

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 2019

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

IN THIS ISSUE

President's Message	1
Coming Events	
-Brown Bag Lunch Series	2
-Genealogy Workshop	2
-Art Sale & Show	3
-National Archives Trip	3
-Yard Sale	4
Hays House Happenings	4
New Peden Book	5
Wapum Belts and the Munsee Tribe	6
Note of Appreciation	7
Save the Date	7
B&O Royal Blue Line	7
Webster Barnes Collection	8
New Members	8
DAR Chapter Revitalized	8
In Memoriam	9
C. Milton Wright	10
National Historic Preservation Month	11
Reservation Form	11

Newsletter sponsored by
Harford Mutual Insurance

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It's a busy year for the Society. We have a lot going on and it doesn't look like it will be letting up any time soon, and, in fact, we expect it to be even busier in the future.

We have events scheduled for nearly every week of the year, including our popular Brown Bag Luncheons, the Lecture Series, the Genealogical Program and other events still in the planning stage. Check out our Calendar of Events on our website, www.HarfordHistory.org to make sure you don't miss anything.

With all this activity, and the continuation of our regular activities, we are looking for additional volunteers. They are the backbone of this organization, without whom we would not be able to achieve our mission. Give a call to Mary Schweers, who runs our front desk, or our Director Maryanna Skowronski, if you are interested. (410-838-7691)

In addition to volunteers, we also need continued funding to operate. We raise our funds through membership dues and our annual giving program, as well as grants from some governmental agencies. But that is only part of what we need to keep operating.

To improve our financial sustainability, the Society has established a Historical Society of Harford County Legacy Program that would allow you to continue your support long into the future. You can do this through several ways, including providing for the Society in your will, directing funds to the Society from Life Insurance policies, or making the Society a beneficiary through the distribution of certain assets, such as stock portfolios.

These are just a few of the possibilities available to those who wish to see the Society continue its work. Give a call to Maryanna Skowronski, our director, and she will put you in touch with our financial advisors who are experts at this. It is really an easy way to give.

George F. Harrison, President

COMING EVENTS

BROWN BAG LUNCH SERIES

This increasingly popular series continues in the coming months with a very special change. The June lecture will be held at the Harford County Agricultural Center on Route 1 in Dublin. This will give attendees an opportunity to view the restored Joesting-Gorsuch House and the new agricultural center.

The May Brown Bag Lunch will feature Maryanna Skowronski. Her talk *And They're Off: The History of Horse Racing*, will be held at Society Headquarters, 143 N. Main Street on **Tuesday, May 14, 12:30 – 1:30 pm**. Society Director, Maryanna Skowronski, will speak on the history of thoroughbred racing in America and the sport's connections to Harford County.



Race Track at Havre de Grace

When not at her day job here at the Historical Society, Maryanna may be found at a variety of equestrian sporting venues around the East Coast. Her interest is the history of equine sports including racing, foxhunting and polo. She is a member of the Elkridge-Harford Hunt Club and covers the sport of steeple chasing for *The Aegis*. She has written professionally for the *Mid-Atlantic Thoroughbred*, *POLO Players Edition* magazine, *The Horseman's Yankee Pedlar*, and the British magazine *Polo Quarterly International* among other publications. In 2015 she was awarded the National Sporting Library and Museum's John H. Daniels Research Fellowship. In 2018 she received the American Horse Publications Equine Media Award, Best Feature Article, for her Mid-Atlantic piece, *My Man o' War*.

On **Tuesday, June 11**, the Brown Bag lunch series will move to the new County Agricultural Center at 3525 Conowingo Road, Street, MD 21154 (near the intersection of Routes 1 and 136 at Dublin - **Please note change in venue**. The presentation entitled, *The Harford County Agricultural Center – Agriculture, Artwork, and Architecture* will be a departure from out standard fare in that it will include a tour of the new center and the Joesting –Gorsuch House as well as an entertaining talk about Harford's agricultural history and more.



GENEALOGY WORKSHOP SPRING 2019

To finalize the Genealogy series before the summer break, Mary Schweers will present "Couch Potato Genealogy" on **May 15th, 2019**. In this class we will review and visit some of the outside repositories you can examine from the comfort of your favorite chair. Don't forget to bring your laptop.



All classes begin at 7:00 PM and are normally over before 9:00 PM. There is a fee of \$10 per participant to offset the expense to the Historical Society for hosting the classes. Reservations are accepted but are not mandatory.

Mark your calendars now for the 2019 Genealogy Weekend at the Historical Society of Harford County. We will be presenting a full weekend of genealogy workshops and presenters on October 12th and 13th, 2019.

ART SHOW AND SALE

Everyone is invited to a special one man show and sale of John Sauers paintings of old Harford County. Come peruse this remarkable oil and watercolor collection. Remember when Tollgate Marketplace was a farm, Cool Spring Road was an unpaved lane and Darlington was a summer retreat. Sauers captures these nostalgic memories in his paintings, some dating back to the early 60s.

The show documents the transformation of the last 50 years. The collection includes many paintings from the Bel Air, Darlington,



John Sauers



John Sauers painting of Darlington in days gone by

Churchville areas and beyond. See a view of the old entrance to the Vineyard in Bel Air, Lloyd Weaver's farm, the Wilson Farm, the Garano Farm, old spring houses and much more.

On Friday, May 10th, 7 – 9 pm, the Society will host a reception showcasing the paintings, providing light refreshments and an entertaining presentation by John Sauers.

Sauers is a noted artist with a following here and in Virginia. He has generously offered to share 50% of all proceeds of the sale with the Society, so we hope you will consider visiting Society headquarters, 143 N. Main Street in Bel Air on Friday, May 10th 7-9pm or Saturday, May 11th 10am -2pm. Part of the collection is currently on display during regular business hours as well, offering a sneak preview.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES BUS TRIP

You are invited to join us on a trip to the National Archives in Washington, D.C. on Tuesday, May 21, 2019, 7:15am – 5:30pm. The trip includes a pre-tour presentation by the Genealogy staff of the Historical Society on how to use the Archives' records; a guided tour of the National Archives Display area; a presentation on the Civil War Widows Pension documents; and expert assistance in locating and using research materials at the Archives. The trip will delve into all manner of research topics including genealogy, general research techniques and much more.

A pre-tour meeting will be held on Saturday April 27 at 10am at the Historical Society to discuss how to take full advantage of participant's time at the Archives and to collect requests for research assistance from Archives staff. The day of the trip, all will gather at the Historical Society, 143 N. Main Street, Bel Air for morning coffee/tea and refreshments and to board the bus for D.C. Once the bus arrives at the Archives, Carmel Wilkens, a professional archivist, will process entrants and give a tour of the facility. Following the tour, Bryan Cheeseboro, a Civil War specialist will share a presentation on the vast amount of information contained in the Archives' Widows Pension documents



After a boxed lunch, provided as part of your trip fee, the group will be taken to the upper research areas where professional researchers will assist individuals with their searches. The bus will return to Bel Air by approximately 5:30 pm. The cost for the trip including transportation, tours, research program, snacks, and a box lunch is \$75. For tickets or more information, call 410-838-7691 or go to www.HarfordHistory.org. Space is limited so you are encouraged to make reservations as soon as possible.

JUNE YARD SALE

An event not to be missed! Join us Saturday, June 29, 2019 between 9am and 3pm at the Historical Society's Headquarters, 143 N. Main in Bel Air and be part of this bargain hunter's dream event. Come browse and shop these amazing treasures. The hall will be filled to overflowing with furniture, household goods, clothes, glassware, exercise equipment, books, jewelry, toys and much, much more. As usual, our members have been wonderfully generous this year donating many unique items as well as those things we just can't do without. Grab a friend and join in the fun.

HAYS HOUSE HAPPENINGS

Once again, starting in May, Hays House Museum will celebrate summer's First Fridays by hosting an Open House. Free tours conducted by costumed docents along with lemonade and cookies will be available to visitors from 5 to 7 pm. Dates for 2019 are May 3, June 7, July 5 and August 2.

On Sunday June 9, local historian and historical society volunteer, Christopher Smithson, will join us at Hays House to talk about Thomas Hays and His Neighbors. What was Bel Air like in the first half of the nineteenth century? Who lived and worked in the town? Join us and learn about life in the town and the surrounding areas of Harford County in this formative time for our country from the days of the War of 1812 to the start of the Civil War.

In late June, after school is out and before most summer activities begin, Hays House will host a special afternoon for children and their dolls. On Tuesday June 25 from 1 to 3 pm, we have a special treat - an American Girl Party. Children, accompanied by their mothers and their favorite dolls are invited to a

party at Hays House with delectable treats, games, and crafts. There will be a treasure hunt with prizes. Stories will be told, and a special tour of the 1788 Hays House will focus on the child's point-of-view. This event is open to children ages 5-12 years accompanied by an adult. Cost is \$15 per child/adult pair. A second child is \$5. Advance, paid registration is required, and space is limited. Call the historical society at 410-838-7691 and reserve space now.



Also coming up, Hays House will host its traditional Open House on the Fourth of July from 9 am to 12 noon. Stop by for a visit as we celebrate our country's birth.

Nancy Webster Cassilly and her son, Senator Robert Cassilly generously donated their time and effort on April 6th to remove a tree stump, fertilize flower beds and plant and mulch the flower beds at the Hays House, a monumental undertaking. The Society sincerely appreciates their efforts and continuing care for the Museum's grounds.

Senator Robert Cassilly (r) and his mother Nancy Webster Cassilly at the Hays House



HARFORD COUNTY, MARYLAND, EQUITY COURT CASES 1803 - 1860

HENRY C. PEDEN, JR.

Visit the society's bookstore to see the newest work by Henry C. Peden, Jr. This compilation and summarization of early Equity Court records will be a treasured find for many researchers interested in the county's early court cases and the many stories they tell.

Equity Courts were established in the counties of Maryland in 1803 to handle equity or chancery matters and resolve complaints in a legally equitable manner. These cases covered a wide range of issues, notably land disputes, money judgments, divorces, guardianships, name changes and inheritances. Information is often brought to light about family members who still lived in the area and others who had migrated to other states. To settle disputes, depositions were sometimes taken by order of the Court in which the deponent often gave his or her age and their testimony was taken under oath. These records are valuable research tools for genealogists and local historians.

The book captures information gathered from more than 20 years of research and is now the only local repository for most of these records as most of the Equity Court records from this time were moved to the Maryland State Archives 15 years ago. It should prove a treasure for many local genealogy researchers. The 170-page book is available at the Historical Society's bookshop and is indexed, 6 x 9, perfect bound soft cover, \$25 each plus \$1.50 tax for Maryland residents an additional \$5.50 postage is added for mail order requests. Checks should be made payable to Historical Society of Harford County.

WAMPUM BELTS AND THE MUNSEE TRIBE

by Jacquelyn Magness Seneschal

On Tuesday, January 8, 2019, Barry Lee of the Munsee tribe (Wolf Clan) taught Society members and guests about the wampum belts exchanged between the native Woodland tribes and early European explorers and settlers of the Mid-Atlantic. Mr. Lee explained that wampum belts are best understood in the context of the larger culture of the Woodland tribes that inhabited the Eastern US prior to the first contact with Europeans.

According to Mr. Lee the key values of the Munsee are inclusion and hospitality. Their music is rhythmic, using drums and non-language vocals that accompany traditional dances shared among the Woodland peoples. Corn Dance songs are sung at every meeting or gathering. Those sung today are much the same as those heard by the first European visitors. During these gatherings and throughout their lives, Munsee tribe members are taught not to waste resources, to thank the animals killed to feed and equip the tribe, and to honor the Only One God – The One who Creates Thoughts.

One reason for meetings between Munsee tribes and Europeans such as William Penn was to establish agreements about how the tribe and the newcomers would conduct themselves. These treaties were confirmed in the exchange of belts woven in intricate patterns made from shell beads (wampum) that depict the terms of the agreement. The belts served as the permanent reminders of the promises each

party made, in much the same way that written treaties serve that purpose in Europe. William Penn carried a wampum belt with him throughout his travels in Pennsylvania. It was a sign of the agreement he reached with tribal leaders.

One common feature of the exchanged belts is the “two-row” agreement showing parallel rows of purple beads. This pattern establishes the two-path agreement – each group would stay on its own path, each willing to share their tradition without one forcing their tradition on the other. Mr. Lee noted that the Munsee negotiating these agreements would not have understood the European tradition of land ownership. They anticipated sharing land in much the way that people share the same air for breathing.

A key feature of Munsee agreements is that they are permanent. A broken agreement is of no value. The Munsee are more likely to claim

that an agreement has been forgotten and to offer the opportunity to remember and comply with its terms. In this way all agreements are lasting.

The traditions of Woodland tribes such as the Munsee made their way into today's government forms and policies. One example Mr. Lee gave was that a delegation of the Founding Fathers visited the Iroquois Nations to learn how their form of representative government functioned. The Iroquois practice



Replica of William Penn's Wampum Belt

was for the women in each village to select a man to represent the community and vote on their behalf at the great council of the whole nation. While our method of selecting a representative included more adults, the idea of elected representation is the model for the U. S. Congress.

Mr. Lee is part of a larger community of Munsee tribal members working to preserve and celebrate their Native American culture through events such as the annual pow-wow held at John Carroll School and teaching moments like the Brown Bag Lunch.

WINE AND JAZZ AT THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A special thank you goes out to the generous sponsors of the Society's Wine & Jazz event held this past March. Sponsors included The Kelly Group - Bryan Kelly, Main Street Design - Bill Walden, Mark & Denise Dardoizzi of Richlin Catering, Bel Air Liquors - Larry Dean / Vince Grande who generously donated the wine. If you were unable to attend, this was a great event featuring the talented Nico Sarbanes Trio, delicious food from Richlin Caterers and fine drinks. The Society thanks the planning committee for an exciting new event, the beautiful "night club" decorations and the fine food and drinks. This was an entertaining night for all who attended, a step back to the jazz era and a chance to hear America's songbook live.



SAVE THE DATE

The Society's next big fundraising event will occur on September 28th at the Richlin Catering and Event Center, *A Night At The Copa*. The evening will include dinner, dancing and three exciting entertainers – singers Elio Scaccio, Julie Anna Gulenko and comedian Larry Noto. Tickets are \$75. For reservations call 410-838-7691 or go to our website at www.HarfordHistory.org.

THE ONCE REGAL B&O ROYAL BLUE LINE IN HARFORD COUNTY



*Havre de Grace
Passenger Station*

Another upcoming event that promises to entertain both railroad and history buffs, is Frank Wrabel's presentation on the B & O Railroad scheduled for Sunday August 18, 2019 at 2 pm at the Society headquarters. The talk will feature photographs of early stations and the stop at the Havre de Grace Racetrack along with stories about the trains that served the region, railroad innovation that was perfected on the Harford County route, the transition to the current CSX strategic freight route and more. The railroad was a tremendous part of the county's history and its stories never fail to entertain. Plan to join us if you can. Tickets are \$10 per person.

PRESERVATION OF THE WEBSTER BARNES COLLECTION

Nancy Webster Barnes was a Harford County native, raised at the family home, Journey's End in Aldino and later living on Glenville Road near Level. She was a highly regarded landscape architect, a graduate of the Pennsylvania School of Horticulture for Women and shared her wisdom in a weekly column in *The Aegis*. While her love and deep devotion to the land was well known, her interest and support of genealogy was muted in the background. She began her family history research at the urging of her mother, Elizabeth Pinkerton Webster.

In her late 30s Nancy found renewed inspiration and worked to complete her research, authoring the book, *Some Webster and Downing Families of Maryland and Pennsylvania*. Upon her passing in 1999 a historically significant collection of letters, family history and other archives of her life was left in the care of her friend, Rosemary Philips. In 2016 Ms. Philips donated the full collection to the archives at the Historical Society.

Looking for a way to process and preserve the collection, Administrative Assistant Mary Schweers began searching for a funding source. She found the Seaton Shields Genealogy Research Grant. Mrs. Schweers submitted an application in January 2019 and the Society was notified in March that the \$950.00 grant had been awarded. The award assures that the Webster Barnes Collection will be preserved and available for future research.

NEW MEMBERS

Anthony A. Adams
Thomas M. Barnhill
Mary Berndt
Diane and Dave Booth
Anne Dulik
Roland Lyle Griffith, Jr.
Larry and Hazel Hopkins

Steven and Joan Hurley
Jeanne Klein
Mr. & Mrs. Gregory Kuester
Barbara Love
Celeste N. Martinez
Charles Murray
Bonnie Payne

Ben Ranneberger
Carroll Rinehart
Bob and Donna Singer
Gary and Jennifer Stokes
Craig J. Strobel
Lisa Tuzo
Carrie Wilson

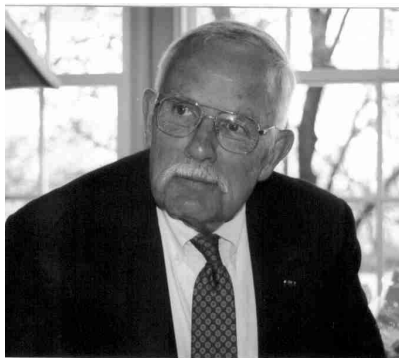
DAR CHAPTER REVITALIZATION AT THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Governor William Paca Chapter NSDAR met on Friday, February 22nd and welcomed the MSSDAR State Organizing Secretary, Reisha Raney. Organizing Secretary Raney presented her program "Building and Sustaining Healthy Honeycomb Chapters". Twenty- one DAR chapter members attended. Those in attendance recognized many positive signs of active membership as listed in Secretary Raney's pep talk. However, there were also many new suggestions to try, such as, choosing an ideal meeting day, gradually moving to electronic communication and meeting presentations. The chapter leadership is planning the upcoming year, looking forward to involvement in the Harford County community. The Service to Veterans chair, Lisa Johnson, announced a new outreach project at Perry Point Medical Center. Chapter members will donate items for "Snack Totes" to present to the veterans at Perry Point.



IN MEMORIAM

Charles Lee Robbins (1929 -2019)



The Society was saddened to learn of the passing of long-time member Charles Lee "Chuck" Robbins. Mr. Robbins was a former Historical Society Vice President, Board Member, a regular visitor to the Society and the donor of many volumes given to our library collection. He was the author of *Harford Images* with Selman Wright, the definitive biography of R. Madison Mitchell, the wonderful children's Harford County coloring book and most recent, his memoir *The Heavenly Waters Gang*. A great storyteller, his visits to the Society always culminated in a gathering of anyone who happened to be nearby as we all listened to one of his many tales of growing up in Bel Air, his war experiences, or

many of his other recollections.

Born on October 29, 1929 in Martinsburg, West Virginia, the Robbins family moved to Bel Air in 1936. Chuck attended Bel Air Elementary and Bel Air High School when both were on Gordon Street, next to the Historical Society's current building. Upon graduating from Bel Air High School, Mr. Robbins joined the Army for two years following World War II serving on Adak Islands in the Aleutians. He returned to the military when the Korean War broke out, serving with the Second Infantry in some of the heaviest fighting of the war. After receiving numerous awards, he was honorably discharged and returned home to continue his education, becoming a much-celebrated teacher in Harford County where he taught for 35 years. His classes were sought after by students and teachers alike because of his extensive knowledge of local history and geography as well as his entertaining storytelling style. Since there were no actual textbooks about the county, Mr. Robbins made his own, sharing them throughout the county school system. He donated many of the photographs he used in his lectures to the Society.

Upon retirement, he served as a Bel Air Town Commissioner for 4 years and worked a brief time for a local attorney, Michael Birch, Esq. and then until 2017 for the law firm of Stark and Keenan as a scrivener (a real estate title abstractor). His knowledge of the court records was encyclopedic, and he was often called on to share this information with court house visitors.

Mr. Robbins is survived by his wife, four children, five grandchildren and four great- grandchildren. Our condolences go out to his family and friends.

Andrew Klein (1954 -2019)

The news came in one of those dreaded telephone calls, news that a good person was gone too soon. Our business neighbor and longtime supporter, Andrew "Andy" Klein had perished in a highway accident.

Over the years Andy Klein, both through his family business and personally, supported the work of the Society countless times. Requests for event sponsorship were never turned down. Andy was also a train buff and made personal and corporate contributions to the Historical Society which were designated to the continuing effort to preserve and restore the former



Aberdeen B&O Train Station. Only a week before his passing his most recent contribution had been received.

Years ago, when the Bel Air store was being remodeled, the Society was asked for historic images of Bel Air which were enlarged, and which hung prominently throughout the store- a small example of the Klein family's regard for the community which they serve.

Much has been written since Andy's death, in particular about his gifts of service. We at the Society echo those sentiments. Our sincere condolences go out to the entire Klein family and to all of Andy's friends and co-workers.

THE STORY OF C. MILTON WRIGHT

by Carol L. Deibel

Several months ago, I received some stories from Curtis Pace, a local county resident. He brought up some interesting questions. One of which was "Do people fail to learn history or fail to remember?" He went on to explain that years ago he went to the Arctic Ice Cream Store in Churchville and approached a young worker wearing a C. Milton Wright High School shirt, asking him if he knew who Mr. Wright was. Neither he nor other workers in the store with similar shirts had any idea who C. Milton Wright was, only that their school was named for this man. Hopefully many of our readers know Mr. Wright's story, but if not I would like to share the story of this amazing man.

One of Harford County's most distinguished historians, Wright began his career teaching in a one-room school near Madonna Road. After securing his degree in history from Western Maryland College, he accepted a position at the House of Refuge, a reform school for boys in West Baltimore. Assigned 90 boys, Wright taught half-day sessions, then supervised the boys for the remainder of the day. He helped select the first groups of 40 boys to be sent to the new Maryland Training School at Loch Raven, choosing boys who he believed would not run away.

In 1907, he came back to Harford County to teach, serving as principal of Aberdeen High. Eight years later, the Harford County Board of Education appointed him superintendent of schools, a post he held for 30 years. At the outset, his major challenge was consolidating Harford's existing one and two room schools into a centralized system at a time when transportation was limited to horse and buggy and funds were severely limited. In spite of two world wars and the Depression, he revamped the system and expanded it from 125 to 350 teachers.

After retirement, Wright simultaneously worked for the Aegis for several years; took on the chairmanship of the Harford County Boy Scouts; served as superintendent of the Bel Air Presbyterian Church's Sunday school; and became treasurer of the county library board. In 1952, he took on yet another career as county director of probation. For the next 10 years, he counseled delinquent boys, collected thousands of dollars in back child support and even did some marriage counseling.

At 84, Wright again retired, this time to write *Our Harford Heritage*, which remains the most accurate, complete and invaluable reference book on local county history written to date.



NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION MONTH

May Is Historic Preservation Month, a time when people across America celebrate their history, culture, and special momentous places. Sponsored annually, the National Trust for Historic Preservation created Preservation Week in 1971 to spotlight local preservation efforts in America.

This year, as part of National Preservation Month, Harford County will hold an Awards Ceremony at Swan Harbor Farm to recognize several individuals and projects that have contributed to the countywide historic preservation efforts. More than 15 submissions for recognition were submitted this year indicating the strong interest and tremendous efforts made by local preservationists over the last two years. Award categories include: Preservation Project; Local Government Project; Special Preservationist award in Communication, Education, Heritage Exhibit & Programming; Community Involvement; Grassroots Advocacy; and a Preservationist Honor Award for long-term preservation accomplishments. This program highlights the genuine interest and accomplishments of the area preservation community.

The Town of Bel Air is hosting an art competition with area fourth graders drawing historic structures to showcase the many local historic sites in town. Contest winners will be awarded prizes and recognized at a Town Board meeting in May. This program coincides with the Board of Education's schedule.



RESERVATION FORM

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Fee</u>	<u># Tickets</u>	<u>Amount</u>
May 14	Brown Bag Lunch - <i>And They're Off: The History of Horse Racing</i>			
	free for members	\$5	_____	\$ _____
May 15	Genealogy Workshop: <i>Couch Potato Genealogy</i>	\$10	_____	\$ _____
May 21	National Archives Bus Tour	\$ 75	_____	\$ _____
Jun 11	Brown Bag Lunch, <i>Ha Co Ag Center: Agriculture, Artwork, and Architecture</i>			
	free for members	\$5	_____	\$ _____
Aug 18	<i>The Once Regal B & O Royal Blue Line In Ha Co</i>	\$10	_____	\$ _____
Sep 28	<i>A Night at the Copa</i>	\$75	_____	\$ _____

(Hays House Museum events are ticketed at door, no Reservations required.)

TOTAL AMOUNT 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, Inc.
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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.

Third Wednesday
ARCHIVES &
RESEARCH LIBRARY
5:00 P.M. - 8:00 P.M.

Thursday
HENRY C. PEDEN Jr.
RESEARCH LIBRARY
9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.

Fourth Saturday
ARCHIVES & HENRY
C. PEDEN Jr. LIBRARY
10:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.