The HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF HARFORD COUNTY, Inc.

Preserving Our Past For Your Future



143 N. Main Street Bel Air, MD 21014

Society News

September / October 2014

Phone: (410) 838-7691 FAX: (410) 838-5257

E-Mail: HarcHis@msn.com

On the web: www.HarfordHistory.org



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

IN THIS ISSUE

1
2
2
3
3
4
5
5
6
6
7
7
8
10
11
11

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I and many of the volunteers involved in the maintenance and restoration of our headquarters building are pleased to share this news with all Society members. The metal roof below the cupola has been replaced, rotted wood has been replaced as needed and the color of the roof has been returned to an earlier shade of red. All of the perimeter capstones have been reworked. The failing mortar between and under the capstones has been removed and replaced. New copper flashing, which deflects rain water away from the walls, was installed and the existing metal flashing repaired. The mortar between the granite stones comprising the chimney which had deteriorated over the years was dug out and replaced. The result is that there has not been a drop of water entering the building since the work was begun. The frequent placing of buckets and trash cans to catch water dropping down from the ceilings or cascading down the walls in the storage room next to the chimney is now a thing of the past.

These accomplishments and other planned improvements are the result of the expenditure of a lot of time and effort by a very dedicated group of volunteers who care about the Society and who appreciate the financial support of the membership and other organizations that have provided the funds that make all of this possible, both now and in the future.

Another recent step forward was the hiring of Jacob Bensen to fill the position of Administrative Assistant. Jacob is on duty Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday between 9 AM and 3:30 PM. His job involves greeting the public in person or by telephone, carrying out tasks as directed by the Director and assisting with the day-to-day workings of the Society. Jacob was a summer volunteer in 2012 and 2013 and is familiar with the workings of the Society.

One of the pleasant experiences of the summer months is the lowering of the average age of the volunteers. No, it is not the imbibing of water from the Fountain of Youth but the arrival of

(cont'd next page)

Page 2 Society News

PRESIDENT'S REPORT (cont'd from page 1)

college and high school summer volunteers. For some of them this was their second or third volunteer summer. This year Rebecca Coates, Justin Daniels, Drew Forthman, Nicole Six, and Carrie Wilson have given hours of their time and shared their skills to assist the volunteer staff.

Plan to attend all of the events that the Society is holding this fall, especially the Annual Dinner on September 25th at the Maryland Golf and Country Clubs. It will not only be a pleasant meal but an enjoyable visit with the dashing Marquis de Lafayette, of Colonial Williamsburg. Also, as part of a brief general meeting we will elect members to the Board of Trustees for the Class of 2015. Contact the Society for reservations and check the website for more information on the Slate of Officers.

Also on the schedule are an antiques and collectibles appraisal event on September 6th at the Bel Air Armory, the annual Archer Lecture on October 18th at the Society and two Sunday events at the Hays House. See details elsewhere in this newsletter.

We hope to see you often this fall. Enjoy the happenings made possible by the efforts of our volunteers.

Richard Sherrill, President

NEW MEMBERS

Joan A. Barnes
Michael Carpenter
Lensworth Cottrell, Jr.
John (Jack) T. Flynn, Jr.
Clarence A. Fry
Kathy Franke
Ron and Kate Gary
Judith J. Goetz

Mary E. Hendrickson Charles W. Irwin Arthur and Katherine Long Carol A. Ristau John and Kathi Santora Rebecca Scheirer Teresa Ann Shiraldi Trish Seipel

MEET OUR NEWEST EMPLOYEE

The Society welcomes Jacob Bensen as our new Administrative Assistant. Mr. Bensen started in July and will be welcoming visitors as well as assisting in day to day Society activities. He holds a Bachelor's degree from Philadelphia University in Architectural Studies and is currently working on his Masters degree at UMBC in Public History. Jacob's interest in history is self-evident and will be a great benefit to the Society. He noted that, "He enjoyed his time here as a volunteer last summer and sees this position as a good fit for both himself and the Society".

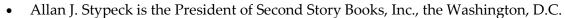


* * * UPCOMING SOCIETY EVENTS * * *

WHAT'S IN YOUR ATTIC? - SEPTEMBER 6 AT THE BEL AIR ARMORY

The Historical Society of Harford County will offer 20 experts who can appraise and answer your questions about a wide variety of items. There is no better bargain. Pay just \$10.00 per item (up to three).

- Richard Opfer local auctioneer and appraiser specializing in toys, paintings, antiques
- Bill Kulick performs appraisal services for the Babe Ruth Museum, Maryland Sports Museum, National Hockey League.



- Fritz Sterbak is a recognized expert in china and Victorian stained glass.
- Gwen Houston owns Fallston Coin & Jewelry.
- Richard Clayton is a local expert who specializes in gold and silver jewelry
- Patrick Vincente, owner of Vincenti Decoys.
- Linda Essers is the owner of Appalachian Doll Company.
- Debra Guy is a firearms expert.
- Kevin Ferrell President of Saxon's Diamond Centers
- And many more:

Go to our website for a complete listing of Appraisers and their credentials – www.harfordhistory.org



ANNUAL DINNER FEATURES THE MARQUIS de LAFAYETTE

On Thursday, September 25th at 6:30 PM, Society members are invited to attend a very special dinner and show at the Maryland Golf and Country Clubs. Mark Schneider, who portrays the Marquis de Lafayette at various and frequent occasions in Colonial Williamsburg, will be the speaker at the Historical Society's 2014 Annual Dinner. Born in Quebec, Canada his family moved to the United States, where his interest in history became focused on military history. To further his appreciation for the contributions of those involved in combat situations he enlisted in the U. S. Army. After serving in the military, Mr. Schneider accepted a position in Colonial Williamsburg working in the brickyard. He claims that he was eventually selected to portray the vibrant and energetic French aristocratic military officer because he could speak French and ride a horse.

Mr. Schneider has spent a great deal of time and energy researching his character so that his presentations and his answers to follow-up questions from the audience have the effect of making the audience feel that he is truly the Marquis. Mark Schneider enjoys his role as Lafayette but has also

Page 4 Society News

portrayed Benedict Arnold on occasion, which requires a major adjustment in his thought patterns. On several occasions he has portrayed Napoleon Bonaparte at various locations in Europe.

We are fortunate to have arranged for Mr. Schneider's appearance at our dinner and look forward to a delightful evening. The cost for the dinner and show is only \$35 per person and will include your choice of Grilled Salmon with grain mustard sauce **or** Boursin cheese and spinach stuffed chicken breast with Madeira wine sauce. Salad, rolls and butter as well as coffee, hot and iced tea are included. Dessert is crème brule in keeping with our French menu theme.

Reservations are required. See the form at the back of the newsletter.

ANNUAL GEORGE ARCHER LECTURE

A History of Pylesville: By Doug Washburn

On **Saturday**, **October 18**th , **2014 from 2 – 4 PM**, the Society will host a lecture, book signing and tea featuring Doug Washburn, author of *A History of Pylesville*, *Harford County*, *Maryland*. This recently released book provides a portrait of Pylesville, the village, which is just to the northeast of the intersection of Maryland Routes 543 and 165. In the 19th century it thrived with Nathan Pyle's Grist Mill and general store, and the Jenkins-Todd asbestos mine. In the 20th century the Western Maryland Dairy, a Ford dealership, and the stores of Halsey and Eney contributed to the village's prosperity. In both centuries the railroad, that went by several names during its life, opened the Baltimore market for Pylesville milk and canned goods.

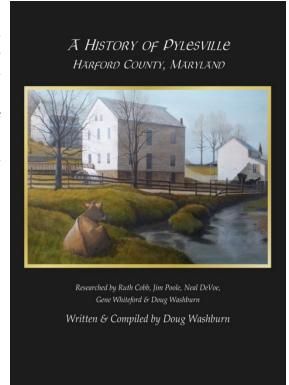
But Pylesville, the 21132 postal code, includes numerous other mills, stores, and a variety of businesses

such as a tavern, an undertaker and cabinetmaker, and blacksmiths. The larger definition includes John Wilkes Booth's plan to kidnap President Abraham Lincoln, Eden Mill's return to a Stanbury descendant, and redone deeds because a father's gift to his daughters had not been blessed by their husbands.

Mr. Washburn will provide insight into the development of this rural community, the genealogy of many of the people in the area, along with pictures that bring the area and its people and its history to life. If you plan on attending the lecture and tea, please call for reservations or return the form in the back of the newsletter.

Copies of the book are available in the Society book store (Price: \$25.00 for non-members, \$22.50 for members).

Included: the cover is an image of a painting by Dave DeRan, 226 pages, 67 pages of color maps or color photos, over 700 names indexed.



LINCOLN'S LIFE & LEGACY: A MUSICAL & HISTORICAL MASTERPIECE IN TWO PARTS

On Saturday, November 8th, 2014, the Society will co-host with the Maryland Conservatory of Music and the Bel Air Arts and Entertainment District, the first of a two part historic concert series celebrating the 150th Anniversary of the armistice ending the Civil War. A second concert will occur on April 18, 2015. The programs will feature renowned pianist Dr. Duke Thompson, historian James Chrismer and photographer David Gigliotti. The first concert entitled, Triumph and Tragedy will concentrate on music from the early war years through the Battle of Gettysburg; the second concert entitled Beyond Gettysburg will tell the story of the battles and hardships leading to Appomattox Court House and the death of President Lincoln. Both concerts will feature a brief pre concert lecture describing Harford County's part in this tragic time in our country's history. The concert will be enhanced by outstanding visual images of the Civil War years assembled by our artistic director, David Gigliotti and include a post concert reception with "Mr. Lincoln". The Armory will open at 6:30 pm to give attendees a chance to view Silent Auction items. Period food items will be available for purchase before and after the performances. Tickets of \$25 for one or \$40 for both concerts are available at the Society or through the Society website: www.harfordhistory.org or at www.eventbrite.com/e/lincolnslife-legacy-in-concert-tickets. Proceeds from these concerts will be divided among the three sponsors with the Historical Society funds going towards our building campaign. The Maryland Conservatory proceeds will go towards scholarships for local students and the Arts and Entertainment District funds will help to continue the numerous free entertainment programs offered by the Town.

* * * UPCOMING HAYS HOUSE EVENTS * * *

A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE

On **Sunday**, **September 7th**, Hays House Museum celebrates Grandparents' Day with an event for nature lovers young and old entitled *A Walk on the Wild Side*. Wildlife rehabilitators from the Phoenix



Wildlife Center will present an educational program on wildlife rehabilitation and the conservation of wildlife habitat. Beekeepers from the Susquehanna Beekeepers Association will present a program and demonstration on honeybees, beekeeping and related arts.

Bring the grandchildren for a tour of the historic 1788 house and a visit with wildlife rehabilitators with their feathered and scaled critters. Get answers to your wildlife rescue questions. Learn about the history and importance of honeybees and beekeeping from members of the Susquehanna Beekeepers Association.

Page 6 Society News

BEN FRANKLIN & THE U.S. CONSTITUTION

On September 28th from 1 – 4 PM, visit with Benjamin Franklin in the formative days of our country. David Fisher portrays Benjamin Franklin in the days before the signing of the U. S. Constitution. He brings this exciting period in our country's history to life and gives the audience the thrill of meeting a founding father who truly changed the world.



Planning club events for fall and winter? If you are looking for a unique venue and a memorable experience for your group, consider arranging a luncheon tea at the historic 1788 Hays House. An enjoyable, private party may be arranged for you and your friends at the oldest home in Bel Air. This is a perfect way to celebrate a club event or a child's birthday. Served by docents in Colonial attire in



Mr. Hays' 1788 Parlor, a luncheon tea and tour may be reserved for your group. Call Betsy Lehmann at 410-592-8693.

Enjoy these special Sunday events from 1 to 4 PM each day. Admission is \$5 adults; \$3 seniors/students; children under 4 are free. Included is a tour of the oldest house in Bel Air built circa 1788.

* * * OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST * * *

HARFORD COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY - FALL SEMINAR

October 4th, 2014 at HSHC HQ – 143 N. Main Street – 8:30 am to 3:30 PM

Our guest speaker is a well-known genealogist from the Maryland area, Rebecca Whitman Koford. Her topics will be:

Vital Records: Births, Marriages, Deaths and Alternative Sources for Vital Information.

Identifying and Preserving Family Photos

Men of the Same Name: Which John Smith Is My John Smith?

Admission: HCGS members - FREE; Non-members - \$20; Students (with school ID) - \$10. Seating is limited. Bring your own brown-bag. Light refreshments and drinks provided.

Additional detail and registration form available at HCGS's webpage: www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mdhcgs/meetings.htm

BRITISH ROYAL FAMILY BIOGRAPHER HUGO VICKERS TO SPEAK AT HARFORD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Author and biographer of the British Royal Family, Hugo Vickers, will give a dinner talk to support the Hays-Heighe House at **Harford Community College on October 10, 2014**. His talk will be an original presentation, created for this occasion, titled "All the Queen's Horses." The ticketed dinner is the opening event for the fall programming and equestrian exhibit at the Hays-Heighe House: "The Racehorse, the Royals, and the Writer: The Legacy of Herman B. Duryea."

The dinner on **October 10 from 7:00 to 9:00 PM** will be held at the Chesapeake Center Dining Rooms at Harford Community College. Tickets are \$75 per person and can be obtained online at http://tinyurl.com/AllQueensHorses or by phoning 443-412-2539. Proceeds will support the Hays-Heighe House at Harford Community College in its mission to showcase the social and cultural history of Harford County through exhibits and inclusive programming. A portion of each ticket purchased is tax deductible.

The exhibit opens to the general public on October 14, 2014 at 1:00 p.m., at the Hays-Heighe House. Open exhibit hours are Tuesdays from 1:00-3:00 p.m., Fridays from 10:00 a.m. to noon, and first Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to noon. Along with the exhibit, the Hays-Heighe House will sponsor a dozen educational programs on topics such as World War I, developments in European and American art and literature at this time, the British suffragette movement, living history interpretations of American suffragists Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Alice Paul, and the genetics behind thoroughbred horse-breeding

For more information about the exhibit and the dinner, phone the Hays-Heighe House at 443-412-2539.

The exhibit is being co-sponsored by the Historical Society and curated by Society Director, Maryanna Skowronski. Many of the artifacts on exhibit are from the Society's collection.





Work proceeds on the Society's Headquarters with the completion of the capstone project and the removal and replacement of the tin roof. Thanks to all who have helped with the fundraising effort. We hope to have the mortar, electrical upgrades and painting done by the end of the year and will begin fundraising for the window restoration project then.

Page 8 Society News

THE OLD LOG HOUSE

By C. Milton Wright

The following article was written many years ago by the illustrious writer, historian and educator C. Milton Wright. This is one of those amazing treasures that Society members bring to us on occasion. We hope that you enjoy this remarkable story.

Allie, Will and I were born in the old log house in which my father and grandfather had been born. In 1886 the old house had become too small for a growing family and the new house was planned and built. The other three children, Hanna, Elva and Bertram were born in the new house which still stands much the same as it was when built in 1886.

A description of the old log house may be of interest. We have no record of the date of the building of this old house which stood about 100 feet north of the new house built by my father. My father told me that Caleb, his father, was born in this dwelling in 1799 which indicates that it must have been occupied by John Wright before that date.

The log house was approximately 20 feet by 36 feet and was built in the side of the hill, the second story having access at ground level at the back. The lower story had a large kitchen and dining area. In the kitchen there was a huge fireplace formerly used for cooking purposes but by 1881 was chiefly for giving heat. Cooking was done on a wood burning stove which occupied one side of the room. This lower story also had two small bedrooms at the east end of the house which I am sure were originally used as slave quarters. There were two doors on the ground level facing the south which was the front of the house.

A large stairway at the back of the kitchen ascended to the second story. The second story which had its ground level at the back of the house consisted of one large sitting room and two bedrooms at the east end. The Sitting room had a large fireplace which was used for heat in winter. One door opened from the sitting room to the ground level at the back.

The third story contained two rooms, one of which was used for storage and the other a bedroom for hired help.

The house had a shingled hip roof made of handmade rived shingles. The spaces between the carefully hewn logs were filled with lime mortar, nicely smoothed. The log construction and the rived shingles indicated that this house must have been built in the late 1700s. The exact date probably falls between 1788 and 1799. Blois Wright had the land surveyed and patent applied for before his death on January 1, 1788 and Caleb Wright was born in the house in 1799. As John Wright as married in 1791 it might be assumed that the house was built about this time.

From 1887 until 1890s the old house was used for curing tobacco. In winter after the tobacco was dried the former bedrooms were used for stripping and preparing tobacco for market.

There seems to be an old story about Allie, Will and myself deciding one day in 1886 while mother and father were away that the old house was no longer needed. By throwing stones we proceeded to break

out almost every window. If the wood shed episode of that evening could be told, I imagine that the blood curdling yells, as the willow stick was applied to each in turn by my father, would have made headlines.

There was an old log barn about 150 feet to the east of this house which was used until about 1900. It was torn down after the new barn was built.

Our New House

In 1886 when I was just 5 years old, father and mother planned to build a new house. The location selected was about 150 feet to the south of the old house on the spot that had been used as a garden from early days by Caleb and father. One of my first real recollections at the age of about 3 years is of this garden beyond the fence where the present house now stands, and of seeing father cultivating the garden with a horse and hoeing between the rows of vegetables.

It was just at this time that Bethel church was being built and father arranged for Mr. William Purkey, the builder of Bethel, to build our new house. Some of the lumber used was cut from our woods but most was purchased. It was in the day when hemlock was usually used for frame and white pine was plentiful for windows, doors, etc. Mr. Purkey came from Bethel and the two buildings were under construction by him at the same time.

I remember seeing the workmen slack the lime. In those days they always used raw lime and when water was added it boiled and boiled until all was white and soft. They took a pile of sand and hollowed it out in a large ring 10 feet across and the ring of sand held the lime until it cooled.

Mr. Purkey had several carpenters and workers. One, Lemuel Morris, stands out in my mind. Mother cooked and boarded the group and they always stayed all week, working 10 hours a day including Saturday. Well do I remember one carpenter, I have forgotten his name, who always came in a dog cart, a two wheeled vehicle with shafts. He always had a date with his girl on Thursday night. One day the other workers played a joke on him and covered his cart up in the straw stack and he didn't find it until Saturday.

Another master carpenter was Ed Klinefelter who came from the region of Maryland Line. Mr. Purkey was a master stair builder and the winding stairs extending to the third floor were skillfully built and add much to that house of today. I do not know the exact cost of the house but it seems to me that father told me later that it was between \$4000 and \$5000.

Incidentally, the house at 622 Rockspring Avenue in Bel Air which I purchased from H. Willard Tarring in 1928 and sold to Charles Robbins in 1963 was built from the same plans as our house on Wright's Prospect.

The house on the farm was the home of our family from 1886 until the death of my father in 1918 when it was sold as I remember for \$6500.

Page 10 Society News

SUMMER AT THE SOCIETY

Numerous, extremely talented artists under the direction of John Sauers graced the Society's headquarters with a unique exhibit. The paintings, each a depiction of the Bel Air Academy on Gordon Street in Bel Air, provided a completely different aspect of the building and its meaning to the community and the artist. The exhibit truly explained how each of us see the world through individual perspectives, some beautiful, some playful, some eerie. In addition to the artists, approximately 20 people, several of whom attended the school and shared their stories about



teachers, events and even one person described how he first met his wife on the steps of the school. They are still married.

The guest speaker described the importance of the school to the community since it predates mandatory school attendance and going to school was considered a privilege when the building was first constructed in the late 1800s. People traveled great distances to attend the school, as most areas were served only by 1 or 2 room school houses. Although he was unable to attend, Councilman James V. "Capt'n Jim" McMahan, Jr. sent a brief story about his years at the school. He attended what was then Bel Air Elementary School from first grade thru sixth grade. These years left a plethora of incredible memories. Captain Jim relates how:

We had a full hour for lunch and as I remember three of us were very adventurous. Gordon Palmer, the late son of Dr. Gerald Palmer, longtime Harford County physician and Sue Ann Snodgrass, the late daughter of Malcolm and Sue Snodgrass, whose father was the assistant postmaster, used to entertain ourselves by sneaking down to the Post Office and climbing along the grates that led to deep window wells which are still evident at the building you now occupy. Today I wonder how we managed that.

The impression of the old wooden flip seat desks on the oiled, second floor show you exactly the outline of the 5th and 6th grade classrooms taught by Sue Snodgrass and Hunter Sutherland, respectively. Mr. Sutherland also held the position of principal.

Helen Haines who lived in the rooming house known as "Miss Jo Moore's" would have 2 fourth grade students walk to Miss Moore's and back every day to deliver her lunch on a special tray.

The highlight of the playground activity was the year we got the push and pull merry-go-round. We got splinters, bruised knees and assorted cuts that all healed and nobody sued. Unfortunately the memories our children acquire today are much different and rarely as rustic.

CONGRATULATIONS TO GENE STREETT ON HIS 70TH ANNIVERSARY WITH BOYD AND FULFORD DRUG STORE

Boyd and Fulford Drug Store has existed since 1892. The store was originally, owned by Henry James Boyd and Alexander Maitland Fulford. Boyd, came from the island of Tasmania and taught at the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy in Baltimore. Fulford was one of the original manufacturers for soda fountain syrup in the 1880s. He bottled root beer and sarsaparilla at the family property on S. Main Street where Wockenfuss candy store now stands. Naturally, there was a soda fountain in their pharmacy.

In 1944, 14 year old M. Eugene Streett applied for his first job. Thus began a journey that continues even today after 70 years, first as an employee and later in 1964 as an owner of this Bel Air landmark. Through good times and bad, Doc Streett and his late wife Marytherese served the people of Bel Air, providing medicines for all sorts of maladies, sharing the town's latest stories and in earlier days serving up treats at the soda fountain.

The Society congratulates Doc Streett on his amazing tenure and thanks him for his service to the community.

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, www.facebook.com/TheHistoricalSocietyofHarfordCounty or call 410-838-7691.



RESERVATION FORM

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Fee</u>	# Tickets	Amount
Sept 6	What's In Your Attic? (Bel Air Armory)	\$10		\$
		(max 3 ite	ms)	
Sept 7	Grandparents Day at Hays House:	\$5		\$
	A Walk on the Wild Side			
Sept 25	Annual Dinner (MD Golf & Country Club)	\$35		\$
	Enter quantity:	Salmon	Chicken_	
Sept 28	Ben Franklin Speaks (Hays House)	\$5		\$
Oct 18	George Archer Lecture & Tea: Pylesville	\$10		\$
Nov 8	Lincoln's Life & Legacy (Bel Air Armory)	\$25/\$40		\$

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED

\$			

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



Nonprofit Org. U.S. POSTAGE PAID BEL AIR, MD 21014 PERMIT No. 40

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED September / October 2014 DATED MATERIAL

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

OFFICERS 2014-2015

President

Richard Sherrill

Vice PresidentCarol Deibel

Secretary

Curoi Deio

Elizabeth Lehmann

Treasurer

Brianne B. Norris

Past President

Henry Peden

TRUSTEES 2013-2014

George Harrison

Walter Holloway

A. A. Roberty

John Spielberger

TRUSTEES 2014-2015

Mary Cardwell Richard Herbig Larry Carmichael Edward Meerholz

Michael Cullum Mary Moses

DIRECTOR

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Carol Deibel

Maryanna Skowronski

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 ARCHIVES and RESEARCH LIRARY 10:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.