# The HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF HARFORD COUNTY, Inc.

Preserving Our Past For Your Future



143 N. Main Street Bel Air, MD 21014

# Society News

March / April 2017

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

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### BEL AIR BOWL: THE LAND ON THE HILL

by Carol L. Deibel

We all have dreams, but few of us act on them, certainly not the way Prescott Coale did. Coale and his wife, Mary grew up in Harford County. Prescott began his career at Aberdeen Proving Ground in the accounting department and Mary took care of their three children. This was a good job by all standards, but Prescott wanted more, something more fulfilling. Initially, he left to sell cars; still he knew that it was not his ultimate goal. He always loved bowling, starting in the old days when he would bowl with his pals at the "Hole" on Main Street. So, he and a few friends talked to Brunswick Corporation about starting a new bowling facility in Bel Air.

They were encouraged and went to Commercial and Savings Bank who agreed to give the group a loan. Starting with five partners-Prescott Coale, major league baseball pitcher, Bob Turley, Gordon Little, Norman 'Hope' Johnson and John Robert Wayne - the venture began with incorporation in 1958. Originally called the Bob Turley Bel Air Bowl, the group held its grand opening on August 12, 1960. Its initial advertisements highlighted a weekly giveaway, a pair of 1960 World Series tickets each week for six weeks. These events, the quality of the facility and the friendly staff brought in many bowlers and visitors. The 24-lane bowling alley became so popular that another 16 lanes were added in 1962-63. In 1969, Johnson and Coale bought out Turley's interest and the name changed to Bel Air Bowl.

The original partners found an ideal location for the new bowling alley at the top of the hill entering Bel Air on Baltimore Pike. The group purchased an eleven-acre property owned by the Baugess family near what was then still the Bel Air racetrack and fairgrounds, donating the large Victorian house on the property to the Bel Air Fire Company for a controlled burn and selling a portion of the property to another party. Circuit Court Judge George Van Bibber originally owned the house.

(cont'd on page 2)

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(cont'd from page 1)

Bel Air Bowl was busy from morning to night and Coale realized fulfilment of his dream.

Initially, there was a nursery for mothers to leave their children while they bowled and a small snack bar, but as more women returned to work outside the home; this was turned into a restaurant serving breakfast and lunch. Many locals remember the hot roast beef and fries prepared by some of the best southern cooks in the area.

This was a seven day a week job that involved the entire family with Coale and Johnson sharing responsibility for day to day operations. Prescott and Mary took off on Friday night to go out to dinner at the Hickory Inn and Sunday morning to go to church. Generally, women would come during the day and the restaurant drew a strong lunchtime crowd from Bel Air offices and the law enforcement community. In the evening adult leagues would fill the lanes and weekends brought in students throughout the county.



Coale loved sports, but recognized that there were many people who were unlikely to make the area football or baseball teams. However, everyone could bowl. No one was assigned to the bench and it was a lifetime possibility. Bob Melville, the Director of Athletics for the Board of Education, was a good friend and neighbor. One day while they were talking, Prescott mentioned this and suggested that he would be willing to set up a simulation bowling lane, supply equipment and teach young children how to bowl right in the school gymnasiums. Mr. Melville quickly accepted the offer and soon Prescott was using masking tape on the gym floors to outline a lane, providing plastic equipment and spotting for 10 pins. His classes met at Bel Air, Edgewood, William Paca, and Jarrettsville Elementary Schools.

The Coale's brought joy to many children and entertained adults bringing in celebrities from the sports world including Bob Turley (Orioles and Yankee Pitcher), Nelson Fox (American League's most Valuable Player and future hall of famer), and Johnny Unitas (Colts football star) as well as Lindy Faragalli (1958 World Bowling Champion) and many bowling tournament champions from across the country. These events provided happy memories for their customers and employees over the years. Bel Air Bowl closed in 1997 when the owners retired.

#### **NEW MEMBERS**

Martha Barchowsky
Grace Fielder
Joseph M. Jarvis
Kyle McKibben
Ed and Jeanetle Miller

Marita O'Connell Michelle Presbury Carol Sander Judith Wilson

#### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The folks that make the Historical Society of Harford County run have been quite active in all the tasks put before them. Among the many areas of effort, the following items need to be drawn to your attention.

Much to the delight of the volunteers who care for the Hays House, the entrance hall, the dining room, and the windows in the original portion of the structure have been repainted in the proper colors for the building. The prep work and painting by Bright Painting have positively altered the appearance of the interior of the building. Thomas Hays would be pleased with the refreshed appearance of his home's interior. Repairs still need to be made to the front porch railings and the damaged fence, but those projects will be completed as the weather warms. When the Hays House activities resume for 2017, you can not only take part in the noteworthy events but see the greatly improved appearance of the building.

A new Strategic Plan that will focus on the years 2017 to 2020 is being developed by the Board of Trustees. A draft was prepared by Vice President Carol Deibel and Rebecca Jessop of RJ Consulting. It was distributed to members of the Board of Trustees and the staff for their review, comments, and suggestions. At the board's next meeting on March 3<sup>rd</sup> they will go over points raised for discussion. If a satisfactory document is achieved at the meeting, it will be put to a vote. If more work is needed, a special meeting of the board will be called. I anticipate that the Society will have a reliable and challenging plan that will guide our actions and re-enforce our mission for the remainder of this decade.

Board member and Archives volunteer Mary Worthington is providing the expertise needed to have a monthly series of genealogical workshops for members and the public. The first two presentations had good attendance and the materials covered were beneficial to the participants. "Jumping the Pond", a workshop dealing with ancestral immigration, will be presented on March 8. Additional topics are being planned to continue this educational service to our community.

Progress is evident in the restoration of the headquarters building. The green light was given to Bright Painting to begin the prep work for painting the upper white trim on the front facade. The airlock removal will soon be under contract. A matching grant from the Town of Bel Air for the building's facade restoration is used to fund these improvements. The Society's portion of matching funds will need to be supported by the Society's membership and the community.

In the basement, where we need to establish permanent storage for several of our artifacts and archival collections, volunteers from the Maryland Recovery Partners removed two small concrete bases for old HVAC equipment. A third base required more than the persuasive pounding of a sledge hammer to remove completely. I called upon Doug Smith (who joined the Society when his company, A&I Environmental Services, was removing the old air conditioning equipment and associated asbestos in 2015). Using a jack hammer, he removed the remainder of that base. Two larger bases (each approximately 100 square feet in size) will be more difficult to remove and most likely will need to be

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removed by a contractor using jackhammers. These bases were poured on the finished floor using a binder to adhere the new concrete to the old. This removal will give us a flat floor area for storage.

Preparation of the floor (chipping off old paint) in the future art storage room is continuing slowly. The floor needs to be painted by early March to allow the paint to cure prior to the scheduled arrival of recently-purchased art storage racks.

The *Harford Historical Bulletin* on Bata Shoe Company has been distributed and future issues are being processed. Unfortunately, the grant that we have been using to finance this benefit to our members and others who are interested in Harford County history will not support non-fiction projects. However, it will cover expenses for in-character speakers at our various events. The cost for printing and distribution of future bulletins needs to come from another source.

At this time, we have sufficient funding for the Society's day-to-day operations. That is the result of members paying their 2017 dues and a very successful Annual Giving drive, which rewarded us with over \$25,000. Your generosity is worthy of our praise and thanks. The main need is for restoration dollars. We plan to have a drive this year to raise funds to complete the restoration and enhancement of our headquarters building. The board is researching the possible use of a professional fund-raising firm to assist us in reaching out to the community.

The board, other volunteers and staff are making progress with the many issues before us. However, we cannot do this without help from all our members. We welcome and greatly appreciate your wholehearted support (skills, time, and financial donations) to help us achieve the goals that are before us.

Richard Sherrill, President

#### JUNE YARD SALE - SALE ITEMS NEEDED

The Society is preparing for its annual yard sale. As always, we welcome donations of any type of household items, books, furniture, glassware, clothing in good shape, decorative items, craft supplies, jewelry, antiques etc.

We will be accepting donations of these and other items starting April 1st. You may drop off your contributions during our regular business hours (Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 9am- 3pm). 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.

Please talk to your 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.

Please contact the Society at 410-838-7691 or via e-mail,  $\underline{\text{DirectorHSHC@harfordhistory.org}}$ , if you have any questions or would like to make arrangements to drop off or have items picked up. The Yard Sale will be held on Saturday, June 24th, 9am – 3pm.

#### **COMING EVENTS**

**Brown Bag Lunch Series:** The second Tuesday of each month brings a new and fascinating topic to the Society's lunch series. The series is free although donations are encouraged. Bring your lunch and sit back for an intriguing hour of entertainment, while you learn about the wonders of your county.

On **Tueday, March 14**th from 12:30- 1:30 pm, Larry Carmichael will recount the **Bata Belcamp** story through photographs of the facilities, workers, and private housing. From the first building in 1939 to the implosion in 2000.

On **Tuesday, April 11**th, John Sullivan, Jr. will transport us to the world of the carvers, hunters and fishermen who frequented the Susquehanna in his talk, "**Decoys and the Sportsmen of the Flats**". This is a unique opportunity to learn about the significance of our local decoy carvers and the hunters and fishermen who visited Harford County to glimpse the abundance of birds, fish and wildlife supported along our shores.

**Spring Lecture and Tea – "The History of Chocolate":** Saturday, **March 18**<sup>th</sup> from 2 – 4 pm, Mark Coulbourne, chocolatier and pastry chef, has a special treat for you. He will share the story of the history of chocolate dating back to 1900 B.C. as a fermented beverage in Mesoamerica. Then take listeners on a journey to its development today as a staple and through its uncertain future as demand outpaces a sustainable supply. Samples will be available to tempt the chocoholics among us along with a fine tea. Reservations are required. The cost for the lecture and tea is \$10.

*Shenandoah*, **The Movie:** As a special treat the Society is planning a family movie night on Saturday, **April 1**<sup>st</sup> at 7 pm. The movie is *Shenandoah*, the 1965 film set in Virginia during the Civil War. The film stars the legendary Jimmy Stewart as a father of 7 sons and 1 daughter who attempts to keep his family safe from the war raging around them. Tickets are \$7 and include popcorn and soda.

On **April 4th** at 6:30 PM the Society will host a sneak preview from the forthcoming PBS series *The American Experience: The Great War*. The episode, "Are You an American? Prove it!" will focus on the suspicion and difficulties that immigrant Americans faced during WWI.

A panel and audience discussion of the immigrant experience during the War will follow the film. The event is being hosted as part of the Society's Genealogical Research Series.

Admission is free and open to the public. Advance reservation is encouraged as light refreshments will be served, however, they are not required. For info call the Society at 410-838-7691

**Your Genealogical Toolbox:** On January 11, 2017, Mary Worthington, initiated a three-part class on Genealogy. The final session for this series will be held on **March 8th from 7 – 9 PM** at the Historical Society offices at 143 N. Main St. in Bel Air.

It is not necessary to have attended previous classes to enjoy this opportunity to explore how Genealogical records can help find family members from foreign countries. Cost for the session is \$10. This is an excellent opportunity to learn how to research your heritage and to share your findings with others.

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Ms. Worthington has helped many in their genealogical searches as a volunteer at the Society. She will be assisted in this project by our chief genealogist, Henry Peden, who is recognized throughout the country for his knowledge and contributions to genealogy. To register for the class, you may call the Society at 410-838-7691 or return the registration form at the end of this newsletter.

The March class is entitled "Jumping the Pond". It will cover research techniques for foreign records without the jet lag.

**Hays House Museum Reopens:** This winter the Hays House underwent extensive repairs and painting. We hope you will come to see our refurbished look and enjoy this season's events.







--- Before ---

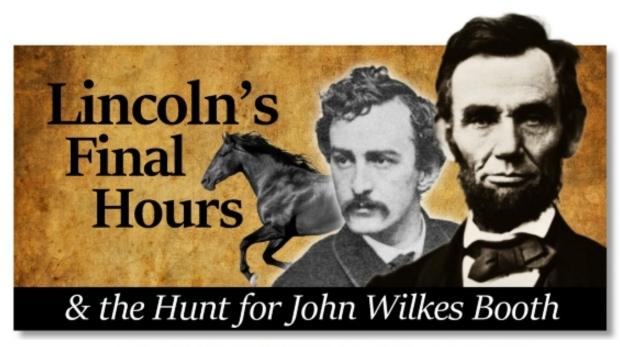
- After -

After these extensive interior repairs and painting, Hays House is ready for an exciting and informative season when it begins its "Learning Bee Series":

- In March, visit the Hays House Museum on Sunday, March 12th at 1 p.m. for "It's Personal, and Private: To be Clean, or not, in the days before indoor plumbing". At this first Hays House Learning Bee series event, our highly inquisitive history interpreters Kathy Scholl and Susan Wooden will share everything they know, and everything they don't know, about achieving bodily cleanliness in the 18th century. From diapers and infant care to unmentionables, and from chamber pots and bourdaloues to bidets and showers, every topic related to hygiene will be explored from the womanly point of view. Join us for a lively conversation and show & tell! As an added attraction, vintage undergarments and baby clothes from the Society's collection will be on display.
- "Old Furniture Exposed": On April 9<sup>th</sup>, Arthur Benser, local furniture expert, will present a talk focused on how to decide if antique furniture is good enough for restoration and how to date vintage furniture.
- "Scents from the Garden": On April 23th, Betsy Lehmann will talk about the importance of sweet smelling herbs and flowers in the 18th century. Children will be able to make a sachet as a Mother's Day gift to take home.

These events along with a tour of the 1788 historic house will run from 1 to 4 pm on each day. Admission to these special events is \$5.00/adults and \$3.00/students and seniors. Children under four are free, and there is free on-site parking.

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Saturday, May 13, 2017 1:00 to 4:00 PM Bel Air, MD

We're very excited to announce that the Junius B. Booth Society (JBBS) and the Historical Society of Harford County (HSHC) are holding an intriguing, one-of-a kind fundraising event titled *Lincoln's Final Hours and the Hunt for John Wilkes Booth* featuring author/historian Kathryn Canavan and Lincoln Assassination historian John Howard on Saturday, May 13 at the Historical Society of Harford County. This is a fundraiser and the proceeds will be split between JBBS and HSHC. All proceeds to JBBS will be used for the Tudor Hall museum. Seating is limited to 100 people, so reserve your seats now. Drinks and snacks will be provided. Following the closing remarks, the first floor of Tudor Hall, the childhood home of John Wilkes Booth will be open to attendees till 5:30 PM. The cost is \$25.00 per person. See the other side for details of how to register for this exciting event.

#### Lincoln's Final Hours by Kathryn Canavan

When John Wilkes Booth trained his derringer on America's greatest president, the drama was just beginning. His actions set in motion unintended consequences that would upend the lives of dozens of people and cause their futures to fork.

Kathryn Canavan, author of *Lincoln's Final Hours*, will speak about the effect that one extraordinary night had on the ordinary Washingtonians who witnessed what happened inside Petersen's Boarding House on the night President Lincoln died there. Their eyewitness accounts provide telling new details about the assassination. Some went on to lead lives that are the stuff of novels, and others came to sad ends.

Some followed the acting business west to Hollywood. One landed back in the headlines after his very public death in front of the Smithsonian Castle. One was the perpetrator in a high-society murder that rocked Albany, N.Y. One owned a glitzy Broadway nightclub so popular the Ziegfeld Follies sang about it. Their eyewitness accounts provide telling new details about the assassination night.

It is natural that **Kathryn Canavan** write about the Lincoln assassination, the most consequential crime in American history, because Canavan started her journalism career as a crime reporter.

She eventually worked as reporter or editor in four states and was a National Health Journalism Fellow at USC's Annenberg School. To get a story, Canavan has reported at gunpoint, lived with the Moonies, negotiated with a killer and joined Tug McGraw in the Phillies dugout.

She began researching the unintended consequences of the Lincoln assassination in 2009. Lincoln's Final Hours has been featured on CSPAN and PBS Newsworks.

-Continued on back.....

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The Hunt for John Wilkes Booth (Murder at Ford's—The Aftermath) by John Howard

Follow the escape route of John Wilkes Booth with our special speaker John Howard. His presentation will take
us on the twelve day escape journey of John Wilkes Booth from the assassination at Ford's Theatre to his
demise at Garrett's Farm through a photographic presentation of the existing sites of the escape route and relics
of the assassination. See where John Wilkes Booth stopped and hid over the course of the twelve days.

Attendees will receive a map of the escape route.

Some of the topics John Howard will cover are:

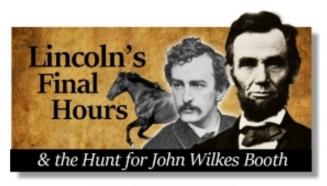
•The motives, role, and fate of the key players who participated. ◆The side players who were affected for the rest of their lives. ◆Why the escape route was chosen and who helped with the escape ◆The myths of the event and debunking the idea that Booth lived.

John Howard is a lifelong resident of New Jersey and was given a thirst for knowledge by his parents, especially his mother. He spent 30 years in biomedical research and supervising hospital laboratories. Recently he added another full time job: teaching High School science while still working as a Pathologist Assistant.

He has been a student of the Lincoln Assassination ever since being told by his mother that her grandmother was taken by her father to see Abraham Lincoln lying in state at New York's City Hall. Since then he has worked at learning all he could about the event. It was also his mother who introduced him to the subject of the Lindbergh kidnapping which is his other major subject of research.

John is currently one of the staff historians who lead the popular twelve hour John Wilkes Booth Escape tour for the Surratt Society and has been involved with the Society from its inception.

Following the Q&A and closing remarks the first floor of Tudor Hall, the childhood home of John Wilkes Booth will be open to attendees till 5:30 PM. Tudor Hall is located at 17 Tudor Lane, Bel Air, MD 21015.



Saturday, May 13, 2017 1:00 to 4:00 PM The Historical Society of Harford County 143 N. Main Street, Bel Air, MD 21014 Doors open at noon.

Parking is available on the street and the Historical Society of Harford County

Register Early to reserve your place! Space is limited to 100 people.

To purchase tickets go to: www.harfordhistory.org/events.php or call 410-838-7691.

Tickets may also be purchased via mail or in person at the Historical Society of Harford County's headquarters.

Presented by the Junius B. Booth Society and the Historical Society of Harford County

#### **MEMBERSHIP**

There are still a few members of the Historical Society who have not renewed their membership for 2017. It is not too late! Please renew today. Thank you very much for your continued support!

#### **GOOD NEWS**

Views on the Historical Society's Facebook page continue to grow. Updates on activities and major events, finds and general news about the Society are posted daily and can be viewed at https://www.facebook.com/TheHistoricalSocietyofHarfordCounty.

The Society's aluminum can recycling program continues to generate helpful revenue. We encourage you to bring your cleaned and crushed (if possible) aluminum cans for processing to the rear loading dock.

### SEEKING IMAGES OF HAVRE DE GRACE LIGHTHOUSE KEEPERS



John O'Neill (died 1838) Thomas Courtney (died 1849) John O'Neill Jr. (died 1863) John Blaney (died 1866) Gabriel Evans (died 1873) The Society's photographic and art collections are extensive, but occasionally researchers ask for items we just can't find. The following list of lighthouse keepers is an example. If you have an image of any of these people that you would be willing to share, please contact Henry Peden, Historical Society Genealogist, pedenroots@gmail.com

Thomas Sutor (died 1878) Nicholas Sutor (died after 1860) Esther O'Neill (died 1883) John D. Bartol (died 1912) Henry E. O'Neill (died 1919) Harry F. O'Neill (died 1927)

#### **LIBRARY NEWS**

A special welcome and thank you to Meghan Haines, a senior English major at Towson University who loves history and who would like to become a librarian, who is beginning to organize and catalogue the papers, records and diaries of Col. Benjamin Silver and the Silver family in Harford County, Maryland. Thank you to Judy Rogers for giving the overwhelmed Meghan some extra guidance and instruction to tackle this huge project! Col. Benjamin Silver, who now has retired to Gatesville, Texas, is also thrilled to hear that his family project is well under way.

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## RAFFLE: HANDMADE ANTIQUE DOLL - Proceeds to Assist the Building Restoration Fund

This beautiful doll was handmade by recognized doll maker Flora Hankins Wiley. She would make an excellent addition to a collection or on her own as an example of doll making at its best. Raffle tickets are available for \$2 each, or 3 for \$5. The drawing will be held on June 10, 2017 at the Down Yonders Reunion and Blue Grass Celebration. See the registration form in this newsletter to order tickets or stop by the Society to see the doll and purchase tickets. You do not need to be present to win.



## PLANNING A FAMILY REUNION

Always wanted to have a family reunion but overwhelmed by the thought of organizing one? Well, we've done the work for you. Get the family together and join us at Deer Creek Overlook on Cherry Hill Road in Rocks on June 10<sup>th</sup> from 12 – 7 pm. This is a chance to enjoy this beautiful park along with food, exhibits, entertainment. Relax in the shaded picnic pavilion; hike the park's trails; bring your guitar and jam with area bluegrass musicians; have your family history recorded for posterity; and pose for a family photograph by one of the Society's photographers, peruse the exhibits and watch quilting and caning demonstrations.

The event will celebrate the tremendous contributions made by the many county residents whose families traveled from the South to Harford between 1900 -1950. Some came for the land and fertile farm fields, some for job opportunities helping to build Aberdeen Proving Grounds, Conowingo Dam, the Bata Shoe Company and others to work at the numerous war industries centered in the area during World War II. They went on to change the face of the county. The exhibit hall will be available for all to learn their amazing stories.

Three bluegrass bands including Grammy nominee Debbie Durant and Stormy Deep, Foggy Hollow and Late for Supper are scheduled to play. Seating is available in the air-conditioned hall or outside on the extensive grounds of the 4H facility. This promises to be an amazing event. Tickets are \$10 per person, children 5 and under are free. All proceeds go toward the Society's building restoration fund. Everyone is welcome and the event will be held rain or shine.

Come, bring the family, and create memories for generations to come. Tickets are available at the Society or you may send in the order form at the end of this newsletter. For more information call 410-838-7691 or visit <a href="https://www.HarfordHistory.org">www.HarfordHistory.org</a>.

## **ARCHER AWARD NOMINATIONS**

Each year the Society recognizes one individual with the George W. Archer Fellow Award. The award is given to a member and others in the community who has demonstrated exceptional service toward the mission and goals of the Historical Society. The criteria for the award are: years of exceptional service; number of volunteer hours; recognition of special projects or research; in addition, the Archer Fellow may be awarded to those persons who have striven to support the preservation of the history of Harford County outside the direct efforts of the Society. This effort may include outstanding activism, in kind services or volunteer efforts.

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The nomination process begins in March and closes May 31st. Please complete the following form and return to the Society with your suggested nominee:

# The George W. Archer Fellow Award Nomination Form

I nominate	for the George W. Archer Fellow Award
(Please print name	
Address of Nominee	
Please describe on a separate sheet of pape. Archer Fellow Award. (No more than 250 v	r why you think your nominee should receive the George W vords)
Your Name	
Address	
Phone No()	
Date/2017	_
Please send the completed form <b>and</b> recom	mendation to:
George W. Archer Fellow Award	
Historical Society of Harford County Inc.	
143 N. Main Street	
Bel Air, MD 21014	

# **RESERVATION FORM**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Fee</u>	# Tickets	<u>Amount</u>
March 8	Genealogical Research Seminar	\$10		\$
March 18	Tea: The History of Chocolate	\$10		\$
April 1	Shenandoah, the movie	\$ 7	·	\$
April 4	The American Experience: The Great War	\$ free		\$0
June 10	Reunion & Blue Grass Festival	\$10		\$
June 10	Doll Raffle Ticket	\$ 2 ea. or		
		3 for \$5		\$
TOTAL AMO	DUNT ENCLOSED	•••••	•••••	\$
Name:		Ph. or E	-Mail:	

For more information, check the Society's website at www.HarfordHistory.org, www.Facebook.com/HarfordCountyHistoricalSociety or call 410-838-7691. Return your Reservation form to the Historical Society, 143 N. Main Street, Bel Air, MD. 21014.

The Historical Society of Harford County is supported in part by a grant from the Harford County Government Office of Economic Development.

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



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED March / April 2017

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Page Smart

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Walter Holloway

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Henry Peden, Jr.

### **ADMINISTRATOR**

Jacob Bensen

#### **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.