT RECORDS  
9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.

Wednesday  
ARCHIVES  
9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.

Thursday  
RESEARCH LIBRARY  
9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.

Fourth Saturday  
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RESEARCH LIBRARY  
10:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.