

The HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF HARFORD COUNTY, Inc.

Preserving Our Past For Your Future



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Society News

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The Historical Society of
Harford County, Inc.,
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IT'S IN THE MAIL

Maryanna Skowronski

The doors may be closed here at the Historical Society but the "mail slot" is open and almost weekly since our shut down we've been cheered by the many donations that have found their way either through that slot or as a result of a knock on the back door and a socially distanced delivery person.

It all started with a padded mailing envelope received from Fawn Grove, Pennsylvania. There was no note, however, inside was a campaign button and a T-shirt with a wonderful graphic of the Democratic donkey and the Republican elephant holding a sign that reads "Harford County Says: Cut the Loss Vote Ross for Boss!" Dated 1992, the items date back to Ross Perot's presidential campaign. Thanks to the Millers for sending them along.

A bit later in March, came a communication via e-mail from the Mathews County Historical Society in Mathews, Virginia. They had a photograph which they thought belonged in Harford County. I forwarded the missive to our photo man, Walt Holloway. The image in question turned out to be a view of Street, Maryland. Walt's communications with Reed Lawson of the Mathews Society resulted in the return of the photo to Harford County as well as an invitation to Walter to stop in for a visit should he ever find himself in Mathews County.

April saw an envelope arrive from Baltimore which contained sales receipts from one of the final days of operation from Boyd & Fulford Drugs. Thank you, "Ron", for a nice addition to our collection of local business ephemera.

A few days later an e-mail correspondence began, initiated by Richard Schillinger. Mr. Schillinger is related to many old Harford families including the Bradfords, McComases and Norrisses, among

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ON DOING HISTORY

Jim Chrismer

Oral History Interviews as Sources of Harford History

Sources for examining the history and heritage of Harford County exist in many forms. In addition to the usual primary and secondary records, perhaps the most versatile resources publicly available to researchers are the scores of taped interviews of local residents born as early as 1894.

With this thought in mind, I set out to analyze these electronic goldmines to get specific insight into the extent and ways they indeed prove useful in studying the development of Harford County as a whole and the major aspects of the county's heritage.

My approach was to focus especially on the tape recordings of those persons loosely and later more formally considered *Living Treasures of Harford County*. At present the collection consists of interviews with over 300 living and deceased residents that continues to grow with the designation of approximately 10-15 new "Treasures" a year. These are all available in physical form through the Harford County Public Library and have been uploaded to *Digital Maryland*, "a statewide digitization program of the Maryland State Library Resource Center" operated through the Enoch Pratt Free Library. Most of the observations in this essay result from my analysis of the searchable descriptions and transcripts of Harford's entries at DigitalMaryland.org (*Left Click to follow link*).

Harford's earliest biographical interviews date to the early 1970s, around the time the county adopted Charter Government and became a self-governing entity. These consisted of audio recordings, of varying value and quality, of the recollections of numerous long-time residents, generally considered "Living Treasures," persons regarded by local authorities to have made meaningful contributions to the life of the county. At that time there were no specific guidelines for choosing which persons to interview, other than the informed choices of administrators and volunteers (including one precocious schoolgirl!) working with the Harford County Public Library. Examples of these early "treasures" include educator C. Milton Wright, librarian Roenna Fahrney, Judge John E. Clark, J., blacksmith William L. Foard, banker-famer J. Edmund Bull, and journalists Mary Helen Cadwalader and F. Wayde Chrismer (*full disclosure: the author's father!*).

In 1981 The Harford County Council instituted a more systematic process that endures to the present. The administration of and guidelines for the program have evolved over the years and today operate in a partnership of the County Council, the Harford County Cultural Arts Board, and the Harford County Public Library. The stated purpose of the program is to "identify and commemorate the contributions of long-time residents whose memories of life in Harford County remain vibrant" so as to "preserve for future generations firsthand accounts of what life in Harford County has been like for previous generations." Persons designated Living Treasures must be a minimum of 70 years of age and have lived in Harford County for at least 40 years. See: DigitalMaryland.org

The actual number of persons designated HLT since the 1970s is difficult to determine. Estimates vary from 250 to 400, with the total clearly running over 300. This impressive number, that includes residents from all of the county's six election districts, is more than sufficient to perceive the representative nature of the people of the Twentieth Century and the activities with which they were and have been involved. This fact, in turn, provides students of all ages and the interested public

helpful significant insight into the county's development and topics researchers might wish to investigate.

The Living Treasures collection reveals that the county's population has become in the last century a progressively more diverse group of persons, especially with recognition of the contributions of increasing numbers of African Americans and women and the welcoming of these persons to the ranks of the Living Treasures. Family names that occur with some frequency throughout the group are Archer, Baker, Cronin, Fielder, Getz, Mitchell, Moore, McComas, Robinson, Stansbury, and Williams, reflecting 20th Century Harford's prevailing Western European and African American heritage.

A sampling of the more recent "Treasures" identified by the County Council reflects this trend. These include Senator Joseph Tydings, architect Jim Wollon, journalist Allan Vought, educator Janice Grant, former County Executive Charles Anderson, public servant Carol Bruce, and horseman J. William Boniface. Despite the relative prominence of the individuals cited above, approximately half of the newer honorees are persons whose names would be unfamiliar to the general public. Not all honorees have chosen to have their memories recorded, and the most recent have yet to be interviewed.

A valuable complement to the Living Treasures collection are the tape- recorded memories of many near-lifetime residents of Berkley, Maryland. Berkley, a rural crossroads area west of Route 1 and south of Darlington, was first settled in the late 18th century by Whites and Free Blacks. Residents Constance Beims and Christine Tolbert at the turn of the 21st century secured a grant from the Maryland Historical Trust to preserve the history and legacy of the Berkley community. See: mht.maryland.gov

One aspect of the multi-faceted Berkley Crossroads Preservation Project was the recording of the biographical memories of 23 individuals, black and white, ranging in age from 65 to 96, about everyday life in the hamlet. Among the family names included in the Berkley Collection are Cain, Dunsen, Glover, Gordon, Jones, Presberry, and Presbury. Interviews of Ms. Beims and Ms. Tolbert also form part of the collection.

The recordings of Harford Treasures and the Berkley Project are an ideal complement to each other and serve to illustrate the seemingly endless array of topics that researchers could undertake. Besides their obvious biographical value, the interviews provide insights into subjects such as the county's leading communities, geographical features, occupations, religions, and influential eras such as the World Wars, The Great Depression, The New Deal, and the Cold War.

As to population centers, interviewees logically mentioned most often the county's "Big three" towns, as well as Aberdeen Proving Ground, and Edgewood Arsenal. Other locations cited by the different persons are Churchville 103, Darlington 68, Fallston 56, Jarrettsville 74, and Whiteford- Delta 55. Devotees of Cooptown, Frogtown, Kalmia, and Shawsville will be disappointed to learn that these localities received only 13, 5, 4, and 9 allusions respectively. Geographical features regularly referenced are the Susquehanna River 73, Deer Creek 41, and Bush River 49. Virginia and North Carolina received comments from 135 and 47 persons respectively, a not surprisingly high number given the influx of persons from Appalachia to Harford County in the years before and during World War II.

Prospective researchers, particularly those relatively new to what has become a burgeoning suburban county, will be startled to learn that the greatest of occupations mentioned on the tapes are those reflecting Harford's association with agriculture. Mentions of farmers, farm laborers, canners, millers,

and dairy operators are in the hundreds. So too, are remarks about teachers and one-room schools (e.g., Bethlehem, Emmorton, Hosanna, Mt. Calvary, and Taylor), including those from the era of segregation (Bel Air and Havre de Grace Colored Schools). Given the prominence of Aberdeen Proving Ground, the work of scientists receives regular comment. The routine reference to railroads, most notably the Maryland and Pennsylvania (Ma& Pa) and the Baltimore and Ohio (B&O) and thoroughfares such as Route 7 and Route 40 indicate the important role transportation has played in the experiences of county citizens and businesses.

Particularly revealing—and quite unexpected —is the breakdown of references to religion. Methodism clearly was the dominant religion in Harford County through the Civil War Era, yet it is Roman Catholicism and its various parishes, most notably St. Ignatius and St. Margaret, that get the greatest number of citations., 65, by citizens of the 20th Century. Other double-digit notations are to Quakers 18, Methodists and Lutherans 16, Presbyterians 13, and Episcopalians 10.

Access to these two collections is extremely easy, as all are available through the Harford County Public Library, and may be checked out to card holders through the Bel Air Branch. The Historical Society holds the Berkley tapes and a companion publication by Ms. Beims and Ms. Tolbert, *A Journey Through Berkley Maryland: A Tapestry of Black and White Lives* (2003). Each program in the two collections comes with a typed transcript, and most interviews in the last fifteen years are in video format.

The Living Treasures and Berkley Collections constitute invaluable sources of information dealing with Harford County's historical development. Anyone entertaining the idea of undertaking research, genealogical or otherwise, on families in Harford County or on almost any topic in the county's past will find great worth in their use. Reading the transcripts or listening to the recordings, in fact, can just be plain fun, especially at the time of social quarantine. For starters I recommend that of Harford Living Treasure Joyce Hilton Bransford Byrd.

Harford Living Treasures: All interviews can be read and heard at [HCLT](#)

Berkley Collection: This link provides a list of the persons interviewed. To read the transcripts and listen to the recordings requires having the program package in hand. See: [Berkley collection](#)

Editor's Note: The Historical Society itself has a variety of recorded histories and reminiscences. We are currently working to convert these audio and video tapes into digital format to make them publicly accessible.

COMING EVENTS

The Covid Pandemic restrictions continue to have a significant impact on the Society's events calendar. The Board of Trustees took into consideration the uncertainty of the times and the risk factors, particularly for some of our older members and determined that it would be prudent to postpone the events originally scheduled for July and August until the virus concerns have abated. For now, we are planning to hold the originally scheduled Wine and Jazz Night with Nico Sarbanes and his Trio on March 26, 2021. We also hope to hold the Annual Yard Sale in the fall. For now, we are waiting to determine the status of the pandemic before making any more detailed plans.

IT'S IN THE MAIL: cont'd from page 1

others. He wrote with the offer of some seventy original letters dating from the mid-1800s, all which chronicle different events in his family's history. He wondered if we might have an interest in them. He referenced one letter as a sample. "I have a copy of a letter written by Captain Henry Gough McComas to his wife from Valparaiso, Chile in 1852 giving some information on his trip to Sacramento, Calif. when rounding Cape Horn in winter in the smallest ship to make that trip up to that time." Let's just say, we were very interested!

After a series of e-mail conversations, a three- ring binder arrived through the mail at headquarters. It was full of carefully sleeved letters and is now in the hands of Society genealogist Henry Peden who has been looking at them to determine how they will be cataloged.

April passed and the packages kept arriving. Former Society volunteer, Rick Bowlus telephoned with an offer of items that he had come across while downsizing in preparation for a move to Florida. His offerings, gratefully accepted, include a collection of James Warner calendars, a framed Warner image of Sally Denning's foxhunt, and a variety of military and other papers. An announcement on the Society's Facebook page that mentioned plans for restoration of the historic Otho Scott House at Bel Air Memorial Gardens prompted a Sunday evening phone call from Robin Chesney Hopkins whose family formerly owned the landmark property. At the close of a delightful conversation Mrs. Hopkins promised to send some photos and other information about the house. She was as good as her word and an envelope containing said items was dropped off at my home.

We weren't finished yet! Janet Spang contacted the Society from Lakewood, Ohio. She had a variety of Harford County materials that her late father had kept. Again, would we be interested? Again, yes! In early June a USPS box arrived. In it were, (among other items) photos, a booklet from the old Oakland Boarding school (Fallston) and some Johns Hopkins newspapers. The papers contained a "before and after" report of Bel Air's Dr. Howard Kelly speaking at Hopkins' May, 1936, Dormitory Dinner.

Our most recent addition arrived via the hand of former board member Rob Preston who provided courier service for Dave Shadwell of Reisterstown, Maryland. Learning that Rob was from Bel Air, Mr. Shadwell related the fact that he had been involved with the demolition of the old Bel Air Racetrack and had collected some memorabilia which he had saved from destruction. He proceeded to present Rob with an original sign from the track that reads Bel Air Races. It appears to be a directional marker which was probably one of many which lined roadways leading racegoers to the track.

We at the Society are very appreciative of all these donations. We are only half -joking when we say that our unofficial motto is "Give us a chance to say no." We have found over the years that one man's (or woman's) trash may truly be another's treasure and some of our most important donations have come from folks who have thought of the Society instead of simply discarding an item or items. We appreciate all of the above-mentioned gifts to our collections. (By the way, the mail slot is still open!)

NEW MEMBERS

Mitch Cullum

Julie Everett

Catherine Ohler

THIS PLACE MATTERS

During the month of May, the Society's Facebook page featured a different Harford County property everyday with two properties on Memorial Day. The response was overwhelming, reaching thousands of people throughout the country, not just the county. Many of those visitors left comments about their experiences at the individual properties and some left questions.

Laura Cooper, the Facebook administrator coordinated the displays and collected all of the stories, comments and activity for each photograph that visitors submitted. This information will now become part of the Society's archival collection, adding some incomparable information to the history of these

memorable places. The Society hopes to make this a quarterly event with another exhibit scheduled during the month of September featuring a new set of historic buildings and places.

The most visited property of the exhibit was Wildfell, the octagon house on Route 1 near Darlington. This wildly popular house fascinated people with its unusual design and the story of its building materials from an abandoned clipper ship. Still many shared stories of possible hauntings at Tudor Hall, budding romances at Reuben's Drive In and weddings at the Blue Bell Restaurant. The photographs took many of us on a trip down a memory lane. Thank you all for participating in this exhibit and for sharing your memories and stories of some of the historic buildings of Harford.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Although the Society's buildings remain closed to the general public for now, work continues on a number of fronts. The Executive Committee continues to work on plans to reopen the facilities and on our building restoration efforts. These include plans for renovating the lobby at headquarters and restoring the 20 plus windows throughout the building. We are also actively working on improvements at the Hays House Museum.

As with all businesses and organizations, the Covid-19 closures required some innovative responses. I have been working on exploring and applying for a number of grants to assure the Society's financial health during this time. I am pleased to announce that we received an Emergency Relief Grant from Maryland Humanities and the National Endowment for the Humanities. This grant will allow us to purchase personal protection items for volunteers and staff and provide sanitizer stations, disinfectant wipes and masks for Headquarters and the Hays House Museum in addition to providing some much needed administrative funding.

For now, I am exploring several options on the reopening of the Society and opportunities to share Society resources on social media. Please watch the Society website for more information about plans for reopening and the status of current projects.

Bill Walden, President

LEGACY CAMPAIGN



Begin Preserving Your Legacy Now

This month the Society launched our Legacy Campaign, a gifting program that makes it easy for you to create your legacy and make an impact on the work we do.

A Bequest to the Society allows you to retain control of your assets during your lifetime while providing future support for the organization. There are several easy ways to do a bequest, including naming the Society in your will, designating the Society as a beneficiary in a life insurance policy, or directing the Society to be a full, partial or contingent beneficiary of your retirement account, such as an IRA or 401 (k) plan.

There are a number of ways you can structure your legacy with the Society and we would be glad to help you or your financial advisor set up such a plan.

A bequest is generally a revocable gift, which means it can be changed or modified at any time. You can choose to designate the bequest be for general use or for a specific purpose that you desire. Bequests are exempt from federal estate taxes and if you have a taxable estate, the estate tax charitable deduction may offset or eliminate estate taxes, allowing a larger inheritance for your heirs.

George Harrison, Vice President

IN MEMORIAM

Robert A. Kinsley

On June 10th, Robert A. Kinsley, a long-time and generous supporter of the Historical Society, passed away after a valiant fight against cancer. Although a native of York County, Pennsylvania, Bob and his wife Anne maintained a part-time residence in Harford County for several decades and with this purchase, and that of many other farms in the My Lady's Manor / White Hall areas of Harford and Baltimore counties, they preserved five farms totaling close to a thousand acres and adding greatly to local land conservation efforts. Bob was just as land preservation minded in York County where he owned and operated several other farms contiguous to his main residence in the Seven Valleys area. He was also the driving force behind the restoration of the Gettysburg Battlefield, including its historic Sherfy House, and construction of the visitors' center which was later named in honor of both Bob and Anne.

When the Historical Society was looking to install a marquee in front of our building the Elkridge-Harford Hunt Club, of which Bob was a member and later Master of Foxhounds, donated the historic stone fence posts to be used in the project. Asked if his firm, Kinsley Construction, could be hired for the installation since they were already donating transportation services to bring the stones from the Jarrettsville Pike to Bel Air, Kinsley's response was the donation of not only the transportation but also the labor and materials needed to install them. Not an easy task as each stone weighs in excess of several hundred pounds and is eight feet in length. Trucks, a crane, a backhoe and several men working for several days making short work of the project.

Bob once again showed his support of historic preservation with his involvement in the Society's effort to relocate the historic Aberdeen B & O Train Station. Through his company, he donated all of the plans, labor and materials used in creating the new foundation for the relocated building- a gift of services that would have amounted to tens of thousands of dollars had he billed the project.

Most recently, Kinsley Construction completed the new parking lot at the Society's headquarters. When told that Kinsley's was the low bid on the project Bob smiled and said "I'm sure it was." Once again, he provided service to the Society at a cost far below the going rate.

In 2015, the Society presented Robert A. Kinsley with its George W. Archer Fellow Award in recognition of his support of the Society and of his historic preservation efforts throughout Harford County and beyond.

Society Director, Maryanna Skowronski said it best, "I was fortunate to know Bob Kinsley personally for over twenty years. He was one of the most generous people I have ever encountered. Always on the go, a real "git 'er done" man, he will be greatly missed by all whose path he crossed." We at the Historical Society of Harford County offer our deepest condolences to Anne Kinsley and the entire Kinsley family.

Bernard James

Bernard James, the 9th President of the Cecil County Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) from 1990 to 2010, who steered the branch through a challenging period in civil rights and was called a major impetus behind changes for racial equality in Cecil County, died at the Hebrew Home of Greater Washington in Rockville, MD, the morning of Monday, April 20, 2020. He was 91. Born and raised in Havre de Grace, he was the son of the late James A. James, Sr. and the late Geneva Meade James, and the oldest of seven children.

In January 2020, Mr. James provided valuable information to the Havre de Grace Colored School Museum and Cultural Center, during an interview about his experiences attending the Havre de Grace Colored School. When reviewing a photo of his high school graduation class, he identified and named each of the 20 graduates of the Havre de Grace Colored School's Class of 1946.

Always an advocate for racial equality, Mr. James actively participated in various Civil Rights initiatives, including "Sit-Ins" at the lunch counters of restaurants on the Route 40 East/West Corridor and many other protests for equal opportunities. In 1958, Mr. James defied the segregation practices of the Cecil County Public School System and enrolled his oldest child in first grade at Perryville Elementary School, as its first African American student. His actions paved a path for educational equality that many local African American children followed. Mr. James also participated in the historic "March on Washington, DC" in 1963, where Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., delivered his most infamous "I Have a Dream" speech.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Mr. James embraced politics as a vehicle for achieving racial equality and campaigned for Cecil County Commissioner in 1978 and Maryland House of Delegates in 1982, losing both elections. Afterwards, he became an active member of the Cecil County Branch of the NAACP.

Mr. James was a Silver Life member of the Cecil County Branch of the NAACP. He served as an Elected At-Large Executive Committee member with the Maryland State Conference NAACP. As President of

the Cecil County Branch of the NAACP, Mr. James worked tirelessly to carry out its mission by organizing voter registration drives; monitoring election polls; hosting fund raisers; attending town and county Board of Education meetings; sponsoring candidates for the Board of Education; and monitoring the actions of local public agencies.

HAYS HOUSE HAPPENINGS

Events may be postponed for now, but our volunteers are still busy working individually on outdoor maintenance and repairs, replacing fencing, removing woodpile debris, gardening and repairing the Hays House porch. Plans continue for repair of the north-face siding and the cedar shake roof replacement.

Hays House is the oldest surviving house in Bel Air so like any lady of a certain age; she requires a nip and tuck now and then. She is standing up very well. In the fall, we hope to reschedule our clothing exhibit, *From Bustles to Ballots* to celebrate 2020 – *the Year of the Woman*. A date will be announced later this year.

100 YEARS AGO IN HISTORY



Maryland suffragists organize on the steps of the State House in Annapolis

League of Women Voters Founded

The League was officially founded in Chicago in 1920, just six months before the 19th amendment was ratified and women won the vote. Formed by the suffragists of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, the League began as a "mighty political experiment" designed to help 20 million women carry out their new responsibilities as voters; The Suffrage Amendment became law on August 26, 1920 after Tennessee became the 36th state in the Union to ratify the amendment. Maryland did not officially ratify the amendment giving women the right to vote until 1941.

FROM IRON MILL TO MANSION: HARFORD FURNACE AND FAIR MEADOWS

Carol L. Deibel

By 1719, with the proliferation of farms throughout the colony, the Maryland General Assembly recognized the tremendous need for iron mills to produce farming implements, tools and household utensils. Importing these goods from Europe was costly and time consuming, but few colonials could afford the costs of developing iron furnaces and supporting facilities. As



an incentive, the Assembly adopted legislation offering 100 acres of land to anyone who would erect a productive furnace. The land grant came with one caveat. The petitioner must begin construction of a productive furnace within six months of approval and have plant in production within four years.

At this time, the mills operated primarily by water power from nearby streams and required a nearby source of limonite, also known as bog ore. The furnaces used tons of charcoal a day, requiring access to acres of forests and a large workforce. The first furnace development near the Bush River area of Harford County began in the 1750s. Deeds describe the location as near the Quaker Meeting House on the Bush River. Isaac Webster, John Hall and Jacob Giles acquired about 70 acres of land here and over a period of several years built a furnace, grist mill, saw mill, dwellings, stables, smith shops and several dams. The workforce came primarily from convicts sent from England to work off their sentences and indentured workers paying off their passage from England by signing on to work for a set period of time, usually four to seven years. The furnace was sold to John Bond, John and James Webster in 1776.

Meanwhile, three Pennsylvanians established a second furnace in the Bush River area, assembling almost 2,000 acres. Eventually, these properties reorganized as Harford Furnace. By the mid-1800s, there were seven iron mills in Harford County. Harford Furnace in Creswell was the largest, eventually expanding to over 5,000 acres bounded by Creswell Road, Goat Hill Road and James Run. The Furnace essentially operated as a small company town with more than 100 workers and 48 buildings in addition to the mill itself. The additional buildings included a sawmill, lime kiln, rolling mill, a library, post office, chemical building, blacksmith shop, warehouses, a glebe house (a church owned property) and residences for workers. Life was hard for the men working the mill. Workers felled massive trees from nearby Van Bibber and burned the lumber to make charcoal for the furnaces. Laborers dug the iron ore by hand from a spot near the village of Bush about a mile from the mill; then transported the limonite back to the furnaces by horse and wagon. A smoky haze often covered the area. The mill operated six days a week with Sundays off to attend church or in many instances to drink away the fatigue. The average wage was 75 cents to \$1 a day. The workers' children attended the nearby two room school house known as the Harford Furnace School.

Legends abound about the area, including one that claimed that the workers left the site of their iron ore dig late on a Saturday night, leaving their equipment behind. Rain fell through the night and into the next day. On Monday, when they returned all of the machinery was gone covered by a newly

formed lake which became known as Old Ore Bank Lake and rumored to be bottomless. Another legend tells of a bank robbery gone wrong. The robbers fled the bank with a stolen safe only to be followed by law enforcement officials. Cornered at the lake, they threw away the evidence, supposedly leaving a safe full of money at the bottom of the lake. The safe was never recovered.

In 1861, William Parnell, a local postmaster and storekeeper bought the property but closed the mill in 1864, as management of workers and mill operations became too demanding and problematic. The next owner, a Frenchman, Clement Dietrich, purchased the mill and the surrounding 5,067 acres in 1867 for \$70,000, transforming the site into a soap and chemical production plant. Dietrich came to the United States in 1830, building his fortune in Cincinnati, Ohio as a soap and candle manufacturer and as President of the Dayton & Michigan Railroad. In 1862, wishing to escape the turmoil of the Civil War, he sold his Ohio property to Proctor and Gamble and returned to Alsace-Lorraine in France and married. He and his bride returned to the States in 1867. The war was over and he was ready to start a new venture in Maryland. Harford Furnace provided the ideal location. At the time, Harford Furnace was the most extensive furnace of its kind in the country. Dietrich immediately began expanding the number and type of buildings on site to accommodate his plans to diversify into chemicals and soaps. He added a three story stone building for his chemical productions measuring 192' x 25', a new laboratory, a carbonization building, a methylene building and an 85' tall smokestack.

For his own residence, he commissioned a Second Empire style mansion with 15 rooms, modelled on the chateau where he and his wife Catherine honeymooned in Alsace Lorraine. The mansion was five bays wide and two rooms deep; boasting a cupola, dormers, round arched windows, patterned slate roofing, bulbous chimneys featuring two thick cornices with rusticated trim around the windows and matching coins. The interior was equally lavish with inlaid marble flooring on the first level and imported wood parquet flooring in differing patterns in some of the other rooms, plaster ceilings, and sculpted friezes. Dietrich then surrounded the house with lavish gardens, a rose garden complete with a fountain led to the front entry, a jonquil lined walkway with decorative statues meandered to the springhouse and swimming pool. All the outbuildings echoed the main house, featuring stone from local quarries, slate roofs and unique architectural features similar to the main house.

The property continued to function as an iron mill, flour mill, in addition to the newly added chemical plant where Dietrich produced acetic acid, wood alcohol and pyro ligneous acid. Regrettably, major changes confronted iron furnaces in the mid to late 1800s. Iron furnaces could not compete with the major steel operations like Andrew Carnegie's Steel Mill in Pittsburgh. Steel replaced iron as the main product used for manufacturing tools and equipment. The steel industry was highly specialized, intricately financed and automated, leaving demand for iron falling and closing iron furnaces across the country. By 1885, Maryland's nineteen furnaces were abandoned. Dietrich's operation went into bankruptcy in 1876 and the property was sold at auction.

Subsequently, Dietrich's daughter, Mary Walsh bought the house and 121 acres at auction keeping the property in the family until her death in 1936. Several other people and organizations purchased parts of the original furnace property over the years including the Eastern Christian College. The College used the mansion as offices until 1958. Today, the mansion known as Fair Meadows is designated on the National Register of Historic Places and is in private ownership. The surrounding properties developed in numerous ways over the years and are in varying hands. Little remains of the original industrial center that was such a major part of Harford's early years.

The Historical Society
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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 & HENRY
C. PEDEN Jr. 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.