



# PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## 2017 ANNUAL REPORT



Mount Calvert, Society Headquarters

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To Our Members and Sponsors:

Welcome to the Prince George's County Historical Society's 2017 annual report. This report is designed to provide a recap of the events and activities of the Society's 65<sup>th</sup> year as well as a look forward to plans for the future.

We had a sad note this year of the passing of our president, John J. Petro. John was president of the Society for 15 years. His leadership and passion for the Society will be greatly missed.

With the recent board election, there has been a changing of the guard. The Society has been motoring along doing the same things every year. It is time to shake things up a bit. The Frederick S. DeMarr Library of County History will continue as it has been and we always welcome donations to its collection. The library is a valuable resource for researchers and those interested in learning more about Prince George's County. Our partnerships on lecture series will expand to include Belair Mansion. The *Then & Now* newsletter will be a printed on a quarterly basis with news, historical information, events and more.

The changes will start with events. It is not fiscally responsible to lose money on events or to have fundraisers that don't make much after expenses. During 2018, the board will evaluate events of our past and create ones for the future that are beneficial to the Society and its members. We will not be holding the St. George's Awards and Dinner this year. However, the awards will still be presented at the May preservation reception. It is important to recognize those who highlight and preserve the history of our county and we are honored to continue that tradition.

You will notice other little changes as the year goes along too. On the agenda are things like modernizing the way the board works, updating the by-laws to match how the Society functions, and brainstorming ways to put the Society on solid financial footing. Even though we would like to roll out things big and small all at once, that isn't practical. We will endeavor to be prudent as to what we change, add or remove. However, these changes are not all about the board, but should include you, our members and sponsors, too. We welcome your suggestions and hope that you bring forth ideas that will make the Society stronger and prosperous and be an organization you and other wants to be involved in.

Respectfully,

***Donna Schneider***

Donna Schneider  
President



Frederick S. DeMarr Library  
Open Saturdays from 12-4 PM  
or by appointment  
301-220-0330  
info@pghistory.org

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## **The Society's 2017 Activities**

**Frederick S. DeMarr Library of County History** is located on the lower level of the Greenbelt Public Library. The DeMarr Library was founded by Fred DeMarr, who served as President and Historian of the Society for a number of years. He was a life-long resident of the county and had an abiding interest in all aspects of Prince George's County history. His collection was donated to the Society by the DeMarr family after his untimely death in 1997.

The DeMarr Library continues to be staffed by a dedicated team of volunteers that assist visitors with historical and genealogical research, catalogue and organize the collections of written materials and maps, scan and index newsletters, archive obituaries along with all of the the other miscellaneous things that need to be done to keep the library running. We continue to receive collections of papers, articles, books, ephemera, and photographs to add to our collection. We are always in search of yearbooks from schools in the county, so if you have any to donate, please let us know. Questions concerning aspects of the history of Prince George's County may be directed by telephone to 301-220-0330, email at [info@pghistory.org](mailto:info@pghistory.org), or on the web message board. Materials do not circulate, but may be used at the DeMarr Library. Photocopies of non-copyrighted materials are free for Society members and color copies or items scanned onto a CD are available for a modest fee.

**Membership and Sponsorship.** We would like to thank members who renewed and new members who joined us in 2017. The membership cycle is on a calendar-year basis from January to December, with dues notices sent to members each December. A membership card is provided for each membership and sponsorship and all members receive the Prince George's County Historical Society's newsletter. Program discounts will periodically be offered to members. PGCHS members are able to receive a discounted membership with the Maryland Historical Society with payment of PGCHS dues annually or with status as a life member.

**Preservation** of the county's historic properties continues to be an interest of ours. During 2017, we continued to monitor Compton Bassett in Upper Marlboro. In early January 2017, the chapel at Compton Bassett (pictured) was restored and renovated. On June 3, 2017, the Society board along with the county's Historic Preservation Commission and the Hill Family were able to view the restored chapel and learn about some of the archaeology occurring on the grounds.



We continue to keep tabs on the Glenn Dale Hospital, Fairmount Heights High School, the Old Marlboro High School/Elementary School, the Old Stone Building, the Peace Cross, and other properties throughout the county.

**Public Relations** activities are through our website, [www.pghistory.org](http://www.pghistory.org), the *Then & Now* newsletter and Facebook page and blog. *Then & Now* continues to be our primary source to impart news and information to our members. Late breaking news or announcements will be emailed to members for whom we have email addresses, and will appear in a banner on the home page of our website. If you would like to receive information by email, please send a request to [info@pghistory.org](mailto:info@pghistory.org).

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## **Fundraising:**

This year, the Society established funds in memory of two individuals who supported county history and preservation. The **John J. Petro Memorial Fund** was established in memory of its president John Petro. The monies raised will primarily provide funding for the ghost structures project at Mount Calvert in Upper Marlboro, MD, a project that John was interested in undertaking. The **John M. Essex Memorial Fund** provides financial assistance to scholars, authors, graduate students and doctoral candidates wishing to research the architectural heritage of Prince George's County, MD.

## **Programs and Activities:**

The Society continued its partnership with Marietta House Museum and the Prince George's County Memorial Library System for a series of spring and fall lectures. Director **Maya Davis** presented "By Any Means Necessary: Methods of Escape by Maryland's Enslaved Community."

The annual St. George's Day awards and luncheon was held on April 9, 2017, at the College Park Airport in College Park and catered by Geppetto Catering. St. George's Awardees were:

**Dennis Campbell** – for his book  
"Redemption in Upper Marlboro"

**Kyla Hanington** – for her research and  
restoration work on the Greenbelt  
Turner cemetery

**Dan Louck** – for his countless hours of  
collecting and processing obituaries and  
his assistance on many other tasks at  
the Frederick S. DeMarr Library

**Jack Thompson, Jr. and Michael  
MacKnight** – for the restoration of  
Beechwood

**Pamela Williams and Yoku Shaw-Taylor**  
– for their book "Images of America:  
Bowie"



Susan Pearl & Kyla Hanington

On April 24 and May 21, 2017, the DeMarr Library hosted "A Night in the Stacks" to allow members, friends, and family the opportunity to peruse the hundreds of used books we have available for sale. Stop by the DeMarr Library to browse through the books when we are open.



The Society partnered with Calvert Brewing Company in Upper Marlboro for a membership mixer on April 27, 2017. Attendees were able to tour the brewery and sample their locally crafted beers, as well as learn about the area where the brewing company is located.

The annual Historic Preservation Week reception was held on May 25, 2017, at the County Administration Building in Upper Marlboro after a downpour forced us to move the event from Darnall's Chance. The Society partnered again with the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, ATHA/Maryland Milestones, the Prince George's County Historical & Cultural Trust, the University of Maryland, and other county organizations and businesses to



(L to R) Leigh Ryan, Michelle Kretsch and Elizabeth Hewlett

host the event. The Prince George's County Historic Preservation Commission presented historic site plaques to seven recipients, Maryland Milestones presented their Heritage Tourism Awards, the School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation at the University of Maryland presented the Prince George's Heritage Fellowship Award, and the Surratt House Museum presented a certificate of appreciation. The Society gave the President's Preservation Award to **Michelle Kretsch** in recognition of her work at the Riversdale House Museum. The award is given to someone who supports the preservation of the county's history outside of the efforts of the Society.

**Jane Taylor Thomas** and **Nathania Branch Miles**, as the Society's representatives, joined with the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society, Inc. Prince George's County Chapter and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to host the 12<sup>th</sup> annual Juneteenth Celebration on June 17, 2017. The annual event commemorates the end of slavery. This year's workshops were for beginner to advanced family researchers ranging from genealogy, preservation, slave research, and DNA in genealogical research. There are special activities for children to introduce them to the world of genealogy and family history. This event is a complement to the family fun day hosted by the Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation at Walker Mill Regional Park.

Our annual Prince of a County fundraiser was held at the Don Speed Smith Goodloe House at Bowie State University, on September 24, 2017. The guest speaker for the afternoon was Ricardo C. Mitchell, President of the Bowie State University (BSU) Alumni Association. He regaled us with stories about his record setting football days as well as the history of BSU. Many thanks to Ms. Wedderburn and her team for opening the house and giving tours and **Nathania Branch Miles** for arranging the event.



The 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Maryland Legacy Day was a co-sponsorship among the Prince George's County Chapter Afro American Historical and Genealogical Society, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Society. Maryland Legacy Day is in honor of the legacy and heritage of the enslaved men, women and children who became free on November 1, 1864. This year's celebration was held on November 18, 2017, at the LDS Cultural Hall in Suitland. The theme was "The Legacy of Maryland" From then Until Now!" with keynote speaker, Karsonya (Kaye) Wise Whitehead, an Associate Professor at Loyola University in African and African American Studies in the Department of Communication.

The Society partnered again with the City of Bowie Museums for our annual holiday party and annual meeting at Belair Mansion on December 10, 2017. Thanks to ATHA/Maryland Milestones for its sponsorship of the event.

### **Prince George's Hall of Fame:**

The portraits of distinguished Prince Georgians that were hanging in the County Courthouse in Upper Marlboro had to be removed this spring. The portraits are being stored and we are looking for new locations for them to be displayed. Our preference is for them to be located at venues so they can continue to educate the public and be enjoyed. If you are aware of a location or more that can accommodate the portraits, please let the Society know.

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*As always, we would like to thank our valued volunteers, members and sponsors for their support and participation. Your continued interest in our library, programs and activities is greatly appreciated. We could not continue to operate without your involvement.*

**Platinum:**

**Barry & Mary Gossett**

**Gold:**

**Minuteman Press of Crofton  
Eugene & Lynn Roberts  
Donna Schneider**

**Silver:**

**Joseph & Peggy Behun  
John Brunner  
Kenneth & Mary Gossett  
James Masters  
Maryland Milestones  
Shipley & Horne, P.A.**

**Bronze:**

**Howard Berger  
Sandra Cross  
EHT Traceries  
Steven Gilbert  
Rebecca Livingston  
Dan Louck  
Barbara McCeney  
Benjamin & Diana McCeney  
Douglas & Susan McElrath  
Melissa Messick  
Gail Rothrock & Chuck Trozzo  
Stephen & Barbara Sonnett  
Andrew & Sondra Wallace  
Patricia Williams**

**Library Volunteers:**

**Nathan Avant  
Sarah Bourne  
Clement Lau  
Susan Pearl  
Dusty Rhoads  
Leigh Ryan  
Donna Schneider  
Tom Simon  
Diane Stultz**

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*The purpose of the Prince George's County Historical Society is to Collect, Preserve, Interpret, Share and Disseminate the Heritage, History, and Cultures of Prince George's County.*

To support our purpose we:

- ❖ Foster an understanding and appreciation of the history and heritage of Prince George's County;
- ❖ Collect, record, organize, restore and preserve historical data, artifacts and all associated materials relative to Prince George's County and the state of Maryland;
- ❖ Promote and encourage research into all aspects of Prince George's County history and heritage;
- ❖ Acquaint and make available to members and the general public historical data and all associated materials relating to Prince George's County through programs and publications arranged or sponsored by the Society; and
- ❖ Encourage and participate in the protection and preservation of historic sites and structures in Prince George's County.

The Society is a non-profit body of five officers and up to 18 directors. The Board of Directors is a volunteer body and serves without compensation. The Society may accept gifts, bequests or endowments and solicit funds for its programs under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

### **Board of Directors as of December 31, 2017**

President – Donna Schneider  
Vice President – Jack Thompson, Junior  
Secretary – Jane Taylor Thomas  
Treasurer – Lynn Springer Roberts  
Historian - Susan G. Pearl

#### **Directors (year term expires)**

John Brunner (2019)	Justin McClain (2020)
Katharine Bryant (2020)	Barrington McKoy (2018)
Maya Davis (2018)	Nathania Branch Miles (2020)
Arthur Dock (2020)	Nancy Dixon Saxon (2018)
Amanda Elliott (2020)	Wayne Tonkins, Sr. (2018)
Christine Garcia (2019)	Sealani Weiner (2019)
Stacey Hawkins (2019)	

### **Board of Director Meetings**

All members and sponsors of the Society are invited and welcome to attend Society meetings. Please check our website for dates, times, and location.

## Profit and Loss Report – FY16 and FY17

	<u>FY 2017</u>	<u>FY 2016</u>
<b><u>Income</u></b>		
ATHA Grant	\$ -	\$ 500.00
Book Sales	\$ 398.89	\$ 549.45
Donations Received	\$ 1,293.00	\$ 716.00
Endowment Fund	\$ -	\$ 50.00
Interest Income	\$ 21.28	\$ 23.76
Library Income	\$ 901.24	\$ 377.29
MDHS Dues Received	\$ -	\$ 630.00
PGCHS Dues Received	\$ 4,940.00	\$ 5,845.00
Program/Activity Income	\$ 5,767.00	\$ 6,660.00
Sponsorships Received	\$ 4,350.00	\$ 4,500.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 17,671.41</b>	<b>\$ 19,851.50</b>
<b><u>Expenses</u></b>		
Book Sales Postage/Taxes/Fees	\$ 73.02	\$ 25.82
Donations & Gifts Paid	\$ 96.45	\$ -
Dues & Subscriptions Paid	\$ 315.00	\$ 165.00
General Operations Expenses	\$ 5,709.45	\$ 6,362.72
Grant Funded Projects	\$ 154.67	\$ 334.20
Insurance Paid	\$ 1,311.00	\$ 1,353.00
Legal Fees	\$ -	\$ 500.00
Library Expenses	\$ 661.82	\$ 1,571.83
MDHS Dues Paid	\$ -	\$ -
Membership Expenses	\$ 791.84	\$ 592.41
Newsletter Expenses	\$ 2,377.47	\$ 2,443.03
Program/Activity Expenses	\$ 6,743.03	\$ 9,419.11
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 18,233.75</b>	<b>\$ 22,767.12</b>
<b>Profit/(Loss)</b>	<b>\$ (562.34)</b>	<b>\$ (2,915.62)</b>
<b>Balance Sheet as of December 31, 2017</b>		
Checking	\$ 24,705.15	
Accounts Receivable	\$ 1,646.80	
Fixed Assets	\$ 12,478.27	
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 38,830.22</b>	