

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 2024

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

IN THIS ISSUE

President's Message	1
Coming Events	2
Sports Hall of Fame	3
Richard's Corner	4
250 th – Bush Declaration Signing	5
200 th - Lafayette's Farewell Tour	6
Museum Update	6
New Members	7
Textile Department	7
Hays House	8
In Memoriam	9
Memorabilia Days	11

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Society lost one of its most treasured volunteers last month with the passing of Richard Sherrill. Richard's dedication to the Society over more than three decades was incomparable. Over time, he served as President, an officer, chair of several departments, and a jack-of-all-trades. Most recently, he led the Building Restoration Project that included the construction of a new county museum, scheduled to open later this year. He will be greatly missed. I want to thank Jacob Bensen for volunteering to continue Richard's work as chair of the Building Restoration Committee and I know Richard would be pleased that Jacob will see that his work is completed.

Over the next two months, the Society will host several exciting events. Details are included in the newsletter, but I wanted to especially draw your attention to the first annual Sports Hall of Fame dinner on June 12th at the Maryland Golf and Country Club. We will be inducting eight local sports figures – Olympians, coaches, champions. Come hear their stories and share in the glory each brought to Harford. A list of the honorees is on the Society's website. Sponsorship opportunities for this event are also included on the website. Please consider becoming a sponsor and help us recognize the many sports figures who brought such joy and excitement to Harford County.

As always, I encourage members to attend our events and consider becoming involved as a Historical Society volunteer.

-Bill Walden, President



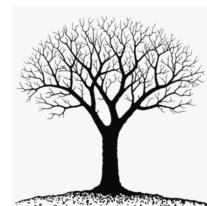
HARFORD MUTUAL
INSURANCE GROUP

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

COMING EVENTS

- **Genealogy Workshop with Mary Schweers**

Join genealogist, Mary Schweers on Wednesday, May 8th at 7 pm at the Historical Society Headquarters for a fascinating program on solving genealogical mysteries at home on your computer. Learn how to trace those long-lost relatives, use computer research programs to make the task easier, and keep track of all that data. Let our experts help you with your search.



Tickets are available on the Society's website, www.harfordhistory.org, and may also be purchased at the door. The cost is \$15 for members and \$20 for non-members.

- **Mother's Day: Tea & Trivia with Mom**

Looking for a way to show Mom how much you care? The Society will host a special event for you and your Mom on May 11th at 2 pm that you won't want to miss. Sign up for a special afternoon tea at the Historical Society headquarters complete with exciting trivia challenges and prizes. This promises to be fun for everyone with a combination of fine food, sweet treats provided by Tea by Two Restaurant, and great competition. Space is limited, so you are encouraged to register early.



Tickets are available at the Society's website, www.harfordhistory.org. The cost is \$25 for members and \$30 for non-members. Tickets will not be available at the door.

- **How to Protect Harford's History**

May is National Historic Preservation Month. This year's theme is *People Saving Places*, so what better venue than the Hays House, one of Harford's most historic structures. The Hays House was saved from demolition in the 1960s when the Safeway Shopping Center (now the home of Looney's Pub) was built.

On Sunday, May 19th at 1 pm, Harford County's Historic Preservation Planner, Jacob Bensen, will share the background stories of the Hays House and some of the other historical places protected by the Harford County Historic Landmarks and Districts Program. You will also learn about the tools available to help you save the places you love in Harford County. These historic structures not only tell the story of our past but create the unique character of our community.



Structures Historic in Harford County

You will also learn about the tools available to help you save the places you love in Harford County. These historic structures not only tell the story of our past but create the unique character of our community.

Visit the Society's website www.harfordhistory.org to register for this free event.

- **The B & O Railroad in Aberdeen**

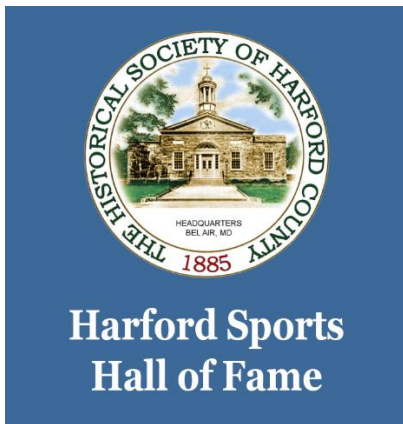


The Historical Society's Virtual Speaker's series continues on June 11 at 12:30 pm with the story of the B & O Railroad station in Aberdeen as told by Pete Dacey, President of the Friends of Aberdeen B & O station. Built in 1885, the Aberdeen station was designed by architect Frank Furness. It served as the gateway to Aberdeen for more than a century. In 2003, the building was saved from demolition by a last-minute agreement between CSX and the Harford

County Historical Society. In September 2016, the building was transferred to the Aberdeen Room Museum and Archives allowing this group to restore the train station using private contributions and several grants. A new non-profit, formed in 2020, The Friends of the Aberdeen B & O Train Station Inc. This group of dedicated people is focused solely on the restoration of the station which will eventually serve as an educational and economic catalyst for the present and future of Aberdeen, MD. Mr. Dacey will describe the history of the station, its importance locally and nationally, and the progress made to date on the structure's restoration.

This is a free event but you must register for the virtual presentation by visiting the Society's website www.harfordhistory.org.

THE FIRST ANNUAL HARFORD SPORTS HALL OF FAME



As a part of the 250th Anniversary Celebration of the county's birth, The Historical Society of Harford County evaluated the desire of the community to develop a Harford Sports Hall of Fame. A committee was assembled, which was comprised of sports reporters, former high school athletic directors, local historians, athletes, and coaches who evaluated nominees from 23 high schools, both female and male, of all ethnicities. As a result of their work, an initial list was developed of 90+ athletes and coaches which contains Olympians, World Champions, World Record holders, professional athletes, coaches, and locally dominant athletes. This past August, over 500 strong came to Ripken Stadium to honor 23 incredibly accomplished individuals from this list.

On Wednesday, June 12th, 2024, from 6 – 9 pm at the Maryland Golf and Country Club, the Historical Society will formally induct the first class of athletes and coaches into the Harford Sports Hall of Fame! Tickets for this event are available to the public. Please visit our website www.harfordhistory.org for event details and to see the list of athletes being celebrated that evening. SPONSORSHIPS FOR THE EVENT ARE NEEDED. SEE THE WEBSITE FOR DETAILS.

Tickets for the dinner and Inductee program are \$100.⁰⁰ and must be purchased online prior to the event.

-Charles Castoro, M.D., Development Director

RICHARD'S CORNER

For more than three decades Richard Sherrill volunteered his time and talents to the Historical Society writing numerous articles, chairing the Archives Department, the Building and Restoration Committees, and leading the Society as a Board member and Officer. Beginning with this edition of the newsletter, we will include a column dedicated to Richard's memory focusing on a unique piece of Harford's history.

As Richard was the Society's expert on the Tidewater Canal, it seems appropriate to include an excerpt from his *Harford Historical Bulletin No. 58* on the subject for our first selection.

"The Tidewater Canal: Harford County's Contribution to the Canal Era"

Along the western shore of the Susquehanna River, at Havre de Grace, Maryland, and locations to the northwest, stand silent stone walls, monuments to a forgotten era. Ravaged by time and the river, they are a memorial to the past, the surviving remnants of the Tidewater Canal. This canal is a part of Harford County history that represents the innovation, skill, and determination of the American people, and it deserves to be kept alive in the recounting of the history of Maryland and Harford County.

Located on the west bank of the Susquehanna River, the Tidewater Canal was the Maryland portion of the Susquehanna and Tidewater Canals. The entire canal ran from Wrightsville, Pennsylvania to Havre de Grace, Maryland, and played an important role in the development of the mid—Atlantic region of the nation. Built between 1836 and 1839, the canal provided in its day one of the most modern and efficient means of transporting goods to coastal markets. However, the ravages of nature and the cost of repairs eventually made the continuation of the canal impractical. Abandoned and allowed to deteriorate, today much of the Tidewater Canal is gone and can only be recreated in papers such as this.

Unlike the study of some other canals, a determined effort is required to locate information on the Tidewater Canal. Only a small percentage of the physical evidence of the canal survives. Parts of the canal, such as the locks at Havre de Grace, Lapidum, and the mouth of Deer Creek, as well as some other stonework, are visible today. Official state documents and legislative acts pertaining to the canal still exist. Corporate records do remain, but are incomplete and frequently vague, especially in the area of day-to-day operations. Personal recollections by eyewitnesses are scarce, perhaps due to lost writings, an inability to write, or a sense that their observations were not important enough to record for the future. Some accounts of canal-related events can be gleaned from the pages of regional and local newspapers. There are photographs of places along the route of the Tidewater Canal that give a visual idea of what the canal was like. Many of the maps and plats that show the canal are merely sufficient detail to illustrate the canal route and structures.



Susquehanna and Tidewater Canals at the Loch House Museum, Havre de Grace

Various aspects of Harford County's fifteen-mile Tidewater Canal have been written about in pamphlets, articles, and reports by a number of eyewitnesses and historians (both amateur and professional). The need

expressed by post-Revolutionary War commercial interests as well as individuals in the early 1820s for a canal to improve navigation and commerce on the Susquehanna River has been reported by various canal researchers. The political and economic aspects of improvements on the Susquehanna River for the rival ports of Baltimore and Philadelphia have been the subject of several publications by James W. Livingood. Havre de Grace, Lapidum, and Shore's Landing have been topics for historical research and personal reminiscences that have tied the canal to the existence of those towns. The type, quantity, and value of canal boat cargoes have been covered, especially in George Scriven's article in the Winter 1976 issue of the Maryland Historical Magazine.

There has yet to be a complete history of the canal. Even with works published thus far, much of the canal's story has not been presented. Though not a definitive history in itself, this effort will cover some additional information on the canal's past, while leaving still other aspects to be elaborated upon in the future.

An overview of the aforementioned research is needed here to refresh the memories of those who have previously read about the canal and to learn for themselves the role of the state of Maryland and Harford County in this important development in the growth of the nation. A clarification of the names used to refer to the canals along the lower Susquehanna River will help avoid confusion for the reader. The Canal located on the eastern bank of the Susquehanna River in Cecil County and opened in 1805 was identified as the Susquehanna Canal when it was chartered by the State of Maryland. The Canal completed in 1839 along the western bank of the river was officially identified as the Susquehanna and Tidewater Canals. This name acknowledged the joint efforts of the two states involved in building the canal. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania referred to its section of the canal in its charter as the Susquehanna Canal. The Maryland legislature, in the charter for its section of the canal, identified the water body as the Tide Water Canal or Tide-Water Canal. The name Susquehanna and Tidewater Canal is however, in this paper, it will be called by its official name, the Susquehanna and Tidewater Canals. The more commonly applied spelling for the Maryland section of the canal, Tidewater will be employed except where the original name is.

The remainder of *Bulletin #58* goes on to describe the planning, building, and builders of the canal along with the struggles following its opening and the employees who tended the Locks. Copies of the complete bulletin are available at the Historical Society in case you would like to delve further into this oft-forgotten era of county history.

250TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIGNING OF THE BUSH DECLARATION

In just eleven months Harford County will celebrate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Bush Declaration. The Bush Declaration was a resolution in support of the patriot cause in the American Revolution that was signed in the town of Bush on March 22, 1775. What led the Harford County Committee to create such a revolutionary document?

The Harford County Committee of Observation had been meeting prior to 1775. They were enforcing the non-importation agreements that had been put in place by many colonies in protest of British taxation. The Committee was hearing cases and dealing out fines to merchants and ship owners who violated the agreements by importing or paying the tax on prohibited goods. They were also raising money and purchasing supplies to send to support the citizens of Boston which was already in its sixth year of occupation by British troops.

The Members of the Committee that drafted the document were elected in late January 1775. Eighty men were elected—10 from each of eight “hundreds” —geographic districts within Harford County. By 1775, these men were organizing militia groups and identifying officers for these groups. This could certainly be interpreted as a sign that county citizens were concerned about the possibility of an armed conflict with the British.

The Bush Declaration’s anniversary will allow county citizens to reflect on the courage and foresight of the early residents who were willing to “risque their lives and fortunes.”

A committee of interested persons has been created to plan events to celebrate this anniversary. If you are interested in learning more or exploring volunteer opportunities, please contact Sandi Wallis at swallis1776@gmail.com.

-Sandra Wallis, Bush Declaration Committee Chair

200TH ANNIVERSARY OF LAFAYETTE’S FAREWELL TOUR

Mark your calendar now for July 29, 2025! Harford County citizens will celebrate the anniversary of Lafayette’s Farewell Tour and welcome the Marquis to Havre de Grace once again with a festive celebration. Plans are still being developed but a few highlights follow.

Lafayette will arrive by boat for an early evening celebration—just as he did 200 years earlier. Citizens will greet him at Harmer’s Town and Graw Alley. Food trucks and booths manned by local organizations will offer plenty of entertainment. Lafayette will greet the citizens of Harford County and express his appreciation for their friendship. He will share highlights of his tour which started 11 months before this stop!

Plans for several lead-up events are also in the works for the months before Lafayette’s arrival. As additional events in the Farewell Tour are finalized, they will be shared in this newsletter. If you have questions or want to learn about volunteer opportunities, please contact Sandi Wallis at swallis1776@gmail.com.

-Sandra R. Wallis, Lafayette Farewell Tour Planning Committee Chair

MUSEUM UPDATE

The Museum Committee continues to evaluate items and artifacts for display. We've had a slight delay in putting fixtures in place while we make some adjustments to the display area. In the meantime, we are preparing the display fixture for the ancient petroglyphs that date from the earliest days of human habitation in Harford County. They will be one of the stars of the museum and will be one of the first displays you see when you enter the museum. It's beginning to come together and the excitement is building. Watch this space.



Susquehanna Petroglyph

-George Harrison, Society Vice President

NEW MEMBERS

Carol Johnson
Richard Albright
Robert Reeves

Randall Akers
Samuel Boykins
Suesan Sneddon

Robert Brown
Ann Helton
Charles Jacobs, Jr.

THE TEXTILE DEPARTMENT

*Lucy Locket lost her pocket
Fisher found it
But ne'er a penny was there in't
Kitty Except the binding round it*

Based on our modern experience with pockets, folks who are familiar with this 18th-century (or earlier) nursery rhyme may wonder how Lucy lost something that should have been securely sewn into her clothes. The answer is found in the study of material culture—the evidence of daily life that accumulates over time and then finds its way into a collection to be catalogued, interpreted, and preserved. In fact, the Society's textile collection includes an extraordinary example of the sort of pocket that the unfortunate Lucy lost.



Front View of Pocket



Back View of Pocket

Object ID 2010.14.015 is a mid-1800s hand-sewn brown silk pocket lined with lightweight brown linen. The pocket measures 6" across the top, with a gradual widening to 10.5" at the bottom. The center front opening is 10.5" long; the overall length is 17". The pocket is fragile but in very good condition for its age. The quality of the silk and linen, along with the piecing in the back and the lining, indicate that the pocket was made of scraps likely left over from a gown (the common term for a dress at that time). We don't know the pocket's provenance, but the solid drab color and

absence of embellishment tell us it may have belonged to a Quaker.

Unlike men's clothing of the time, women's clothing had no or few sewn-in pockets. From about 1650 through the late 19th century, women's pockets most often were detachable, pear-shaped accessories that were tied around the waist singly or in pairs and worn under petticoats, skirts, or aprons. The pocket's center front opening was easily accessible from hidden openings in the sides of the petticoat/skirt. Generally, women and girls made and personalized their own pockets, which could be of utilitarian, patchwork, or fashionable fabrics, and could be plain or decorated, usually with embroidery. Pockets were often made as gifts and were also sold ready-made.

Tie-on pockets were highly significant in daily life: they enabled females to privately carry an assortment of personal and intimate items and domestic necessities. Our pocket is an exceptional example of what

anthropologist James Deetz* calls “small things forgotten” that help us understand and better appreciate life and social context in the distant past.

The Pocket, A Hidden History of Women’s Lives, by Barbara Burman and Ariane Fennetaux thoroughly explores the importance of pockets and showcases a fascinating array of extant examples. To learn how pockets are constructed (and make your own!), check out the Burnley & Trowbridge sew-along series at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RNfmq68cSqQ>.

*Deetz, James, *In Small Things Forgotten, An Archeology of Early American Life*. 1977 and 1996, Anchor Books, Doubleday.

-Susan K. Wooden and Kathy Scholl, Textile Department

WHAT’S NEW AT THE HAYS HOUSE

Finally! The Hays House will be welcoming visitors soon!

In the past, the Hays House has been open on Sunday afternoons two Sundays a month. The Hays House Committee will begin its 2024 programming by re-instituting Sunday events starting April 28th. Each of the Sunday programs listed below will be offered from 1:00 – 3:30 pm.

On Sunday, April 28, visitors are encouraged to spend time “At Home at the Hays House”. This program is offered in conjunction with the Bel Air 150 Celebration scheduled for Saturday, April 27th at the Bel Air Armory. Volunteer, Carol Powers will showcase period games in the dining room. Visitors are invited to stop by for a fun game of Shut the Box! Victor Miller and Mercy Ingraham, experienced hearth cooks, will demonstrate the art of hearth cooking in the colonial kitchen. Representatives from the Historical Society’s Textile Department will display clothing from 1874 in the parlor. The Hays House has been closed since the Covid pandemic, so this event is doubly special. Come share in this Society FIRST – the celebration of Bel Air 150 at one of the few surviving homes of the town’s founding era.



Two programs are planned for May. They include a presentation by County Historic Preservation Planner, Jacob Bensen, on Sunday, May 19th at 1 pm celebrating National Historic Preservation Month. This is the perfect opportunity to learn about the county’s historic buildings and how each of us can help preserve historic properties in Harford.

On Sunday, May 26th our program will focus on the museum’s pollinator garden. The Governor William Paca Chapter NSDAR has maintained a Pollinator Garden at the Hays for several years. The garden began as a Conservation project and is maintained by a dedicated group of volunteers. Recently, the volunteers adopted the Herb Garden, established by the Historical Society of Harford County (HSHC) volunteers years ago. The Pollinator and Herb Garden volunteers invite the public to “Come See What We Do in the Garden”. Join us in the Hays House garden between 1:00 – 3:30 pm. Volunteers will informally discuss their work in the garden and the value of pollinator gardens today. Following the presentation, visitors can enjoy the Hays House and gardens.

Please check the Historical Society of Harford County website for more information on these programs.

-Sandra R. Wallis, Hays House Chair

IN MEMORIAM

- **Richard J. Sherrill (1939-2024)**

On Palm Sunday, 2024 the Historical Society lost one of its most beloved and longest-serving volunteers, Richard J. Sherrill. He was 84 years old.

A History teacher at Bel Air High School, 33-year-old Richard began helping the Society in 1972. His volunteer service, valuable but sporadic at first, increased greatly following his retirement from HCPS in 1991. In 2009 he assumed the Chairmanship of the Society's Archives Department, whose photograph and postcard collections were of special interest. With the late Dr. David Hodge, he expanded the collection by scouring online auctions, visiting local dealers, and seeking out benefactors. He retained that position until shortly before his passing. Richard was elected to the Board of Directors in 2006 and became 1st Vice-president in 2010 and President two years later. In addition to his archival and elected duties, Richard also served on the Publications Committee, and as the Chairman of the Building Restoration and Museum committees.



*Richard Sherrill during recent
Society renovations.*

For Richard, committee work was more than chairing meetings and assigning projects to others. His chairmanships were hands-on. He was never afraid to “get down and dirty,” climb ladders (once on top of filing cabinets as he hung the Society's portrait collection), wield a paintbrush or perform plumbing (the loading dock door and the bathrooms), trim a hedge, pull weeds, wet vacuum a flooded basement, climb up to the roof to clean out blocked drains, haul trash and recycling to the curb, or complete countless other tasks. He hand-painted the gold leaf lettering in the lobby bulletin cases during their recent restoration. Richard, whose Society mailbox overflowed more with tools than papers, appeared at HQ as often in a set of coveralls as he did in street clothes.

Richard Sherrill was also a respected scholar. In 1993 he authored *Harford Historical Bulletin*, “The Tidewater Canal: Harford County's Contribution to the Nation's Canal Era,” and was considered the Society's expert on the history of the Lower Susquehanna River area. A Baltimore Poly grad, he aided the Maryland Park Service in producing signage along the canal, consulted on the Maryland Public Television documentary on the Conowingo Dam and Hurricane Agnes, and produced maps for Society Bulletins on the War of 1812 and The Medal of Honor (Alfred B. Hilton and Charles E. Phelps)

Despite his humble nature, Richard's services brought him much acclaim. In 2010 the Society presented him with its George W. Archer Award for his contributions to the Society and the preservation of the History of Harford County as a whole. The County Council named him a Harford County Living Treasure that same year. And in 2021 he received the Harford County Historic Preservation Commission's Preservationist Honor Award, and the Governor William Paca DAR Chapter Award for Historic Preservation. His closest friends, however, believed his highest achievement in life was his 56-year membership in and 49-year presidency of the famed Bel Air American History Club, established in 1964.

Some individuals are expected to be around forever. They have boundless energy and enthusiasm for life, are assumed to always bring in bunches of home-grown daffodils, pop open a Coke can, take home for their blueberry patches the tea bags and coffee grounds saved by their fellow volunteers, or flash a smile when dessert is offered during a lunch break. Richard Sherrill was one of those people. He is greatly missed by many a person at Society Headquarters and the Hays House.

The Society extends its heartfelt gratitude and condolences to his wife Bea and daughters Renee, Bonnie, and Heather.

- **Dr. John E. Brown (1931 – 2024)**

Dr. John Eugene Brown, President of the Historical Society from 1986 to 1988, died in Walkersville, MD, on March 19, 2024. Brown, a long-time Professor of History, Religion, and Philosophy at Harford Community College, was 92 years old.

Dr. Brown, a native of Indiana, attended DePauw University, San Francisco Theological Seminary, Johns Hopkins University, and Ball State University. He held a Bachelor's Degree in Divinity, a Master's in Near Eastern Studies, and a Doctorate in History. His dissertation dealt with the career of Vice-president Thomas R. Marshall.

As an academician with experience in curriculum development, Dr. Brown stressed the need for greater organization and substance in Society activities and publications, as reflected in his October 30, 1994, address for the Ninth Annual George W. Archer Lecture. The Society published Dr. Brown's remarks as part of its Spring 1995 Bulletin, "Toward the Writing of a New County History."

An ordained Presbyterian minister who enjoyed living in different parts of the country, John enjoyed a dual career, assisting at local congregations, including Bel Air First Presbyterian Church.

The Society extends its condolences to Dr. Brown's spouse, Sandra, and children Beth, Christine, and Jefferson.

- **Hannah T. George Koziski (1944- 2024)**

Hannah T. George Koziski, a longtime member of the Harford County Historical Society and niece of the late Tom Brooks, died peacefully on Easter Sunday at home with her husband of 55 years by her side, after a courageous 6-year battle with cancer. Hannah was born to the late Peter J. George and Elizabeth D. Brookes on May 3, 1944. In her husband's words, "Hannah was beautiful, intelligent, and had a big compassionate heart. She was truly an "All American Girl."

Hannah graduated from John Dickinson High School in 1962. She attended the University of Delaware where she met her husband, Michael, before transferring to Goldey Beacon School of Business where she completed the Executive Secretarial Course and received her associate in arts.



Harford County Memorabilia Days

for African American History and Culture



Save Harford's History!

Join the Historical Society of Harford County and Hosanna School Museum in preserving and sharing vital African American history and culture through a traveling exhibition that highlights Black life throughout Harford County over the centuries. We are seeking your support.

Contribute to the exhibition by bringing your memorabilia and photos to the Historical Society. Whether you loan or donate items, you're ensuring that the African American experience in Harford County is preserved and celebrated for future generations to explore.

Your support is crucial.

**Wednesday, April 17, 2024
and
Saturday, April 20, 2024**

**11:00 am to 2:00 pm
at the
Historical Society
of Harford County (HSHC)**

**143 N. Main Street
Bel Air, MD**

**(or call to make a Wednesday
appointment until April 30th.)**

For more info, call 410-838-7691



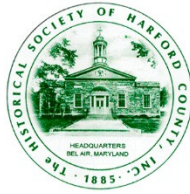
**HISTORIC
HOSANNA
SCHOOL MUSEUM**

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Harford County Government



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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.