The HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF HARFORD COUNTY, Inc.

Preserving Our Past For Your Future



143 N. Main Street Bel Air, MD 21014 September / October 2024

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

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Society is looking forward to a very busy Fall Season. Please consider joining us for some of our upcoming events which are detailed later in the newsletter. Although the longawaited Museum is not quite ready to open, the Society's Headquarters is once again open to the public. Also, the Hays House Committee is sponsoring several activities in the coming months at the Hays House Museum on Kenmore Avenue in Bel Air.

One event that we hope you will consider attending is this year's Annual Dinner and Meeting on September 22nd at 2 pm at the Society's headquarters on Main Street in Bel Air. The Lafayette-themed program will celebrate the kick-off of the 200th anniversary of General Lafayette's Farewell Tour of America which included a stop in Havre de Grace and will include a birthday cake in his honor. Alise Dupuy, a celebrated reenactor will tell the story of Lafayette from his wife's perspective. The event will be catered by Dean and Brown and promises to be a very special afternoon for all. Members will also be invited to vote for the 2025-2026 Board of Trustee Class members. Details about the candidates are included in the newsletter as well.

I also want to draw your attention to a special feature on the Society's website. Since the 1970s, the Society has published more than 100 Bulletins covering historic events, people, and places in Harford County. A large number of these Bulletins are available on the Society's website. I encourage you to visit

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

Society News

the website at <u>www.harfordhistory.org</u>, click on SHOP, and peruse the numerous Bulletins, programs, and materials available to you. While there, please check out the newly added Bulletin by Jeff Smart, *Divided Union: A Military History of Harford County in the Civil War 1864, Part I.* This is now available for download by Society members. The story includes many surprising details about Harford's experience in the Civil War and is sure to add new light to your understanding of this difficult time in our country's history.

All of these programs and events provide outstanding opportunities for our members and the public, but they come at a cost. If you or someone you know would be interested in becoming a sponsor for the Society's Bulletins, the Annual Dinner, the Annual Sports Hall of Fame Program, the Society's Speakers Series, the Hays House Museum programs, the upcoming Paranormal (ghost hunt) event, or one of the planned Museum programs, please contact us at <u>info@harfordhistory.org</u>. Sponsorships generally range from \$500 to \$2,500 and offer an excellent opportunity to receive widespread advertising for your company. It is also a wonderful opportunity to help the Society meet its mission of collecting, preserving, interpreting, and promoting Harford County's rich history.

Bill Walden, President

BOARD OF TRUSTEE NOMINATIONS

The Historical Society's Bylaws require that a list of possible Trustees be nominated by the current Board of Trustees through its Nominating Committee and placed on the ballot at the Annual Meeting. This year, the following candidates are presented for members' consideration:

- Eric F. Bojo a teacher specialist and instruction coach at Edgewood High School with a BA degree in history, graduate degrees in education and extensive teaching experience in all aspects of American and world history.
- Sarah Aultowski Gourgoulianis a quality control specialist at Imagen Technologies. She has worked at Becton, Dickinson and Company, the U.S. Naval Medical Center San Diego, and has a life-long interest in museum curation.
- Victor Miller a construction professional with extensive experience in restoration and preservation of historic properties, a long-term volunteer on Harford County's Historic Preservation Commission and the Society's Hays House Museum committee.
- Bruce G. Pitts an amateur history buff who was instrumental in establishing The Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library in Dickinson, ND. He is a graduate of Yale University and the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine.

Nominations will also be accepted from the floor as noted in the Society's Bylaws. The final vote on candidates will be conducted on Sunday, September 22nd at the Society's Annual Meeting.

THE 1959 CLASS OF BEL AIR HIGH SCHOOL

The Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the generous gift of \$1,745.⁴⁸ from the alumni association of the 1959 Class of Bel Air High School. The Society is reliant on the generosity of local groups and organizations. Truly, local people valuing our work is what keeps us going.

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Bush Declaration Kick Off: Life in Harford County in 1774-1775

It's September 1774. The "shot heard round the world" would be fired in just seven months and the American Revolution would begin. What was the buzz in Harford County? Visit the Hays House as people go about their normal routine and share what they are learning about the coming revolution. Join us for this exciting step back in time on **Sunday**, **September 8**, **2024**, **at 1 pm** at the Hays House Museum.

Celebrate Constitution Day/Week

Constitution Day is Tuesday, September 17th. What did local residents think about this new form of government and how it would impact them and future generations? On **Sunday**, **September 15**, **2024**, **at 1 pm join us at** the Hays House to learn more about the creation of our constitutional government from the perspective of 1787.

The Historical Society's Annual Dinner and Show

Sunday, September 22, 2024, at 2 pm at the Historical Society Headquarters

The Historical Society's 2024 Annual Dinner promises to be a grand occasion. This year's dinner will be held at the Historical Society's Headquarters, 143 N. Main Street in Bel Air. Attendees will have the opportunity to see the tremendous progress in the building restoration, learn about upcoming Society



Alisa Dupuy as Adrienne de Lafayette

projects and programs, elect members of the 2025-2026 Board of Trustees, discover the winners of this year's George W. Archer Fellow Award and the Richard Sherrill Volunteer Award, while enjoying a French themed dinner, show, and a celebration of the 200th Anniversary of General Lafayette's return to America.

In 1824, Lafayette, the American Revolution's last surviving general, returned for a Farewell Tour of the country he helped create. He toured the 24 states that made up the country at the time. His journey will be recreated over the next year and a half with programs in the cities he visited in 1824-1825. Harford County was one of Lafayette's final stops on his tour before returning to France. This visit will be commemorated in Havre de Grace in July 2025, but local exhibits and events are planned throughout the next year.

The Historical Society is planning a special program for this Year's annual dinner which will begin with a celebration of Lafayette's birthday – dinner will include birthday cake based on one of Lafayette's favorite recipes, followed by a presentation by reenactor, Alisa Dupuy as Adrienne de Lafayette, wife of General Lafayette, hero of the American Revolution, without whom we could not have won our independence. She will tell us about their life together, General Lafayette's achievements and explain why he is considered the Hero of Two Worlds.

Lafayette's visit did much to keep America strong in a political environment that could have torn the country apart. Come honor this great Founding Father and learn about the amazing woman behind the man. Register at <u>www.harfordhistory.org</u>. Members \$45/Non-Members \$75. Space is limited so order early. Tickets will not be available at the door.

Bush Declaration Part II: Life in Harford County in 1774-1775

Winter is just around the corner! The family needs to prepare! Join people at the Hays House as they work to set aside the summer's bounty to enjoy the coming winter. Stir the kettle as we make apple butter! Listen to their conversation about the events of the times. Be a part of the fun on **Sunday**, **September 29**, **2024**, **at 1 pm** at the Hays House.

Genealogy Workshop

On Saturday, October 12, 2024, the Historical Society will host its Annual Genealogy Workshop at the Society's Headquarters, 143 N. Main Street in Bel Air. Speakers will provide information on accessing Courthouse Records, using online resources and newspapers to discover details about your family's past and the ancestors who molded your family's personal history.



Workshop sessions begin at 9 am with a break at noon followed by time for attendees to conduct personal research in the afternoon between 1 pm and 4 pm.

To register visit <u>www.harfordhistory.org</u>. This event is free for members and \$15 for non-members.

WHAT'S NEW AT THE HAY'S HOUSE

There has been lots of activity at the Hays House and a lot is still on the horizon.

Programs have resumed. The Hays House welcomed a large group of visitors on July 4 with games, house tours, and crafts. A May program focused on historic preservation, and a June Flag Day presentation shared the story of Mary Pickersgill and the women who sewed the Star-Spangled Banner.

Beginning in August, the Hays House will solicit input on program suggestions for the future. When the survey arrives in your inbox, please take time to complete it. We need everyone's input. In September, the Hays House will begin a new series of programs tentatively titled *Revolutionary Harford* which will focus on Harford County in the Pre-Revolutionary War years. These programs will continue for the next two years and culminate with the 250th Anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 2026. We're hoping to make that history come to life and have planned interesting programs

that will engage adults and children in this America 250 Celebration.

In addition to programs, the repairs to the exterior and interior of the Hays House are moving along. Stay tuned for more information about these long-needed repairs.

Sandra Wallis, Chair Hays House Museum



RICHARD'S CORNER

In recognition of more than 50 years of volunteer service to the Historical Society of Harford County, Inc., the Board of Trustees established the **Richard J. Sherrill Volunteer Award** at its August 5, 2024 meeting. As noted in the Resolution adopted at the meeting, "Richard Sherrill was a dedicated volunteer for whom no service to the Historical Society was either too large or too small." Richard served as President, Vice President, and Trustee on the Historical Society's Board, as an editor of the Publication Committee, as Chair of the Archives Department, and as Chair of the Building and Restoration Committee. In addition to the leadership positions, he was always there to handle the mundane tasks of painting, plumbing, yard work, and emergency repairs that the Society's historic buildings routinely needed. He was an example to his counterparts and future generations.

Recipients of the Richard J. Sherrill Volunteer Award will be selected by a majority vote of the Board of Trustees as circumstances deem appropriate at any time. A permanent display will be created identifying award recipients. The first of these awards will be presented at the Society's Annual Meeting on September 22, 2024.

PARANORMAL ACTIVITY FOUND AT SOCIETY BUILDINGS



In case you have heard, yes, the rumors are true, on May 25th, 2024, the Above and Below Paranormal Group conducted a paranormal investigation or "ghost hunt" at the Historical Society Headquarters. The investigation, which lasted from 6:00 PM to 4:00 AM began with a load-in of a variety of high-tech equipment by the team. They soon covered the majority of the building with cameras and motion sensors. After "lights out" the six-member team divided up and used other equipment to perform investigations in areas of interest in the building. They used various forms of paranormal technology including Rempod's and Environmental Detection Instrument, both measure environmental changes, they also had

digital recorders and special full spectrum cameras. The most intriguing piece of equipment is called an Epoch box, which is a device that allows a response to a yes or no-based question.

This preliminary investigation at headquarters was to determine if enough activity existed to have a ghost-hunting event at the Society at a later date. The answer to that question is yes, and the investigators are very anxious to come back to zero in on some interesting finds.

We also hosted the team for a preliminary investigation at the Hays House Museum on July 20th. During that investigation, the team was prepped with some questions to investigate. All of this leads to collaborating with the team to host a ticketed hunt for members of the public to come in and take part in the investigations later this year. We hope to finalize the events soon and host some very interesting paranormal nights. Watch for dates and details on the Society's website and Facebook page.

Mary Schweers, Administrative Assistant

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NEW MEMBERS

Russell Watson, new lifetime member

THE TEXTILE DEPARTMENT

In May 2024, we launched the first of many future textiles exhibits in the Welcome Center of Harford County's Administration Building!

The opportunity to install a series of displays in so public a space came about through synchronicity and an elegant navy blue 1880s bustle dress—when County Executive Bob Cassilly toured Society headquarters in late summer, he was so impressed by the formal wear, military uniforms and other items on display in our workrooms that he thought our collection would be a perfect fit for the Administration building's re-designed reception area. The intent is to place these highly personal pieces of history where more Harford Countians and others can see and enjoy them.

To get this exciting project from idea to reality, we teamed up with Cindy Mumby, Chief of Community Relations, and Stephanie Nay, Graphic Design Manager (both in the Office of the County Executive) to determine space, budget, exhibit requirements, and a graphic template that describes the County-Society partnership along with the displayed items.

Each exhibit has a timely theme. Our May installation featured the US Army uniform that was issued to the Society's Administrative Assistant, Mary Schweers (nee Worthington) of Havre de Grace when she transferred from active duty to the US Army Reserves in 1981. So far, hers is the only woman's military uniform donated to our collection. The man's outfit is a 1930s US Army Cavalry Officer uniform designed especially for troops on horseback. The style was in service from the late 1920s to 1940s.

In July our Harford County Farm Fair* display honored beloved veterinarian Dr. Richard O. Cook (1930-2017) by showcasing his overalls and red Farm Fair polo shirt and hat. The child's overalls belonged to Judge Stewart Oscar Day (1897-1985); Susan Osborn donated the 1996 Farm Fair T-shirt; and the apron was worn by Mrs. Nathal Yealdhall Dennis (1885-1966). The exquisite Album quilt was hand-stitched as a wedding gift in 1882 for Samuel Gover Hopkins (1853-1944) and Annie S. Hetrick (1860-1932).

We have a terrific project team guided by Kathy Scholl, Chair of the Textile Department, and overseen by Chris Potts, the Society's Executive Director. The crew includes Sally Cassilly and Susan Wooden in the Textile Department, George Niewenhous in the Military Textile Department, and other Society volunteers who enthusiastically help in various ways. Besides the County staff mentioned previously, we are assisted with setup and PR by Historic Preservation Planner Jacob Bensen and Public Information Officer Matt Button.





We're already envisioning our September exhibit! Meanwhile, we hope you will stop by the Administration building lobby at 220 South Main Street in Bel Air and step to the right of the doors to see our latest exhibit. We know you'll enjoy it!

*The Harford County Farm Fair began in 1858 to promote the County's agriculture but lapsed in the mid-1960s. Dr. Cook spearheaded the revival of the Fair in 1987.

Susan K. Wooden and Kathy Scholl, Textile Department

PLANS FOR THE 250TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIGNING OF THE BUSH DECLARATION

Mark your calendar for a full weekend of activities in celebration of the 250th Anniversary of the Signing of the Bush Declaration.

Save the Date 250th Anniversary Signing of the Bush Declaration

Declaration March 21, 22, and 23, 2025 On Friday evening, March 21, 2025, there will be a "Meet and Greet" opportunity for direct and collateral descendants of the original 34 signers. Plans are underway for the social that will kick off a full weekend of activities. There will be opportunities for attendees to mingle with other descendants of the Signers. You can find a long-lost cousin!

The Bush Declaration was signed on March 22, 1775. The Anniversary Celebration will be held exactly 250 years later, on Saturday, March 22, 2025. A committee of representatives of groups from across the county is working on planning a full day of events.

A morning public celebration will include displays related to the Bush Declaration, the Signers, and Harford County in 1775. There will be activities for families and children. The committee is working with local groups to feature musical and dramatic presentations tied to the celebration. The committee is looking for creative ways to involve descendants in the day's activities, Future newsletters will provide details as they are confirmed.



Grave of signer John Archer at Churchville Presbyterian Church



Sophia's Dairy, Home of signer COL Aquila Hall.

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The Historical Society of Harford County owns the actual Minute Book from 1775 that contains the text of the Bush Declaration and the signatures of the Signers. A highlight of the morning's activities will be the display of the Minute Book and the original text of the Bush Declaration. This is a once-in-alifetime chance to see this priceless document.

In the afternoon, sites around the county related to the Signers will be open to visitors, and docents at each site will provide information about the Signer and the site. The committee is working to finalize the list of sites.

On Sunday, March 23, 2025, the Hereditary Order of the Signers of the Bush Declaration will hold its Annual Dinner and Meeting. This is always a special event, and the officers of HOSBD are working on plans to make the meeting memorable. The event will be open to guests who are not members of HOSBD.

SGT. ALFRED B. HILTON MEMORIAL UPDATE

Sandra R. Wallis, Chairman Bush Declaration Committee

Just before a beautiful sunset on Thursday evening, May 2, 2024, the Sgt. Alfred B. Hilton Memorial Fund Committee was honored to raise a commemorative replica flag at David Craig Park in memory of our local hero Sgt. Alfred B. Hilton (1842-1864).

Our readers will recall that Sgt. Hilton holds the distinction of being Harford County's only native-born Medal of Honor recipient. Sgt. Hilton paid the ultimate sacrifice as National Color Bearer for the 4th United

States Colored Troops (USCT). On September 29, 1864, Sgt. Hilton and his regiment advanced ahead of Union troops in an assault against entrenched Confederate defenses at Chapin's Farm, part of the Battle of New Market Heights, outside of Richmond, Virginia — a critical engagement during the Civil War (1861-1865). During the battle, Sgt. Hilton rescued the Regimental standard (flag) from a fallen soldier in his unit. The flag had been presented to the 4th USCT by the Colored Women of Baltimore prior to the troop's departure for Virginia. Sgt. Hilton carried both the National and Regimental standards forward until he was injured and unable to continue. Saying "Boys, save the colors!" he passed both standards to other members of the USCT before he fell. Sgt. Hilton was taken to a segregated unit of a field hospital in Hampton Road, Virginia, where he underwent the amputation of his right leg, but sadly he died from his wounds on October 21, 1864. He was buried at the Hampton National Cemetery and posthumously honored by the US. War Department with our nation's highest military decoration for valor.

We encourage our readers to visit Sgt. Hilton's local memorial, located at 553-559 North Union Avenue, Havre de Grace, MD 21078, and to learn more about his storied biography in Harford Historical Bulletin No. 86, available for purchase at the Historical Society of Harford County. The Sgt. Hilton Memorial Fund Committee is continuing its efforts to educate the public about Sgt. Hilton has established an annual scholarship in his honor, administered through Harford Community College. The Committee is currently working to locate the final resting places of other local USCT and appropriately mark and identify them. То help in this effort and learn more, visit their website at: https://www.sgtalfredbhiltonfoundation.com

Roxann Redd-Wallace, HSHC Trustee



THE INDOOR RIFLE RANGE AT NORTH HARFORD HIGH SCHOOL

By Doug Washburn

Many Harford County schools have an interesting past. North Harford, my alma mater, has several 'claims to fame' in my opinion. One was its indoor rifle range. Other Harford schools, e.g. Bel Air, also had rifle clubs but they did not have an indoor rifle range.

Located at 211 Pylesville Road, North Harford High School opened in 1950, an age of consolidation in Harford County schools. Also in 1950, a new white only school was built in Bel Air and a new black-only school was built at Hickory. Central Consolidated (now Hickory Elementary) was built to serve all the African American children in northern Harford (with Havre de Grace serving all the southern part).

NHHS replaced four smaller, northern county schools: Dublin, Slate Ridge, Highland, and Jarrettsville, all serving grades 1-11. The old schools then became elementary schools serving grades 1-6. It was at this time that the 12th grade was added to the curriculum.

The ag teacher at Jarrettsville was Frederick Fuller and the 1934 addition to the 1926 Jarrettsville High School included a rifle range in the basement at the south end of the building. As Fuller was being transferred to North Harford (along with Highland's better known Earl C. Baity whose name would be on the F.F.A. Chapter), it was most likely Fuller who noticed the 'dead space' along the ground floor hall paralleling Pylesville Road and suggested the space as a new rifle range. With financial aid from the Jarrettsville Lions Club, the indoor rifle range became realization. A 1950 letter from Fuller to the Director of Civilian Marksmanship described the facility as $110' \times 25'$ with five firing stations.

The dedication occurred February 1951. The NRA guest speaker indicated it was the only known indoor high school rifle range in the United States. Since the rifle range in Jarrettsville was retired with the conversion to an elementary school, maybe he was correct, but it is doubtful. Known for sure, the 1957 Upper St. Clair High School on the outskirts of Pittsburgh also had an indoor rifle range, although six years later. Hard to believe that others were not around.

The firearm of choice was the .22-caliber rifle, some donated by the Jarrettsville Lions and others loaned by the Army. And students could bring their own gun. At least into the 1960s, students transported rifles on school busses.

The six rifles loaned by the Army were the Remington M513T manufactured between 1940 and 1968 for the Army's training purposes. The rifle was single-shot, bolt-action, with a 27" barrel and a 6-shot magazine. The "T" denoted that the Redfield site design was specific for target practice.

A novelty, a model of the NHHS rifle range facility was displayed at the Baltimore Armory in 1952 and the Harford County Farm Fair, held at the old Bel Air Race Track (Harford Mall now), in 1953.

Club membership, and sometimes the existence, were often vague or absent in the yearbooks. The rifle club was co-ed, and some years seemed to have more female members than male. Besides farm kids wanting to protect their fowl and stock, those heading for military service often joined to get a head start on their future training (successfully, as noted in the 1952 *Handbook* caption).

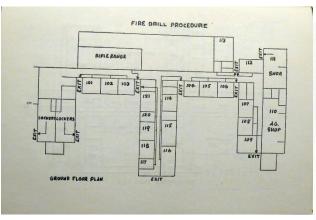
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Sixty students or faculty advisors have been identified from the yearbooks at HSHC, but there were surely hundreds. Fuller's November 1950 letter indicated "the present enrollment of 84 has been limited to the 10, 11, and 12 grades. Our enrollment can be near 200."

c.1976, rifle was offered as a PE elective rather than via the F.F.A., but at that time the .22-caliber rifle was replaced with an air rifle. The original rifle club, an NRA junior club, seems extinct by this time.

The rifle range served several other purposes over the years: dancing at lunch time, cheerleader practice, bowling, and shuffleboard to list a few uses. The school had a second gym added c.1980 and to accommodate a library remodel, the old gym became the temporary library in the 1980-81 school year. At that point the rifle range became the new weight room.



This drawing from Your Handbook of North Harford High School, Pylesville, Md, 1951-1952 for the fire drill exiting procedure shows the location of the indoor rifle range. Room 101 eventually became the student lounge. From page 18 of the Handbook, "RIFLE CLUB: We have the only approved fully equipped indoor rifle range in a high school in the country. The North Harford F.F.A. Junior Rifle Club, affiliated with the National Rifle Association of America is sponsored by the Baity Chapter F.F.A. The purpose of the club is to be a good sportsman. The individual can earn fifteen metals, the highest being Expert Rifleman. This club was organized in 1932. Many of our boys quickly and easily won their sharpshooter metals upon entering the armed forces. The club is open to girls as well as boys." (Handbook in possession of Dorothy Bull O'Donnell, class of '52)

Director of Civilian Markamanship Washington 25, D.C. Dear Sirt

I am enclosing my report for the Jarrettsville High School. Future Farmers of America, Junior Rifle Club for 1950.

This club has been absorbed by the North Harford High School Future Fermers of America Junior Hifle Club, which has been registered with the Hational Rifle Association of America, for the 1950-51 gear.

The Jarrettsville, Dublin, Highland, and Slate Ridge high schools have been consolidated into a new school known as North Earford High School, Harford County, Maryland (P.O. Pylesville, Md.). We are equiping an indoor range, 110 X 25 ft. with five firing points. Until we are thoroughly organized and in operation the present enrollment of 84 has been limited to the 10, 11, and 12 grades. Our enrollment can be near 200.

Please send me an application for Bond for the enclosed requisition for 8 rifles.

I would appreciate any advise or help you can give me in this work.

The Jarrettsville High School, F.F.A. Jr. Rifle Club is now out of operation, and all records will be in the North Harford High School, F.F.A. Jr. Rifle Club.

Yours truly.

November 9, 1950

Frederick W. Fuller Vocational Agriculture Teacher

FWF/mr

1950 Fuller letter to the Director of Civilian Marksmanship notified them that Jarrettsville rifle club had been replaced by the North Harford rifle club. (Archive of Michael J. Duke, last club advisor).

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The NHHS Rifle Club was still functioning in 1974, but the club number had changed from the 1950s and 60s designation of "2958" to "J3514". (Duke archive)



"The Rifle Club is one of the newest additions to sports at North Harford – already in its first year it has won first place in Class A of the Maryland and surrounding states division, and George Thompson also took an individual prize. Under direction of Mr. Twist, the club meets in the indoor rifle range, the only one of its kind in Maryland". (1954 Golden Treasury, predecessor to the better known Aerie; HSHC)

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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.

William Baron

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.