

News and Notes from

THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

January 1978

Vol. VI, no. 1

The New Year.

Members are reminded that the Prince George's County Historical Society will not meet in January or February. The meeting program will resume on Saturday, March 11, 1978, at Riversdale, when Paul Garber, retired curator of the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum, will speak on "The History of Aviation in the Washington Area."

The Public Documents Reference Library

The Prince George's County Library system's new public documents reference library is now open in the County Administration Building in Upper Marlboro. The Prince George's County Public Documents Reference Library was designed to provide a single place in which citizens of the county would be able to find and examine documents produced by any agency of the county government.

The library has three basic sections: 1.) the documents collection, including a permanent collection of documents generated by the county government and a working collection of pertinent documents from the state and federal levels and the multi-jurisdictional agencies, (such as the Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority); 2) a reference collection to serve the needs of county officials and staff; 3) the Council central files, completed zoning files and legislative files, with the exception of the current session's bills and resolutions, which will continue to be housed in the office of the Clerk of the Council. The collection of county documents is far from complete at this time, but enough of them have been acquired and arranged in accessible order to make a useful beginning, and more are being received every day. Some of the documents on hand date back at least as far as the 1950's, and the deliberations of the County Commissioners are available on microfilm from 1924 on.

All of the material in the Documents Library is non-circulating, but members of the public are welcome to visit the library any weekday between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 P.M. (except on County holidays) to examine documents that they are interested in. The library is staffed by a Librarian and a Circulation Assistant, who will be available to answer questions and find materials whenever the library is open. The library is located in Room 2198 of the County Administration Building. Phone is 952-3454.

--From a Library informational brochure

Contributions to the Society

The Society gratefully acknowledges the generous contributions made by the following individuals:

Mr. Forrest D. Bowie  
Mr. Theodore C. Howe  
Mr. James H. Starkey

New Members of the Society

We welcome the following individuals to membership in the Prince George's County Historical Society:

Edward John Skeens	Suitland	Sponsor
Clara Jacobs	Greenbelt	Mr. DeMarr
		Ms. McGraw

### Sydney Mudd and Pennsylvania Avenue

A few months ago John Hechinger of the Hechinger lumber company offered his company's property at Bladensburg and Benning Roads N.E. as the site of the proposed Washington convention center. The city fathers were less than enthusiastic in their response; despite the chance to save many millions of dollars--perhaps 20 million--they politely rebuffed Mr. Hechinger, preferring to try to convince the Congress to accept a much more expensive site in Northwest.

During the week following Mr. Hechinger's offer, one was able to detect in many of the leaders of the city a slight disdain for the very idea that a convention center could be built in the Northeast, The natural home for such a complex, they implied, was only in the Northwest. That the commercial development the convention center would bring to the Northeast would be beneficial to the economy of the area was ignored or dismissed: the true heart of town was in Northwest, and it deserved the center.

This sectionalism in the District of Columbia is nothing new. For many decades the Southeast and the Northeast--called "East Washington" years ago--have felt that the Northwest was favored by the city government when it came to public works and public improvements. In many respects the attitudes and realities of life came out to Maryland when the suburbs developed. The development of the close-in areas of both counties reflected to a large degree the patterns already existing in Northwest and East Washington.

Sydney Emmanuel Mudd, the Congressman from Southern Maryland representing Prince George's County in the 1890's, voiced the frustrations of East Washington in a speech on the House floor on June 22, 1898. The frustrations in this case were also the frustrations of Prince George's County, for the particular point being debated was an extension of Pennsylvania Avenue from the Anacostia River to the Maryland line. Many citizens of Prince George's County, particularly farmers in the southern part of the county, wanted an improved road to ease transit into the city.

In 1898, the city of Washington had not yet grown across the Anacostia River. What we know as Anacostia today was country, with a few small towns or crossroads, such as Uniontown and Bennings, scattered here and there. Until 1890, there were only two bridges across the river, the Benning Road bridge and the Navy Yard bridge (11th Street). There had once been a bridge at Pennsylvania Avenue, but it burned down twice; once at the hands of the defenders of Washington against the British in 1814, and finally in 1846.

The Benning Road bridge and Navy Yard bridge must have been insufficient to meet the needs of the citizens, judging from the celebrations held in 1890 at the dedication of the new Pennsylvania Avenue bridge, the first since 1846. Day-long festivities with fireworks in the evening were held, and the celebration program declared the new bridge to be "a Godsend to the farmers who supply the city's markets with 'garden truck.'"

A new road was cut down over the hills on the Anacostia side of the river to the bridge. The dedication program again recounts that "a broad road has been made over the Maryland hills and down to the bridge, through the thick trees of the old forest, and the white road through the dark green of the trees shines in the hot sunlight like a satin ribbon." But this newly cut road--the forerunner of Pennsylvania Avenue on the south side of the river--must have needed improvement--after eight years, for in his speech in 1898, Congressman Mudd referred to it as "'little more than a country road.'" He felt that the citizens of the District and Maryland needed a better road, and as the extracts from the Congressional Record illustrate below, he tried to get one.

The bill being debated was actually one to extend Eleventh Street N.W. Congressman Mudd moved to amend the bill and authorize the extension of Pennsylvania Avenue toward Maryland in the Southeast as well. In the

first part of the debate he expresses the resentment East Washington felt at what they thought was second-rate treatment; in the second he argues for the bridge on its merits.

--Alan Virta

June 22, 1898

Mr. MUDD. The object of the amendment is very plain. In discussing the amendment, which I shall do very briefly, I do not care to make any observations upon the general policy of these street extensions but if street extensions are to go on, I want them to go on in all portions of the city, At any rate, sir, I am opposed to the policy which has been pursued thus far, of liberal and luxurious development in the way of street improvements and otherwise in one section of the city and of neglect and utter disregard of the requirements, and interests of another. We have, within the last three or four days, made large, not to say extravagant, appropriations for the construction of bridges in the northwestern portion of the city.

Scarcely a day passes in the House or Senate when District matters are under consideration that some measure of improvement is not proposed for the northwestern section of the city, while the eastern and southern sections, which contribute their proportion of taxes to the city, which are just as much entitled to the favorable consideration of Congress as any other portion of this city, receive nothing at all. Now, my position is just this: If we are to continue in these expensive extensions, which, I am frank to say, I think are in large measure reasonable and ought to go-on, whenever there is a bill for this purpose here I intend to yoke onto it, if I can, a proposition to extend or improve some street where there is the most need of extension and improvement over here in the eastern section of the city.

Mr. KING. What street do you propose to yoke onto this one?

Mr. MUDD. Pennsylvania avenue extended, across the river. It is an inexpensive improvement. It may not appear to gentlemen here as a very important matter, but it is.

Mr. KING. Is it in the District?

Mr. MUDD. It is unquestionably in the District. I can not get an extension into Maryland. If I could I do not say that I should not be tempted to attempt it: but these street improvements can only be carried on in the District of Columbia.

Mr. KING. Knowing the loyalty of my friend to his constituents in his own State, I thought he might want an extension of the street into the State of Maryland.

Mr. MUDD. There is no sort of question about the matter of my loyalty and interest in my constituents.

Mr. HENRY of Connecticut. If the gentleman will allow me, how far is the present terminus of Pennsylvania avenue extended from the District line?

Mr. MUDD. I think 1 mile or a little over would bring it to the District line. It is a suburban improvement undertaken, if it shall be, not for a populous portion of the city; but to those who live in the rural sections across the Eastern Branch, a section that is building up considerably, it is of great importance.

If it were not building up, this street, which is but little more than a country road at the point of its present terminus and which under my amendment will still be but little more than a country road, is needed, in order that facilities may be offered to the people living in that portion of the District and in the contiguous portion of the State of Maryland to get into this city.

Now gentlemen may say that the State of Maryland is not to be considered, but it is of mutual advantage to the people of this District and to the people of this rural section as well that they have roadways, so that the people

of the District can get to Maryland and the people of Maryland can get into the District, where they have all their trade and business, contributing in that way to the trade and business of the District of Columbia.

Mr. MUDD. Then, if you agree with me, vote with me; and act upon your judgement, as I shall. If this would require a great expenditure of money, there would be some reason for opposing it, but I apprehend \$5,000 or \$10,000 will meet the expenditures of this short extension. As I have said, it requires but little amount of construction beyond that of a good county roads and good county roads are blessings that are largely unknown as leading from this section of the city to the rural sections in the directions I have indicated and the contiguous parts of the State of Maryland.

Gentlemen seem to think I am unduly exercised concerning the building of roadways that will lead to Maryland. Mr. Chairman, if Utah happened to lie immediately outside of the District of Columbia, I would concern myself just as much for good roads to it.

Mr. KING. If the gentleman knew the people and what a lovely State it is, he would want to go out there.

Mr. MUDD. I am sure I would feel great pleasure in going out there anyhow; but I do not expect the people of the District of Columbia to build a road for me to walk there. (Laughter) It is not the fault or the misfortune of the State, but rather the good fortune of the District, that the State of Maryland happens to lie close to it. This District ought to be very grateful to that State, that ceded the territory that we stand upon to-day; and when we consider the history of the State in its connection with the District and its liberality and generosity to the District that have been instanced in many ways that I might call attention to, there ought to be some feeling of mutuality and liberality in the appropriations needed to build the roads that are required by the District people, and needed also to bring the people of the adjoining portions of the State into the Districts where all their business lies.

I am not here as any special apologist for or defender of the Eleventh street proposition. I take it for granted that, being a part of a plan for the general improvement of the city, it has its merits and ought to be favored; but with it I want to couple this proposition for the extension of Pennsylvania avenue, which will bear hardly any expense, and which, in my judgment, is the more needed and more meritorious measure of the two.

As I stated in the beginning, whenever propositions shall be pending here for large expenditures for improving the northwest I shall if I can, tack on something for other sections of the city that have been so long and utterly neglected; and I believe that that is the only way I will have a chance to get them through. This is not an expensive improvement. I believe that \$5,000 or \$10,000 will cover the whole expense. I rather apprehend that the distinguished chairman of the committee will very cheerfully, if he can, accept this amendment.

Mr. DOCKERY. Why, the amendment is obviously out of order---

Mr. MUDD. It is too late to make that point.

Mr. DOCKERY (continuing). In view of the policy that has been maintained--

Mr. MUDD. Why is it out of order?

Mr. DOCKERY. Because the policy seems to be to build up the northwest

Mr. MUDD. I want to change that policy.

Mr. BABCOCK. I wish to submit a point of order against that amendment. It is an entirely different subject. There is no reference to Pennsylvania avenue, no extension of Pennsylvania avenue. It has not been considered by the committee, and we have had no opportunity to investigate it; and while I dislike very much to make this point of order, I feel compelled to do so.

The CHAIRMAN. The Chair sustains the point of order.

Congressman Mudd, then, was rebuffed in this attempt to extend Pennsylvania Avenue. But whenever we are stuck in a monumental traffic jam at Minnesota Avenue, or get trapped in the right lane behind a bus going up the hill toward Branch Avenue, we can testify that Pennsylvania Avenue has not remained "little more than a country road."

References; Grand Celebration of the Opening of the New Bridge, Penna. Ave., S.E., Washington, D.C. The East Washington Citizens' Association. 1890. Note: much of the program was taken from the Star and Post articles on the bridge and the preparations for the celebration in issues August 23-25, or thereabouts, 1890.

Speeches of Hon. Sydney .1. Mudd, of Maryland, in the House of Representatives, June 22 and 27, 1898. Offprint from the Congressional Record.

Editor's note: Much credit was given to Col. Samuel Taylor Suit, of Prince George's County, for his work in obtaining funding of the Pennsylvania Avenue bridge. According to the program, "The late Col. Suit, of Suitland, also did very valuable work in connection with the matter. He had many friends in Congress, entertained the members of the Committees handsomely at Suitland, and showed them the need of the bridge. He also persuaded the legislature of Maryland to pass resolutions calling on that State's Representatives in Congress for favorable action on the bridge bill." A brief biography of Col. Suit can be found in News and Notes from the Prince George's County Historical Society, v. II, nos. 5 and 6 (May and June 1974).

#### The Prince George's County Historical Society

Subscription to this newsletter is included in the membership dues, which are \$5.00 per year. For information contact the Society at P.C. Box 14, Riverdale, Md. 20840.

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News and Notes from

THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

February 1978

Vol. VI, no. 2

The St. George's Day Awards

The Society will present the St. George's Day Awards at the St. George's Day Dinner, April 23, 1978, at the University of Maryland. These awards are presented annually to organizations and individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the preservation of the county's historical or architectural heritage. This year's dinner will celebrate the 282nd anniversary of the founding of Prince George's County on St. George's Day 1696.

The awards committee will soon begin considering nominations. Anyone wishing to make a nomination should contact awards chairman Paul Lanham at Rt. 1, Box 35 Huntingtown, Md. 20639 (301-535- 2862) or any other member of the Executive board at P.O. Box 14, Riverdale, Md. 20840.

News of Historic Preservation

The following is reprinted from SWAP (Some Words About Preservation), the newsletter of the Maryland Historical Trust:

"The Bowie City Council has approved the first stages of restoration work on Belair Mansion. The Trust is considering contributing to the funding of the project as part of its capital projects budget. The Mansion has served as Bowie's city hall. The restoration project is being supervised by the Bowie Heritage Committee.

The Laurel Historic District Commission has presented a draft proposal for the creation of a historic district to the mayor and city council. A work session with the two groups and the Laurel Planning Commission will take place before a public hearing is held.

A Case of Mistaken Identity

"The county immediately outside of the District of Columbia, to the south is named Prince Georgia's. . ."

--from The Life, Crime, and Capture of John Wilkes Booth by George Alfred Townsend. Dick & Fitzgerald# Publishers, New York, 1865.

George Alfred Townsend, the noted author of Tales of the Chesapeake, certainly knew our name. This must have been the publisher's fault!

Frank F. White, Jr.

We regret to inform the membership that Frank F. White, Jr., died following a heart attack on January 30, 1978, in Annapolis. An active member of the Prince George's County Historical Society, Frank White worked as an archivist at the Maryland Hall of Records and had just completed a four-year term as chairman of the Prince George's County Historical and Cultural Trust. He was a resident of Riverdale Heights.

In April 1976 Frank was awarded the St. George's Day Award by the Prince George's County Historical Society for his many contributions to the Society's program. He directed the publication of the 1878 Hopkins Atlas of Prince George's County in 1975 and later served on the committee which supervised the publication of Judge R. Lee Van Horn's county history. He indexed the Hopkins Atlas, the Van Horn history, and many other historical works. He was a frequent contributor of material to this newsletter, and had recently completed indexing last year's volume.

Frank was a native of Massachusetts, and received both bachelor's and masters' degrees from the University of Maryland. He served in the infantry during World War II and received the Purple Heart during the Italian Campaign at Anzio. He was a member of the Disabled American Veterans and the Masonic Order, and was active with the Boy Scouts. His professional duties at the Hall of Records included service as editor of the Maryland Manual. He was the author of one book, The Governors of Maryland.

Frank is survived by his father, Frank F. White, Sr., and his sister, Eleanor Nearing of Laurel. The Society extends its deepest sympathy to the family.

### An Update

Last month's article on Sydney Mudd and Pennsylvania Avenue touched on East Washington's ancient contention that the city government and Congress favored the Northwest when it came to public expenditures for public improvements, and illustrated that this sentiment existed at least as early as the 1890's. Just as January's News and Notes went to press, a present-day illustration of that suspicion, now removed to the suburbs with Prince George's and Montgomery Counties as the principals, surfaced in the local papers. Greenbelt's weekly newspaper, the Greenbelt News Review, reported in its January 19, 1978 issue, the comments made by Greenbelt mayor Richard Pilski at a public hearing held on January 11 to consider Metro route alternatives. Declaring himself in favor of completion of the full Greenbelt line, Mayor Pilski exclaimed:

"We are frankly puzzled why serious consideration is being given to not building METRO in one of the most populous corridors of the metropolitan area but not anywhere else. We have to fight continuously for METRO to reach the Beltway whereas all the other routes are being planned for construction to the vicinity of the Beltway with out question. In wealthy Montgomery County where residents can best afford the luxury of driving to work, METRO routes are being constructed far beyond the Beltway."

Solomon, who wrote the book of Ecclesiastes, summed it up best: "What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done; and, there is no nothing new under the sun." (Ecclesiastes 1:9)

--Alan.Virta

### The Morning Traffic! Report

Those of us who commute into Washington in the mornings have been frustrated several times this winter by snow and the traffic problems it creates. Auto traffic is snarled, buses run late, and sometimes the commuter trains from Baltimore are delayed several hours. Only the underground Metro is unaffected, if you can get to it.

The, Washington commuters of 1899 faced a similar problem the morning of February 15. Of course there was not the motor traffic to contend with--but commuters had problems nonetheless.

The following is taken from the Evening Star of February 16, 1899, and was reprinted in Judge R. Lee Van Horn's historical column in the Prince George's Post of June 16, 1960.

"Hyattsville, Md. Quite a number of citizens of this place walked to Washington yesterday, a distance of six miles, no train reaching here until about noon. This train left Baltimore about 6:00 a.m., February 14th and was tied up at Oakcrest above Ammendale.

"Mr. William Hickey, a merchant of this town, claims the distinction of being the first person to reach Washington by other means than steam railway and he did so by cutting a road through fields adjoining the Pike.

"Dr. C. A. Wells, the physician at the District reform school was compelled to tunnel through the snow with an immense snow plough in order to reach the school.

"Lewis W. Richardson of this place had a narrow escape from perishing in the drifts while returning from the home of Mr. C. H. Welsh, he became exhausted but managed to reach the Chinese Laundry, where he fainted, He was soon restored and started for his home about 200 yards distant. The snow was up to his waist and just as he entered the vestibule of his home he again became unconscious and his parents were attracted by his moaning."

### A Correction

In last month's issue we spelled Congressman Sydney E. Mudd's middle name incorrectly. According to the Biographical Directory of the American Congress and Dr. Richard Mudd's published genealogy of the Mudd family, it correctly is spelled "Emanuel", with one "m" after the first "E" and not two.

Meeting reminder: The Society will meet next on Saturday, March 11, 1978, at 2 p.m. at Riversdale. Paul Garber will speak on the history of aviation in the Washington area particularly in the county.

### The Oldest Surviving Newspaper in the Nation

The July 25, 1977, Anniversary issue of the Annapolis Evening Capital newspaper commemorates the 250th anniversary of America's oldest newspaper publishing firm, whose first newspaper, The Maryland Gazette, began publication in 1727.

The anniversary issue contains many interesting "tidbits" such as the following:

1. The origin of the word "News" purportedly is from the compass points North, East, West, and South, indicating the scope of a Newspaper's coverage.
2. March 23, 1758: "Last night at two minutes before X we had a very considerable shock of an Earthquake but thro' God's mercy it has done no damage that we have yet heard of. For about 3/4 or a minute before the shock, there was a rumbling noise, not unlike that of carriage wheels on frozen ground at a distance, which increased til the shaking and that lasted about half a minute."
3. November 14 1754: "Last week a cricket match was play'd in Mr. Murdock's old field, in Prince George's County, between eleven of that county and eleven South River gentlemen and the Prince Georg'ans were beat."
4. Dr. Hamilton's Grand-Restorative "recommended as an invaluable medicine for the speedy relief and permanent cure of the various complaints which result from dissipated pleasures--juvenile indiscretions--residence in climates unfavourable to the constitution--the immoderate use of tea--frequent intoxication or any other destructive intemperance--the unskillful or excessive use of mercury--the diseases peculiar to females at a certain period of life--bad layings in--etc., etc."
5. "WANTED--A Young Woman who is between 15 and 22 who can take care of a single man's linen and otherwise attend him in case of indisposition; to make tea and occasionally amuse him with a tete-a-tete. As a very genteel salary will be given, it is expected that the lady will be likely as to person, and cheerful in her temper---, The advertiser is serious and in earnest, He hopes an idle curiosity will not lead anyone to be impertinent."
6. 1752--"About a fortnight ago --- in Frederick County --a couple with their guests came to the house of a reverend clergyman ---after he had been some time in bed with his wife and desired to be married ---but the bridegroom having imbib'd a notion that if he married a woman with any thing he should be obliged to pay all her debts --and, as she came from New Jersey --- the obliging bride, to remove all incumbrances, stripp'd to her buff, and two women held a sheet between her and the clergyman, while he performed his office. This account, the reader ---may be assured is the certain and naked truth."



7. If you ever cut yourself and can't stop the bleeding don't waste your money on doctors. Just find the seventh son whose father was a seventh son and he can stop your bleeding immediately.

8. The first fork brought to America was for Governor John Winthrop, in Boston, in 1633. Thirty or forty years later, a few two-tined iron and silver forks were brought across the water and used in New York, Maryland and Virginia, as well as Massachusetts.

9. From the diary of one William Faris between 1792 and 1804, "Either last night or this morning (August 12) ... " \_\_\_\_\_ " was delivered of a daughter. I think they have not been idel '(sic) being only married (sic) the 9th of May last."

10. March 1801 " WANTED A 'WIFE. A Generous offer will be made. Proposals directed to X.Z. and left with the printer, will be duly attended to. None need apply but such as can come well recommended."

--Submitted by Paul Lanham

### Two Days Later

In the May 1977 issue of News and Notes there was published a letter from Benjamin Stoddert of Beall's Pleasure (now in Landover) to his brother-in-law, Benjamin Lowndes of Bladensburg, dated May 26, 1798, Stoddert had been offered the post of Secretary of the Navy in the administration of President John Adams, and had to decide whether to accept the post and move to Philadelphia, then the seat of government, Stoddert seems to have been leaning against it in his letter, but indicated he would have to make up his mind very soon. As history will tell us, he did accept the post--and thus became the first Secretary of the Navy for the new Navy Department.

Stoddert's letter of acceptance, written 2 days after his letter to his brother-in-law, is printed below. It is interesting to note how formal--and awkward for the modern reader--this second letter seems, when compared to the less formal and familiar letter to his brother-in-law two days earlier Even then, one had to make the writing difficult if one was writing for the government.

Georgetown 28 May 1798

To: Timothy Pickering  
Secretary of State

Sir:

I am honored with your letter of the 22nd instant notifying to me, my appointment to the Office of Secretary of the Navy.

No circumstance would be more grateful to my feelings, than, that the President of the United States, whose character I have always revered (?), and which has grown upon me, and his country, in proportion as it has been developed; hereto have been induced (no doubt by the partial representations of the virtuous men around him, to some of whom I have been long known) to think so favorably of mine, as to deem one worthy of an appointment so honorable, and at this crisis, so important.

I accept the appointment with more sensibility than I can express--but with the determination to discharge to the best of my power, the duties of it--tho not without (I fear) well founded apprehensions, that it will be found, my qualifications have been greatly over rated.

I have consolation however in the reflection, that those great and comprehensive (?) minds which stand least in need of indulgence for themselves, are ever most disposed to accord it to others if the will to act right, be not wanting.

I have honor to be with great respect and esteem, Ben Stoddert

The editor should note that Stoddert's handwriting was difficult to read, but hopefully we have it right. Thanks to Bill Aleshire of Bowie for supplying the letter and typed transcript.

"Equal to Any Horse on the Continent"

"To be let to mares the ensuing season, at Schoolfield, Prince Georges County, the high bred English horse SPRIGHTLY, full fifteen hands high, rising seven years old, is of a beautiful dark chestnut colour and impeccable blood lines, imagined equal to any horse on the continent. He will be let at six dollars, for the season, and as at so low a rate the cash will be expected before the horse is led out. Good pasture to be had for mares at half a crown a week or half a dollar, with proper feeding."

Maryland Gazette, August 15, 1776, as reprinted in the Sun's Sunday magazine in 1,976.

The Prince George's County Historical Society

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Change of address: The editor's address and phone number have changed. The new numbers are printed above.

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THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

March 1978

Vol. VI, no 3

The March Meeting

The first meeting of the Prince George's County Historical Society for 1978 will be held on Saturday, March 11, at 2 p.m. at Riversdale, the Calvert mansion on Riverdale Road. The guest speaker at the meeting will be Mr. Frederick Tilp of Alexandria, Va. A native of Bladensburg, Mr. Tilp has spent the last thirty or forty years studying the Potomac River--the people, the lifestyles, the towns, the lighthouses, the sailing vessels--virtually all aspects of life on the river. He will speak on "Fun and Games on the Potomac River," a look at gambling, Prohibition rumrunning and bootlegging, and other such sports on the river that have largely passed from the scene. This is not a story of large-scale operations; just a look at the ways many of the "common people" of Southern Maryland and Washington, D.C., amused themselves during more freewheeling eras. Mr. Tilp is an architect, and has written a book on the river which is now at the press. His talk will be illustrated with slides.

Because of scheduling conflicts, the previously announced speaker, Mr. Paul Garber, had to be rescheduled. He will appear at the May meeting to talk on the history of aviation in the Washington area,

As always, guests are more than welcome. Riversdale is located at 4811 Riverdale Road, between Kenilworth Avenue and the B&O railroad tracks in Riverdale, If you need directions, call Alan Virta at 474-7524 or Fred DeMarr at 277-0711. It promises to be a most interesting meeting.

The St. George's Day Dinner

Members of the Society are reminded that the annual St. George's Day Dinner will be held as usual on the evening of St. George's Day, April 23, this year on a Sunday. The dinner commemorates the 282nd anniversary of the founding of Prince George's County and will be held at the University of Maryland Center of Adult Education. Invitations with more details will be mailed later. The St. George's Day Awards, honoring individuals and organizations who have made significant contributions to the preservation of the county's historic heritage, will be awarded at the dinner.

The First Meeting of the Year--March 11--At Riversdale--2:00 p.m.

Plenty of-Room for Immigrants

In the February 1976 issue of News and Notes, we printed the Prince George's County portion of an 1867 booklet published by the State Senate advertising the agricultural and economic advantages of the State of Maryland. In this issue, we print the 1889-890 report of the Commissioner of the Land Office, presenting a description of the county's advantages and resources in those years. It should be noted that the Commissioner of the Land Office at that time was John Thomas Scharf who was also a noted historian. He wrote the History of Maryland (1879), a history of Western Maryland and several other historical works.

Prince George's County

Prince George's county, the most central of the Southern Maryland counties, lies between the Potomac river on the west and southwest, and the Patuxent river on the east. Montgomery and Howard counties, with the District of Columbia, are adjacent to it on the north and west, and Charles county on the south. Its area is 500 square miles. The population, according to the last census returns, was 26,263, divided as follows: Males 13,499; females 12,764; natives, 25,705; foreign born, 558; whites: 13,950; colored, 12,319. The chief employment of the people is agriculture, and the county contains many successful farmers. The improved acreage, as shown by the last census, is 164,289, leaving unimproved 104,545 acres. The character of the soil is varied,

consisting of the limestone formation in the northern part, a sandy soil, a heavy clay soil, and farther south in what is called the tobacco belt, a rich combination of marl with sand. With such variety of soil it can readily be seen that the county possesses a vast capability for variety production. The staple crops have been for a long series of years, tobacco, wheat and corn. The first-named crop was for a long time the great staple, and in colonial days was currency. From its cultivation all the revenues of the farmer was derived, but now, owing to the scarcity of labor, the expense of its cultivation and the small market value, it has of necessity, to a great extent, been given up as a crop. The cultivation of grass, especially in the northern portion of the county, has taken its place, whilst nearer to the District line the lands are principally devoted to the growth of vegetables and fruits. With the rapid progress that Washington city is now making, these lands are yearly improving in value, and present a fine opportunity for investment, whether for permanent homes or for speculation. The principal towns are Laurel, Marlboro, the county-seat, Hyattsville, Nottingham and Piscataway. There are also many other new and thriving-localities upon the railroads --the Baltimore and Ohio and Baltimore and Potomac--running through the county. The population of Laurel is about 850, Marlboro about 700, and the other towns mentioned varying from 200 to 300. In the town of Laurel there is a factory producing yearly a large quantity of cotton cloth, and giving employment to many laborers at remunerative prices. Besides this factory, there is at Muirkirk an iron foundry that turns out from the ore-beds that abound in that vicinity a sufficient-quantity of iron to make it a paying business. The working of the ore-beds and the furnaces of the factory afford employment to a large number of laborers. At Bladensburg there are two large flouring mills, whose reputation for the quality of the flour and corn meal produced, is well established. The facilities for manufacturing purposes are equal to those of any other county of the State, and industries are on the increase, as the many canneries that have been started of late will attest. The communication with the outside world, both by rail and water, are easy and at all times accessible, as the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad runs through the upper and the Baltimore and Potomac through the lower part, while the balance of the county is drained by the Potomac and Patuxent rivers. Besides these two roads there is another in the course of construction, known as the Washington City and Point Lookout, that will run from Brandywine Station, on the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad, to Washington city. This will bring a fine section of the country within easy access of the capital. Schools and churches abound, and the people are of a social and friendly disposition, and are ever ready to welcome the stranger seeking a home amongst them. The prices of land are low, and range, according to quality and location, from ten to thirty dollars per acre. No portion of the State offers better inducements, for a class of thrifty immigrants. The soil is kind, the climate good, and nearly every product known to this section of our country can be grown with profit. Especially is this the case with fruits and vegetables. There is now a growing tendency towards the extensive cultivation of the peach, and with the fact in view many large nurseries have been started. The time is probably near at hand when this county is destined to rival her Eastern Shore sisters in the growth of this delicious and profitable fruit. The soil is well adapted to the peach, and wherever tried this fruit has succeeded well. The great want, is an honest, industrious immigration. There is plenty of room for immigrants.

This brief sketch presents many possible research projects. What became of the canneries and the peach orchards? How did the railroads affect the population? Did the manufacturing come? In short, the industrial, agricultural, and demographic development of the county from the time of the Civil War is field in which little Research has been attempted.

We should add that George Alfred Townsend, known as "GATH," the Maryland author and poet, made note of the immigrants coming into Prince George's County after the Civil War. The sketch above mentions the scarcity of labor; and many of the large plantations, impractical to cultivate after the freeing of the slaves, were sold off in small tracts to small farmers, many of them from the North. Townsend notes that immigration in his poem, "Upper Marlboro' ," published in 1880 in his Tales of the Chesapeake. One verse mentions the changes in the county as smaller farms replaced the large plantations:

"One by one the homes colonial disappear in Time's decrees  
Though the apple orchards linger and the lanes of cherry trees;  
E'en the Woodyard mansion kindles when the chimney beam consumes,  
And the tolerant Northern farmer ploughs around old Romish tombs."

The entire poem was published in the August 1975 issue of News and Notes.

### The 1978 Maryland Highway Map

The 1978 State Highway Map is now available from the Maryland State Highway Administration free of charge. Besides the standard road map of Maryland, this year's map includes more detailed insets of twenty municipalities and the Baltimore-Washington-Frederick metro areas. Mileages between towns are indicated, as are locations of hospitals with 24-hour emergency service and the locations and phone numbers of State police stations. For the first time, a detailed map of Ocean City is provided. And although he retains the title of Acting Governor, Blair Lee III's photo replaces that of Marvin Mandel. Telephone and mail requests for the map should be directed to the Map Distribution Center, State Highway Administration, 2323 West Joppa Road, Brooklandville, Maryland 21022. Phone 301-321-3518. Maps can also be picked up at any State police office, any toll facility, Motor Vehicle Administration offices at Glen Burnie, or at State office buildings in Baltimore and Annapolis.

### Maryland Calendar of Events

Each year the Office of Tourist Development of the Maryland Department of Economic and Community Development publishes a guide to and calendar of recreational and cultural events occurring in the State. The 1978 guide, entitled "Four Seasons: Memories are Made in Maryland," is now available to the public without charge. It lists arts and crafts exhibitions, historic tours and commemorations, seafood festivals, antique and hobby shows, sporting events, concerts, cultural events, and the like. It is available from the Maryland Department of Economic and Community Development, Office of Tourist Development, 1748 Forest Drive, Annapolis, Maryland 21401. Phones 301-269-3517.

### Membership Dues

Dues statements for 1978 have been mailed out to the members of the Prince George's County Historical Society. If by chance you did not receive one, contact the Society's Treasurer, Herbert Embrey, at 10414 Tullymore Drive, Adelphi, Maryland 20783. Phone 434-2958.

### The Prince George's County Historical Society

Post Office Box 14, Riverdale, Maryland 20840

President:	Frederick S. DeMarr	277-0711
	4010 Hamilton Street, Hyattsville, Md. 20781	
Corresponding Secretary:	Mrs. Edith Bagot	927-3632
	3510 Longfellow Street, Hyattsville, Md. 20782	
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News and Notes from,

THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY- HISTORICAL SOCIETY

April 1978

Vol. VI. no. 4

The Founding of Prince George's County

An Act for the Division and Regulating Several  
Countys within this Province and Constituting a County  
by the name of Prince George's County within the same Province

And be it enacted... That the Land from the upper side of Mattawoman and Swansons Creeks & Branches Extending upward bounded by potomock on the West and Putuxent River on the East shall be and is hereby Constituted founded & Incorporated into a County of this Province and shall be Denominated Called and known by the name of Prince George's County and shall from and after the said Twenty third day of Aprill next Ensueing being St George 's day as aforesaid have and enjoy all other Rights benefitts and priviledges Equall with the other Countys of this Province such as sending Burgesses to Assemblys haveing County Courts Sherriffe Justices and other Officers and Ministers requisite & necessary, and as used in other Countys of this Province

--By the General Assembly of the Province of Maryland, May 8, 1695. Archives of Maryland.. XIX, 212-215.

The Man Who Was Honored

Prince George's County was named for Prince George of Denmark, husband of England's Queen Anne. George was born in 1653, the second son of Denmark's King Frederick III. He and Anne were married in 1683, and at her accession to the throne in 1702 he was named Generalissimo of the Queen's Forces and Lord High Admiral. The Prince took an active part in the politics and governance of the kingdom, administering the admiralty for the Queen until his death in 1708. Anne later wrote of George, "You can judge the magnitude of our affection because such a husband was an inestimable treasure, who loved us with such tenderness for the course of so many years."

--From, the Society's 1976 St. George's Day Dinner Program, by Alan Virta

The St. George's Day Dinner--Sunday, April 23--University of Maryland

The St. George's Day Dinner

The Society's annual St. George's Day Dinner will be held this year on Sunday, April 23, at 5:00 p.m. at the University of Maryland Center of Adult Education. The dinner will commemorate the 282nd anniversary of the founding of 'Prince George's County, and the highlight of the evening will be the presentation of the St. George's Day awards, honoring persons and organizations who have made significant contributions to the preservation of our county's heritage. The pre-dinner reception begins at 5:00 p.m. and the dinner at 6:00. The price is \$10.00 per person. All members should have received invitations by now. If you have not, please call Mrs. Edith Bagot at 927-3632. If you have not yet sent in your check to hold your reservation, please do so immediately. Tickets will not be mailed back to you, but a guest list will be kept at the door. Since we must know in advance how many will attend, no tickets will be sold at the door. This year's dinner, the 5th sponsored by the Society, promises to be a fine affair. Please bring family and friends and plan to join us for an evening dedicated to our county's history.

No Meeting in April

The St. George's Day Dinner takes the place of the April meeting. Our regular meeting schedule will resume on Saturday, May 13.

### New Members of the Society

We welcome the following individuals to membership in the Prince George's County Historical Society:

		<u>Sponsor</u>
William F. Amick	Lanham	Mr. Durity
Bernice G. Nelson	Greenbelt	Ms. McGraw
James I. Walsh	Oxon Hill	Mr. Embrey
Phyllis H. LaBorwit	Bowie	Mr. DeMarr
Howard S. Carpenter	Fort Washington	Mr. DeMarr
Harold H. Griffin	Oxon Hill	Mr. Virta
St. Clair Reeves	College Park	Mr. DeMarr
Frank M. Stephen	University Park	Mr. DeMarr
Esther E. Stephen	University Park	Mr. DeMarr
Mrs. Stephen Smith	Louisville, Ky.	Mrs. Bagot
Elizabeth Donoho	Severna Park	Mrs. Brunelle
Nancy Hill	Upper Marlboro	Mr. DeMarr
Mary E. Parker	Forest Heights	Ms. Ransom
Gary E. Greer	Hyattsville	Mr. DeMarr
Helen S. Callimahos	New Carrollton	Mrs. McLeish and Ms. Hamilton
J. Kirkpatrick Flack	Washington, D.C.	Mr. DeMarr
Frederick Tilp	Alexandria, Va.	Mr. DeMarr
Carol-jean Webster	Mitchellville	Mr. Lanham
Mr. and Mrs. Walter Keeseey	Laurel	Mr. DeMarr

### History Month in Prince George's County

April has been proclaimed as History Month in Prince George's County, and there are several special events honoring the county's founding which should be noted:

April 11                                The Historic Tobacco Auctions - will begin at 3 tobacco warehouses in Upper Marlboro. Mondays through Thursdays until June 1st. Hours: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Admission is free.

April 14,15                                Sixth Annual Greater Washington Glass Show will be held at the Christ Episcopal Church, 8710 Old Branch Avenue, Clinton. Thousands of pieces of antique glass will be on display at the area's largest glass show. Hours: 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Friday and from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday. Call 449-5372. Admission is \$2.00

April 15                                Hundreds of artifacts and antiques will be on display on Victorian Heritage Day at the historic Surratt House, 9110 Old Brandywine Road in Clinton. Call 868-1121. Hours: Noon to 4:p.m.

April 21,22                                8th Annual Antiques Show & Sale at historic St. John's Church-at Broad Creek (Episcopal), 9801 Livingston Road, Oxon Hill. Hours: 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Friday; 1.1 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday. Admission \$1.50 Ca;; 449-5372.

April 23                                St. George's Day Dinner of the Prince George's County Historical Society on the 282nd anniversary of the county's founding in 1696. See elsewhere in the newsletter for details.

### Architectural Easement Granted on Bellefields

The Maryland Historical Trust reports that Mrs. John D. Bowling, owner of Bellefields, near Croom, has given an easement to the Trust covering both interior and exterior of that property.

Bellefields was built in the early 18th century by Dr. Patrick Sim, who called it Sim's Delight. After the Revolution, the home came into the possession of the Oden family, who changed the name to Bellefields. By the 1930s it had deteriorated into very poor repair, and was saved only through the efforts of the Bowlings. Mrs. Bowling received one of the Society's St. George's Day Awards in 1975 in part for her restoration of Bellefields.

Bellefields is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is built of brick and is considered one of the finest colonial homes in Prince George's County. The easement given by Mrs. Bowling- gives control of the architectural features to the Maryland Historical Trust--thus insuring its preservation.

#### Prince Georges-County Historical and Cultural Trust

The Prince George's County Historical and Cultural Trust, an agency of the county government, has elected new officers and announces an historic sites identification project.

Robert A. Crawley of Camp Springs, a former commissioner with the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission, was elected chairman of the trust for the coming year. Mrs. Margaret Cook of Forest Heights was elected vice chairman and Mrs. Ruth Lockhart of New Carrollton was elected Secretary-Treasurer.

Mr. Crawley announced that the trust is looking for volunteers to work on an important project to research historic properties in Prince George's County. The project has been requested by the County Council and is expected to be completed by July 1978. Those who are interested should call Margaret Cook at 839-3638.

--- From a news release

#### Frank F. White, Jr., Memorial Fund

A fund in memory of the late Frank F. White, Jr., has been established by the Prince George's County Committee of the Maryland Historical Trust, the Prince George's County Historical and Cultural Trust, and the Prince George's County Historical Society. Frank White, an archivist at the Hall of Records, Annapolis, was an active member of all of these groups at the time of his death in January 1978. The members of our Society will remember Frank especially for his work on the Publications Committee in producing both the Hopkins Atlas and the Van Horn history.

The fund will be used for purchase of historical and/or preservation materials for use in Prince George's County. Members may make checks payable to the "Frank F. White, Jr., Memorial Fund" and mail them to the Society at P.O. Box 14, Riverdale, Md. 20840

#### Society to Publish Church Records

Several years ago Mrs. Helen Brown and the late Mrs. Louise Hinton indexed the church registers of the colonial period belonging to Queen Anne Parish (St. Barnabas, Leeland), King George's Parish (St. John's, Broad Creek), and Prince George's-Parish (St. Paul's, Rock Creek and Christ Church, Rockville)

A labor of love, typescripts of these indexes were placed in the DAR Library, Hall of Records, Maryland Historical Society, McKeldin Library (University of Maryland), and the Hyattsville branch of the county library. Since that time, they have proven to be an invaluable research tool for persons interested in Maryland genealogy, and some of the copies are about worn out from use.



At the March meeting, the Society authorized the publication of these indexes in order to make them available to libraries and individuals across the nation. Volume 1 (Queen Anne Parish) is currently in preparation by Mrs. Brown who has generously offered to prepare the manuscripts for her earlier works as well as that of the late *[article concluded below]*

### From the Public Purse

The salaries of our elected officials have received a great deal of attention in the press recently, brought on, no doubt, by the fact that this is an election year. The State legislature seems to have been singled out for most of the attention, but rightly so, for its method of raising its pay is quite ingenious. It is beyond our powers to explain it here, but leave it said that the legislators no longer vote on a simple motion to set their salaries at x dollars. It is much more complicated than that, involving a commission and a report, yes votes that may mean no, no votes that may mean yes, and other parliamentary ingenuities. Quite a contrast when compared with the straightforward law of 1796: "Four dollars and fifty cents shall be allowed the Speaker of House of Delegates and three dollars and fifty cents to each member of the General Assembly for every days attendance as such, besides the itinerant charges and ferriages."

Our State legislators will earn approximately \$16,000 a year for their work. Our County Executive makes about \$35,000 annually; members of the County Council in the neighborhood of \$20,000. County department heads earn anywhere in the upper 30 or lower 40 thousand dollar range, and the sheriff is paid about \$25,000,

Reprinted below are the public salaries of another era, the year 1850. They were printed in Wingate's Maryland Register for 1860-61, a predecessor to the Maryland Manual, and were turned up by Mrs. Edith Bagot, librarian of the Maryland Room at the Hyattsville branch library.

--Alan Virta

N.B. Current salary figures courtesy of the County personnel dept.

### Prince George's County

The Alias House Overseer--is paid not over \$225 per year, and gives bond in \$500. The two members of the Executive Committee of the Trustees of the Poor are paid \$2.00 per day, but not over two days in one month. The Bailiffs of the Court--are paid \$1.00 -per day, and 10 cents per mile for every mile over six of travel, but not more than \$1.00 mileage per day. The County Commissioners--are paid \$2.00 per day, and 5 cents per mile for not over twenty miles of travel. Their Clerk--is paid \$300 per annum, and gives bond in \$1,000. He is also paid 25 cents for delivering to the Sheriff the certificates of appointment of Trustees of the Poor. The Crier of the Court—is paid \$80 per year in lieu of all fees. The Judges and Clerks of Election--are paid \$3.00 per day. Jurors--are paid \$2.00 Per day, and 10 cents per mile for over six miles of travel going to Court,--but not over \$1.00 mileage for one day, and \$1.00 in lieu of mileage when they remain in Marlborough over night by order of the Court. Constables--receive, for serving all summons and return, 50 cents; for dispersing tumultuous meetings of negros, not over \$25 per year, as the County Commissioners may allow. The Messenger to the Circuit Court and Orphan's Court--is -paid \$50 per year. The Judges of the Orphan's Court--are paid \$3.00 per day, and 5 cents per mile for over six miles of travel, to and from the sessions of the Court. Landholders--are paid for the work of their hands upon the public roads \$1.25 per day for men and \$1.00 for women; for a boy not less than 10 years of age, 75 cents per day; for a yoke of oxen and cart and driver, \$2.50 per day; and for a plow and two horses, with plowman, \$2.50 per day. Trustees of Schools-in the different districts, are paid \$2.00 per day, out of the school fund, while attending the meetings of their Board. The Sheriff--is paid 90 cents per day for boarding prisoners and runaway negroes, and \$2.00 per day for attending the Orphan's Court. He is paid 50 cents for delivering each certificate of appointment to the Trustees of the Poor. The Keeper of Weights and Measures--is paid \$80 per year. The Register of Wills--is paid/annually for keeping the books of the school fund. \$200

Society to Publish Church Records (Continued from above)

Mrs. Hienton. Each volume will contain a short history and map of the parish in addition to the index containing marriages, births, and burials.

Envisioned as a continuing project to make church records of the county more accessible to researchers, other volumes covering later years and additional churches of other denominations will be published as they become available. A formal announcement concerning price, etc., will be made when the first volume is available from the printer.

### The Laurel House Tour

A house tour to benefit the Ivy Hill Cemetery will be held in and around Laurel on Saturday, May 13, from 10:30 to 4 p.m. The price will be \$3.00, and several homes are on the tour: 1) Snow Hill, the home of Dr. and Mrs. Bryan Warren, 2) Montpelier, 3) Maiden's Fancy, home of Col. and Mrs. Samuel Crook, 4) the home of Mrs. Margaret Marshall, where memorabilia of Chief Justice John Marshall, an ancestor of her husband's, will be on display, and four other houses in town.

The tour begins at Laurel City Hall, where tickets can be purchased and a map will be made available. City Hall is located just off Main Street a few blocks west of Route One. A sign will direct you there. Even though May 13 is also our meeting date you can tour some of the homes with plenty of time to spare before our meeting begins.

### Membership Applications

You will find a membership application enclosed with this newsletter. Please pass it along to an interested friend, relative, or business associate. Membership fees are a major portion of the Society's income, and our membership must grow if we are to broaden our program. If everyone will sign up one member, our rolls will double. But don't stop at one!

News and Notes from

THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

May 1978

Vol. VI, no. 5

The May Meeting: Please Note Change of Place

The May meeting of the Prince George's County Historical Society will be held at the College Park Airport on Saturday, May 13, 1978, at 2:00 p.m. The guest speaker will be Mr. Paul Garber, retired director of the Smithsonian's Air and Space Museum, who will speak on "The History of Aviation in the Washington Area." Mr. Garber was previously scheduled to speak to the Society in March, but conflicts in his schedule necessitated moving his talk to May.

The College Park Airport, scene of the May meeting, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is the oldest airport still in use in America. The Wright Brothers conducted experiments there in the early years of this century.

The airport is located on Calvert Road in College Park. Calvert Road runs between Kenilworth Avenue and Route One, about a mile North of Riverdale Road. The access road to the airport, known as Corporal Frank S. Scott Drive, runs along the B & O Railroad Tracks.

Please note that the meeting site has been changed, and is not the one listed in the year's program distributed in September. As at all of our meetings, guests are welcome.

Bowie Heritage Day

Bowie Heritage Day will be observed on Sunday, May 21, from 2 to 5 P.m. at the Belair Mansion and Belair Stables. Congress' Own Regiment will be encamped at the mansion, and there will be displays of needlework and exhibits on preservation in Prince George's County, as well as a program, by the Bowie Madrigals. There will be horses at the stables as well as displays pertaining to Belair and a slide show on its history. All members and friends are cordially invited to attend.

Recently the City government of Bowie vacated Belair Mansion. Plans are underway for the eventual restoration of the house. Belair Mansion was home of two colonial Governors of Maryland, Samuel Ogle and Benjamin Tasker. The stables established there by Samuel Ogle have come to be known as the cradle of American racing.

Laurel House Tour--May 13--Tickets and Maps at the City Hall

The St. George's Day Awards

At the 5th annual St. George's Day Dinner, held on April 23 in commemoration of the 282nd anniversary of our county's founding, the Society presented St. George's Day Awards to seven individuals and organizations who have made significant contributions to the preservation of the county's heritage. The recipients of this year's awards were:

Theodore Bissell, of University Park, for his work as chronicler of the early history of the University of Maryland, notably its students, faculty, and academic departments, and for his research and writings on the early history of the Methodist Church in Prince George's County.

William Aleshire, of Bowie, in recognition of his role as a prime mover, both as researcher and worker, in the establishment of the museum at the Indian Queen restoration, and for his untiring efforts for the historical marker and National Register programs.

William G. Cook, of Laurel, for his definitive work on Montpelier and the Snowden Family, the history of a family and their property, which will serve as a principal reference source for historians and genealogists of the future.

Jean Speicher and the Friends of Montpelier: a joint award to an organization and its chairman who have labored long to furnish Montpelier, a National Historic Landmark, interpret its history and that of its family, and make it available for the enjoyment of our citizens.

Prince George's County Bicentennial Commission, for their efforts over the Bicentennial period in organizing various projects and programs, and for coordinating the work of various groups and municipalities, all of which extended an appreciation of our history to the citizens of the county. The award was accepted by the Commission's chairman, Harry Durity, of Upper Marlboro.

Alan Virta, of Greenbelt, for his work over the past several years both as contributor and editor of News and Notes from the Prince George's County Historical Society, a publication which has stimulated interest of both members and the public at large in our county's heritage.

Francis X. Geary, of Hyattsville: author of several publications concerning the people and institutions of his native Hyattsville, among which are a history of the Hyattsville Fire Department and the first American Legion Post in the County and their work which brought the construction of the Peace Cross monument in Bladensburg. He has published the 75th and 90th anniversary histories of the City and is currently preparing a monumental work to celebrate the 100th anniversary in 1986.

The Society's thanks are extended to Paul Lanham for chairing this year's Awards Committee.

#### Rezin Williams: A Story of Black Life in Prince George's During Slavery

During the 1930's the Federal government sponsored a program known as the Federal Writers' Project created to put unemployed writers and historians to work during the worst years of the Depression. One of the projects undertaken by the FWP was the Slave Narrative program--conversations with black men and women who had once been slaves. Hundreds of elderly blacks were interviewed, and the results of the conversations were transcribed, creating a picture of slavery in the words of those who had once endured it.

One of those interviewed by the Federal Writers' Project was Rezin Williams of Baltimore, who had lived during the slave days in Prince George's County. Williams himself had not been a slave. He had been a free black, instead, as had his father. Williams lived near the Bowie home Fairview and knew many of the Bowie slaves. Both he and his father had worked for the Bowie family. Because of his close association with blacks who had been slaves, Williams knew slavery first hand.

Rezin Williams was interviewed by the Federal Writers' Project in September 1937. In his interview, he presents not only the story of an interesting life, but a description of what slave life was like in Prince George's County before the Civil War. The interview has been reprinted in Slave Narratives, V. 15, published by Scholarly Press, 1976, which has published all of the slave interviews. Portions of the Williams interview are printed verbatim below.

#### "Parson" Rezin Williams

In 1864 when the State Constitution abolished slavery and freed about 83,000 Negro slaves in Maryland, there was one, "Parson" Rezin Williams, already a freeman. He is now living at the age of 115 years, in Baltimore City, Maryland, credited with being the oldest of his race in the United States who served in the-Civil War.

He was born March 11, 1822, at "Fairview," near Bowie, Prince George's County, Maryland--a plantation of 1000 acres, then belonging to Governor Oden Bowie's father (Col. William Duckett Bowie--ed.). "Parson" Williams' father, Rezin Williams, a freeman, was born at "Mattaponi", near Nottingham, Prince George's County, the estate of Robert Bowie of Revolutionary War fame, friend of Washington and twice Governor of Maryland. The elder Rezin Williams served the father of our country as a hostler at Mount Vernon, where he worked on Washington's plantation during the stormy days of the Revolution.

There is perhaps nowhere to be found a more picturesque and interesting character of the colored race than "Parson" Williams, who, besides serving as a colored bishop of the Union American Methodist Church (colored) for more than a half century, is the composer of Negro spirituals which were popular during their day. He attended President Abraham Lincoln's inauguration and subsequently every Republican and Democratic presidential inauguration, although he himself is a Republican. Lincoln, according to Williams, shook hands with him in Washington.

One of Williams' sons, of a family of fourteen children, was named George Washington, and another after Abraham Lincoln. The son, George Washington Williams, died in 1912 at the age of seventy-three years.

"Parson" Williams, serving the Union forces as a teamster, hauled munitions and supplies for General Grant's army, at Gettysburg. On trips to the rear, he conveyed wounded soldiers from the line of fire. He also served under General McClellan and General Hooker.

Although now confined to his home with infirmities of age, he possesses all his faculties and has a good memory of events since his boyhood days. Due to the fact that his grandmother was an Indian and daughter of an Indian chieftan, alleged to be buried in a vault in Baltimore County, Williams was a freeman like his father and hired himself out.

Williams claims that his father, when a boy, accompanied Robert Bowie, for whom he was working, to Mount Vernon, where he first met George Washington and was given work as a servant and hostler by General Washington. He said that General Washington once became very angry at his father because he struck an unruly horse, exclaiming: "The brute has more sense than some slaves. Cease striking the animal."

Williams recalls hearing his father say that when Washington died, December 14, 1799, many paid reverence by wearing mourning scarfs and hatbands.

He recalls many interesting incidents during slavery days. He said that slaves could not buy or sell anything except with the permission of their master. If a slave was caught ten miles from his master's home, and had no signed permit, he was arrested as a runaway and harshly punished.

There was a standing reward for the capture of a runaway. The Indians who caught a runaway slave received a "match coat." The master gave the slave usually ten to ninety-nine lashes for running off. What slaves feared most was what they called the "nine ninety-nine" or 99 lashes with a rawhide whip, and sometime they were unmercifully flogged until unconscious. Some cruel masters believed that Negroes had no souls. The slaves at Bowie, however, declared "Parson" Williams, were pretty well treated and usually respected the overseers.

He said that the slaves at Bowie mostly lived in cabins made of slabs running up and down and crudely furnished. Working time was from sunrise until sunset. The slaves had no money to spend and few masters allowed them to indulge in a religious meeting or even learn about the Bible.

Slaves received medical attention from a physician if they were seriously ill. When a death occurred a rough box would be made of heavy slabs and the dead Negro buried the same day on the plantation burying lot with a brief ceremony, if any. The grieving darkeys, relatives, after he was "eased" in the ground, would sing a few spirituals and return to their cabins.

Familiar old spirituals were composed by "Parson" Williams, including Roll De Stones Away, You'll Rise in De Skies, and Ezekiel, Me's Comin Home.

Following is one of Williams' spirituals:

When dat are ole chariot comes, I'm gwine to lebe you;.  
"I'm bound for de promised land I'm gwine to lebe you.  
I'm sorry I'm gwine to lebe you,  
Farewell, oh farewell  
But I'll meet you in de mornin Farewell, oh farewell.

Still another favorite of "Parson" Williams, which he composed on Col. Bowie's plantation just before the Civil War, a sort of rallying song expressing what Canada meant to the slaves at that time, runs thus:

I'm now embarked for yonder shore  
There a man's a man by law;  
The iron horse will bear me O'er  
To shake de lion's paw.  
Oh, righteous Father, will thou not pity me  
And aid me on to Canada, where all the slaves are free.

Oh, I heard Queen Victoria say  
That if we would foresake  
Our native land of slavery,  
And come across de lake  
That she was standin' on de shore  
Wid arms extended wide,  
To give us all a peacefule home Beyond de rollin' tide.

Interesting reminiscences are recalled by "Parson" Williams of his early life. He said that he still remembers when Mr. Oden Bowie (later governor) left with the army of invasion of Mexico (1845-1848), and of his being brought home ill and after several years was nursed back to health at "Fairview." Governor Bowie died on his plantation in 1894 and is buried in the family burying ground there.

"Fairview is located in the upper part of what was called the "Forest" of Prince George's County, a few miles southwest of Collington Station. It is a fine type of old Colonial mansion built of brick, the place having been in the possession of the family for some time previous. "Fairview" is one of the oldest and finest homes in Maryland. The mansion contains a wide hall and is a typical Southern home.

"Parson", Williams' wife, Amelia Addison Williams, died August 9, 1928, at the age of 94 years. The aged Negro is the father of 14 children, one still living--Mrs. Amelia Wesley, 67 years old, 2610 Pierpont Street, Mount Winans, Baltimore, Maryland. His brother, Marcellus Williams, and a single sister, Amelia Williams, both living, reside on Rubie Street, Philadelphia, Pa. According to "Parson" Williams, they are both more than a century old and are in fairly good health. Besides his children and a brother and a sister, Williams has several grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great grandchildren living.

President Lincoln, Williams says, was looked upon by many slaves as a messenger from Heaven. Of course, many slave masters were kind and considerate, but to most slaves they were just a driver and the slaves were work horses for them. Only once during his lifetime does Williams recall tasting whiskey when his cousin bought a pint. It cost three cents in those days. He said his mother used to make beer out of persimmons and cornhusks, but they don't make it any more, so he doesn't even drink beer now. He would much rather have a good cigar. He has since a boy, smoked a pipe.

--To be continued in next month's issue of News and Notes.

N.B. Sharp students of Civil War history will note that General Grant was not at Gettysburg, as is stated in the 5th paragraph of the interview.

#### New Historical Markers

William Aleshire, of the Society's Marker Committee, reports that orders for three historical markers are now being processed. All three historic sites are churches: Christ Episcopal Church in Accokeek, Cheltenham United Methodist Church (formerly Westwood Methodist Episcopal Church), and Sacred Heart Chapel at White Marsh, near Bowie (Roman Catholic).

#### A Correction

Along with last month's News and Notes we enclosed a membership application for you to send to a friend. There is a typographical error on this form. The Maryland Historical Society dues we listed as being \$8.00 single and \$12.00 husband/wife are \$10.00 and \$14.00 respectively. Please make the correction. A new correct membership form will be sent in the next mailing. Please send it to a friend. We need their interest and support.

#### The Prince George's County Historical Society

A subscription to this newsletter is obtained by joining the Prince George's County Historical Society. Dues are \$5.00 Per year. Inquiries may be addressed to the Society at P.O. Box 14, Riverdale, Maryland 20840, or by calling any of the officers listed below.

President:	Frederick S. DeMarr 4010 Hamilton Street, Hyattsville, Md. 20781	277-0711
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News and Notes from

THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

June 1978

Vol. VI, no. 6

The June Meeting: Ferguson Foundation Farm, Accokeek

The June meeting of the Prince George's County Historical Society will be held on Saturday, June 10, at 2:00 p.m. at the Ferguson Foundation Farm in Accokeek. Robert E. Ruskin, past president of the foundation, and his wife Thelma Ruskin will speak on "The Piscataway Indians of Early Maryland." Their talk will be illustrated with slides, and the Ruskins will display Indian artifacts unearthed at the farm. Following their presentation, there will be a tour of the farm and gardens, which include a beautiful view of Mount Vernon, directly across the Potomac River.

The Piscataways were the major Indian tribe of Southern Maryland at the time of the first colonial settlements. Shortly after the arrival of the first colonists in the Ark and the Dove at St. Mary's in 1634, Governor Leonard Calvert visited the Emperor of the Piscataways at their chief village along the Piscataway Creek in Prince George's County. During the 17th century, an area known as the Mayonne Reserve was reserved for the Indians near Piscataway Creek, and they lived relatively peacefully with neighboring whites. Most left the Province, however, by 1700.

The Ferguson Foundation Farm is located on Bryans Point Road in Accokeek. From the Beltway, take Exit 37 South and follow Indian Head Highway (Route 210) South for 10 miles to a traffic light. Three roads intersect at that light; make a sharp right onto Bryans Point Road. Follow Bryans Point Road almost 3 miles, and the gates to the farm will be on the right, a little ways back off the road. The gates are marked. Turn into the Ferguson farm drive and continue straight back to a two-story building which is the meeting site. You go down Bryans Point Road as far as the local swimming pool the National Colonial Farm, you have gone too far. Indian Head highway is a divided Highway up near the Beltway, but it narrows considerably by the time you get to Bryans Point Road.

Several members of the Society with automobiles will be driving to the farm from the Calvert Mansion in Riverdale. If you would like a ride down from the mansion, please be there by 12:45 sharp. We will be leaving shortly thereafter. If you would like a ride or can drive others, please call Fred DeMarr at 277-0711.

Guests are more than welcome, and refreshments will be served. This will prove to be a most interesting meeting. Plan to join us, and bring a friend.

Some Recent Maryland Books

Newspapers in Maryland Libraries: A Union List, compiled by E.O. Hofstetter and M. Eustis under the auspices of the Academic and Research Division of the Maryland Library Association. Free for the asking from the Maryland Library Association, 115 West Franklin Street, Baltimore, Md. 21201.

The United States District Court of Maryland, by H.H. Walker Lewis. Published by Maryland State Bar Association, 1977, as a Bicentennial history project. Available for \$6.00 from the Maryland State Bar Association, 905 Keyser Building, Baltimore, Md. 21202 Please send a check or money order for \$6.00 along with your order. Price includes mailing.

Maryland: A Bicentennial History, by Carl Bode. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, and Nashville: American Association for State and Local History. 1978. 197 pages plus index. \$8.95. Available at many bookstores.



Carl Bode, literary and cultural historian, poet, biographer, and Professor of English at the University of Maryland, has written Maryland's volume in the States and the Nation Series. The book is described thusly on its dust jacket: "In 1634, two small ships, the Ark and the Dove, brought the first English settlers to what would become Maryland. That event is familiar to most Marylanders--and something they won't find in this book. What the reader will discover is a delightful series of characters and episodes that more dramatically illuminates Maryland's historical character. Such vignettes, believes author Carl Bode, tell us much about the variety of the state's experience and what is important in it."

### Some Books Soon to Be Published

Publishers' Weekly, the news and review magazine of the American publishing industry, reports that Putnam will publish a work of fiction entitled The Woman Who Loved John Wilkes Booth. The book was written by Pamela Redford Russell, and Publishers' Weekly states that "Russell has embellished the known facts of Surratt's life with very plausible and psychological believable explanations. . ." We shall await word, however, from the Surratt Society for the definitive local comment. Publication date is May 24.

Publishers' Weekly also reports that on July 24 Random House will publish James Michener's latest novel, Chesapeake. The book is described by the publisher thusly: "Set against the great Chesapeake bay area on Maryland's Eastern Shore--with more than 100 characters, both real and fictional--Chesapeake is the story of the region's founding families and their extraordinary descendants--from Indians and European immigrants to African slaves and religious outcasts." Chesapeake will be a main selection of the Book of the Month Club. Michener is well known as author of Tales of the South Pacific, The Bridge at Toko-Ri, Hawaii, The Source, Iberia, The Drifters, and Centennial and many others.

### Rezin Williams: A Story of Black Life in Prince George-Is During Slavery

In last month's issue of News and Notes we printed part one of the recollections of Rezin Williams, recorded by the Federal Writers' Project when he was 115 years old. We print the second and concluding part in this issue, and repeat the introduction.

During the 1930's the Federal government sponsored a program known as the Federal Writers' Project created to put unemployed writers and historians to work during the worst years of the Depression. One of the projects undertaken by the FWP was the Slave Narrative program--conversations with black men and women who had once been slaves. Hundreds of elderly blacks were interviewed, and the results of the conversations were transcribed, creating a picture of slavery in the words of those who had once endured it.

One of those interviewed by the Federal Writers' Project was Rezin Williams, of Baltimore, who had lived during the slave days in Prince George's County. Williams himself had not been a slave. He had been a free black, instead, as had his father. Williams lived near the Bowie home Fairview and knew many of the Bowie slaves. Both he and his father had worked for the Bowie family. Because of his close association with blacks who had been slaves, Williams knew slavery first hand.

Rezin Williams was interviewed by the Federal Writers' Project in September 1937. In his interview, he presents not only the story of an interesting life, but a description of what slave life was like in Prince George's County before the Civil War. The interview has been reprinted in Slave Narratives, v. 15, published by Scholarly Press, 1976, which has published all of the slave interviews. Portions of the Williams interview are printed verbatim below.

By special permission of plantation owners in Prince George's, St. Mary's, Baltimore and other counties in Maryland, he was often permitted to visit the darkeys and conduct a religious meeting in their cabins. He usually wore a long-tailed black "Kentucky" suit with baggy trousers and sported a cane.

Usually when servants or slaves in those days found themselves happy and contented, it was because they were born under a lucky star. As for eating, they seldom got chicken, mostly they ate red herring and molasses--they called black strap molasses. They were allowed a herring a day as part of their food. Slaves as a rule preferred possum to rabbits. Some liked fish best. Williams' favorite food was cornpone and fried liver.

"Once before de wah, I was ridin' Dazy, my donkey, a few miles from de boss' place at Fairview, when along cane a dozen or more patrollers. Dey questioned me and decided I was a runaway slave and dey wuz gwine to give me a coat of tar and feathers when de boss rode up and ordered my release. He told dem dreaded white patrollers that I was a freeman and a 'parson.'"

When the slaves were made free, some of the overseers tooted horns, calling the blacks from their toil in the fields. They were told they need no longer work for their masters unless they so desired. Most of the darkeys quit "den and dar" and made a quick departure to other parts, but some remained and to this day their descendants are still to be found working on the original plantations, but of course for pay.

Describing the clothing worn in summer time by the slaves, he said they mostly went barefooted. The men and boys wore homespun) three-quarter striped pants and sometimes a large funnel-shaped straw hat. Some wore only a shirt as a covering for their body.

"In winter oxhide shoes were worn, much too large, and the soles contained several layers of paper. We called them 'program' shoes because the paper used for stuffing consisted of 'discarded programs'. We gathered herbs from which we made medicine, snake root and sassafras bark being a great remedy for many ailments."

Williams, though himself not a slave by virtue of the fact that his grandmother was an Indian, was considered a good judge of healthy slaves, those who would prove profitable to their owners, so he often accompanied slave purchasers to the Baltimore slave markets.

He told of having been taken by a certain slave master to the Baltimore Wharf, boarded a boat and after the slave dealer and the captain negotiated a deal, he, Williams, not realizing that he was being used as a decoy, led a group of some thirty or forty blacks, men, women and children, through a dark and dirty tunnel for a distance of several blocks to a slave market pen, where they were placed on the auction block.

He was told to sort of pacify the black women who set up a wail when they were separated from their husbands and children. It was a pitiful sight to see them, half naked, some whipped into submission, cast into slave pens surmounted by iron bars. A good healthy negro man from 18 to 35 would bring from \$200 to \$800. Women would bring about half the price of the men. Often when the women parted with their children and loved ones, they would never see them again.

Such conditions as existed in the Baltimore slave markets, which were considered the most important in the country, and the subsequent ill treatment of the unfortunates, hastened the war between the states.

The increasing numbers of free Negroes also had much to do with causing the Civil War. The South was finding black slavery a sort of white elephant. Everywhere the question was what to do with the freeman. Nobody wanted them. Some states declared they were a public nuisance.

"Uncle Rezin", by which name some called him, since slavery days, has, besides being engaged in preaching the Gospel, journeying from one town to another, where he has performed hundreds of marriages among his race, baptised thousands, performed numerous christenings and probably more sermons than any Negro now living. He preached his last sermon two years ago. He says his life's work is now through and he is crossing over the River Jordan and will soon be on the other side.

Since the Civil War he has made extra money for his support during depression times by doing odd jobs of whitewashing, serving as a porter or janitor, cutting wood, hauling and running errands, also serving as a teamster, picking berries and working as a laborer.

He has had several miraculous escapes from death during his long life. Twice during the past quarter of a century his home at Mount Winans has been destroyed by fire, when firemen rescued him in the nick of time, and some years ago, when he was suddenly awakened during a severe windstorm, his house was unroofed and blew down. When workmen were clearing away the debris in searching for "Uncle" Rezin, some hours later, a voice was heard coming from a large barrel in the cellar. It was from Williams, who somehow managed to crawl in the barrel during the storm and called out:

"De Lord hab sabed me. You all haul me out of here but I'se all right." Scabo, his pet dog, was killed by the falling debris during the storm.

Firemen at Westport state that three years ago, when fire damaged "Uncle" Rezin's home, the aged Negro preacher refused to be rescued, and walked out of the building through stifling smoke, as though nothing had happened.

When veterans of a great war have been mowed down by the scythe of Father Time until their numbers are few, an added public interest attaches to them. Baltimore septuagenarians remember the honor paid to the last surviving "Old Defenders", who faced the British troops at North Point in 1814, and now the few veterans of the War of Secession, whether they wore the blue or the gray, receive similar attention.

A far different class, one peculiarly associated with the strife between the North and South, are approaching the point of fading out from the life of today--the old slaves, and original old freemen. "Parson" Williams tops the list of them all.

Another slave narrative from Prince George's County has been published in Scholarly Press' edition of Slave Narratives. The interviewee is Dennis Simms, who was a slave on a plantation owned by Richard and Charles Contee near Contee. The story Simms presents is not like Williams'--for his is one of severe punishment and hard work. The Simms interview is found in volume 15.

--Alan Virta

### Bowie and Baseball

The 1978 professional baseball season began in April, and for the 7th consecutive season the city of Washington and its suburbs are without a major league team. Ever since the Senators were moved to Texas, the Commissioner of Baseball, Mr. Bowie Kuhn, has promised to bring baseball back to town. Despite his promises, however, major league baseball has not returned, and its prospects for returning are bleak indeed.

With a first name like Bowie, one might suspect that the Commissioner of Baseball has some connection with Prince George's County. That suspicion would be a valid one--for among Bowie Kuhn's forebears are representatives of several Prince George's County families.

Bowie Kuhn was born in 1926 in Takoma Park, Md., the son of Louis Kuhn and Alice Merrick Roberts Kuhn. His maternal grandfather was Joseph Kent Roberts, Jr., an Upper Marlboro attorney, and his Maternal grandmother was Alice Merrick Roberts, daughter of Judge George C. Merrick. Further up his mother's family tree we find representatives of other long-time county families: Clagetts, Bowies and Warings. His great-great grandfather was Thomas Fielder Bowie, Congressman from Prince George's County in the 1850's.

Bowie Kuhn grew up in Washington, D.C., he attended Roosevelt High School. He earned a law degree and became a lawyer, like so many of his Prince George's County forebears. Active in the area of sports and

contract law, he was named Commissioner of Baseball in 1969. He received much praise early in this term: sports reporter Roger Angell declared that "he may be the best thing that has happened to baseball since the catcher's mitt." In recent years many club owners have criticized him for what they consider heavy-handedness in vetoing certain trades and other matters--but his job is considered to be secure, at least through the duration of his current contract.

We might hope that Bowie Kuhn would favor his hometown Washington and Prince George's County with special considerations but so far he has made no vigorous attempt to return major league baseball here. Now that Alexandria, Va., has acquired a minor league team, however, perhaps some town in Prince George's County might consider the same. If he won't send major league baseball to Washington, would Bowie send the minor leagues to Bowie?

--Alan Virta

References: Current Biography, 1970  
Across the Years in Prince George's County by Effie Gwynn Bowie

### Historical Markers

The many roadside historical markers in the County are often the victims of vandalism or neglect. If you know of a missing or damaged marker, or one that is in need of painting, please call or write Bill Aleshire 12302 Chalford Lane, Bowie, Md. 20715 (262-5505) or Bill Pyles (431-4725).

### Marlborough Day - June 3, 1978

The Second Annual Marlborough Day observance will feature tours, displays and demonstrations by the 4-H Clubs and children of the school system, music, folk dancing, a County garage sale of surplus property (in the parking garage) antique cars display play and many other events beginning late morning until 5 P.M., In case of rain all events except the garage sale will be held on Saturday June 17th. For information: call 952-4723.

### The Prince George's County Historical Society

President:	Frederick S. De Marr 4010 Hamilton Street, Hyattsville 20781	277-0711
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News and Notes from

THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY Historical SOCIETY

July 1978

Vol. VI, no. 7

### The Summer Schedule

There will be no meetings of the Prince George's County Historical Society in July or August. The Society's meeting program will resume on the second Saturday in September.

### Geary F. Eppley

We regret to inform the membership of the death of Geary F. Eppley, a member of the Prince George's County Historical Society. Mr. Eppley was with the University of Maryland for more than 50 years as a student, teacher, coach, athletic director, and Dean of Men. During his long career with the University, he served as president of both the old Southern and the Atlantic Coast athletic conferences. He retired from the University in 1964 as Doan of Men, a post he had held since 1936. He was 82 years of age at his death.

Members will recall that Dean Eppley did not let scheduling conflicts between Society functions and Maryland football games prevent him from missing either. When such conflicts arose, he attended our meeting with a radio under his jacket and an earphone at his ear.

The Society expresses its deepest sympathy to the family. Dean Eppley is survived by two daughters, one son, a sister, Elaine M. Eppley of Hyattsville, and 12 grandchildren.

### Addition to the National Register

The Maryland Historical Trust announces that the Harry Buck House, in Upper Marlboro, has been added to the National Register of Historic Places. Also known as the James Wardrop House, the Harry Buck House was built sometime before 1753, although the present appearance would lead one to date it in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. Before alterations the house had a gambrel roof, quoins and a projected central pavilion. The house is now the oldest brick structure in Upper Marlboro.

The Harry Buck House is owned by the county. It is located between St. Mary's Church and the Schoolhouse Pond on Governor Oden Bowie Drive. The exact use of the house has not been announced, but the county pledges to restore it.

The Harry Buck House should not be confused with the Sarah Buck House, on Water Street before it was destroyed.

### The Declaration of Independence

On July 4 we celebrate the 202nd anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence. For generations, American school children have memorized those stirring first words, "When in the course of human events." But how often, after elementary school, or after the high school history class, do Americans actually read the Declaration? The Prince George's County Historical Society thought it fitting to present the full text of the Declaration of Independence in this month's newsletter. These words have contributed more to the cause of freedom than any others. Please read them.

In Congress, July 4, 1776.

## A DECLARATION

By the Representatives of the  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,  
In General Congress Assembled.

When in the Course of human Events, it becomes necessary for one People to dissolve the Political Bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the Powers of the Earth, the separate and equal Station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent Respect to the Opinions of Mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the Separation.

We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness— That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed, that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these Ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new Government, laying its Foundation on such Principles, and organizing its Powers in such Form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient Causes; and accordingly all Experience hath shown, that Mankind are more disposed to suffer, while Evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the Forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long Train of Abuses and Usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object, evinces a Design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their Right, it is their Duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future Security. Such has been the patient Sufferance of those Colonies; and such is now the Necessity which constrains them to alter their former systems of Government. The History of the present King of Great-Britain is a History of repeated Injuries and Usurpations, all having in direct Object the Establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid World.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public Good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing Importance, unless suspended in their Operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other laws for the Accommodation of large Districts of People, unless those People would relinquish the Right of Representation in the Legislature, a Right inestimable to them, and formidable to Tyrants only.

He has called together Legislative Bodies at Places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the Depository of their public Records, for the sole Purpose of fatiguing them into Compliance with his Measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly Firmness his Invasions on the Rights of the People.

He has refused for a long Time, after such Dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative Powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the Dangers of Invasion from without, and Convulsions within.

He has endeavored to prevent the Population of these States, for that Purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners refusing to pass others to encourage their Migrations hither, and raising the Conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary Powers.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the Tenure of their Offices, and the Amount and Payment of their Salaries.

He has erected a Multitude of new Offices, and sent hither Swarms of Officers to harrass our People, and eat out their Substance.

He has kept among us, in Times of Peace, Standing Armies, without the consent of our Legislatures.

He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil Power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a Jurisdiction foreign to our Constitution, and unacknowledged by our Laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

For quartering large Bodies of Armed Troops among us:

For protecting by a mock Trial, from Punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:

For cutting off our Trade with all Parts of the World:

For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:

For depriving us, in many Cases, of the Benefits of Trial by Jury:

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended Offences:

For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province. establishing therein an arbitrary Government, and enlarging its Boundaries, so as to render it at once an Example and fit Instrument for introducing the same absolute Rule into these Colonies:

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:

For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with Power to legislate for us in all Cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He has plundered our Seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our Towns, and destroyed the Lives of our People.

He is, at this Time, transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the Works of Death, Desolation, and Tyranny already begun with circumstances of Cruelty and Perfidy, scarcely paralleled in the lost barbarous Ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized Nation.

He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the Executioners of their Friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

He has excited domestic Insurrections amongst us, and has endeavored to bring on the Inhabitants of our Frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known Rule of Warfare, is an undistinguished Destruction, of all Ages, Sexes and Conditions.

In every stage of these Oppressions we have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble Terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated Injury. A Prince, whose Character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the Ruler of a free People.

Nor have we been wanting in Attention to our British Brethren. We have warned them from Time to Time of Attempts by their Legislature to extend an unwarrantable Jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the Circumstances of our Emigration and Settlement here. We have appealed to their native Justice and Magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the Ties of our common Kindred to disavow these Usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our Connections and Correspondence. They too have been deaf to the Voices of Justice and of Consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the Necessity which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of Mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace, Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the World for the Rectitude of our Intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the People of these Colonies, solemnly Publish and Declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be, Free and Independent States; that they are absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political Connection between them and the State of Great-Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm Reliance on the Protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.

Signed by Order and in Behalf of the Congress,

JOHN HANCOCK, President.

Representatives of each of the thirteen colonies signed the Declaration. Maryland's Signers were Samuel Chase, William Paca, Thomas Stone, and Charles Carroll of Carrollton. John Rogers of Upper Marlboro who voted for the Declaration left before the signing--and thus is the only person eligible to sign who did not.

### Twenty One Minute Guns

On July 4, 1826, Americans celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence, the 50th anniversary of the founding of the United States. They soon learned that the date would be remembered for another reason as well--for on that day, both John Adams and Thomas Jefferson died.

These two men, Adams of Massachusetts, and Jefferson of Virginia, had been instrumental in uniting thirteen quarrelsome colonies in one common purpose: independence. But in later years, they became the bitterest of political foes. Adams defeated Jefferson for the Presidency in 1796, and Jefferson in turn defeated Adams in 1800. Adams refused to attend the inauguration of his successor, and for years they remained enemies. It was not until they had both retired from politics that reconciliation began. By the time of their deaths, they exchanged letters frequently and often expressed admiration and praise for the other.

The Governor of Maryland on July 4, 1826, was Dr. Joseph Kent, a physician of Prince George's County. Kent ordered twenty-one minute guns, i.e. twenty cannon shots fired at intervals of a minute, on two successive days in honor of the two patriots. In the letter reproduced below, we read of Kent's reaction to the deaths and his orders for public mourning.

Governor Joseph Kent was born in 1779 in Calvert County. He received a good education for his day and became a physician. By 1806 he had moved to Prince George's County and acquired an estate of more than three hundred acres which he named Rose Mount, in what is now the Landover area. Kent not only was a physician, but a planter as well. He was especially fond of roses--and kept terraced gardens of them--hence the name Rose Mount.



Kent was elected to Congress in 1810 as a Federalist, and was reelected in 1812. Unlike most Federalists, he supported the War of 1812. He switched his allegiance to the Democratic-Republican party, and in 1816 was a Presidential elector supporting James Monroe. In 1818 he was again elected to Congress this time as a Democratic-Republican and was reelected in 1820, 1822, and 1824. In 1826 he was elected Governor of Maryland. At that time, the Governor was elected by the Legislature for a term of one year. Kent was reelected in 1827 and 1828. After his retirement from the Governorship, he again switched parties, becoming a National Republican, a follower of John Quincy Adams and Henry Clay. In 1833 he was elected to the U.S. Senate, but because of ill health rarely spoke on the floor. He died in 1837 at Rose Mount, and was buried there. Governor Veazey declared, "Maryland has suffered a severe loss in his demise, and her citizens who mourn over this bereavement will long cherish his name in grateful remembrance."

Kent was married twice, first to Eleanor Lee Wallace, and then to Alice Contee. His widow sold Rose Mount to Kent's nephew, Joseph Kent Roberts. The 13<sup>th</sup> Election District of Prince George's County was named in his honor. So also do the names of the areas Kentland and Kent Village honor his memory. Rose Mount, located near Landover Road, was burnt by vandals in the early 1970's.

The portion of Governor Kent's letter pertaining to the deaths of Adams and Jefferson is printed below. It was written to Thomas Culbuth, clerk of the Governor's Council in Annapolis. —Alan Virta

Rose Mount

12th July 1826

Dear Sir,

In the absence of the Council I feel somewhat at a loss how I should act in regard to the death of those illustrious men Jefferson & Adams, who have departed from us so miraculously on the 50th anniversary of that independence, in the declaration of which they acted so conspicuously a part---The nation will feel deeply on the occasion & no portion of it more than the State of Maryland.

Therefore should you not think, it too great a stretch of power on my part, as an evidence of our sensibility of the great obligations imposed upon us by the long and distinguished services of those individuals & in expressive of the sympathy of the State on this melancholy event, I should be glad you would order Mr. Tuck to fire twenty One minute guns on Thursday at noon in honor of the memory of Thos. Jefferson & a like number on the succeeding day in honor of the memory of John Adams --- When the Council shall meet, the Executive can then adopt any further measures they decree necessary.

\* \* \*

I hope your health will soon be restored—Let me know should anything occur to make a meeting of the Council necessary.

Yours very truly

Jos: Kent

(The letter is in the Hall of Records, Annapolis. A photocopy was supplied by the late Frank F. White, Jr. His book, The Governors of Maryland, and Across the Years in Prince George's County, were major sources.)

The Prince George's County Historical Society

Membership applications may be obtained by writing the Society at P.O. Box 14, Riverdale, Md. 20840. Dues are \$5.00 per year and include a subscription to this newsletter.

President: Mr. Frederick S. DeMarr  
4010 Hamilton Street, Hyattsville., 20781

277-0711

Corresponding Secretary: Mrs. Edith Bagot  
3510 Longfellow Street, Hyattsville 20762

927-3632

Newsletter editor: Mr. Alan Virta  
8244 Canning Terrace, Greenbelt 20770

474-7524

News and Notes from

THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

August 1978

Volume VI, number 8

The Meeting Schedule

The first meeting of the Prince George's County Historical Society for the Fall season will be held on Saturday, September 9. Details on the speaker and location will follow in September's newsletter.

The Tobacco Barn Antiques Show

The nationally acclaimed Tobacco Barn Antiques Show, sponsored by St. Thomas Episcopal Parish, will be held this year on September 8, 9, and 10th at the Edelen Brothers Tobacco Warehouse in Upper Marlboro, at the intersection of Routes 301 and 725. There will be free parking at the Race Track and a free shuttle bus will take you to the show.

Admission is \$2.50 per person, but if you bring an ad or clipping advertising the show (including this one), you will be admitted for \$2.00. The hours are 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. on September 8 and 9th, and 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. on September 10th.

The Tobacco Barn Antique Show is one of the largest on the East Coast, and attracts exhibitors from many States. Thousands of items will be on display and for sale. Don't miss it!

T. Raymond Burch

We regret to inform the membership of the death of T. Raymond Burch of Hyattsville, a long time member of the Prince George's County Historical Society. Mr. Burch, who founded Burch Realty in 1946, was active as a realtor for over thirty years. He was postmaster of Berwyn Heights from 1934 to 1946, and before that operated a laundry business and worked for the Department of the Interior. In 1946 he was elected to the Maryland House of Delegates and served one term. He was one of the founders of the City of College Park, and participated in its incorporation in 1947. Mr. Burch was a native of Berwyn Heights and a graduate of the University of Maryland. He was 84 years old at his death.

Mr. Burch lived at Ash Hill, also known as Hitching Post Hill, in Hyattsville. The home was built in 1840 by Robert Clark, over the years was visited by Presidents Grant and Cleveland and by Buffalo Bill Cody. President Grant's Arabian horses were once stabled on the property. Hitching Post Hill was named to the National Register of Historic Places in 1977. The Prince George's County Historical Society met at Hitching Post Hill once several years ago.

Mr. Burch was a member of several organizations besides our own, including the Lions and Knights of Columbus. He wrote one book, a history of College Park and adjacent communities.

T. Raymond Burch was married to Grace Finnel Burch, who died in 1975. He leaves two sons, six daughters, twenty-five grand-children and twenty-seven great-grandchildren.

The Reception for Lord Fairfax

More than 150 persons braved the summer heat and early afternoon showers on July 30 to attend the Prince George's County Historical Society's reception for Nicholas Fairfax, 14th Baron Fairfax of Cameron, held at Montpelier in Laurel. The event was quite a success, and it received front-page coverage in the Laurel News Leader of August 3, 1978.

A number of members of the Society have asked that we reprint the information on the Fairfax family connection with Prince George's County in News and Notes. This summary appeared on the invitation shoots mailed out in July, and is reprinted below.

The family of our guest has close ties with Prince George's County. In 1747 Thomas Fairfax, 6th Baron Fairfax of Cameron in the peerage of Scotland, settled permanently in Virginia, becoming the only resident peer in the American Colonies. The title descended through several generations of the Fairfax family in both Great Britain and America. In 1869 John Contee Fairfax, M.D., of "Northampton" located near Largo, Prince George's County, inherited the title as 11th Baron Fairfax. Dr. Fairfax, as he was always known, was the son of Albert Fairfax and Caroline Eliza Snowden, daughter of Richard Snowden of "Oaklands" (Born at "Montpelier" Richard Snowden was the oldest child of Major Thomas Snowden.)

Preceded by his brother Charles Snowden Fairfax (10th Baron), Dr. Fairfax never claimed the title on a formal basis, preferring to remain in Prince George's County and practice medicine. After the turn of the present century his son, Albert Kirby Fairfax (12th Baron) returned to England and assumed the title in 1908. The present Baron Fairfax of Cameron (14th) is the grandson of Albert Kirby Fairfax.

Our guest has a host of relatives living in Prince George's County today. We are pleased to say "welcome home" to Nicholas Fairfax during his visit to the United States.

We should add that one of the purposes of Lord Fairfax' visit to the United States, besides that of visiting with his American relatives, was to attend the annual convention of the American Bar Association in New York City the first week of August. Lord Fairfax, who introduces himself as "Nick Fairfax," is a solicitor, and is 22 years old.

#### Cock-Fighting in Early Maryland: According to Scharf

"The original colonists were Elizabethan people--people fond of cruel outdoor sports, and they brought their taste for such things over with them. The purity of breed of our dogs it was thought quite as necessary to maintain as that of the stock of horses, and consequently, bear baiting and bull baiting were regular amusements, the former checked in some measure by the limited supply of bears, but the latter kept up regularly until forbidden by statute.

"Nearly always, at the end of a race week, there was a bull baiting, the bull the wildest and fiercest of the neighboring herds, and the dogs generally terriers of some undisputed pedigree. As to cock-fighting, it was at once universal and inexcusable in the light of our modern ideas (i.e., 1879). Everybody fought cocks, and in order to fight them with success, paid great attention to the breeding of game-cocks, very often at great expense and personal inconvenience, for a gamecock in good condition cannot be admitted into any poultry yard without disastrous consequences. The fascination of this sort of sport is not to be accounted for except upon the ground of heredity.

"The present writer [J. Thomas Scharf] recollects having met upon one occasion, an elderly gentleman with a game-cock that weighted over eight pounds, under his arm. After stroking the bird's magnificent feathers and admiring him in a general way, the writer asked his friend: Did you ever make anything by cock-fighting? "Make! It has cost me thousands of dollars!" "What do you do it for then?" The question seemed so puzzling that the answer was slow in coming, but finally--O it's the prettiest sight in the world!" A main of cocks is certainly a pretty sight--conceding the absence of humanitarians. There is something peculiarly fascinating to the human race in the exhibition of indomitable courage; a game-cock of good breed shows that probably in a more conspicuous way than any other animal.

"A cock of this sort has been known to kill his opponent in ten seconds--on the contrary, he has been known to fight a match of an hour's duration, after midnight, and to win it finally, without any critical blow, by simple endurance. A hundred years ago [1779] cock--fighting was one of the chic amusements in Maryland, and it

was regarded as one of the most innocent of our sports. People whose "doxy" compelled them to abstain from horse-racing and who would almost have preferred to be accused of murder to being charged with going to the theatre, felt no particular scruples about cock-fighting. It encouraged the breeding of a tough and tenacious race of fowls, whose eggs were delicious in flavor, and then, besides they were so game." All classes raised game chickens, and it is proof of the innate democracy of the people of Maryland a hundred years ago, that nothing so delighted the spectators around the cock-pit as to see the village carpenter's or blacksmith's cock defeat the splendid "piled" and tenderly nursed favorite of the owner of manorial lands.

"Today (1879], cock-fighting is not only dispraised but an outlawed amusement. It is never resorted to except by gamblers, horse-jockeys, and their dupes, in alloys and suburbs, for gambling purposes alone, and if a gentleman should be a furtive visitor, he is ashamed to let it be known."

From: History of Maryland from the Earliest Period to the Present Day, by John Thomas Scharf. 1879. Volume II, pages 74 and 75. Facsimile reprint.

Locally, legend has it that there was a large and well attended cockpit just to the rear of the old "Palo Alto" in Bladensburg.

A drink concocted in this establishment and enjoyed by the participants and spectators of the cock-pit was called a cocktail.

Thus from Bladensburg came a first coined name that has long since become universally adopted to label any variety of mixed drink.

--Herb Embrey

### New members and contributors

There is quite a list of new members and contributing members since the publication of the last list in April. The complete list will be published in the September issue of News and Notes.

### An Acknowledgement

In the brief announcement of the publication of Carl Bode's bicentennial history of the State in the June issue Of News and Notes we neglected to mention that the Society's corresponding secretary, Edith M. Bagot, is cited for her assistance as librarian of the Maryland Room in the Prince George's County Library branch at Adelphi Road in Hyattsville. Bode's history, entitled Maryland: A Bicentennial History was published by W.W. Norton and Company and the Association for State and Local History.

### The Prince George's County Historical Society

Annual dues for membership in the Prince George's County Historical Society are \$5.00 per person, and include a subscription to this monthly newsletter.

President:	Frederick S. DeMarr 4010 Hamilton ton Street, Hyattsville 20781	277-0711
Corresponding Secretary:	Mrs. Edith Bagot 3510 Longfellow Hyattsville 20782	927-3632
Treasurer:	Herb Embrey 10414 Tullymore Drive, Adelphi 20783	434-2958
Newsletter Editor	Alan Virta 8244 Canning Terrace Greenbelt 20770	474-7524,

News and Notes from

THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

September 1978

Vol. VI, no. 9

The September Meeting

The first meeting of the Prince George's County Historical Society in the 1978 Fall season will be held on Saturday, September 9, at 2 p.m. at Riversdale, the Calvert Mansion in Riverdale. Our guest speaker for the meeting will be Wilbur H. Hunter, director of the Peale Museum in Baltimore, who will speak on "Baltimore in the Revolutionary Generation." His talk will be illustrated with slides, and promises to be quite interesting,

Riversdale is located at 4811 Riverdale Road, between Kenilworth Avenue and the B & O Railroad tracks. If you have never visited Riversdale and are coming via the Beltway, exit at the Kenilworth Avenue ramp and head south several miles until you come to Riverdale Road, which is the first light past East-West Highway (Route 410). Turn right onto Riverdale Road, and follow it to Riversdale on the left.

Guests are welcome and invited, and refreshments will be served.

The Year's Schedule

The Society's 1978-79 meeting schedule will be mailed out with next month's issue of News and Notes. Please note on your calendar now, however, that the popular luncheon meeting will be held on Saturday, October 14, at the Rossborough Inn, University of Maryland. As is the custom, the staff of the Inn will prepare a fine lunch for us just before the Society convenes its regular October meeting.

Montpelier Tours to Resume

The Friends of Montpelier will offer tours of the mansion near Laurel again this year from September 7 through November 18. Hours are 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Thursdays and noon to 4 p.m. on Saturdays. The mansion is also available for rental for weddings, dinners, and receptions. Call Mrs. Joan Speicher at 776-3086 for details.

The popular Christmas dinner at Montpelier will be held at the mansion on December 3. Tickets will be available from the Friends of Montpelier after October 1.

Now Members of the Society

We welcome the following individuals to membership in the Prince George's County Historical Society.

	Town	Sponsor
Saul J. Harris	Landover Hills	Mr. Virta
		Mr. F. Bowie
Kathryn Thorp	Lanham	Mr. DeMarr
Maxwell and Helen Bloomfield	Adelphi	Mr. Zeender
Alice M. Fuller	Washington, D.C.	Mr. H. Embroy
		Mr. Cecil
Edna G. Waters	College Park	Mrs. McGraw
Eleanor Hill Koenig	Washington, D.C.	Mrs. Stevens
		Miss M. Hill
Mrs. G. Calvert Ray	Fayetteville, N.C.	Mr. DeMarr
Mr. and Mrs. John K. Zeender	Hyattsville	Mr. DeMarr
Mr. Robert A. Cecil	Hyattsville	Mr. H. Embrey

Mr. Fred Clagett  
Mrs. Eleanor T. Burnside

Olympia, Wash.  
Hyattsville

Mr. DeMarr  
Mrs. McLeish  
Mrs. Hamilton  
Mrs. Callimahos  
Mr. DeMarr  
Mrs. McGraw  
Mr. Skarda  
Mrs. Schnabel  
Mr. DeMarr  
Mr. DeMarr  
Mr. DeMarr  
Mr. DeMarr

Kenneth F. Hodges, Jr.  
Linda Lee Carrick  
Mr. and Mrs. William W. Herndon  
Mrs. Margaret F. Hagan  
Mr. Thomas V. Mike Miller  
Mr. and Mr. W.C. Dutton  
Mr. Francis X. Geary  
Ms. Arlene R. Nave

Washington, D.C.  
Greenbelt  
Beltsville  
College Park  
Clinton  
Upper Marlboro  
Hyattsville  
Cheltenham

### Sales of Chesapeake are Record Breaking

Publishers Weekly, the journal of the American publishing industry, reports that sales of James Michener's now novel, Chesapeake are setting sales records across the country.

Chesapeake, the story of several generations of several families on Maryland's Eastern Shore, jumped to first place on the New York Times Book Review list of best sellers on July 23, the first week it was listed. This was the first time in memory that any novel had done so. PW listed it as number 5 the week of July 17, and number 1 July 23. It is still number 1 on the PW list for hardcover fiction.

While brisk sales were to be expected in Maryland, the book's success in other parts of the country is remarkable. Taylor's Bookstore in Dallas, according to PW, reported that it sold 50 copies in its first week, moving faster than any other title in the store's seven-year history.

Many critics do not like James Michener's writing, and Newsweek panned Chesapeake as the "Bay of Yawns." The reading public evidently likes Michener much more than the critics: witness the success of Hawaii, The Source, Centennial, and others.

Chesapeake lists for \$12.95, but I have soon it in local book stores for as low as \$8.42. --Alan Virta

### "The Graveyard of Prince George's County"

During the Winter of 1860-61, as the Southern States seceded from the Union one by one to form their own Confederacy, Washington was a city virtually undefended. The regular troops in the District, chiefly Marines and ordnance men, numbered only between 400 and 500 men. There were just 4 small local D.C. volunteer organizations: 2 companies of riflemen, one battalion of infantry, and one other battalion.

As the Secession crisis worsened, government leaders worried about the defenses of the city should war with the seceding States break out. Col. Charles P. Stone was assigned the task of raising more troops, and by the time Spring came he had organized 33 companies of infantry and riflemen and 2 troops of cavalry--all comprised of D.C. volunteers. It was not until the firing on Fort Sumter, the start of the war in April, that Federal and State troops were brought in to defend the seat of Federal government.

Just as Washington was short of troops, so was it short of defensive works at the opening of the war. One of the early tasks of the troops rushed in to defend the city was to build forts and batteries to aid in that defense. By the war's close, Washington was ringed by 60 such structures--a circle of defensive works all around the city on all sides, most within the District and Arlington County, Va. Historian Lenard Brown, writing for the National Capital Parks, summed up the flurry of defensive activity this way: "From a defenseless city in April 1661, Washington had become one of the most heavily fortified cities in the world."

One of the forts built to defend Washington was Fort Foote, located on the Potomac River opposite Alexandria, Va., in Prince George's County. It was designed to help defend Washington from an attack by Confederate ships coming up the Potomac River, and was located upriver from Fort Washington. Constructed in 1863, it was first garrisoned by troops of the 20 Battalion of the 9th New York Heavy Artillery

The following account is taken from a history of the 9th New York Heavy Artillery, written by Alfred Seelye Roe in 1898. Roe describes the battalion's arrival at Rozier's Bluff, the site of the fort, their work there, and life at the fort. He refers quite often to Fort Simmons, where several other companies of the 9th New York Heavy Artillery were stationed. Fort Simmons was located right at the District line (now Western Ave.) at what is now Westmoreland Circle.

Fort Foote continued in operation even after the war was over, until 1878, when the Federal Government closed it down. With the nation at peace, it was an unnecessary fort, in the words of the Adjutant General of the Army, "simply a fort with convenient quarters for one company of Artillery."

The site of Fort Foote is now maintained by the National Capital Parks with a picnic area overlooking the Potomac. It can be reached by following Fort Foote Road from Oxon Hill Road through the residential community that now bears its name.

--Alan Virta

Sources: Brown, Lenard E., Fort Stanton, Fort Foote, and Battery Ricketts. Washington, D.C. National Park Service. 1970  
Miller, David V. The Defenses of Washington During the Civil War. Privately published 1976.

The following account is taken from:

The Ninth New York Heavy Artillery, by Alfred Seelye Roe. Worcester, Mass.: Published by the author. 1899.

[July 1863]

...The day before had been promulgated the most important order for many a long month. It was to the effect that Companies C, D, E, and G, forming a battalion the 2d under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Seward, should proceed to a point south of Washington and there construct a fort. Accordingly, at 5 A.M. on the 14th, accompanied by the regimental band, these companies set forth, and from the wharf at the foot of D Street took a boat for Rozier's Bluff, where a landing was made at about noon.

For the ensuing nine months there is to be a pretty effectual separation of the 2d Battalion from the other two, which remained in their former quarters. In addition to Lieutenant Colonel Seward the detachment is accompanied by Major Taft. The site selected for the fortification is a very steep bluff 100 feet high, four miles from Washington and on the same side of the Potomac. It was to be the only defense between Fort Washington and the District line. It proved to be one of the very largest of the cordon of forts which encircled the city. It was wholly outside of the District and faced the mouth of Hunting Creek, on whose south bank was the nearest considerable neighbor, viz. Fort Lyon. Alexandria became the base of supplies, whence also came a daily mail and other necessities. E.W. Newberry of Company D, who had pulled many an oar on Great Sodus bay, became the post's ferryman, and with his crew semi-daily he rows to and from for his comrades. The locality, though elevated was particularly malarial so much so that by the neighboring inhabitants it was called the grave-yard of Prince George's county. Nor did it belie its name, as the long list of sick and dead from typhoid fever and like diseases bore ample testimony. Assistant Surgeon Dwight W. Chamberlain accompanied the battalion, and by his care of the ailing won the regard of all.



Those who had served so extended an apprenticeship at digging in the northern part of the District were now to have another and extended opportunity to develop their muscle and to assist in rendering secure the most talked of city in America. Apparently the now fort is of special interest to General J. G. Barnard, who had in charge the laying out of the majority of Washington's defenses, for on the 21st, just one week after the arrival of our boys, he came down with no less distinguished guests than the president, Secretary Stanton, Generals Heintzelman and Haskins, with many other officers and citizens. If all that they saw was not in proper order, let us hope that every defect received its proper ascription.

This is the season of peaches and melons. If the men of the Ninth make long marches, by no means forced, along the Potomac shore of Maryland, it is not on topography bent, but rather to afford a home market for the special products of that favored locality. There is no diary of this period that does not teem with records of luscious fruit and juicy melons, the very recollection of which, to this day, makes the veteran's mouth water. As offered for sale in the camp, everything is surprisingly cheap. A haversack full of peaches costs but twelve and one-half cents, and that receptacle would hold well towards a peck. The weather is extremely warm, but this does not delay the work, a large part of which is upon the road leading up from the river to the camp and fort. The hours of toil are not made more agreeable by the stories that visitors from Fort Simmons tell of the restful, quiet times they are having there. Early in September, 150 men from the four companies are working ten hours each day, but just how hard some of them labor may be inferred from their taking a stint on the 8th, which they complete before 10 A.M. Men are only boys of larger growth. About this time the malarial climate began to get in its work, and by the 10th nearly or quite one-half of the officers and men are on the sick list, among them Major Taft, who is so badly off that even drums and bugles are suppressed. As he convalesced ten days later, the major was carried to a neighboring farm-house thinking that he might improve more rapidly there. On this very day, the 21st, our lieutenant colonel is taken down, and on the following day his father, the secretary [Secretary of State William H. Seward], comes and has him removed to Washington so weak is the colonel he is borne from the camp to the boat on a stretcher. The hospital record for these autumnal days is a sad one of sickness and death. To unacclimated people the river's shore was often pestalential. In this year, 1898, so much is said of suffering soldiers in Cuba, it is not amiss to remember that equally great affliction we had along this Potomac river in the years of the Rebellion, and very little note was made of it, the death loss in battle being so much more conspicuous. The funeral march became the one most often heard. Just before Major Taft was attacked, the camp was moved down the river, hoping thus to find a healthier place. Meanwhile warlike preparations go forward, and the earthworks slowly arise for the reception of guns, and on the 25th their carriages begin to arrive. The 25th gladdens many a heart, for on this day the major returns to camp, though he has to ride back in an ambulance.

October 1st is a memorable day, for then Secretary Seward and friends appear and give the works their name, and those who hear it are not disappointed, for that of Commodore Foote [Andrew Hull Foote] the river hero of Forts Henry and Donelson, was already a cherished one in America. Sickness causing the absence of the field officers, who had been helped from the camp, Major Snyder came down on the 4th and took command. An immense 200-pound Parrott gun arrives on the 13th, and on the 22d has its first trial, at which time Secretaries Chase [Salmon P. Chase, Treasury] and Welles (of the Navy), Generals Barnard and Augur with numerous - others came to witness the event.

The hospital is a very important part of the camp and has dimensions, 20 x 100 feet, none too large for the increasing number of sick. On the 31st no less than twenty-two men are furloughed home, that they may vote in the November elections. Persimmons follow peaches, and those who know how to wait for the ripening fruit till Jack Frost has touched them find them a most enjoyable dainty, but the injudicious adventurer who, lured by their tempting yellow skin, tasted them out of season, has ascribed any subsequent oral difficulties to that early indiscretion.

While, November 3d, voters at home are recording their political opinions, there is nothing more for soldiers to do than to just express their feelings, which many of them do. One careful observer says, "There are few Democrats in the army, or if there are they are ashamed to own it." On the 6th comes the big fifteen-inch gun, which is rolled, not carried, to the fort. The 11th marks the completions of barracks for Companies C and G,

and on the 16th those companies with E move in. On the 19th D followed. The 22d, Sunday, Sergeant Devoe of Company G preached in the hospital. The 28th marked the advent of stores for cook-house and barracks, though the quantity is pronounced insufficient; more came later.

December 22d four Russian war vessels are noted moving up the river. Winter settles down upon the men, some of whom reflect that they are not doing much for the war, "but someone must stay here." The mess-house, 16 x 40 feet, is opened on the 10<sup>th</sup>. Christmas, so lively and jolly at home, is dull enough here for many though some, having made acquaintances among the near-by citizens, find some sensation in calling, even if there secesh notions abound, for youth ever rises superior to political and sectional feelings. Romeo and Juliet were from opposing houses. Then there were cases of fun and jollity right in camp, since in Company D Captain Lyon ordered ten gallons of oysters and twelve dollars' worth of poultry. Henry Porter of Sodus Point and J.J. Vickery of Lyons went out with guns and dogs and secured a buck deer weighing 200 pounds, all of which served to brighten the surroundings not a little.

Continued Next Month

N.B. "Secesh notions" were feelings of sympathy or support for the Southern seceding States.--AV

#### A Reminder

The St. Thomas Church Tobacco Barn Antiques Sale and Show will be held at Edelen Brothers Tobacco Warehouse in Upper Marlboro on September 8,9, and 10th. See last month's News and Notes for details.

#### The Prince George's County Historical Society

President: Frederick S. DeMarr	277-0711
Corresponding Secretary: Edith M. Bagot	927-3632
Treasurer: Herb Embrey	434-2958
Newsletter editor: Alan Virta	474-7524

News and Notes from

THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

October 1978

Vol. VI, no. 10

The October Meeting

The highlight of our Fall schedule will be the October meeting to be held at the Rosborough Inn on the University of Maryland campus on Saturday, October 14. Following cocktails and luncheon, the program will begin at the regular time of 2 p.m. Our topic will be Civil War music presented by Dr. Robert Garofalo of the Catholic University. Assisting our speaker will be 15 student-musicians using instruments of the Civil War period.

In order to guarantee space for the luncheon and this outstanding program, please send in your reservation on the enclosed form. Guests are invited.

Nominating Committee

This year's Nominating Committee is composed of Mrs. Margaret Wowra, Chr. (927-6751), Prof. Ted Bissell (277-4723), and Dr. Truman Hinton (UN4-3580). Society members having suggestions for nominations for officers for the 1978-79 season are invited to call any member of the committee. Elections will be held at the October meeting.

Fort Washington

The National Park Service is currently engaged in research on the fort and its personnel during the period prior to 1900. Any member having information on descendants of troops stationed at Fort Washington or of life in and around the fort are asked to contact Susan Hanna at Fort Washington National Park, telephone 292-2112.

News from the Maryland Historical Trust

There were several items of interest to members of the Society in recent issues of SWAP (Some Words About Preservation), the newsletter of the Maryland Historical Trust. They are printed below:

"Newly elected officers of the Trust's [Prince George's] County Committee are chairman Theodore D. Machen of Hyattsville, vice chairman Mrs. Margaret Cook of Oxon Hill, secretary Mrs. Shirley Baltz of Bowie, treasurer David D. Duvall of Upper Marlboro and executive committee designee J.J. Smith of Upper Marlboro.

"Mrs. Ruth Lockard of New Carrollton has been reappointed to a four-year term on the county Historical and Cultural Trust. William Aleshire of Bowie was also selected to serve a four-year term.

"The Laurel City Council has passed an ordinance creating three historic districts along Main Street." [July 1978]

"The Trust's [Prince George's] County Committee has presented a \$3,500 donation to the Surratt Society for further restoration of the Mary Surratt House in Clinton. The money will be to complete the kitchen."

"Restoration architect James T. Wollon of Havre de Grace has recommended that the circa 1845 Avondale Mill in Laurel be preserved and adapted for modern use. The mill, owned by the city, is the only one remaining of those which contributed so much to the city's development. The building is being nominated to the National Register."

[Aug. 1978]

### Addition to the National Register

The Maryland Historical Trust further reports that another structure in Prince George's County has been added to the National Register of Historic Places:

"Oxon Hill Manor. Bearing the name of an 18th century house, the present Oxon Hill Manor was designed in 1928 for Sumner Welles by Jules Henri do Sibour, a Washington, D.C., architect. The neo-Georgian design of the house is typical of the stylistically conservative major American houses of its period. Sumner Welles (1892-1961) served as Assistant Secretary of State, Ambassador to Cuba, and Under Secretary of State in the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt. He was instrumental in promoting the Good Neighbor policy toward Latin America and assisted in laying the groundwork for what would become the United Nations. After 1943 he wrote on foreign affairs, and he served as editor of Harvard's American Foreign Policy Library from 1949 to 1953." [Aug. 1978]

### Contributor to the Society

The Society gratefully acknowledges the generous contribution made by Rev. Edward C. Raffetto, of Croom.

### Ted Bissell to Speak in Greenbelt

Prof. Ted Bissell, a longtime member of the Society, will address the Greenbelt Historical Society at the Greenbelt library on Monday, October 2, at 7:30 p.m. Ted's talk will be on "Search for Shadrick Turner" and relates to the very early history of the Methodist Church in Prince George's County. The public is invited. A paper by Prof. Bissell on the subject was published in the December 1973 issue of News and Notes.

### "The Graveyard of Prince George County"

In last month's issue of News and Notes, we began publishing a description of Fort Foote, a Civil War fortification located on Rozier's Bluff, Prince George's County, above the Potomac River. We present the conclusion of that description in this issue. The author was Alfred Seelye Roe, and it is taken from his book, The Ninth New York Heavy Artillery, published in 1899. Several companies of the 9th New York Heavy Artillery were stationed at Fort Foote, and Roe's book is a reminiscence of their service there and elsewhere during the Civil War.

1864

January brings very little variety to the camp, though drill of all kinds is kept up regularly with accompanying inspections and dress-parades. In these quiet days and this secluded place, the officers have an excellent opportunity to study regulations and tactics, which some of them conscientiously seize. Meanwhile the weather becomes very cold, and the Potomac freezes-so hard that, on the 8th, the boat makes landings on the ice. The next day, men cross the river on the ice to Alexandria. Cleanliness is maintained, and in spite of the weather the barracks are regularly scrubbed and kept in the best of order. Those who can obtain permission to visit Forts Simmons, Reno and other old stamping-grounds, just for the friendly relations and the return of courtesies for maintenance of friendly the officers and men from those parts as often as possible came down to the fort.

Though as good as the average soldiers, all of the Ninth's men were not angels and court-martials were not unknown, though it would puzzle some, after this lapse of years, to tell what they were all about. However important then, they have been forgotten in the hurry of later living. The ice reign continues in the river and boats have to break their way through.

Officers are responsible for the care of company funds arising from the use of Government appropriations for rations. Instead of dealing out to each man his portion, all combine and live in common, thereby saving so

much that luxuries otherwise impossible are obtained, and besides, the individual is spared the necessity of preparing his own food, certain ones from each company being quite willing to serve in the capacity of cooks for all. Whatever there might be over and above the cost of rations could be applied to the purchasing of better equipment for the mess-tables. A strict accounting was required from the officer in charge, and while no scandal ever arose in our regiment there were those, during the war, whose officers had no end of trouble in making clear their relations to the respective funds.

Captain William Wood made out on the 16th no less than ten discharge papers, for disability incident to the situation is great. Fever germs still linger, and there are few men at the post, notwithstanding the cold weather, who do not use a deal of quinine. To crown all these disadvantages, on the 19th of January Post Adjutant Redgraves is taken down with the small-pox. But there are diversions for those who call themselves well, and catching rabbits in the snow is great fun for the boys; the feelings of the victims are not recorded.

February 1st was made noteworthy in Company D by the change from tin dishes to earthenware, all through the husbanding of the company fund. The other companies were likewise equipped, then or later. As Chaplain Mudge had remained with the larger part of the regiment, preaching was had on Sunday by different men, the Christian Commission occasionally sending a minister. There are some indications of home life, for several officers and men have their better halves with them, and calls on St. Valentine's day are on record. On the 17th there is ice three inches thick on the river. Washington's birthday marks the taking command of Company D by Captain Bacon, Captain Lyon having resigned. The latter departed for home on the 27th, and in going away made a good speech, which the boys cheered to the echo.

The great Rodman gun is still a curiosity, and has to have a drill of its own. The 27th two shots were fired from the 200-pound Parrott and three from the 15-inch Rodman, solid globes of iron weighing 433 -pounds. Crowds of visitors beheld the trial. To take the places of the many discharged and to bring the companies up to the maximum limit, numerous recruits come in during those weeks, occasionally to be stigmatized as "small boys" by those longer in the service; some even say, "No good." Time will tell whether such judgement is right or not. Lieutenant Colonel Seward returned to his duties on the 19th, and his hand is soon evident in every direction. His illness had in no way impaired his vigor. On the 29th, Leap year's day, the battalion was mustered for four months' pay.

Another March is not without the expected characteristics of the month. The biggest snowstorm of the season came on the 23d, and New York boys were reminded of their own Lake Ontario region. In addition to the regular physical ills of this locality there came an epidemic of sore throats. The 18th of March brings forty-two recruits to Company G. Secretary Seward does not forget his boy, and frequently drops down the river to see him and the latter's men. On the 13th he came with certain foreigners as guests, possibly Prussians. In his honor the big flag was hung out, but the strong wind with so much sail was too much for the staff, and it broke above the upper splice. Then the soldier carpenters had to repair it, which they were abundantly able to do as well as to build locks at the river's edge, and to make anything that we needed. Officers maintain an evening class to perfect themselves in military knowledge. The 24th a target was set up across the river, the distance having been ascertained by computation, for the Ninth was ready for any sort of exaction.

As it has ever done, whiskey gets men into trouble, and the army was a particularly fine field for evidencing its power. One of the battalion, noted for his love of the intoxicating cup, gets drunk, makes a raid into the neighboring country, and winds up his carouse with a musket ball in his log, sent there by an irate countryman, whom he had most grievously offended. This same soldier was noted for his range of tricks and pranks; he was the man who once smuggled a quantity of liquor out of Alexandria by putting his flasks in a child's coffin and then with a sad face, such as a bereaved father might be expected to wear, he bore his spirits, by no means departed, across the river and into camp. The closing incident of the month was the adventure of a Company E drummer, who rowed a boat to a low island in the river, and leaving it unfastened, with the rising tide it floated off; and he on account of the same tide had to spend the night in a tree, an experience he never forgot, though he had an unexampled opportunity to reflect on the Darwinian theory which ascribes to early humanity traits that were decidedly arboreal.

The following is a fair presentation of daily routine, the same being from notes made at the times

Reveille at day-break  
Breakfast at 7 o'clock  
Fatigue from 7.30 to 11.30  
Dinner at 12 M.  
Fatigue from 1 to 5 p.m.  
Supper at 6 o'clock.

For those who were not laboring there was drill from 2 to 4 P.M. In the evening, there were whist or other diversions till 9 o'clock; then came taps, and sloop till the next reveille called to wakefulness and work. With plenty of quinine to keep off the chills, there was no trouble as to appetite.

April, the month of budding hopes, finds the battalion still preparing. On the first, or All Fools' day, a large party comes down from Washington to witness the workings of the big guns. The great Rodman is fired at 25 degrees elevation, three miles' range. On the 6th comes the first skirmish drill here, of which there is afterwards frequent recurrence. Scarcely a day without some additions to the ranks by way of recruits. The 17th, Sunday, Episcopal service is conducted by an army chaplain, not ours.

The event of the month was the presentation, on the 23d, of an elegant sword costing \$350 to Lieutenant Colonel Seward. This amount was raised by his fellow soldiers, and was made an inspiring occasion by the presence of many friends, including ladies from Washington, the regimental band, etc. In the presence of the battalion, Captain William Wood of Company G spoke eloquently as follows:

"In this time of peril, of suspense, and of doubt, when the shifting fortunes of war, and the stern duties upon every citizen in consequence, render it uncertain whether those who, as comrades in battle stand shoulder to shoulder in the defense of their country to-day, may not, by the relentless decree of fate or the imperative necessity of their country's good, be separate? to-morrow, to moot again, never; if it is fit for them to give expression to their affectionate regard, especially is it fit for soldiers to give expression to their devotion to their commander; and that which in the quiet times of peace would be a tame and meaningless ceremony is big with interest and earnest feeling. Colonel Seward, reluctantly, because conscious of my inability to perform in a befitting manner the complimentary office assigned me, I appear, in behalf of the 2d Battalion, to say to you that the officers and men, that every officer, and every man, now or recently connected with it, unless so recently attached as to have been deprived of the privilege, have an interest in making the request of you, that you will accept this steel from donors who are happy and proud to bestow it, as a memorial of their confidence in your unflinching courage and their admiration of your exalted leadership. Take it and join with them, as they know you do in reverential trust that the Omnipotent Disposer of all things will, give success to our finance, and success to our arms. Take it and join with them, as they are sure you do, in the firm and fixed resolve that the stars and stripes shall never permanently cease to float over one inch of territory where it over waved. Take it and be assured that with it, you have, without dissimulation, the hearts over true of the officers and men of the 2d Battalion. It is from zealous and willing men to their energetic and efficient chief."

To these words Colonel Seward made fitting response, touching feelingly on the cordial relations so long existing among them, and all felt that the day was a precursor of one when the regiment might reverse the Scriptural sentence and so transform their picks, shovels and other instruments of husbandry into those of war.

The next day drill was resumed as usual, and one man records four roll-calls. Obviously, no man guilty or otherwise was to be allowed to escape. In firing a 200-pound Parrott the 26th, a shell exploded at the muzzle of the gun. Luckily no one was hurt. The month ends with a large party of men building a road through some neighboring woods.

May is to end the stay of the battalion in Fort Foote, a place in which its members had been so long that some of them actually began to refer to it as home. Coming events were making themselves felt, if not by forecasted shadows, at any rate in more drill in the extensive assortment that was dealt out to all heavy artillery regiments.

May 7th Companies E and C left for forts across the Eastern Branch, a long way around by water, but only a little distance had there been means of communication by land. Extensive preparations are making in all the companies for -m active campaign. Extra clothing is packed for storage, or is sent home. On the 10th D and G take their departure, going direct to Alexandria. The battalion had done well the duty assigned, and now a new field was opening before it and the remainder of the regiment.

The Prince George's County Historical Society

President:	Frederick S. DeMarr 4010 Hamilton Street, Hyattsville 20781	277-0711
Corresponding Secretary:	Mrs. Edith Bagot 3510 Longfollow Street, Hyattsville 20782	927-3632
Treasurer:	Herb Embrey 10414 Tullymore Drive, Adelphi 20733	434-2958
Newsletter editor:	Alan Virta 3244 Canning Terrace, Greenbelt 20770	474-7524

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Announcing the OCTOBER meeting at ROSSBOROUGH INN on the University of Maryland campus - -

DATE: Saturday, October 14, 1978

TIME:

Cocktail - Noon

Luncheon - 12:45

Program - 2 PM

PROGRAM: "CIVIL WAR MUSIC"

Presented by Dr. Robert Garofalo of the Catholic University, assisted by 16 students with instruments of the Civil War period.

The band will play during the cocktail reception.

Dr. Garofalo will speak about the instruments and the music during the regular program.

ALSO: ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 1978-79.

(If you cannot make the luncheon, join us for the program at 2 PM.)

Rossborough Inn is located on U.S. 1 (Baltimore Boulevard) opposite Ritchie Coliseum and next to the Dairy's Ice Cram Store (Turner Lab). Turn from Baltimore Blvd. at the traffic light. There is ample parking on the lot behind the Inn.

If further information is needed, call any of the officers at phone numbers listed in NEWS AND NOTES.

GUESTS ARE WELCOME!

COST: Luncheon - \$5. (includes gratuity). Cash bar.

RESERVATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 11th.

-----  
To: Mr. Herbert C. Embrey, Treasurer  
10414 Tullymore Dr.  
Adelphi, Maryland 20783

My check is enclosed for \_\_\_reservations at \$5. each for the Prince George's Co. Historical luncheon at Rossborough Inn on Saturday, October 14, 1978.

NAME

TELEPHONE



News and Notes from

THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

November 1978

Vol. VI, no. 11

NOVEMBER MEETING AT RIVERSDALE

"Ornamental Plaster Work" will be the topic of our speakers, Robert and John Giannetti, at the regular meeting on Saturday, November 11, 1978. at 2 PM in the Calvert Mansion.

This art form was employed extensively in the mansions of the colonial aristocracy and our speakers are master craftsmen who continue this art today. In addition, they are constantly called upon to do restoration work. Among others, Mount Vernon, Woodlawn and The White House bear the Giannetti brothers' artistic touch. On Sunday, October 22nd, they were featured in an article appearing in the magazine section of the Washington Star newspaper. Slides will be shown.

The Calvert Mansion, "Riversdale", is located on Riverdale Road between the B&O Railroad and Kenilworth Avenue. Refreshments will be served and as usual, guests are most cordially invited.

SOCIETY ELECTIONS

At the October meeting held at Rossborough Inn the following officers were elected for 1978 - 79:

President	Frederick De Marr	Hyattsville
Vice President	John Giannetti	College Park
Rec. Secretary	Harold Hutcheson	Laurel
Corres. Secretary	Edith Bagot	Hyattsville
Treasurer	Herbert Embrey	Adelphi
Historian	James Wilfong, Jr.	Prince Frederick
Directors	Suzanna Cristofane	Bladensburg
	Paul Lanham	Huntingtown
	Alan Virta	Greenbelt

WILLIAM HENRY DUVALL

We regret to note the passing of Mr. William Henry Duvall, Sr. during the last week of August, 1978. Services and interment were at St. Thomas' Church, Croom,

Mr. Duvall, who lived on Duvall Road in Croom, was a recipient of the Society's St. George's Day Award in 1975. This recognition was given as a result of his lifetime efforts in ---gathering an outstanding collection of farming implements known as the Duvall Farm Museum which is housed in a structure on his farm.

The Society expresses its deepest sympathy to his family. Mr. Duvall is survived by his wife, Mrs. Elizabeth Miles Duvall and two children., Mrs. William (Betty) Rigoli and Dr. William Henry Duvall, Jr.

UPPER MARLBORO IN 1814

When the British marched on Washington in August, 1814, they came from their landing on the Patuxent near Benedict through Prince George's County. One of the British officers in the operation was G.R. Gleig, who later published his reminiscence as Subaltern in America. Gleig recorded impressions of one of the British soldiers of Upper Marlboro in this way:

Upper Marlboro as it appeared to an anonymous British officer, a member of General Ross's invading army, on the afternoon of August 22nd, 1814.

Our narrator, speaking of this beautiful village says: "It was one o'clock when the neat houses and Pretty gardens of Marlborough presented themselves to our view. At that moment I imagined that I had never looked upon a landscape more pleasing or more beautiful. The gentle green hills, which on either hand inclosed the village, tufted here and there with magnificent trees, the village itself, straggling and wide, each cottage being far apart from its neighbors, and each ornamented with flower-beds and shrubberies; these with a lovely stream that wound through the valley, formed as far as my memory may be trusted, one of the most exquisite Panoramas, on which it has ever been my good fortune to gaze."

Source: Subaltern in America, p. 44. Published by Carey and Hart, Baltimore, 1833.

- Herb Embrey

### MONTPELIER DINNER & CANDLELIGHT TOURS

The Friends of Montpelier will hold their annual candlelight buffet dinner at the mansion on the evening of Sunday, December 3, 1978. Tickets for this popular event are \$12.50 per person and may be reserved by calling 953-9595. Because of limited space an immediate response is suggested.

The traditional candlelight tours of the mansion, which will be beautifully decorated for the season, will be on Monday and Tuesday, December 4-5, 1978 from 5:30 to 9:00 PM. Admission, \$1.

### NEW PUBLICATION

This Was Potomac River, by Society member Frederick Tilp of Alexandria, has just been received from the printers. Published by the author, a native Prince Georgian, this hard back 9x11 book contains 384 pages and over 100 photographs as well as bibliographical references and extensive index. Priced at \$24 per copy plus \$1 postage (Va. residents add sales tax), it may be ordered from Frederick Tilp, P.O. Box 630, Alexandria, Va. 22313.

### J. THOMAS SCHARF ON MANNERS OF GENTLEMEN

The beauty of J. Thomas Scharf's three volumes on Maryland history, published in 1879, lies in the fact that he covered every facet of life in the colony and later state of Maryland.

Scharf was closer to his subject than later historians for he had the advantage of time on his side and he made the most of it by seeking out first hand accounts or eye witnesses to the subjects he sought to describe.

In his brief on "Manners of the Gentlemen", he gives us a vivid first hand description of the social life of the gentry of Prince George's County in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

Scharf writes:

"Amongst the papers of the late George L. L. Davis we have found some minutes of a conversation which he had some twenty-two or three years ago with Colonel Richard Burgess of Washington City! apropos of the old Marlborough assembly balls, once so famous. "I retain," said Colonel Burgess, "a vivid recollection of the state of society during my youth in Prince George's County, and I attended many of the horse races, balls, plays, and other diversions of that period. They were then under the management of the oldest and most distinguished gentlemen of the county - - the strictest order and decorum were observed, and a special regard was paid to the nicer points of etiquette. There were many horse-races in Prince George's County, and it was very much the practice of the gentlemen and ladies of the county to attend races near Georgetown, at

Marlborough and elsewhere. The planters laid aside their spare money, and with the savings thus secured, they made up a purse. Many of the horses were very fleet. Drunkenness and disorder of every kind were severely frowned down. The ladies were delighted to attend, and nearly always a handsome ball was given to wind up the festival. The ruins of the old assembly rooms at Upper Marlborough are still conspicuous. It was used for a variety of purposes - for plays, balls, recitations by a musical class, of which I was a member, and which Bishop Claggett sometimes attended, and anniversary dinners on the Fourth of July. You call it the club house. There was another club house in the forest, not far from the residence of the Bowies, and about six miles from Westphalia, the family seat of the Burgesses. I frequently attended the balls given there. The crowd was very great, and I remember that, upon several occasions, I slept in the ball-room myself. The balls at the Forest club house, (to give gentlemen and ladies an opportunity to return to their homes and so get comfortable lodgings) commenced at three o'clock in the afternoon and closed at twelve, midnight. Those at Upper Marlborough were kept up to a very late hour, sometimes to nearly daybreak.

We occasionally had very fine actors at Marlborough, some of the most eminent in the country at that time. I remember the names of Warren Blisset, Wood, Barret, Mrs. Warren, Miss Western and others. The plays performed were representative ones. When we had a grand theatrical season or entertainment, the houses at Upper Marlborough were crowded, and so also was every householder living within five miles of the town. Many ladies and gentlemen came in their handsome and costly carriages and chariots, with postillions and outriders in livery, from Georgetown, Alexandria, Baltimore and other places. A ball was given the first night after the play. There was generally a dance on the third night also, on which the races and theatrical season usually ended. The Assemblies, or balls, were founded upon and supported by the subscriptions of gentlemen, renewed every season.

Assemblies at Upper Marlborough and the club house in the forest were given once every month during the season, the ball usually beginning at 8 o'clock P.M. (and ending when the period of satiety set in). Occasional balls were also given at Nottingham, Piscataway, and other places. The gentlemen dressed in short breeches, wore handsome knee-buckles, silk stockings, buckled pumps, and so forth. The ladies wore - God knows what ! I can't tell! The aristocracy were fully represented; the best manners prevailed, the suppers at the assemblies were sumptuous and elegant and it was en regle for gentlemen subscribers to contribute partridges, woodcock, canvasbacks, etc., out of their private game-bags. At these assemblies intoxication was not tolerated, and all persons who showed signs of it were promptly removed from the presence of the company. The managers were always present and did their duties faithfully. The manners of the gentlemen at these assemblies were generally refined and elegant, courteous, and somewhat pompous and ceremonious. The most fashionable dances were those simple "contra-dances", called country dances, with which the ball both opened and closed, cotillions, reels, etc. As yet the waltz was not - on this Continent, at least. The music comprised two or three violins, with maybe a flageolet, a flute, or a clarinet, and for the end sought, was nearly always good. Card parties were a regular feature at these entertainments and the game usually played (always for money) was the now obsolete one of long whist, next to chess the best game in the world.",

From: History of Maryland From the Earliest Period to the Present Day. by J. Thomas Scharf. 1879. Vol. II, pages 86 & 87. Facimile reprint.

---Herb Embrey

#### THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Membership applications may be obtained by writing the Society at P.O. Box 14, Riverdale, Md. 208110. Dues are \$5.00 per year and include a subscription to this newsletter.

President:	Frederick S. De Marr	277-0711
	4010 Hamilton St., Hyattsville	20781
Corresponding Secretary:	Mrs. Edith Bagot	927-3632
	3510 Longfellow St., Hyattsville 20782	

Newsletter Editor: Alan Virta  
8244 Canning Terrace, Greenbelt 20770

474-7524

News and Notes from

THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

December 1978

Vol. VI, no. 12

The Christmas Party: December 16 at Montpelier

The Prince George's County Historical Society will celebrate the Christmas season with our annual Christmas party on Saturday, December 16, at 2 p.m. at Montpelier Mansion near Laurel. The house will be decorated for the season and the rooms will be open for inspection by members of the Society and their guests. Refreshments will be served. As is the custom, members are invited to bring any Christmas food specialty they may have to share with the rest of the Society. The great number of Christmas foods that are offered help make the party so enjoyable.

Guests are more than welcome. There will be no business meeting, and all the time will be devoted to the party. Montpelier is located on Route 197 just north of the Baltimore-Washington Parkway exit and south of Laurel.

Come celebrate Christmas with us in one of Prince George's County's finest colonial mansions. Merry Christmas!

Historical Doings in Laurel

The Maryland Historical Trust reports that the Laurel Horizon Society has donated \$1800 for improvements to the old Laurel High School, now the Edward Phelps Community Center. This is not the first contribution the society has made to the project, and it is also working to place the structure, built in 1699 as the first high school in Prince George's County, onto the National Register of Historic Places. Bill Aleshire of the Prince George's County Historical Society reports that the nomination has cleared the Governor's Consulting Committee and will be forwarded to the Dept. of Interior, hopefully for final approval.

Another Laurel structure, the Avondale Mill, has also been cleared by the Governor's Consulting Committee and awaits final approval by the Dept. of Interior for placement on the National Register of Historic Places.

Inventory of Historical Sites

The Prince George's County Historical and Cultural Trust is continuing work on its inventory of historic sites in the county. Volunteers with experience in doing research in Upper Marlboro (in the land records, etc.) are needed for the project. Anyone who would like to help is invited to contact Margaret Cook at 839-3638.

The Maryland Historical Magazine

Members of the Prince George's County Historical Society who are also members of the Maryland Historical Society are warned to examine closely the return business reply card that came with the Fall 1978 issue of the Maryland Historical Magazine, received recently. The Maryland Historical Society believes that many of its members have ready access to the magazine through libraries and other means and in an economy measure is trying to eliminate unnecessary mailings. It therefore asks those who wish to continue to receive the Maryland Historical Magazine to return the card. If you currently receive the magazine at home and wish to continue to do so, be sure to return the card. If you've misplaced it, send a note to the Maryland Historical Society at 201 West Monument Street, Baltimore, Maryland. 21201. A subscription to the Maryland Historical Magazine is included in the dues paid to the Maryland Historical Society, and every member of the Maryland Historical Society is entitled to receive it if they so desire.

Additions to the National Register

The Maryland Historical Trust reports in its September and November issues of its newsletter that the following structures in the county have been named to the National Register of Historic Places.

"William Hilleary House, Bladensburg. This structure, now owned by the State Highway Administration, is the only 18th century, gambrel roofed house of stone in Prince George's County. The walls were at one time stuccoed and scored to resemble ashlar masonry, a common way of making a house more elegant. William Hilleary had built this structure by 1746 on Lot 32 of Bladensburg, complying with the law requiring construction of a house with a minimum of 400 square feet and a masonry chimney. The house is locally known as the Old Stone House or the Magruder House." [The house now serves as an antiques shop and sits between the Kenilworth Avenue overpass and McGee's Upholstery on Annapolis Road, Route 450.]

"Kingston, Upper Marlboro. Kingston is a one-and-a-half story, five bay frame house built in the first half of the 18th century. In the 19th century board and batten siding and Carpenter Gothic trim were added to the house. Those Victorian details, though prominent, do not alter the 18th century vernacular form. This juxtaposition of two building styles in which neither obliterates the other makes Kingston unusual."

"Content Upper Marlboro. Also known as the Bowling House, this two-story frame structure was built in three stages, beginning in 1767 and ending in 1844. Content is the third eldest building in Upper Marlboro.--" [The house is located across from the Episcopal Church in Upper Marlboro. Society member J.J. Smith is restoring it.]

Celebrate with us at the Christmas Party--December 16--Montpelier

#### Prince George's County and the Maryland Gazette, 1768.

Four years ago in the December 1974 issue of News and Notes we published excerpts from the Maryland Gazette of 1774. This December we present excerpts from the December 1, 1768, edition of the Maryland Gazette--to show what news might have been on the minds of the citizens of Prince George's County at year's end two hundred and ten years ago.

The Maryland Gazette was the province's principal newspaper, printed in Annapolis and issued weekly in an edition of four pages. Two of the four pages were devoted to advertising, and most of the news coverage was devoted to international, British, or other colonial events, with little attention to local matters. A more complete description of the Maryland Gazette can be found in the December 1974 edition of News and Notes.

Printed below are some of the news items and advertisements from the issue of December 1, 1768, with particular emphasis on Prince George's County. It should be noted that Governor Horatio Sharpe was leaving office--and the grand juries of several of the counties saw fit to publish words of praise for his service in this issue of the newspaper. Those must have been the good old days--when grand juries commended public officials instead of indicting them!

The

MARYLAND GAZETTE

Thursday, December 1, 1768

Warsaw, August 24.

Notwithstanding the taking of Cracow, we are apprehensive that the Tranquility of the Kingdom [Poland, which was suffering invasions, revolts, and conspiracies] will not soon be restored; for besides that the Haydamacks [Cossacks?] have committed fresh Excesses, by burning Three Towns, about 50 Villages, and murdering 4 or 5000 People, among whom were great Numbers of Jews, most of whom were burnt alive; some Confederacies are apprehended in Lithuania, where the High-Ways are very dangerous.

Ploczko, August 24.

The Peasants of the Ukraine, who were Accomplices in the first Revolt, have been put in Irons, and are sentenced to work on the Fortifications, for Life. Three Hundred are to be sent to Warsaw, One Hundred to Lemberg, and the same Number to Kamienieck, the last of which Places is putting into a State of Defence.

Vienna, August 27.

The last Letters from Constantinople, confirm the Accounts before received, that the Porte was marching Troops towards the Frontiers of Russia, or Poland. It is possible that these Troops may be interned only as an Army of Observation, on account of the Disturbances in Poland.

LONDON

Sept. 3. Letters from Rome advise, that the Pope has written with his own Hand, to the Kings of France, Spain, and Sicily, on the Subject of the present Disputes between his Holiness and the House of Bourbon; but that each of those Courts had refused even to receive his Letters, 'til such Time as the Brief issued against the Duke of Parma shall be revoked.,

They write from Bassora, that the English have formed a Design of seizing the Isle of Karee; the Ships which they had on the Tigris are sailed on this Expedition. We are assured, that Kerim Kan, Regent of Persia, has engaged to furnish them with a Body of 9000 Men.

Sept- 15. A certain Lord, it is said, will not quit the Place he holds, without a very handsome Equivalent in the Way of Pension; and which Demand is under Consideration. This, and numberless other Instances, justly display the patriotic Principles of our great People in great Offices; and the Weakness of a State, to admit of such venal Proceedings.

NEW-YORK, November 17

His Excellency William Franklin, Esq., Governor of New-Jersey, the Hon. Frederick Smyth, Esq., Chief Justice of Now-Jersey, the Hon. Thomas Walker, Esq., 'Commissioner from Virginia, with several other Gentlemen, returned here a few Days ago, from Fort Stanwix, where they have been attending the Congress held by the Hon. William Johnston, Bart., with the Six United Nations, and their Tributaries.

We hear that about 3000 Indians, from the different Tribes of the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagoes, Senecas, Cayugas, Tuscaroras, Coghnowagos, Onoghguagos, Tutedoes, Shawnanese, Delawares, Mingoos of Ohio, Nanticokes, Conoys, Chugnotts, Schoras and Oriscas met Sir William Johnston at Fort-Stanwix, on the very important Business recommended by the King's Ministers. And we have now the Pleasure of assuring our

Readers, that by his unwearied Application, Address, and extraordinary Influence (which never appeared more conspicuous than on this Occasion) the Six Nations, and all their Tributaries, have granted a vast Extent of Country to his Majesty, and to the Proprietaries of Pennsylvania, and settled an advantageous Boundary Line between their Hunting Country, and this and the other Colonies to the Southward, as far as the Cherokee River; for which they received the most valuable Present in Goods and Dollars that was ever given at any Conference since the Settlement of America. An uncommon Sobriety and good Humour prevailed through all the numerous Indian Camps, for above 7 Weeks, and the Sachems and Warriors departed from the Congress in a very happy Disposition of Mind, from a firm Persuasion, that his Majesty will gratify them in their just and reasonable Expectations.--It is therefore earnestly to be hoped, that this grand Cession and Boundary will be rightly improved, as they will undoubtedly secure the future Tranquility of these Colonies, and be productive of lasting commercial Advantages to them and Great-Britain.

PHILADELPHIA, November 24

Letters from London mention, that Dr. FRANKLIN, is indefatigable in his Endeavours to convince the Ministry of the Loyalty of the Colonies, and that a tender and motherly Behaviour on the Part of Britain, would go farther to support her Authority with her American Children, than all her Forces by Sea and Land.

#### Advertisements

There is at the Plantation of Thomas Gordon, near Bladensburgh, in Prince-George's County, taken up as a Stray, a bright bay horse, about Fourteen Hands high, a Blaze in his Face, his hind Feet white, was shod before, branded on the off Shoulder CC, and, on the near Shoulder Sd.

The owner may have him, on proving Property, and paying Charges.

To be sold by Thomas Addison, Jun., Being upon Potowmack River, Prince-George's County, Two Hundred Barrells of INDIAN CORN.

TO BE SOLD, on the 12th of December, on the Plantation, called Enfield Chace, in Prince-George's County, that belonged to the late Benjamin Tasker, Esq.; sundry Negroes, and Stock; and, on the 16th of the same Month, sundry Negroes, and Stock, on the Plantation that belonged to Mr. Tasker, near Annapolis, and near the Place where the late Mr. Joseph Hill lived--This Plantation also to, be sold, at any Time. For which Purpose, apply to Mrs. Tasker.

October 27, 1768

Eight Pounds Reward. Ran away on the Night of the 14th of July last, from the Subscriber, living in Prince-George's County, the following Convict Servants, viz.

JAMES COORT, (alias Court) born in the County of Kent, in England, about 5 Feet 7 Inches high, of a dark Complexion, and about 28 Years of Age, has an oval Face, and short Hair, which is dark; his nose has a Cast to one Side, and his right Foot turns in more than his left, and speaks in the Kentish Dialect. Had on, and took with him, a blue Fearnought Jacket, Two Orange Shirts, Osnabrig Trowsers, and Cloth Coat, and Breeches of a Spanish Brown color, and the Coat has been mended in the Lining, with Pompadour coloured Shalloon, a flower'd Velvet Jacket, Yarn Stockings, half worn Shoos, and a ... Felt Hat.

ISABELLA WATSON, of a fair Complexion, sandy-coloured Hair, has a round Face, pitted with the Small-pox, of a middle Stature, but thick, an", about 24 Years of Age. Had on, and took with her, an Osnabrig Shirt, and a white Linen ditto, a striped Country Cloth Petticoat, a now blue Shalloon ditto, and a new Osnabrig ditto, a now Purple Sprig-stamped Cotton Gown, a blue and white short Gown, old Stays, and a black Silk Bonnet, a Silk



Handkerchief, Two. redstamped. Linen ditto, white Yarn Stockings, and a Pair of Country-made Pumps, and a small Looking-glass, with sundry other Things. --The above Servants came into the Country in the Year 1764, in the Neptune, Capt. Somerville.--Whoever takes up said Servants, and brings them to their Master, or secures them in any Jail, and gives Notice thereof, so as he may hear of them soon after their Commitment, shall have Four Pounds Reward for each; and, if taken, and brought home, reasonable Charges, paid by  
JOHN F. A. PRIGGS.

Annapolis, July 28, 1768

Whereas my late Master, Mr. Andrew Buchanan, has generously declined his Business of Barber and Peruke-Maker, in Favour of the Subscriber, who has removed next Door to Mr. Robert Couden's, where he has supplied himself with a fresh Assortment of Hair, and other Materials, for carrying on his Business and hopes for the Encouragement of all Gentlemen, Ladies, and others, as they may depend on being served. honestly, with every Article, in his Way, and after the newest Fashions. JAMES REID

ANNAPOLIS.- Printed by ANNE CATHARINE and WILLIAM GREEN, at the Printing-Offices Where all Persons may be supplied with this GAZETTE, at 12 s. 6 d. a Year; Advertisements, of a moderate Length, are inserted the First Time, for 5s. and 1s. for each Week's Continuance. Long Ones in Proportion to their Number of Lines.--At the same Place may be had, ready Printed, most kinds of Blanks. viz. Common and Bail Bonds; Testamentary Letters of several Sorts, with their proper Bonds annexed; Bills of Exchange; Shipping-Bills, etc., etc. All Manner of Printing-Work performed in the neatest and most expeditious Manner, on applying as above.

#### George Washington House Open

A number of historical books and crafts items are now on sale at the George Washing on House in Bladensburg. Books on hand include This Was Potomac River by Frederick Tilp (autographed); the Society's republication of the 1878 Hopkins Atlas of Prince George's County; Vera Rollo's biography of Henry Harford, last Proprietor of Maryland; The Dawn's Early Light, by Walter Lord, about the War of 1812, with several chapters on the British campaign in Prince George's County, and the history of Bladensburg by Sister Catherine Wright. The arts and crafts shop offers blown-glass, leatherwork, macrame, pottery, hand-sewn dolls and animals, and other crafts items made by local people.

The George Washington House, its museum, and gift shop, are open Wednesday through Sunday, 9:30 to 3:30. The phone number is 699-1776.

#### The Prince George's County Historical Society

A subscription to this newsletter is included in the annual dues for membership in the Society. For information contact the Society at P.O. Box 14, Riverdale, Maryland, or any of the officers listed below.

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