

# The HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF HARFORD COUNTY, Inc.

*Preserving Our Past For Your Future*



143 N. Main Street  
Bel Air, MD 21014

## Society News

September / October 2023

Phone: (410) 838-7691

FAX: (410) 838-5257

E-Mail: [info@HarfordHistory.org](mailto:info@HarfordHistory.org)

On the web: [www.HarfordHistory.org](http://www.HarfordHistory.org)



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

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### SPEAKER SERIES

- **The Arts in Harford – Bob Willenbrink, September 12, virtual presentation at 12:30 pm**

Bob Willenbrink is the Executive Director of the Maryland Center for the Arts in Harford County (MDCFA). An accomplished guitarist and singer, his professional background includes stints as a theater director, a professor, and a Dean. Join us at this virtual presentation to learn more about the exciting growth of the arts in Harford.

In 2020, just as the COVID pandemic hit, Bob came to the county to lead the MDCFA. Even with these challenging circumstances, he was able to generate enthusiasm and participation in the arts by moving programs outside. The annual Bluegrass festival continues to be a major success drawing people from across the country. Plans call for the expansion of this event to include Celtic, folk, and blues. Likewise, the Plein Air Art Festival grows each year drawing submissions from talented artists and leading to displays in the Bel Air Armory. With Bob's leadership, the county is experiencing an increased interest in the arts and the development of a vibrant arts scene.

Join us on Tuesday, September 12<sup>th</sup> to learn about the diverse arts programs available throughout the county. To register for this free, virtual program visit our website at [www.harfordhistory.org](http://www.harfordhistory.org).

- **In Support of Women - Joan Hodous, October 10, virtual presentation at 12:30 pm**

Joan Hodous, author, activist, and founder of the Harford County Commission for Women will be our guest at a virtual presentation on Tuesday, October 10<sup>th</sup> at 12:30 pm. This promises to be an entertaining, and for some, an eye-opening program.

We forget how much has changed since the seventies in the county and

*cont'd page 2*



**HARFORD MUTUAL**  
INSURANCE GROUP

The Historical Society of Harford County newsletter is funded in part through a gift from Harford Mutual Insurance Group.

*Continued from page 1*

the country. This is your chance to relive, or possibly learn for the first time, the challenges, successes, and failures of the women's movement in Harford County. Ms. Hodous stepped forward to lead the state-mandated Commission, accepting incredible challenges that few of us would recognize today. Remember this was a time when women needed their father or husband to approve their applications for a bank account and a credit card. Assistance programs for women were essentially non-existent. Employment opportunities were specifically divided into male or female in newspaper advertisements. Joan attacked these issues with determination and humor, resulting in major changes in the county, changes we can all be grateful for today.

To join this free virtual program, register at [www.harfordhistory.org](http://www.harfordhistory.org).



### HARFORD 250 NIGHT AT THE BALLPARK

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you who made Harford 250 Night at the Ballpark a grand slam success! Your presence and enthusiasm created an unforgettable atmosphere, turning the ballpark into a vibrant sea of supporters and fans. It's because of you that this event was a home run in every sense of the word. Keep the memories of the night alive, you're welcome to download the exclusive program from the evening at [www.harford250.org](http://www.harford250.org). The program provides photos and stories about many of the outstanding sports figures and coaches who attended the event.



#### Nominate Your Favorite Athletes

The joy doesn't end with the final inning. The Historical Society invites you to continue celebrating our local athletes and sports in the community. The Society is embarking on a research project to create a Harford County Sports Hall of Fame. We need your help collecting the names of athletic stand-outs in our community. Nominate your favorite athletes by visiting the Harford 250 website.

### BOARD OF TRUSTEE NOMINATIONS

The Historical Society's Bylaws require that a list of possible Trustees shall be nominated by the Board through its Nominating Committee and placed on the ballot at the Annual Meeting. This year, the nominating committee has submitted the following candidates for consideration: Jesse Bane, Paul Koerner, William Rothenbach, Bill Baron. Nominations from the floor will also be accepted. The vote on candidates will be conducted on September 17<sup>th</sup> at the Annual Meeting.

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As the summer winds down, I thank you for your phenomenal support of our Harford 250 events especially the Night at the Ballpark and the speakers' series presentations. This fall will bring equally exciting activities. After years of Covid enforced annual meetings either canceled or held outdoors, I am thrilled to say that this year's Annual Dinner will be a true celebration in the newly refurbished Historical Society Headquarters with dinner, libations, a silent auction and best of all a fantastic storyteller and reenactor who will regale us with the exploits of Virginia Hall, an American Spy who just happened to come from northern Baltimore County.

For budding genealogists, the *Back to Basics* Workshop is a must. This will be a hands-on opportunity to explore your past and help you move forward to an exciting hobby that will give you pleasure for years to come.

I am especially pleased to once again collaborate with Tudor Hall to bring two nationally renowned authors to the Society to speak about their recently published books on Lincoln, the Booths and the Forgotten Women who were involved in the Lincoln assassination. These events tend to sell out early, so I encourage you to register as soon as possible.

Our speakers' series continues to bring outstanding people and their stories to you. In September we will have Bob Willenbrink, the Executive Director of Maryland Center for the Arts. Harford County is becoming an incredible arts venue and will soon include an impressive arts center on MD 24 near Wheel Road. To learn more, be sure to register for this talk. I am also happy to announce that the much-anticipated talk on the Women's movement in Harford County by Joan Hodous is scheduled for October. Again, visit our website to register for these free programs and while there, check out some of our past programs. There is something for every interest.

Finally, I would encourage you to help us with the Harford 250 Mosaic project, by donating a small piece of durable material along with a sentence or two about why Harford County is important to you. These can be dropped off at any county library. The materials will be used as part of a mosaic of Harford's landmarks and displayed at Bynum Run Park for years to come. More details are included in this newsletter along with details about all of the events I have mentioned.

We are looking forward to a very busy and exciting fall and hope you will join us.

-Bill Walden, President

### NEW MEMBERS

Ellen Waudby, Bill Baron, Douglas and Arlene Restrict, Henry Hoffman

### THE TEXTILE DEPARTMENT

The Historical Society has several departments that process and preserve the artifacts and history of our county. The following article about the "George H. Baker" quilt was submitted by two of the Society's Textile Department volunteers. These Textile Department volunteers and others who generously share their time and talent to process, sort, repair, and display the numerous pieces of county history, from wedding dresses to baby clothes, shoes, hats, quilts, and more are invaluable assets in helping the Society

tell the story of Harford County's people, places, and events over time.

### **What's in a Name? Everything!**

Susan K. Wooden and Kathy Scholl

Nearly 150 years ago, 20 of George Hildt Baker's cousins organized their own family quilting bee with the intention of creating a special gift, signed with their names, to honor George on his 25<sup>th</sup> birthday. A few weeks ago, the Society accepted the "George H. Baker" quilt as a donation from the Julian Fairfax Mitchell, III, family. Along with a solid Harford County provenance, the quilt has a fascinating story that even the Mitchell family hadn't known.



*George H. Baker Quilt*

The quilt measures 85" x 86" and is made of two layers of cotton fabric pieced in the Double Irish Chain pattern in white, red, and green. There is no middle layer of batting. The nearly 4" deep border, which is barely shown on the upper edge of the photograph, comprises squares made of red and white triangles.

Each maker embroidered her name in elegant white cursive on the interior white blocks. The neatly centered inscription "Presented—To—George H. Baker—By his Cousins—March 18<sup>th</sup>, 1875" is embroidered in white cursive in the middle block.

The signatures, the inscription, and the excellent condition of the quilt speak to its having been an heirloom all along. However, Mr. Mitchell was unaware of how it came into his family's possession, there being no apparent connection between the Bakers and the Mitchells other than as founding fathers of Harford County's canning industry. He only knew for certain that his mother discovered the quilt many years ago in a cabinet that had been used by or belonged to Annie L. Osborn Mitchell (1887-1973), his paternal grandmother.

By researching the names on the quilt, which were a bit difficult to decipher partly because of their being white on white, we believe we tracked the quilt's journey from its beginning to the present.

The name directly under the center inscription is Libbie Wells, whose full name was Mary Elizabeth Wells (1857-1939). She was 18 when she helped make the quilt, and she most likely was not one of George's cousins. On October 28, 1879, Libbie (age 22) and George (age 29) were married. In a sad turn of events, George passed away 11 months later, on September 7, 1880. George and Libbie's daughter, Georgie H. Baker, was born on September 21, 1880, exactly two weeks after her father's death.

After seven years of widowhood, Libbie married Charles H. Osborn. They had four children, including one daughter, Annie L. Osborn (1887-1973). Annie married Julian Fairfax Mitchell (Sr.) on November 11, 1908.

On finally discovering that the quilt passed from Libbie Wells Baker Osborn to her and Charles's daughter, Annie L. Osborn Mitchell, we wondered why it hadn't been handed down instead to Libbie and George's daughter, Georgie. We learned that Georgie passed away in 1906 at age 25.

Conserving and storing textiles is one way the Society is "preserving our past for your future." Finding



the stories that textiles silently tell is another. If the makers of the "George H. Baker Quilt" hadn't so carefully signed their names on this extraordinary gift to a beloved young man, we would not have been able to find and tell this part of the story.

*Feel free to let us know if you have information about any of the makers' names on the list below.*

Last Name	First Name	B-D Years	Age in 1875	Notes
Arnold	Hattie C.	1843-1915	32	Baker Cemetery
Baker	Alice C.	1854-1904	21	Alice Cordelia, daughter of G. W Baker; married Asel Tollenger
Baker	Susie E.			
Baker	Lydia C.	c 1844-	31	Sister of Alice C Baker.
Carsins*	Anna E.	1855-	20	
Carsins*	Coreen (Mary Corinne?)	c 1853-	22	*The Carsins are sisters; Anna and Lizzie are twins. Parents: William W. and Martha J. Maxwell Carsins
Carsins*	Laura V.	1857-1899	18	
Carsins*	Lizzie J.	1855-	20	
Gilbert	Anna S.			
Gilbert	Mollie E.			
Gilbert	Phoebe			
Hollis	Tillie			Possibly Matilda Hollis, Died 1934, Baker Cemetery
Jewens	Anna V.			
Jewens	Mary S.			
Johnson	Anna S.			
Johnson	Josephine			
Richardson	Ida			
Smith	Lizzie			
Wells	Libbie	1857-1939	18	Married George H. Baker in 1879
Whiteford	Lizzie			

Sources:

"The Baker Family of Aberdeen" by Jon Harlan Livezey. Harford Historical Bulletin #16, Spring 1983. Published by The Historical Society of Harford County, Inc.

Findagrave.com, FamilySearch.org, and other free online resources

Cemetery Records compiled by The Historical Society of Harford County, Inc. accessed through <https://www.hshccatalog.org/> and [www.harfordhistory.org](http://www.harfordhistory.org)

### ANNUAL MEETING

This year's Annual Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, from 4 - 7 pm. The evening will include a catered dinner, libations, a silent auction, the opportunity to see the restoration of the Society Headquarters firsthand, and an outstanding performance by Historic Reenactor, Rosemarie Law relating the harrowing tale of Virginia Hall, an American spy. Cost for the event is \$45.

Now, that we are once again allowed to meet indoors, we have a special treat prepared for you. The Society will host this year's event at the Historical Society Headquarters on Main Street in Bel Air. Our Caterer Dean & Brown will transform the Headquarters into a beautiful dining facility and prepare a sumptuous dinner, complete with wine, beer, and more.

President, Bill Walden will provide an overview of the many accomplishments achieved by the Society in the past year and attendees will vote for the 2024-2025 Board of Trustees appointments. Additionally, attendees will have an opportunity to visit the restored lobby and participate in a silent auction.

The highlight of the evening will be a reenactment by storyteller Rosemarie Mimi Zannino Law detailing the story of a Maryland legend. Virginia Hall, a famous WW II spy and the subject of numerous books, grew up on a farm in Monkton. Rosemarie Law, writer and researcher will tell the story of "Virginia Hall: America's Greatest Spy." Hall served as a spy during World War II, working behind enemy lines. She is considered one of the greatest espionage agents of the era. She was also one of the first female officers at the CIA.



Ms. Law is a living history reenactor who has performed throughout the East Coast from Delaware to Florida. Alan Heil, a former Voice of America foreign correspondent and the author of *Voice of America: A History* wrote the following review after seeing Ms. Law's presentation: "Rosemarie Law brought Virginia Hall to life in a wonderful way. All of us were energized by her presentation. This was the most eloquent accounting of history centered on an historic figure we have yet heard. Congratulations for bringing the role of a true heroine to life for us. Virginia Hall must be smiling from heaven."

This is an event you will not want to miss. To register, visit the Society's website at [www.harfordhistory.org](http://www.harfordhistory.org) or call the Society at 410-838-7691.

### BECOME A VOLUNTEER

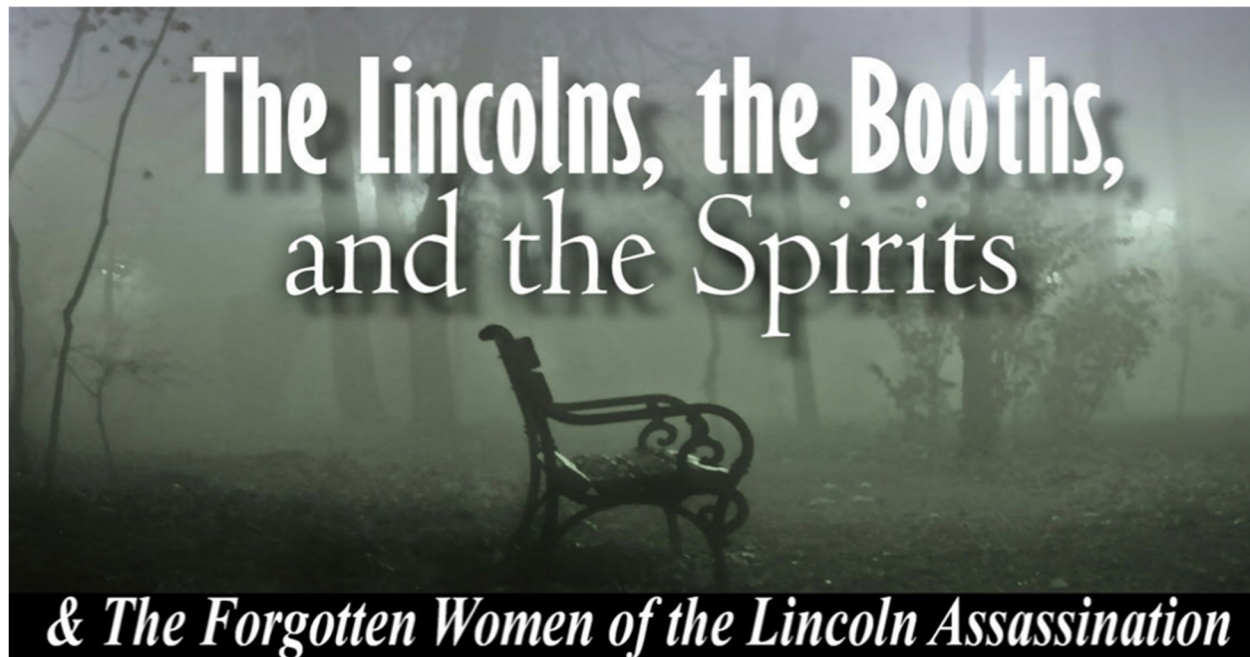
Today is your chance to help save and share Harford's history! As a Historical Society volunteer, you gain access and insight into the behind-the-scenes of a museum, expand your skills and interests with like-minded peers, and more.

This is your opportunity to support history in the making – explore our unique volunteer options.

- Needed IT specialist - Volunteer to assist with the Society's Information Technology
- Needed assistants to oversee the Society's new museum, greet visitors - Volunteer as a Docent for the new History of Harford Museum scheduled to open in the Fall 2023
- Needed history buffs - Volunteer for Hays House Museum Committee – help plan the future of this historic gem.

*SPECIAL EVENT***Saturday, October 21, 2023****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, Inc. (HSHC) are holding an intriguing, one-of-a-kind fund-raising event titled *The Lincolns, the Booths, and the Spirits & The Forgotten Women of the Lincoln Assassination* featuring author / historian Terry Alford and author / historian Kathryn Canavan on Saturday, October 21 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 95 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 \$30.00 per person for this event. Visit the Society's website at [www.harfordhistory.org](http://www.harfordhistory.org) to register for this exciting event.



- **THE LINCOLNS, THE BOOTHES, AND THE SPIRITS** by Terry Alford

Terry's latest book, *In the Houses of Their Dead*, is the first book of the many thousands written about Lincoln to focus on the president's fascination with Spiritualism (very popular in the Civil War era). Terry will demonstrate how it linked Lincoln, uncannily, to the man who would kill him. Abraham Lincoln is usually seen as a rational, empirically-minded man, yet as acclaimed scholar and biographer Terry Alford reveals, he was also deeply superstitious and drawn to the irrational. Like millions of other Americans, including the Booths, Lincoln and his wife, Mary, suffered repeated personal tragedies, and turned for solace to Spiritualism, a new practice sweeping the nation that held that the dead were nearby and could be contacted by the living.

Remarkably, the Lincolns and the Booths even used the same mediums, including Charles Colchester, a specialist in "blood writing" whom Mary first brought to her husband, and who warned the president after listening to the ravings of another of his clients, John Wilkes Booth.

Terry Alford is an author, historian, and Professor Emeritus at Northern Virginia Community College. He received a Ph.D. in history from Mississippi State University and did post-doctoral work in family history at the University of California, Davis.

Dr. Alford is a founding board member of the Abraham Lincoln Institute of Washington, D.C., and is an internationally recognized authority on John Wilkes Booth and the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln. Dr. Alford makes frequent appearances on television programs and networks such as "20/20," ABC News, the History Channel, the Discovery Network, the Smithsonian Channel, CSPAN, BBC, and PBS. *Fortune's Fool*, Dr. Alford's biography of Booth, was published in 2015 by Oxford University Press and has received exceptional reviews. His research endeavors have been supported by four grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities. He has been an historical consultant on a number of films and documentaries, most recently Stephen Spielberg's "Lincoln," starring Daniel Day-Lewis. He also serves as a member of the Advisory Council for Ford's Theatre in Washington, DC.

In 2010, Dr. Alford received the Outstanding Faculty of Virginia Award from the State Council on Higher Education. This is the highest teaching honor given to college and university faculty in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

- **THE FORGOTTEN WOMEN OF THE LINCOLN ASSASSINATION** by Kathryn Canavan

Kathryn will reveal the forgotten women who were connected to the Lincoln assassination. She digs deep and uncovers surprising secrets and stories about these fascinating women.

Kathryn Canavan is an independent researcher and the author of *Lincoln's Final Hours: Conspiracy, Terror, and the Assassination of America's Greatest President* and has appeared on PBS, CSPAN, and the Discovery Channel. She started her journalism career as a crime reporter and 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. In *Lincoln's Final Hours* she explores 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.

**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 95 people.

To purchase tickets, go to: [www.harfordhistory.org/events.php](http://www.harfordhistory.org/events.php) or call 410-838-7691.

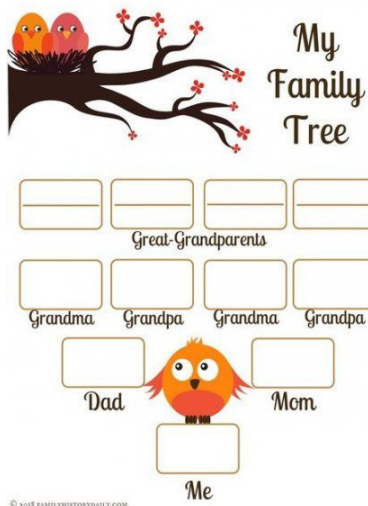
Tickets may also be purchased in person at the Historical Society of Harford County's headquarters before the event (please call first), and at the door on the day of the event.

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. Tudor Hall is located at 17 Tudor Lane, Bel Air, MD 21015.



## GENEALOGY WORKSHOP – BACK TO BASICS

**The Historical Society Headquarters, 143 N. Main St., Bel Air, October 14, 10 am – 3 pm**



Each year for Family History Month, the Society offers a one-day Genealogy Workshop with guest speakers and the opportunity to research the voluminous genealogical materials in the Society's archives. This year's event will be held on Saturday, October 14, 2023, between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. The 2023 Workshop theme is *Back to Basics Genealogy* and will be led by genealogist, Mary Schweers.

Attendees will learn about the incredible resources available on the internet, including free sites at the National Archives, State Archives, Historical Societies, and libraries. The morning program will run from 10 am to 12 pm, and provide classes on research resources and more. There will be a break for lunch. The program will resume at 1 p.m. with class time and some time allotted for participants to practice what they have learned, and research the Society's collections. To make the day even more enticing, there will be a book sale and door prizes.

Participants should bring a laptop or pad-type device for accessing the internet. To register, visit our website at [www.harfordhistory.org](http://www.harfordhistory.org). The cost is \$5 for members and \$15 for non-members.

If you are beginning your Genealogy search or brushing up on research tactics, this session will provide information on methodology, resources, and other tricks of the trade.

## BE A PART OF THE HARFORD 250 ART PROJECT



**We Are Collecting Harford County's Story!**

From Now until October 1st we are accepting a unique type of submission for the Harford 250 Public Art Project. In March, Lisa Scarbath, with Pieceful Design Mosaics, was selected to create her winning proposal ... and she needs YOUR memories! As a master mosaic artist, Lisa is collecting objects and stories from our lives and connecting them into a beautiful representation of our community, demonstrating how intertwined we have grown over 250 years together.

We hope to render these iconic images from Harford County.



## How You Can Help?



Find an item (or items) that represent your experiences in Harford County. This could be an old coffee mug, a CD you used to listen to, a company pen, an old key, a pebble from your driveway or a broken watch. **From well used to long forgotten we will use anything non-biodegradable!**



Write down your name, contact information, the item you are submitting and YOUR memory of Harford County to be connected to the item. (It is okay if the item and story do not directly correlate, as long as it represents you, we can work with it).



Either tape your story to the item and bring it to your nearest Harford County Public Library **OR** mail the item and story to Lisa Scarbath, Howard County Center for the Arts, 8510 High Ridge Road, Ellicott City, MD 21043



**Spread the word!** Tell your family, friends, neighbors, clubs, favorite businesses. We hope to build a full picture of the people who live, work and play in Harford County, so share the project where ever you go.

## Are You Involved in a Harford County Business or Non-Profit?

This is the perfect opportunity for any local business to leave a lasting imprint on Harford County during its 250th anniversary. We would love to accept your company's story and how your business has been a part of Harford County's history. We can accept any promotional materials, overstock inventory or representative items as long as they are non-biodegradable (glass, metal, tile, wood, etc.)



### REMINDER!

**All Items must be dropped off at a county library, or mailed to  
Lisa Scarbath,  
Center for the Arts  
8510 High Ridge Rd.  
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043  
by OCTOBER 1<sup>st</sup> to be included in the Public Art Project.**

Please, don't forget to include your unique story. Forms are available at [www.Harford250.org](http://www.Harford250.org)

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The Historical Society of Harford County, Inc. is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization,  
donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.

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



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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.