

# News and Notes

## Prince George's County Historical Society



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January 1998

Our 46th Year

XXVII Number 1

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### 1998 WINTER WORKSHOP

The Board of Directors of the Society met at the home of Phyllis and Bill Herndon on Saturday, January 10 to review the past year and make plans for 1998.

During 1997 a number of different events were tried in an effort to reach wider participation. It was felt that these were all successful. The collaboration with the African American Genealogical Society in February and the Lunch / Lecture by Susan Pearl in May had large attendances. Our March meeting with members of the Duvall Society will be repeated this year. The *First Annual* Dinner Meeting in November drew a much larger crowd than recent election meetings so we are planning a similar dinner meeting for November 1998.

If you missed the October Candlelight Concert at St. Barnabas Church, you have two more chances- on February 1st and March 8th. St. George's Day and the Christmas Party were their usual success and will not be tampered with in the near future!

The Society will not meet regularly each month on the second Saturday afternoon, but we have several events in the planning stage. We would appreciate comment from the membership about the changes and welcome suggestions for new activities.

**"Watch this space for news of coming attractions."**

### Board of Directors - 1998

President - Jane Eagen

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## **WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS**

### **Proposed Calendar for 1998**

Events discussed at the Board's Winter Workshop include: A February Black History educational event or lecture at Dorsey Chapel; March events under consideration are a repeat concert at St. Barnabas Church, a County based bus-trip, a joint venture with the DuVal Society; and a St. George's Day awards selection meeting. These awards are presented annually to recognize outstanding efforts in the areas of preservation and research.

**Please help to make these representative of the entire county by nominating worthy candidates. You may send suggestions to: PGCHS; Box 14, Riverdale, MD 20737 or contact Susan Pearl at 301-262-3367.**

The County's April birthday will be the actual presentation date for the St. George's Day Awards.

Additional events under consideration for the remainder of 1998 are lectures, yard sales, trips and heritage days ending the year with the Christmas Party gala. The Board welcomes your ideas and suggestions.

**Ralph and Susan Wetzl  
George D. Denny, Jr.  
Diane Stultz  
Daniel Fileppelli  
Iris H. McConnell  
John McCann  
Elizabeth Funk  
Mr. & Mrs. Dan Snyder  
David and Joyce Uber  
Edmond N. Morse  
Gerri Gerhardt  
Judith M. Schneider  
Wendell E. McCarty  
Ruth Kluth**

## **WELCOME BACK**

**Mrs. Francis Loevi**

### **Editorial Comments**

During Lester's brief visit to the United States over the holiday's, he made various contributions to the Society. He wrote the following two articles for this newsletter which you will recall he previously edited. The first, on Presidential visits to Prince George's County, is meant to celebrate birthdays during the month of February. The second article he wrote while helping at the Frederick S. DeMarr Library. He also attended the aforementioned long-range planning meeting so that I could keep the Library open. I appreciate his help very much.

## PRESIDENTS COME TO PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY

We all know that George Washington slept here (in Montpelier Mansion, to name just one place), but how many other Presidents have traveled to Prince George's County. In honor of President's Day, we thought we'd mention just a few.

George Washington may have been the first President of the United States under our Constitution, but **John Hanson** was the new Nation's first President of the Continental Congress after the adoption of the Articles of Confederation. A native of Charles County, Hanson married into a Prince George's family - his wife Jane Contee was the daughter of Alexander Contee, the immigrant and progenitor of the Contee family. Hanson died while on a visit to Oxon Hill Manor and is said to have been buried there. Virta p 71.

George Washington slept at Montpelier in May 1787. Virta, p. 73 It is likely that he stayed at other places in the County, and it is noteworthy that he selected Prince George's County as the seat of the new Government (The District of Columbia was formed from Prince George's County).

While we are not sure that John Adams stopped in the County, his wife Abigail stayed with Major Snowden in 1800. Virta -p.73

Our Third President surely traveled through Prince George's County on his way from Monticello to New York, Annapolis and other eastern locales. While we've no real proof, a story did appear in the March 12, 1970 edition of the "Washington Star" that we came across in the James Wilfong scrapbooks at the Frederick S. DeMarr Library of County History the other day. It reads, in part, as follows:

"Marietta was a simple brick mansion along the road to Annapolis in the winter of 1783-84 when a distraught Thomas Jefferson, shocked by the recent death of his beloved wife, found solace and warm friendship there.

"Jefferson had made friends with Gabriel Duvall, the brilliant clerk of the Continental Congress, whom he met in Annapolis that winter. The Duvall home, Marietta, was a convenient place to visit on weekends during Congress."

I will leave it to our Historian, Susan Pearl, to comment on this story. I was under the impression that Jefferson's wife Martha died in September 1782, and the grief-stricken man turned not to Annapolis but to a stint as American Minister to France as his place of recovery. See Peterson, Merril D., Jefferson.

President Madison's well known visit to Bladensburg might have been termed a "day at the races" but was certainly not enjoyable in August of 1814. The Battle of Bladensburg was the most humiliating defeat the young country had ever suffered. Virta p 88.

General Edward Fitzgerald Beale entertained both Ulysses Grant and Grover Cleveland at Hitching Post Hill (Ash Hill) near Hyattsville.

Matthew F. Halloran of Edgewood in Hyattsville was the Chief Clerk of the U. S. Civil Service, the highest ranking employee there. His one-time boss, Theodore Roosevelt, was said to have visited Halloran's home, which is on Hamilton Street in the Hyattsville Historic District.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, whose administration built Greenbelt, visited that city on several occasions during and after construction of the noble experiment.

Beginning in the 1950s, virtually all Presidents visited Prince George's County because Andrews Air Force Base has been the home of Air Force One since the Eisenhower administration.

Dwight D. Eisenhower was the only president known to have lived in Prince George's County - in 1919 while stationed at Camp Meade, he lived at Mrs. Ray's rooming house at 327 Montgomery Street, Laurel. Virta, p. 181.

It is said that John F. Kennedy visited Bladensburg on more than one occasion to sample the 'cultural' delights of the Crossroads.

George Bush, in his efforts to pass the Clean Air Act, visited the PEPCO Power Plant at Chalk Cliffs in March 1990. Virta 257.

Our current President has also visited Prince George's County, its schools most notably.

### BIRTH OF AN INSTITUTION

The Society has begun the countdown to our golden anniversary, which we shall celebrate in 2002. Like most enterprises, this one was some time in getting off the ground. We present here a short history of the founding of the Prince George's County Historical Society.

May 6, 1952. James W. Foster, Director of the Maryland Historical Society, wrote to Mr. Joe Zatman, Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission, 4811 Riverdale Road, Riverdale, Maryland

"Dear Mr. Zatman:

We send you a list of the members of the Historical Society who live in Prince George's County. We hope that you will succeed in lining all of them up in joining the new county society as joint members with this Society.

Ordinarily the dues for joint membership would run \$5 a year, payable to the treasurer of the county society. The latter would remit \$4 to this Society together with the name of member. This is in cases where the county membership dues are only \$1.

If dues of the county society are \$2 a year, joint dues will be \$6, and \$4 of this should be remitted to this Society.

As our dues are payable by the calendar year and we are already in the fifth month, we do not want to see a situation arise where we would refund any part of dues already banked to the county treasurer. We shall be glad to discuss with you the procedure in handling this matter.

Please feel free to call on us for suggestions, copies of publications of other county societies and information about constitutions, dues, membership privileges, etc."

On May 29, 1952, Mr Zatman wrote back:

"Dear Mr. Foster:

Thank you very much for the membership list of the Historical Society involving those living in Prince George's County.

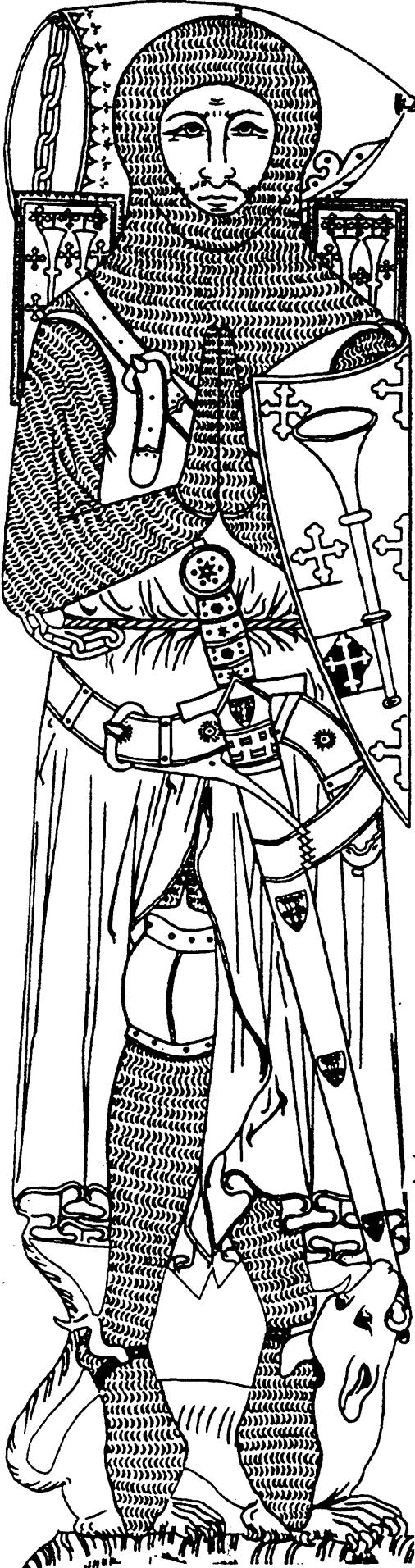
Mr. Robert M. Watkins, the chairman of our Commission, is anxious to get started as soon as possible on the organization of a Prince George's County Chapter of the Maryland Society, and your list will prove of very great value in this endeavor.

Mr. Watkins has instructed me to forward his appreciation for your list and to assure you of our desire to co-operate with you in this matter."

A note MEMORANDUM dated June 11, 1952, states:

Mr. Leland Worthington - Dropped by this morning to see the music room at Joe Zatman's request - Says it will make a fine meeting room, but doesn't think much of it as a place for storing relics (which he, incidentally, plans to obtain for us) -- Will contact Mr. Zatman and Mr. Duckett later.

RE: Maryland Historical Society,  
Prince George's County Chapter -



# 6th Annual Marching Through Time

*Multi-Period Living History Civilian and Military Encampments.*

• Romans • Vikings • Knights • Musketeers •  
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ACTIVITIES TO BE PERFORMED  
Period Cooking, Crafts, Merchants,  
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and tactical demonstrations

April 18th and 19th, 1998

11a.m. to 5p.m. both days

Admission: \$5.00/Adults \$2.00/Students

## Marietta

Location: 5626 Bell Station Rd, Glenn Dale MD  
Capital Beltway/I-495/I-95 Exit 20A; Take Rt.  
450 East Annapolis Rd. 4 miles to Rt. 193  
West; Follow signs to Free Shuttle Parking

For more information please call:  
(301) 464-5291 TTY (301) 699-2544



A Facility of the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation, Division of Natural and Historical Resources

## UPCOMING EVENTS

The **Anne Arundel Community College's** Continuing Education/Lifelong Learning Spring 1998 brochure offers several interesting programs/tours related to *Historic Preservation: Keeping the Past for the Future*. Programs consider Family and Community Culture and visits to Historic Battlefields. For information call 410-541-2462.

The **Historical Society of Talbot County** sponsors a History Reading Group with discussions of Colonial and Revolutionary history. Also, Emma Gooby of Easton will talk about her great-grandfather, Joseph "Guby" Gooby. For additional information call 410-822-0773.

**THE LORD BALTIMORE TOUR TO FRANCE AND BELGIUM**, May 28 - June 11, 1998, will be lead by *Professor David Fogle*, Director of the UMCP Graduate Program in Historic Preservation and the Kiplin Hall Study Center of the University of Maryland. Sponsored by the Maryland Historical Society, the University of Maryland Graduate Program in Historic Preservation, and the Riversdale Historical Society. For information call: Mary Munroe, 202-293-0033.

The **Maryland Historical Society** announces a major, comprehensive exhibition of rare early American Jewish portraits and decorative arts from 1700 through the 1830s. ***Facing the New World Jewish Portraits and Decorative Arts in Colonial and Federal America*** opens in Baltimore on February 20 and will continue through May 24, 1998. For information call: 410-685-3750.

See attached flier for ***Marching Through Time***, a most successful event, held at Marietta Mansion.

On July 15, Mr. Foster of the Maryland Historical Society, wrote:

"Dear Mr. Zatman:

We are now preparing the summer issue of our bulletin, Maryland History Notes. A copy of the last number is enclosed. You will see on the last page that we carry brief notices concerning the activities in the various counties. If the organization of such society in Prince George's County has gone far enough for us to announce that it has been or is being formed, we should like to run a notice to that effect. Can you let us have a few lines by return mail regarding the situation?"

On July 18, Mr. Zatman dutifully wrote Mr. Foster:

"Dear Mr. Foster:

Thank you for your bulletin,  
Maryland History Notes (May 1952),  
and for your interest in the formation  
of a Prince George's County Historical  
Society.

Although we are still in the preliminary stage, we hope to have something definite to report after Tuesday, July 22. Will you please let me know the deadline for items for your forthcoming bulletin, so I can send you the information about our organization as soon as it is completed.

Thanks again for your cooperation.”

Mr. Foster provided details on deadlines and procedures in a short note dated July 19, 1952.

However, Mr. Zatman's next letter was somewhat disappointing, I submit, for him to write. Dated August 4, 1952, it reads:

"Dear Mr. Foster:

Many thanks for your letter of July

19, 1952. Organization plans for the Prince George's County Historical Society are still in the formative stage, and we shall have nothing to report in this connection until after September 15<sup>th</sup>.

At that time, we plan to have a meeting of interested persons, and we hope to be in a position to report something to you as a result of this meeting.

We shall appreciate it, if you will place this office on the mailing list for your quarterly bulletin, entitled "Maryland History Notes." If there is a subscription fee, please bill this Commission at its Prince George's County Regional Office, 4811 Riverdale Road, Riverdale, Maryland."

On August 12, 1952, the following Memorandum appeared:

"MEMORANDUM – August 12,  
1952  
To: Joe Zatman  
Re: Prince George's County  
Historical Society

Mrs. Russell W. Bean      Warfield  
d 1969

6208 Sheridan Street.  
Riverdale Hills, Md.

Informed that organization meeting will be held middle of September and that Society will be organized soon after - Very much interested.

Joyce”

On or about September 1, 1952 (based on a copy stamped received Sep. 2, 1952), T. Howard Duckett wrote a 'My Dear' letter, stating as follows:

Many months ago I promised Senator Radcliffe that some of us would try to form an active Historical Society for the County. The Park and Planning Commission has generously agreed to give us, indefinitely and for our exclusive use, the music room of the Calvert Mansion.

This is an invitation to you, therefore, to meet with others on the enclosed list Monday, September 15th, at eight o'clock P.M., at the Calvert Mansion, Riverdale, to organize a Prince George's County Historical Society, and, if deemed desirable, to affiliate with the Maryland Historical Society. The courtesy and cooperation of the Park and Planning Commission make it possible for us to have our permanent headquarters in one of the most beautiful and historic mansions in the County, and it seems very unwise to let this opportunity pass.

I will certainly appreciate "if you could indicate the probability of your attending."

This letter was sent to 25 people, of whom 11 attended. Those invited were (an \* indicates attendance at the first meeting):

Joe Addison  
Beall Bowie  
\*Oden Bowie  
\*M. Hampton Magruder  
\*T. Howard Duckett  
\*John S. Stanley  
Ogle Marbury  
\*Leroy Pumphrey  
Chas. C. Marbury  
S. Marvin Peach  
Richard Zantzinger  
\*Kent Robert Mulliken  
Lansdale G. Sasscer  
W. Hallarn Tuck  
\*T. Hammond Welsh, Jr.  
Loundes Wells  
Mrs. Eleanor Calvert Thompson

Hal. C.B. Clagett  
\*Mrs. Rhoda Christmas  
\*Mrs. G.W.S. Musgrave (DAR)  
\*Mrs. Susanna Christofane  
(Bladensburg Historical Society)  
\*A. Glynn Bowie  
Wm H. Brooke

## MINUTES

Eleven Prince Georges County residents met at 8:30pm Monday, September 15, in the Calvert Mansion, Riverdale, to take the initial steps looking toward formation of a Prince George's County Historical Society.

T. Howard Duckett was elected temporary chairman of the group, which met in the music room of the mansion. ... Acting as Temporary secretary was J. B. Zatman, public relations officer of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. Robert M. Watkins, chairman of the Park and Planning Commission, also met briefly with the group and explained the history of the mansion. Mrs. Musgrave moved that the temporary chairman be given the authority to appoint the necessary committees. The motion was duly seconded by Mr. Welsh and passed. Mr. Duckett said he will appoint the following three committees within a few days: incorporation and bylaws; membership and house committees. Mr. Stanley moved that the dues for membership be set at \$6. A year. The motion was seconded by Mr. Welsh and passed. Mr. Pumphrey, in discussing new members, said it was essential to get persons who are vitally interested in Prince Georges County. It was agreed that the membership committee would pass on the first 100 members, after which the next meeting of the group will be held. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:45pm. The next meeting took place on

NOVEMBER 19, 1954!!

The Society deeply appreciates the many contributions that have been made in memory of Fred DeMarr. These funds will all be used to further the development of the Frederick S. DeMarr Library of County History. The Society is committed to continuing his efforts to preserve the rich heritage of Prince George's County.

The Board of Directors extends a sincere *Thank You* to the following contributors:

Mr & Mrs Robert Chaney	George Weber
Mr & Mrs George Calcott	Friends of Montpelier
Beverly Green	Elizabeth Aman
Mr & Mrs Herbert Embry	Hilda Hayes
Ida DiVincenzo	Louise Tatspaugh
John Giannetti	Katherine Lilly
Sami Sharkey	John Heise
Mr & Mrs Richard Bourne	William Roeder
France Hoyert	Mary Milstead
Charles Roeder	Margie Roeder Ellis
Carey Singleton	Mr & Mrs Paul Lanham
Karen Eisinger	Laura Verge
Gail Rothrock	Karen Miles
Mr & Mrs Vance Livingston	Anne Fotos
National History Day, Inc.	Gertrude Poe
D. Beatley	Waldo Burnside
Gordon Wells	Greig Stewart
Eleanor Fields	Catherine Bernstein
Mr & Mrs William Herndon	The Surratt Society
Mr & Mrs Lester Sweeting	Geraldine Gerhardt
Maitland Dade	Sarah Moseley
Elizabeth Clark	Mr & Mrs Fred Lawrence
Patricia Tatspaugh	

Historical & Cultural Trust of Prince George's County  
Friends of Fred DeMarr at the University of Maryland Student Union

Other moving tributes to Fred were the dedication of a collection of historic photographs in his memory at the Stamp Student Union of the University of Maryland on October 21, 1997. The Fall 1997 issue of *The Riversdale Letter*, edited by Ann M. Ferguson and published by the Riversdale Historical Society (RHS), remembers Fred as a long-time friend and supporter.

But most importantly, we are happy to report that since the Frederick S. DeMarr Library at Marietta was reopened following his death, 350 volunteers hours had been contributed toward making the passion of this special man a useful, viable library. The Library Committee comprised of Dick and Sarah Bourne, Susan Pearl and Sharon H. Sweeting welcomes your assistance.

**PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
POST OFFICE BOX 14  
RIVERDALE, MARYLAND 20738-0014**

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U.S. POSTAGE  
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RIVERDALE, MD  
PERMIT NO. 1948

**DATED MATERIAL**

**HOURS OF OPERATION**

Library: Saturdays 12 - 4 PM  
and during special events  
Call 301-464-0591

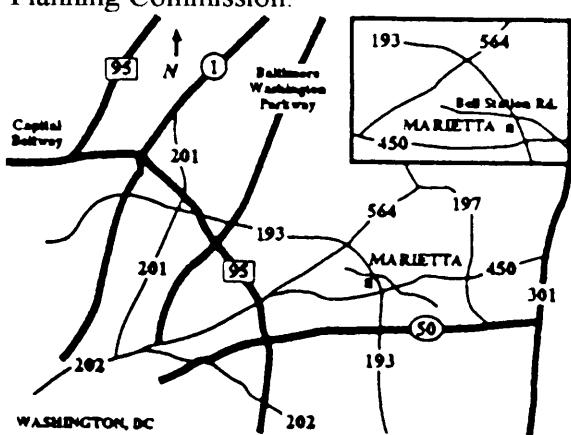
Marietta Tours -Friday, 11 - 3, Sunday,  
12 - 4 - and by appointment -  
Information 301-464-0591

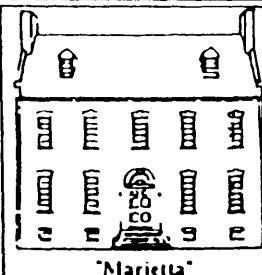
**THE SOCIETY GIFT SHOP**

Features a wide selection of books, gifts,  
toys and small antiques. Open Friday,  
Saturday and Sunday, 12 -4 PM and  
during special events. Call 301-464-  
0590.

**LOCATION OF THE SOCIETY**

The Society is located at Marietta, 5624  
Bell Station Road, in Glenn Dale, MD, off  
Route 193, near Route 450. This is a  
facility of the Maryland National Park and  
Planning Commission.





# News and Notes

## Prince George's County Historical Society



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February 1998

Our 46th Year

XXVII Number 2

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### MARCH 14TH JOINT MEETING WITH THE DUVALL SOCIETY

Our March meeting will be held at the Glenn Dale Community Center, 11901 Glenn Dale Boulevard, Glenn Dale, just down the road from Marietta, at 2:00 pm. We will join with the Duvall Society in a study of the letters of Gabriel Duvall. Please attend this exciting event.

#### ALSO MARK THESE IMPORTANT DATES ON YOUR CALENDAR

March 8      St. Barnabas' Candlelight Concert: **James Gholson**, Clarinet; 4 p.m.

James Gholson, clarinet, is Associate Professor of Music at the University of Memphis. A native of Prince George's County holding advanced degrees from the Catholic University of America, he is principal clarinetist with the Memphis Symphony. St. Barnabas' Church, Queen Anne Parish, and the Prince George's County Historical Society, invite you to join us for this special occasion. The church, built in 1772, offers an unusual and most attractive setting for chamber music.

March 14      Prince George's County Historical Society **Board Meeting**, 9:00 am; Marietta Joint Meeting with Duvall Society (see above for details)

March 21      **Mad Hatter Tea Party** at Marietta (See enclosed flier for details)

March 29      **PGCHS DAY** at the **GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY LIBRARY**, 12219 Tulip Grove Drive, Bowie Maryland. Open House: 2:00 to 5:00.

Prince George's County has many fascinating places to visit. The Tricentennial Passport of History introduced us to many, but there are a number of smaller, lesser known locations with great attraction.

The Historical Society is making it easy for you to discover some of these through a series of special invitation events. These will be *SOCIETY VISITS*, scheduled at times not open to the general public. We hope that many of our members will take advantage of these opportunities to learn more about our community. Members and researchers from Prince George's County Genealogical society will be there to show us the wealth of information available. The library materials are nationwide in scope with particular emphasis on Maryland. A recent first-time visitor described the Library as "*the county's best kept secret.*"

- April 11      Prince George's County Historical Society **Board Meeting**, 9:00am, Marietta
- April 18-19    ***Marching Through Time*** at Marietta (see details in Jan. 1998, *News & Notes*)
- April 26      **St. George's Day 1998**; *Andrews Air Force Base Officer's Club*, 1:00 to 4:00  
(Watch for invitations which will be mailed shortly).

The Board's 1998 Winter Workshop also developed, in addition to the above Calendar, a

#### ***Mission Statement***

The Prince George's County Historical Society is dedicated to fostering understanding and appreciation of the rich culture and heritage of our county by

- \* maintaining library facilities to collect and preserve archival materials that encourage continuing research;
- \* developing educational programs and publications;
- \* contributing to and participating in programs and events which stimulate and enrich the lives of residents and visitors to the county.

The Board also charged the Publication's Committee, lead by Sarah Bourne, with the task of republishing ***Prince George's County - A Pictorial History*** by Alan Virta. This volume has been out of print for the past year and we receive frequent requests for copies. The new edition will be funded by the Society and will include an up-date of county history and a pictorial review of the Tricentennial. We expect to have it available in time for Christmas 1998!

#### **New Members**

Mildred E. O'Brien  
Merle L. Gibson, Jr.

Gary Moore

#### **Welcome Back**

Mary Calvert Conger

#### **New Life Members**

Ed Joynes and  
Christian Davis

## **U.S.S. PRINCE GEORGES**

During World War II the United States Navy named 184 ships after Marylanders, or places in Maryland. There were 107 Liberty ships named after Marylanders. Prince Georgians so honored were Daniel Carroll, Benjamin Contee, Gabrial Duvall , John Hanson and Reverdy Johnson. There were 43 Destroyers named after Maryland military Heros such as Joshua Barney , Stephen Decatur and Benjamin Stoddert. There were 34 other types of warships named after places in Maryland., Potomac, Patuxant, Prince Georges to name a few.

The USS Prince Georges was built in Richmond California and was first named the SS Richard March Hoe (AP165) and was launched October 30 1942. It served in the Army Transport Service making runs to the Aleutian Islands with Army troops. Acquired by the Navy October 25, 1943 and commissioned November 10, 1943 under the command of Lt.Comdr. W.J. Lane. The ship was renamed the USS Prince Georges after Prince George's County .

On December 16 1943 Prince Georges departed Pearl Harbor on her first Navy operation, which took her to the bloody shores of Tarawa, where she spent Christmas 1943 and New Years Day of 1944, before returning to Pearl Harbor. In February 1944 she steamed from Pearl Harbor to disgorge men and materials on Kwajelein Atoll, Makin Island and Albamama. After a return to Pearl Harbor, Prince Georges was back in the Gilberts and Marshalls in April 1944. She participated as a part of the invasion fleet -Saipan, on June 20 to 25 1944. and returned to Pearl Harbor in July 1944.

Reclassified (AK 224) August 20, 1944, Prince Georges departed Pearl Harbor again in September to back up the invasion of the Palaus, anchoring in Kossol Roads October 31. In December she delivered troops to Noumes, then put into Auckland before heading north and west reaching the Solomons and Marianas in January 1945 . She was employed as a troop carrier in the Central Pacific until June 1945.

Returning to Pearl Harbor in June 1945, she proceeded on to San Francisco. At the end of the war she was back in Hawaii, whence she carried occupation troops to Saipan and Japan. Then reporting for " Magic-Carpet" duty at the end of October, she steamed for the United States with a load of returning veterans, arriving Seattle November 10, 1945. She then proceeded to Okinawa on another " Magic-Carpet" run.

Reaching San Francisco February 13, 1946, she was decommissioned and returned simultaneously to civilian use and her name was struck from the Navy List May 1, 1946. Prince Georges received one battle star for World War II service. Her name returned to the SS Richard March Hoe and she served as a cargo ship until she was scrapped at Oakland California in November 1969.



Submitted by: Bob Crawley

## Board of Directors - 1998

President - Jane Eagen

Vice President - Eugene Roberts

Secretary - Sarah Bourne

Treasurer - Joyce Uber

Membership - Phyllis Herndon

Historian - Susan Pearl

John Giannetti

W.C. (Bud) Dutton

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Kathryn Clagett

Midlred Ridgeley Gray

Iris McConnell

Editor - Sharon Howe Sweeting

Warren Rhoads

Joyce McDonald



## **"The Graveyard Shift: A Workshop on Cemetery Preservation"**

**at Darnall's Chance  
14800 Governor Oden Bowie Drive  
Upper Marlboro, Maryland**

**Saturday, March 21, 1998 8:30AM to 3:00 PM**

**Fee, includes lunch: \$15/Bi-County Residents, \$18/ Non Bi-County Residents  
Registration Required. Call 301-952-8010. Checks payable to: M-NCPPC  
Mail to: Darnall's Chance, Box 32, Upper Marlboro, Md. 20773**

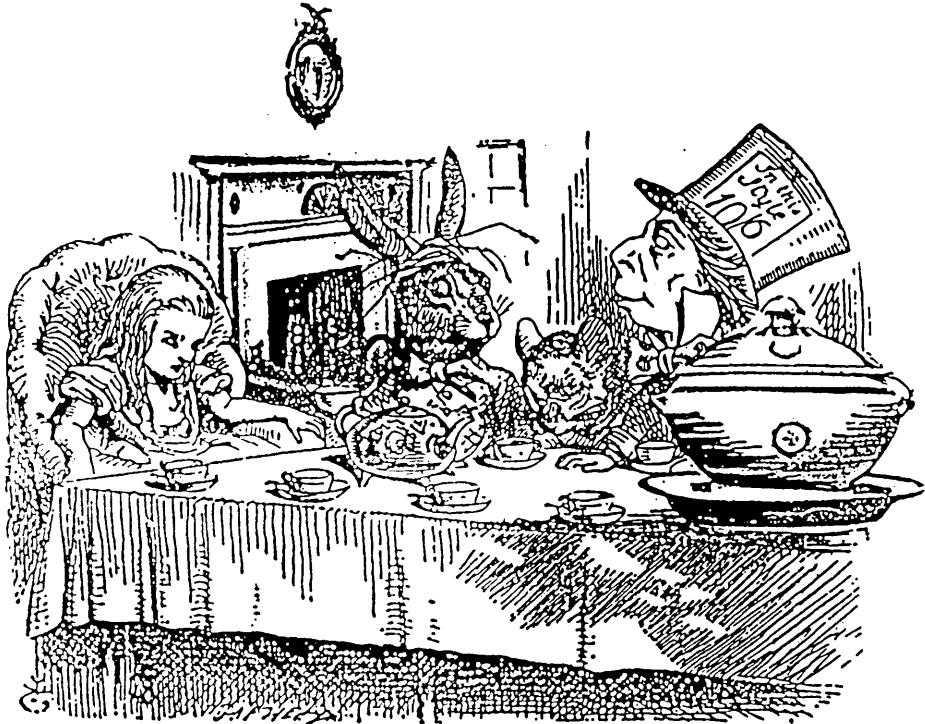


**Presentations Include:**  
Planning the Cemetery Restoration Project  
Congressional Cemetery Update  
Stone Marker and Iron Fence Preservation  
Symbolism of Women Cemetery Sculptures  
Searching for Lost Graveyards  
Cemetery Consumer Rights  
Managing the Small Private Cemetery

**"Cycles" a Photo Exhibit by Timothy Bladen accompanies this workshop  
Opening Reception March 15      Exhibit runs through April 30  
Weekdays: 9 to 1      Sundays: Noon to 4**

The Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission, Prince George's County Parks & Recreation Association  
Arts and Cultural Heritage Division 2/08/98

# *Mad Hatter Tea Party*



*at historic*  
**Marietta House Museum**  
5626 Bell Station Road, Glenn Dale, MD.  
**Saturday, March 21, 1998**

**Sittings:** 11 a.m.  
1 p.m.  
3 p.m.

**Reservations Required:**  
301-464-5291



"O Looking Glass Creatures," quoth Alice, "draw near!  
Tis an honour to see me, a favour to hear:  
Tis a privilege high to have dinner and tea  
Along with the Red Queen, the White Queen and me!"

**\$5.00/4-18 yrs. \$8/Adults**

*Tea & light refreshments served; Storyteller for Children; Tour for Adults*

*Sponsored by the Prince George's County Historical Society and Marietta, a property of the Maryland National Capital Park & Planning Commission*

## WANTED

Coordinator for Gift Shop Volunteers.  
Please call Jane Eagan on 301-249-6409.



## IN MEMORIAM

Since the beginning of the New Year, two long-time members of the Society have died. **Emily Nees** and her husband, Bernie, have maintained membership in PGCHS even though they moved to Kent Island several years ago.

**Bob Chaney** and Mary Charlotte have regularly supported all Society activities for many years and we will miss his presence at future events.

We extend our sincere sympathy to Bernie and Mary Charlotte.

## Congratulations

In celebration of Black History month, an exhibition called "Reading, 'Riting, and Race: The Education of African Americans in Prince George's County, 1865 to 1954" was on display at Harmony Hall Regional Center on Livingston Road. The exhibit, as described by the Thursday, February 12, 1998, edition of the *Washington Post*, "includes wooden desks, letters, books, report cards and diplomas--documents the education of black children from emancipation until the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954, when the U.S. Supreme Court declared segregated schools unconstitutional." This exhibition was widely reviewed and highly praised.

### Annual Membership Application

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

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Please indicate:  New  Renewal

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<input type="checkbox"/> Full-time Student .....	\$ 10.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Member .....	\$ 20.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining .....	\$ 50.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Life Member .....	\$ 400.00

Additional Contribution \_\_\_\_\_

I am also interested in helping the Society as a volunteer. Please contact me regarding volunteer opportunities.

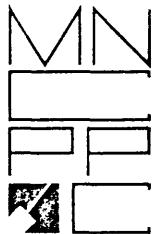
For membership in the Maryland Historical Society, include an additional \$30.00 for individual or \$40.00 for husband and wife.

Our operating support comes from your dues and contributions. All contributions qualify for tax deduction. We appreciate your support.

Please make checks payable to PGCHS  
Mail check and form to:

Prince George's County  
Historical Society  
Post Office Box 14  
Riverdale, Maryland 20738-0014  
301-464-0590

## WE GET LETTERS:



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

*Department of Parks and Recreation*

6600 Kenilworth Avenue Riverdale, Maryland 20737

Surratt House Museum

PO Box 427

Clinton MD 20735

301-868-1121 (Voice & TTY)

301-868-8177(FAX)

February 6, 1998

Sharon Sweeting, Editor  
Prince George's County Historical Society  
PO Box 14  
Riverdale MD 20738-0014

Dear Sharon,

After reading the last newsletter with its article on Presidential visits to our county, I thought I would share a family story about President Woodrow Wilson. When he was courting his second wife, Edith Bowling Galt, they would enjoy drives out into Southern Maryland. One stop was usually the crossroads hamlet of T.B., between Clinton and Brandywine.

It seems there were two attractions in T.B.--a gas pump at Mr. Bruce Burrough's country store and a beautiful sheep meadow nearby, also owned by Mr. Burroughs (my grandfather). My uncle, Hunt Burroughs, was a teenager then and helped in the store during the summers when Charlotte Hall Military Academy was not in session. He would fill the gas tank while President Wilson would question him about raising sheep, the care required etc. The President was interested in installing a flock on the White House lawn to aid in maintenance. Our flock was a selling point.

His visits were fairly frequent and always included a stop to admire the sheep before gassing up (at a Standard Oil pump) for the return to Washington. The President and Mrs. Galt would be in the back with a chauffeur and bodyguard up front--no other entourage in those days.

A family friend, now approaching 90, was raised at the Dower House (Mt. Airy) and remembers visits by Presidents Taft, Harding, and Coolidge during their terms in office. Coolidge was particularly fond of one comfortable rocker that the family owned.

Bill Clinton visited Clinton as a candidate. We tried hard to get him to visit Surratt House while here, but I'm afraid we have a bad track record with Presidents. Of course, we got our bad reputation because of a Republican! The Democratic Clinton should not have worried.

Sincerely,

Laurie Verge  
Historian/Manager

## EVENTS AROUND THE COUNTY AND STATE

**Laurel Historical Society** announces that the Laurel Museum re-opens on February 1, 1998, with the highly acclaimed exhibit of **Bert Sadler's Laurel: Photographs from 1905-1917** continuing. "These photographs document life just after the turn of the century and before World War I. Drawn from an extraordinary collection of 1300 glass negatives, **Bert Sadler's Laurel** turns its lens on the people and places that reflected the photographer's life in this typical American town halfway between Washington and Baltimore." The Museum is located at 817 Main Street and is open Wednesdays from 10-2, and Sunday's, 1-4. Admission is free. For more information call 301-725-7975.

**CITY OF BOWIE MUSEUMS** announces that on Saturday, March 14, 1998, at 12:00 pm., Belair Mansion will host a lecture on "Victorian Ladies Clothing," by **Georgia Meadows**. Ms. Meadows, a member of the 49th Virginia Cavalry re-enactment group, is an avid collector and authority on nineteenth century ladies dress and mourning garb. Admission is \$5. For reservations, please call 301-809-3089. Belair Mansion is located at 12207 Tulip Grove Drive in Bowie, one mile north of Rte 50 (Exit 11 N), just south of the intersection of Md. Rtes. 450 and 197.

The 1998 Tour Schedule for the **Maryland House & Garden Pilgrimage** follows: Saturday, April 18, Charles County; Sunday, April 19, Baltimore City and Mt. Washington; Saturday, April 25, Dorchester County; Sunday, April 26, Talbot County; Saturday, May 2, Howard County; Saturday, May 9, Washington County; and Saturday, May 30, Cruise. For further information call or write: Maryland House and Garden Pilgrimage, 1105-A Providence Road, Towson, Maryland 21286-1790; (410) 821-6933.

The **Conference United Methodist Historical Society** announces a Calvert-Prince George Bus Tour on Saturday, April 25, 1998, guided by Edwin Schell. Sites will include the Smithville Church (1843), Calvert Marine Museum, Solomons Island, Battle Creek Cypress Swamp, Mega Resurrection Prayer Worship Center (formerly Gibbons) and conclude with a Banquet at Providence UMC, in Fort Washington. For additional information write to: UM Hist. Soc., 2200 St. Paul St. Baltimore MD 21218.

**Worcester County Historical Society** announces their *Garden Market* in the Historic Furnace Town near Snow Hill, Maryland on Saturday, May 2 from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm; and Sunday, May 3, from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm. Free parking and site admission; worships and seminars.

The Nineteenth Annual **Historic Hyattsville House Tour** will be held on Sunday, May 17th from 1:00 to 5:00 pm. Tickets are \$8.00 in advance at Franklin's General Store and Deli and Hyattsville Municipal, 3rd Floor Administrative Offices. Tickets day of tour are \$10.00 at 4310 Gallatin Street. For information please call: 301-927-4514.

**PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
**POST OFFICE BOX 14**  
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and during special events  
Call 301-464-0591

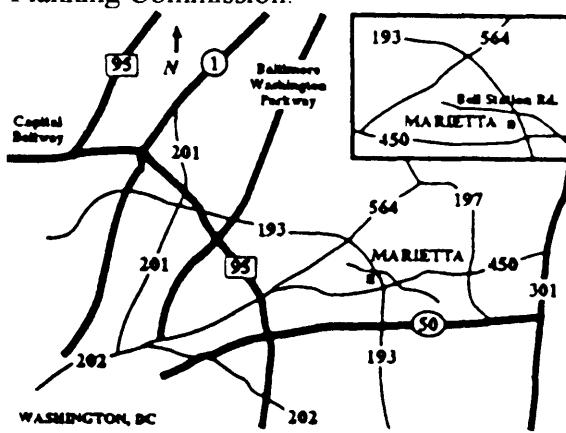
Marietta Tours -Friday, 11 - 3, Sunday,  
12 - 4 - and by appointment -  
Information 301-464-0591

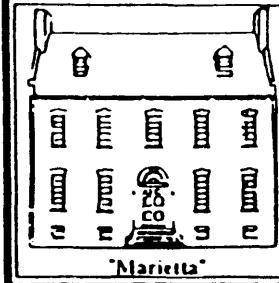
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0590.

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Bell Station Road, in Glenn Dale, MD, off  
Route 193, near Route 450. This is a  
facility of the Maryland National Park and  
Planning Commission.





# News and Notes

## Prince George's County Historical Society



March 1998

Our 46th Year

XXVII Number 3

### *Presentation of The Prince George's County Historical Society's St. George's Day Awards*

*Established in 1974, The Prince George's County Historical Society's St. George's Day Awards are given annually to honor living individuals and organizations that have made a significant contribution to the preservation of the County's heritage.*

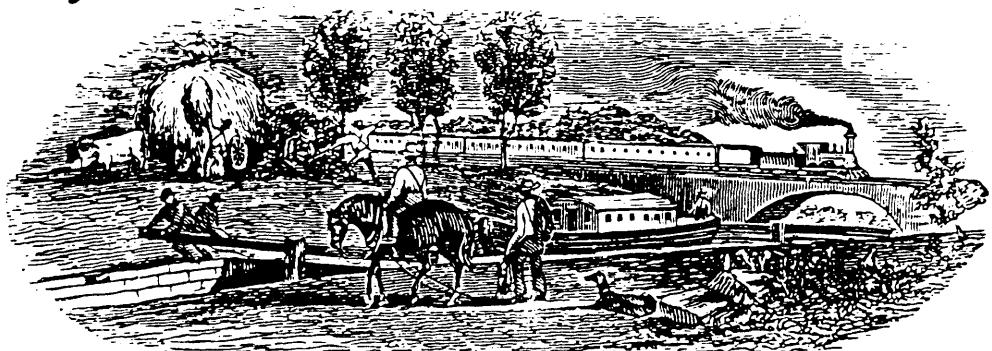
*The Hall of Fame, Prince George's County, Inc. Induction  
"Pioneers of Flight"  
Benjamin Foulois and John W. Greene, Jr.*

*Established in 1975, The Hall of Fame recognizes superior achievement, extraordinary creativity and natural talent of distinguished Prince Georgians of the past.*

*1:00 to 4:00  
Sunday, April 26, 1998  
at Andrews Air Force Base Officers' Club*

*Spend a pleasant Sunday afternoon  
celebrating*

*St. George's Day*



Cover illustration by Liz Brinson, Public Affairs Division, M-NCPBC

## **Prince George's County's Aviation History**

**by Cathy Allen**

**While Prince George's County may be best known for its elegant historic houses, and association with many significant individuals in history, one of its most unique historical achievements is often ignored because it is primarily a 20th century phenomenon - "our county's association with the history and growth of Aviation."**

**While North Carolina can claim itself "First in Flight" and Dayton, Ohio is certainly the home of the Wright Brothers, Prince George's County represents the entire span of aviation history in all its forms. It is this achievement that the Hall of Fame has chosen to honor this year and which we are here to celebrate today.**

**While many associate flying with the airplane, the history of aviation actually begins with lighter-than-air flight, and continues on to space travel.**

**Our rich flight history begins in 1784 when Peter Carnes made the first unmanned balloon ascent in America, from a field in Bladensburg. Carnes, who had operated a store in what is now referred to as the George Washington House, launched an unmanned hot air balloon into the air in June of that year.**

**Many, many years later, Wilbur and Orville Wright brought their new flying machine to a field in College Park. The government had just accepted the aeroplane, and as part of the Wright's contract, they had to teach two military officers to fly the machine. This was to be**

**just the start of significant firsts at what became College Park Airport, including the first military officer to solo in a plane, first a machine gun shot from a plane, first development and testing of a bomb-dropping device from an aeroplane, first mile high flight by a military aviator, first postal service Air Mail flight, first controlled helicopter flight, first development of instruments for all blind and bad weather flying and more.**

**In 1909, when the Wrights came to the field, Benny Foulis was a young lieutenant in the Army Signal Corps, and had assisted the Wrights in the trials for acceptance of the Wright airplane at Ft. Myer, Va. He expected to be one of the two officers chosen to receive flight instruction, but was sent to a conference in France instead -- some say as punishment for his outspokenness to the press and others about the military.**

**However, Foulis returned quickly from France, just in time to get Wilbur Wright to agree to give him lessons. Benny all but soloed at College Park in 1909. Lieut. Foulois went on to have an illustrious career in military aviation. He became a Brig. General and served as Chief of Air Service for the 1st Army in 1918. In 1931 he became the Chief of the Army Air Corps and a major general, before retiring in 1935. Foulois, who continued to be active in aviation spent his remaining years at Andrews AFB where he died in 1967.**

**Andrews is also an important part of the county's association with aviation. Established in 1942 by President Roosevelt, it was named in honor of Lieut. Gen. Frank Andrews who at the time of his death in 1943, was commander of all**

**Army Air Force Operations in Europe.** Since WWII Andrews AFB has served as headquarters for the Continental & Strategic Air Commands, Military Air Transport Service and Air Force Systems command. Today this 4220 acre base is home to many individual units of the Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps, and is often best known as the home of Air Force One and the 89th Airlift Wing which provides air transportation for the President and other high ranking US officials.

Also located in the southern part of the county is the site of Columbia Air Center, also known as Croome Airport -- the 1st black operated Airfield in the nation. The founder of the Airfield was aviation pioneer John Greene, who in 1937 became only the 2nd man in the country to receive a commercial pilots license. He was also a certified engine and airplane mechanic and a teacher. While teaching in D.C. in 1940, he and several other black pilots formed "The Cloud Club." In response to the racial prejudice they experienced while flying at area fields, they decided to secure a piece of land and develop their own airfield.

Green leased a field in Croome and initially called it Riverside Airways. In 1944 the field was granted authority to operate as Colombia Air Center. The Airfield quickly expanded and offered primary flight training, classes, charter services, airplane tie downs and it even had a small snack bar and hangar.

Greene was an avid promotor of aviation for the young, so many of the field's classes and programs were oriented toward youth. He organized a civil air patrol pilot training program and

offered on-site training to students at D.C.'s Phelps High School. By 1950, Columbia was one of the county's most active airports.

The family that owned the land decided not to renew Greene's lease and in 1956 the Columbia Air Center was forced to close. Greene however stayed active in aviation and education until his death in the late 1980's. In 1986 among numerous awards from the Smithsonian Institution and District of Columbia, he became the recipient of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's Pioneer Award for his commitment to youth and aviation.

Our final two sites represent both the past and future of aviation, respectively, the Paul Garber Facility and Goddard Space Flight Center.

The Garber Facility, also known as Silver Hill, is the storage, preservation and restoration facility for the National Air and Space Museum. This inconspicuous facility actually has several buildings that house many significant air and space craft that the main building downtown does not have the space to display. At Garber, the story of flight history and preservation are told in a simple, yet realistic setting. Many of the Smithsonian's most significant aircraft make their first stop at the Garber Facility for repair, restoration and cleaning before moving on to Air and Space or other well-known aviation museums around the world.

Ironically, the facility was named in honor of aviation pioneer Paul E. Garber, the first curator of the National Air Museum (later to become Air and

**Space) who learned to fly at College Park Airport in 1919, when he worked for the first Postal Service Airmail service, which was inaugurated there the preceeding year.**

**Our final destination in our trip through aviation history in the County, The Goddard Space Flight Center is in Greenbelt. Goddard was established in 1959 in honor of Robert Goddard. Goddard's many contributions to the field of rocketry earned him the name the "father of American Rocketry" and provided the basis for man's entry into space exploration. Goddard was NASA's first major scientific laboratory devoted entirely to the exploration of space. The Center is primarily responsible for the nation's near-Earth satellites; management of the design, development and construction of spacecraft; and management of the worldwide tracking and communications network for both manned and unmanned spacecraft.**

**So you can see that Prince George's County reflects the spirit of aviation and flight in all its forms. Here, you can witness the history of aviation from its fledgling years with the development of light-than-air flight, all the way through to the seemingly limitless experimentation an exploration that the future of space flight seems to offer us. Prince George's county is truly the window to aviation and aerospace history.**

**Editor's note: These remarks were delivered at our joint Hall of Fame meeting last fall at the 84th Aero Squadron restaurant**

## **ANDREWS AFB NAMED FOR GENERAL**

The *Enquirer Gazette* on April 30, 1992, featured the following information about this airfield:

"Lt. Gen. Frank M. Andrews was killed in Iceland 49 years ago, May 3, 1943, in an aircraft accident along with thirteen other men when their B-24 lost its radio beam and crashed into a hillside. He is buried at Arlington Cemetery.

General Andrews was one of the first to see the future role of air power and the possibilities of long-range bombing. In 1935 he organized the General Headquarters Air Force. By the time of his death at age 59, he had amassed 6,000 hours on Army planes. He loved to fly and had told friends he didn't want to be "one of those generals who die in bed."

On March 31, 1945, Camp Springs Army Air Field -- which had been established in 1941 -- was renamed and dedicated to the general. His widow, Jeanette Andrews, came from Miami for the ceremonies and christened the B-29 Superfortress "The General Andrews" moments before it left for combat against Japanese forces.

Next year Andrews AFB will celebrate its 50th anniversary. But its history goes way back. During Colonial times an Indian reservation was located there near Camp Springs Lake. Belle Chance, residence o AFSC commanders, dates to 1712. In 1814 British troops en route to burn Washington stopped at Belle Chance and Americans tried to ambush them there.

## VICTORIAN SOCIETY IN AMERICA WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN CHAPTER

invites you to

***Robert Gilmor, Jr.: Baltimore Art Collector*** and Tour  
of **Riversdale Mansion** - Sunday, April 19th  
Lecture Presented by: **Lance Humphries**

**"Robert Gilmor, Jr.** (1774-1848) was perhaps the most significant collector of art in America in the first half of the nineteenth century as well as a major patron of American artists of this period. While Gilmor is best known for his patronage of American artists, these American paintings were a small percentage of his collection of over four hundred pictures. In fact, most of his collection was comprised of Old Master paintings, and in this line he emulated wealthy European collectors. Mr. Humphries will also talk about the connection between Gilmor and the **Stiers of Riversdale Mansion**.

Gilmor's art collection was only one of the significant collections he assembled during his lifetime, for he also collected minerals, coins and medals, and autographs. Gilmor's interest in history was a driving force behind his collecting activities, for his collections documented the natural, intellectual, and cultural histories of the world. Upon Gilmor's death his art and other collections were dispersed. Although most of the art collection remained in his family for another generation, by the late-nineteenth century it was scattered throughout the United States."

See verso for details

## Tour of Riversdale, The Stier-Calvert Mansion, Built Between 1801 and 1807, in Riverdale, Maryland

And

Slide-Lecture on "Robert Gilmor, Jr.: Baltimore Art Collector," by Lance Humphries

Mr. Humphries is due to have conferred upon him in May 1998 a Ph. D. in Art History from the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, for his research and dissertation on Robert Gilmor, Jr. Since October 1993, Mr. Humphries has been the Research Coordinator for the Daniel Garber Catalogue Raisonné in Baltimore.

Tour of Riversdale (meet at front door)— 2:00-3:15 pm

4811 Riverdale Road

Refreshments at Riverdale Town Hall—3:30 pm

5008 Queensbury Road

Lecture by Lance Humphries on Gilmor— 4:15 pm

## Town Hall Council Chamber

Cost \$8.00 per person, which includes tour fee for Riversdale Mansion

Info: Telephone Bill Wilson in Riverdale at home 301-277-2498 or at work 301-405-2048

To register for the Riversdale/Gilmor event, complete the form below and mail it with your check for \$8.00 made out to Victorian Society in America, Washington Chapter, to: Bill Wilson, 4716 Riverdale Road, Riverdale, MD 20737.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

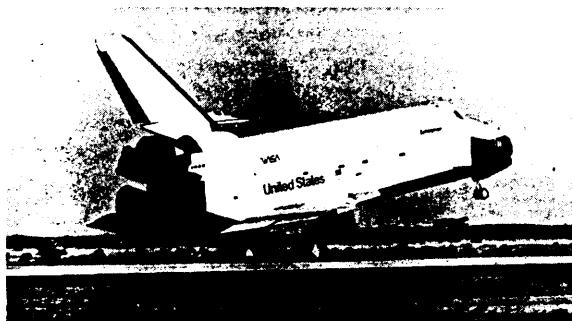
Telephone (day) \_\_\_\_\_ (evening) \_\_\_\_\_

**Number in party** \_\_\_\_\_ **Amount enclosed** \_\_\_\_\_

Please register by Tuesday, April 14.

See next page for travel directions, map, and parking information.

Chapel 2, built in 1854, was used as a Union command post. There's a cemetery where the gravestones bear the names of old Southern Maryland families: Duckett, Beall, Duvall. Mary Surratt, of Lincoln Assassination fame, was born in her father's house on what is now the south end of the base."



SPACE SHUTTLE. The Enterprise landing at Edwards Air Force Base, October 26, 1977, after a test flight.

## More on Presidential Visits to Prince George's County

This from Historian Susan Pearl:

In reference to your stories on presidential visits to Prince George's County -- here is an excerpt that refers to President James Madison's visit to Marietta in the spring of 1816.

"We have been on a jaunt to Annapolis, to visit the "Seventy-four" about to carry Mr. Pinckney (sic) on his mission. It is one of the oldest towns in the Union, and though exhibiting every symptom of decay, is the most lovely spot you can conceive. On our way we met Judge Duvall, who pressed us to dine at his house, about fifteen miles from Washington, on the roadside, where we spend a few hours most delightfully in the society of this venerable, patriarchal man and hospitable, loquacious, kind old lady, who displayed on her table every luxury in and out of season. **The President and family had stayed a day and night just before, being much gratified in this visit.** The evening we reached Annapolis there was a great ball in honor of the President, and half an hour after our arrival we received invitations. Every one was there . . . Mrs. Madison was very polite, expressing herself surprised and

delighted at our arrival, introducing me very handsomely to Mrs. Pinckney (sic) . . . The Seventy-four was the ostensible cause of the jaunt, but the beautiful country and scenery had by far the greater portion of our time. A description of the interior of such a magnificent man-of-war transcends my power; suffice it that the clock-work regularity, the rigid discipline reigning throughout, and the delicate neatness pervading every nook of the vast monarch of the seas, received my full meed of admiration. The little President was as gay as a lark, and jested very humorously on the incidents of their journey; the cares of state through off his shoulders completely metamorphosed him, and relaxed his frigidity amazingly."

This excerpt is from a letter written by Sarah Gales Seaton in May 1816, included in *William Winston Seaton of the "National Intelligencer", a Biographical Sketch*, Boston: James R. Osgood and Company, 1871, page 133. (From 1810, Joseph Gales II and his partner, William Winston Seaton, owned and published the *National Intelligencer* newspaper in Washington, D.C. Sarah Gales, sister of Joseph Gales I, had married William Winston Seaton in 1809.)

The reference to Mr. Pinckney (sic) above is to William Pinkney, appointed in

1816 Minister Plenipotentiary to the court of Russia; it was to this post that he sailed from Annapolis in May 1816. His nephew of the same name lived in Bladensburg for nearly 50 years. The younger Pinkney was Rector of Addison Chapel beginning in 1836, and later of St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Bladensburg; he was elected Episcopal Bishop of Maryland in 1868 and served fifteen years until his death in July 1883.

### **BOOKS FOR SALE IN MARIETTA GIFT SHOP**

*Out of the Past* by R. Lee Van Horn  
(\$20.00)

*Mareen Duvall of Middle Plantation*  
(\$40.00)

*Maryland Lighthouses of the Chesapeake Bay* (\$29.95)

*Maryland: A New Guide to the Old Line State* (\$29.95)

*Eat, Drink and Be Merry in Maryland*  
(\$15.95)

*Proud Past, Promising Future* by George D. Denny, Jr. (\$19.95)

*Roadside Markers in MD* by Charles S. Adams (\$14.00)

*Francis Gasch & Sons Funeral Home*  
(\$40.00)

Also for sale: Children's books, paper dolls and various miscellaneous books of interest to all ages.

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

#### **Annual Membership Application**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone—Home: \_\_\_\_\_

Business: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate:  New  Renewal

#### **Check below the category you select:**

- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Full-time Student ..... | \$ 10.00  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Member .....            | \$ 20.00  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining .....        | \$ 50.00  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life Member .....       | \$ 400.00 |

Additional Contribution \_\_\_\_\_

I am also interested in helping the Society as a volunteer. Please contact me regarding volunteer opportunities.

For membership in the Maryland Historical Society, include an additional \$30.00 for individual or \$40.00 for husband and wife.

Our operating support comes from your dues and contributions. All contributions qualify for tax deduction. We appreciate your support.

Please make checks payable to PGCHS  
Mail check and form to:

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Riverdale, Maryland 20738-0014  
301-464-0590

## Calendar Notes

### ***PGCHS AND MARIETTA EVENTS***

- April 11      Board Meeting, 9:00 am, Marietta
- April 18-19     ***Marching Through Time*** at Marietta (details in Jan. 1998, *News & Notes*)
- April 26       *St. George's Day 1998*, Andrews Air Force Base Officer's Club, 1:00 to 4:00 pm
- May 9          Board Meeting, 9:00 am, Marietta
- April 17**       Maryland Historical Society (MHS) opens an exhibition ***Celebrating the Baltimore City Life Collections***, featuring 160 artifacts, including everything from aquatints to zithers, mastodons to television sets, Peale paintings to H.L. Mencken's baby grand piano. Located at 201 West Monument Street, Museum hours are Tuesday-Friday, 10 am to 5 pm; Saturday, 9 am to 5 pm and Sunday, 1 to 5 pm. Admission. Call 410-685-3750 for information.
- April 18-**      ***Maryland House & Garden Pilgrimage***: Saturday, April 18, Charles County; Sunday, April 19, Baltimore City and Mt. Washington; Saturday, April 25, Dorchester County; Sunday, April 26, Talbot County; Saturday, May 2, Howard County ; Saturday, May 9, Washington County; and Saturday, May 30, Cruise. For further information call or write: Maryland House and Garden Pilgrimage, 1105-A Providence Road, Towson, Maryland 21286-1790; (410) 821-6933.
- April 18**       "Let's Talk Antiques and Collectibles" conducted by Ray Mansfield, Appraiser. Presented by The Wicomico Historical Society, Inc., 1 pm to 4 pm, Salisbury State University, Guerrieri University Center, Wicomico Room. Admission. Call 410-860-0447 for additional information.
- May 30-**       Historical Society of Talbot County presents ***1998 Decorator Show House*** at  
**July 5**           "***Perry Hall***", one of Maryland's oldest and most picturesque estates, located 3.5 miles south of St. Michaels on the Miles River. Hours are: Tuesday-Saturday 10-4; Sunday, 12-4. Admission. For additional information: 410-822-0786.

### Board of Directors - 1998

President - Jane Eagen	Directors 1998-2000	Directors 1998-1989
Vice President - Eugene Roberts	Julie Bright	Melinda Alter
Secretary - Sarah Bourne	John Mitchell	Kathryn Clagett
Treasurer - Joyce Uber	William Uber	Midlred Ridgeley Gray
Membership - Phyllis Herndon	Wallis Cain	Iris McConnell
Historian - Susan Pearl		
	Past Presidents	Editor - Sharon Howe Sweeting
John Giannetti	Paul T. Lanham	Warren Rhoads
W.C. (Bud) Dutton		Joyce McDonald

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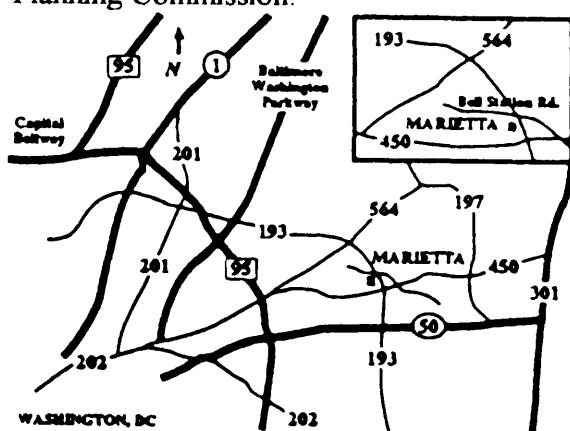
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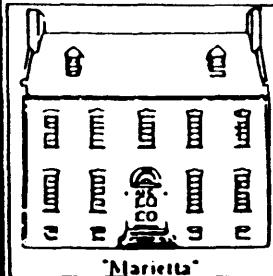
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# News and Notes

## Prince George's County Historical Society



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April/May 1998

Our 46th Year

XXVII Number 4

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# AND THE WINNERS ARE:

## 1998 Recipients of the St. George's Day Awards

*Established in 1974, St. George's Day Awards are given annually by the Prince George's County Historical Society to honor individuals and organizations who have made a significant contribution to the preservation of the County's heritage. The presentations are given on the Sunday nearest the County's April 23 birthday. The 1998 awards were presented at Andrews Air Force Base on April 26.*

**Elizabeth Watson:** From the end of 1989 through the summer of 1997, Elizabeth and her family lived at Melford and took care of this important 19th-century plantation house. But she was no ordinary caretaker, and she tackled far more complex than ordinary problems of stewardship. During these years, she was faced with a variety of problems involving the development of the Maryland Science and Technology Center around Melford. Elizabeth diligently and conscientiously kept in contact with the banks which sequentially owned the property, with the City of Bowie, and the County preservation office, in an attempt to promote the preservation of the house and to prevent the various threats which kept arising. When each new structural problem reared its head, she wrote a detailed letter to her contact at the owner bank, she sought out contractors and proposals for repair projects, and sent copies of everything to other interested parties. In short, by patient but persistent persuasion, she managed to get the problems at least stabilized if not repaired; it is largely through her efforts that Melford survives today, and has now a chance for full restoration in the future. Elizabeth is also the co-author of *Saving America's Countryside*, published by Johns Hopkins University Press in 1989 and 1997.

**Richard Padgett:** Dick Padgett was first elected to the Bowie City Council in 1971, and was sworn in for temporary duty as the City's Mayor, August 1974-April 1975. Since he returned to the City Council in 1980, he has faithfully and consistently served as the City's liaison to the Heritage Committee, making his influence felt in all issues related to the City's historic properties. He initiated the viewshed analysis of historic Sacred Heart Church, a City-commissioned environmental report on the undeveloped land around this 18th-century chapel; this report represented unusual foresight in the effort to protect an important historic and natural area. Dick has always been out in front in his support of historic preservation in the Bowie area - working with the rehabilitation of the Belair Stable, the restoration and opening of the Huntington Railroad Museum, and support for the preservation of Belt Woods. His principal influence, however, has been over the long period of the restoration of Belair Mansion; his active support eased the project's way through all phases with the City Government, and since its completion he has even proposed the concept of a clear viewshed between Belair Mansion and Stable. In recent months he has actively supported the City's participation in efforts to preserve Melford, on the grounds of the Maryland Science and Technology Center.

**Susanna and Tim Yatman:** This couple is well-known throughout Prince George's County and the state of Maryland for their historical preservation and political activities. Susanna, following in her mother's footsteps, served as Mayor of Bladensburg. Her family was custodian of two of the County's important, pre-revolutionary buildings in Bladensburg: The Market Master's house and Bostwick. Susanna and Tim were tireless in their

efforts to ensure that Bostwick would remain in the public domain. Other activities include: Membership and service in Prince George's Heritage, located at the Magruder House in Bladensburg. Susanna served as Chair while they both worked on the Grants Committee; Tim was always available to review work completed at various sites which received grant monies. They worked energetically in stabilizing Bowieville on Church Road. They served as active participants in the Easement Review program in cooperation with the Maryland Historical Trust. Tim, a fine woodworker, built the gift shop at Marietta mansion for us. Susanna serves on the Board of the Aman Trust, located at the George Washington House in Bladensburg. Together they travel around the state demonstrating Colonial dances.

**George Denny** for his publication *Proud Past, Promising Future (Cities and Towns in Prince George's County, Maryland)*, 1997. George served 8 years as Councilman for the Town of Brentwood, and then 12 years as its Mayor, all the while employed as a teacher, counselor and administrator in the Prince George's County Public Schools. During his years of elective office, he took considerable interest in the workings of the municipalities, and upon his retirement as Mayor in 1995, began organizing the substantial amount of material from his experience for the publication of a book. During the next two years he visited many repositories of historical and current information about the municipalities - collecting, photocopying, photographing, etc. - and put it all together into a very useful little volume on the cities and towns of our County. The book is filled, not only with facts about the history, development, institutions, problems and accomplishments, of the 28 municipalities, but also with

photographs, both historical and current. In addition, the book is prefaced by a chapter defining “city/town/municipality” and explaining elected officials, services, etc., as well as a summary history of the very earliest towns in the County. The resulting publication is a very useful gathering together of information on our cities.

**North Brentwood Historical Society:** A group of interested residents and former residents of North Brentwood began to meet in 1990-1991, in order to assist with the first architectural survey of this historic African-American community. The group soon evolved into the North Brentwood Historical Society, with its principal goals being the collection and preservation of historical information and records about North Brentwood, and the promotion of the awareness and appreciation of the Town’s history and development; the Society has been meeting regularly since 1991. In 1993 the Society applied for and received, through the Maryland Humanities Council, a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The grant supported the production of an exhibit and oral history, *“Footsteps from North Brentwood,”* as well as a narrative history booklet as a companion to the exhibit. The exhibit was on display at the Smithsonian’s Anacostia Museum of African-American History and Culture from July 1996 to January 1997, at the North Brentwood Community Center from February 1997 to May 1997, and at the Lowe House of Delegates Building in Annapolis from June 1997 to December 1997. The booklet was published and released on February 1998; it summarizes the project, and provides a handsome and useful history of the families and institutions of the historic African-American town of North Brentwood, the first black community

to be incorporated (1924) in Prince George’s County. The PGCHS recognizes and congratulates the North Brentwood Historical Society, along with the project directors and professionals who assisted them, for the production of this exhibit, oral history and booklet.

**Friends of Dorsey Chapel:** “On Wednesday evening , September 11, 1996, the long awaited rededication of Dorsey Chapel took place. The M-NCPPC and the Friends of Dorsey Chapel welcomed well wishers to this culminating event of a restoration project that began over 15 years ago. A crowd of approximately 150 people enthusiastically celebrated the preservation of M-NCPPC’s only African-American historic structure that is open to the public. Dorsey Chapel was built in 1900 to serve the black farming community of Brookland, which had grown up near the railroad village of Glenn Dale (originally called Glennville). Brookland was centered around a meeting hall, the Good Samaritan Lodge, built circa 1889. Because the nearest places of worship were approximately 2-1/2 miles from Brookland, worship services were held in the Lodge, while members of the congregation purchased one half-acre west of the Lodge ‘for the purpose of establishing a place of worship.’ The Brookland Methodist Episcopal Church was completed and dedicated in September 1900. From the earliest period, however, the church was know as Dorsey Chapel after its first pastor, the Reverend A.B. Dorsey. By 1980 the Chapel was in deteriorating condition and was slated for demolition. Local families formed the ‘Friends of Dorsey Chapel’ and began negotiations to acquire the Chapel from the Glenn Dale Church. The chapel with its one-half-acre lot was conveyed to the Friends in 1989, and in the same year

was designated as an Historic Site by the Historic Preservation Commission. In 1992, the Friends conveyed the Chapel property to the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, which has since that time coordinated the restoration project.”  
(Reprinted from: *Friends of Preservation*, Fall 1996)

## CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THE WINNERS.



PRESERVATION  
BEGINS AT  
**HOME**  
Preservation Week • May 10-16, 1998  
National Trust for Historic Preservation

## Riversdale Designated Historic Landmark

In celebration of Preservation Week, we wish to congratulate all those involved in the restoration and designation of this important county resource as a National Historic Landmark.

“On December 9, 1997, Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt announced the designation of 16 properties in 12 states and one U.S. territory as National Historic Landmarks.’ One of these 16 historic properties is Riversdale, the fine, early nineteenth-century plantation house of the Stier/Calvert family, now owned and operated by The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. Landmark designation is the Federal government’s official recognition of the national importance of historic properties.

The nomination of Riversdale for Landmark designation was prepared by Susan G. Pearl, research/architectural historian for the M-NCPPC Planning Department. From December 1996 through June 1997, she gathered and prepared the required materials for the Landmark nomination, conferring with staff of the National Park Service (NPS), the M-NCPPC Department of Parks and Recreation, the Town of Riverdale and the Riversdale Historical Society. The documentation was transmitted to the NPS Landmarks office at the end of last June. The documentation included a thorough architectural description of Riversdale, a detailed and fully footnoted statement of Riversdale’s historical significance (emphasizing its national importance in several different areas, e.g., architecture, art and the contributions of prominent individuals), color slides and black-and-white prints, floor plans, sketch map, and both historic and current locational maps.”  
(Reprinted from: **Friends of Preservation**, Spring 1998)

# WE GET MORE LETTERS

In addition to the two letters from the City of Bowie Museums related to Presidential visits, we also received further information on interesting ships from Bob Crawley.

"After I wrote the article on the U.S.S. Prince Georges that appeared in the February issue of *News and Notes*, I was asked by several members if any ships in the modern Navy are named after Prince George's places or people.

After a little research I found the U.S.S. Patuxent, a fleet oiler is on active duty. The U.S.S. Benjamin Stoddert, a destroyer, is in the inactive fleet at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. It is up for sale.

There are several ships named for Maryland locations and people:

The U.S.S. Maryland, strategic missile submarine, Ohio Class. Port: Kings Bay, GA.

The U.S.S. Baltimore, attack submarine, Los Angeles Class. Port: Norfolk, VA.

The U.S. S. Annapolis, attack submarine, Los Angeles Class. Port: Groton, CT.

The U.S. Frederick, amphibious tank landing ship, Newport Class. Port: Pearl Harbor, HI.

The U.S.S. Ft. McHenry, amphibious dock landing ship, Newport Class. Port: Sasebo, Japan.

The U.S.S. Antietam, guided missile cruiser, Ticonderoga Class. Port: San Diego, CA.

The U.S.S. John Rodgers, destroyer, Spruance Class. Port: Mayport, FL. (This John Rodgers was a hero of the War of 1812 from Havre de Grace, Maryland not to be confused with John Rodgers from Upper Marlboro)."

*Editor's note:* Thank you all. We love getting letters and interacting with our readers.

## Board of Directors - 1998

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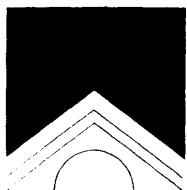
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Iris McConnell

Editor - Sharon Howe Sweeting

Warren Rhoads

Joyce McDonald



# CITY OF BOWIE MUSEUMS

12207 Tulip Grove Drive, Bowie, Maryland 20715 tel 301-809-3088 fax 301-809-2308

March 9, 1998

Sharon Sweeting, Editor  
Prince George's County Historical Society  
P.O. Box 14  
Riverdale, MD 20738-0014

Dear Sharon:

All of us at Belair are charmed by Laurie Verge's letter in the last issue about President Wilson's visits to Prince George's County "in search of sheep." As everyone knows, President Wilson was searching for a way to free up man-hours for more constructive purposes than grass-cutting (something which, no doubt, current people would like to do, as well.)

At the risk of turning the Historical Society Newsletter into some sort of "Soap Opera Digest" for sheep stories, I am happy to report that some County sheep did, indeed, make it to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

In March of 1918, through the efforts of Adm. C.T. Grayson, White House physician, 12 sheep and 4 lambs were procured from William Woodward's estate at Collington (Belair), and were set up at the White House for the purpose of clipping the grass of the Executive Branch. They soon became the subject of no small amount of media attention and press.

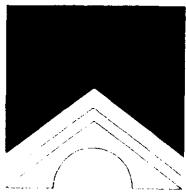
In May of that year, the sheep were shorn, netting about 90 lbs. of wool. The wool was divided into 2 lb. packages, which were then, by request of the President and Mrs. Wilson, sent to the Red Cross and auctioned throughout the country to benefit the Second War Fund.

The sheep eventually returned to Belair, along with a handwritten thank-you note from President Wilson; the note remained one of Mr. Woodward's treasured possessions.

The moral of this story, one might suppose, is that no Prince Georgian need ever be "sheepish" about our County's contribution to the War Effort!

Sincerely,

Pam Williams  
Museum Asst., City of Bowie Museums



# CITY OF BOWIE MUSEUMS

12207 Tulip Grove Drive, Bowie, Maryland 20715 tel 301-809-3088 fax 301-809-2308

March 17, 1998

Sharon Sweeting, Editor  
Prince George's County Historical Society  
P. O. Box 14  
Riverdale, Maryland 20738-0014

Dear Ms. Sweeting:

I read with interest the letter from Laurie Verge of the Surratt House Museum in the February newsletter. In it, she mentioned that President Wilson was interested in installing a flock of sheep on the lawn of the White House.

Indeed, a flock was introduced to the gardens of the White House during the First World War as an effort to free up the gardeners needed for the war effort. Prince Georgians should be proud to know that the flock came from the Belair Estate at Collington (present day Bowie) at the urging of William Woodward, Sr.

The flock, consisting of twelve sheep and four lambs, were shorn in May 1918, and the wool auctioned off in two-pound packets around the country as a fund-raiser for the Red Cross. The drive netted \$49,333.57. A more thorough account of this unique presidential sidelight in Prince George's County history may be found in Shirley V. Baltz's *Chronicle of Belair*. The Belair Stable Museum exhibits a photograph of the famous flock grazing away on the White House lawns.

Sincerely,

Stephen E. Patrick  
Curator  
City of Bowie Museums

**Prince George's County  
Historical Society**

**WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**

Ann Elizabeth Beck

Richard B. Duckett

Patricia K. Gill

James D. DeMarr, Jr.

J. Andrew Wallace

**OUTDOOR ATTIC SALE**

The Society will hold its 2nd annual "Outdoor Attic Sale" on Saturday, June 20th, from 10 am to 4 pm at the Marietta Gift Shop.

Items to be donated to this sale should be left at Marietta no later than Saturday, June 13th.

Help is needed prior to, and on the day of the sale. To volunteer, or for more information, contact Stella Uber at 301-937-6379.

Tours of Marietta will also be available from 10 am to 3 pm.

**Annual Membership Application**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone—Home: \_\_\_\_\_

Business: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate:  New  Renewal

**Check below the category you select:**

Full-time Student ..... \$ 10.00  
 Member ..... \$ 20.00  
 Sustaining ..... \$ 50.00  
 Life Member ..... \$ 400.00

Additional Contribution \_\_\_\_\_

I am also interested in helping the Society as a volunteer. Please contact me regarding volunteer opportunities.

For membership in the Maryland Historical Society, include an additional \$30.00 for individual or \$40.00 for husband and wife.

**Our operating support comes from your dues and contributions. All contributions qualify for tax deduction. We appreciate your support.**

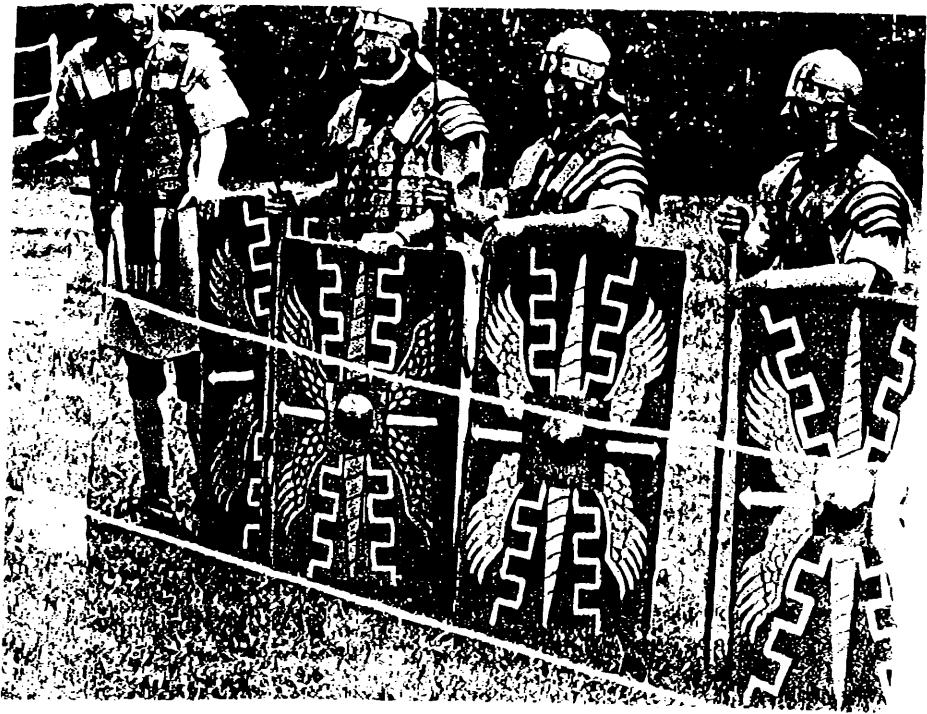
**Please make checks payable to PGCHS  
Mail check and form to:**

**Prince George's County  
Historical Society  
Post Office Box 14  
Riverdale, Maryland 20738-0014  
301-464-0590**

## Calendar Notes

### PGCHS and Marietta Events

- June 13      Board Meeting, 9:00 am; Marietta
- June 13      Deadline for bringing donations to Marietta for the Outdoor Attic Sale
- June 13-14     ***ROMAN DAYS AT MARIETTA*** (See enclosure for details)
- June 20       **Outdoor Attic Sale**, Marietta, 10 am to 4 pm.
- April 18-  
June 28       City of Bowie Museums sponsors an **exhibit** of bronze horse sculpture by the artist, **Eleanor Iselin Wade** at Belair Mansion. Open Thursday to Sunday from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm. Admission. The Mansion is located at 12207 Tulip Grove Drive, half a mile from MD Rt. 197, approximately one mile north of U.S. Rt. 50. Info: 301-809-3088.
- May 10-  
June 28       ***"A Washington Debut: Caroline Calvert's Introduction to Washington, D.C. Society, 1818-1819."*** An exhibit at Riversdale (See enclosure for details)
- June 7         ***"Un beau dejenue ou on dansera"*** -- period dance demonstration/live musical accompaniment/refreshments. (See enclosure for details)
- July 18        ***"Maryland and the Civil War: A Regional Perspective."*** A one-day historical and cultural event sponsored by the Carroll Community College & Carroll County Office of Tourism. Admission: \$5. Family: \$8. 9:30 am - 4:00 pm plus evening entertainment. At Carroll Community College, 1601 Washington Road, Westminster, Md. For information: 410-386-8000.
- July -  
August        Exhibit: ***"By the Rockets' Red Glare--The War of 1812, the Battle of Bladensburg, and the Calvert Family"*** Riversdale, 4811 Riverdale Rd., Riverdale, Maryland. For information: 301-864-0420
- July 24-26      **1998 Robey/Robie/Roby Family Reunion**, Ft. Wayne, Indiana. Fourth National Reunion. Holiday Inn Downtown is the venue. Reservations must be made at the hotel by July 4, 1998. Call: 219-422-5511. For additional information contact: William G. Robey, President, 301-567-0440.
- August 1       **Hottel-Keller Memorial, Inc.'s (HKMI)**, 16th annual meeting at Peter Muhlenburg Middle School, Woodstock, Va. Catered lunch, speaker and business meeting. Social gathering on July 31, 7 pm - 9 pm at Tom's Brook Fire Hall. A silent auction during the evening will benefit the restoration of the Loom House at the Keller Homestead. For information contact: Chester Ramey (703) 460-3733 or write to HKMI, P.O.Box 33, Toms Brook, VA22660.



# *ROMAN DAYS*

*AT*

## **MARIETTA**

*5626 Bell Station Road  
Glenn Dale, Md.*



*Twenty-five Roman Legionnaires  
demonstrating battle tactics, drill formations, and camp life*

*Friday and Saturday  
June 13-14, 1998  
10 A.M.-4 P.M.*

*Period Merchants*

*Information: 301-464-5291  
TTY: 301-699-2544*



Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Prince George's Parks and Recreation Department, Natural and Historical Resources Division

# *A Washington Debut*

## *Caroline Calvert's Introduction to Washington, D.C., Society*

**1818-1819**

*an exhibit at*

### *Riversdale*

*4811 Riverdale Rd.,  
Riverdale, MD*

**MAY 10-JUNE 28**

*Sundays, noon to 4:00 p.m.  
Group tours by appointment*



### *Special Event*

*"Un Beau Dejeuné ou on Dansera"*  
*period dance demonstration/  
live musical accompaniment/refreshments*

**JUNE 7**

*2 seatings:*

*4:30-6:30, 5:30-7:30*

*admission \$20.00,*

*children 6-12 \$10.00*

*for more information or reservations  
call 301-864-0420*

*This program is made possible [in part] with funds from the Maryland State Arts Council*  
The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Department of Parks and Recreation encourages  
individuals with and without disabilities to engage in leisure pursuits together. Reasonable accommodations will be  
provided for all programs and classes, except those of a drop-in nature.

*Advance notice for accommodations is requested.*

*Sponsored by M-NCPPC, Dept. of Parks and Recreation, Natural and Historical Resources Division  
and the Riversdale Historical Society*

**PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
**POST OFFICE BOX 14**  
**RIVERDALE, MARYLAND 20738-0014**

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#### **HOURS OF OPERATION**

Library: Saturdays 12 - 4 PM  
and during special events  
Call 301-464-0591

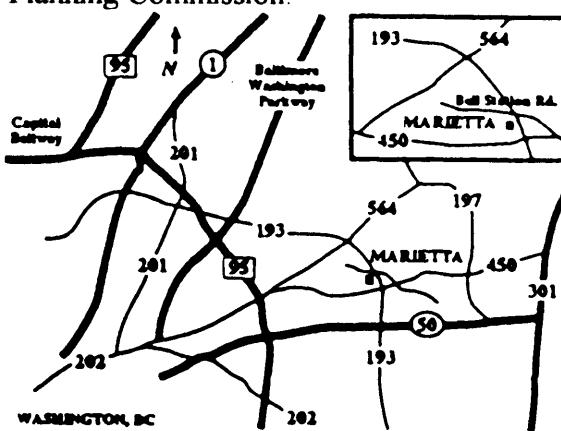
Marietta Tours -Friday, 11 - 3, Sunday,  
12 - 4 - and by appointment -  
Information 301-464-0591

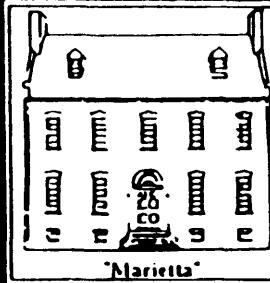
#### **THE SOCIETY GIFT SHOP**

Features a wide selection of books, gifts,  
toys and small antiques. Open Friday,  
Saturday and Sunday, 12 -4 PM and  
during special events. Call 301-464-  
0590.

#### **LOCATION OF THE SOCIETY**

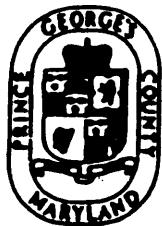
The Society is located at Marietta, 5624  
Bell Station Road, in Glenn Dale, MD, off  
Route 193, near Route 450. This is a  
facility of the Maryland National Park and  
Planning Commission.





# News and Notes

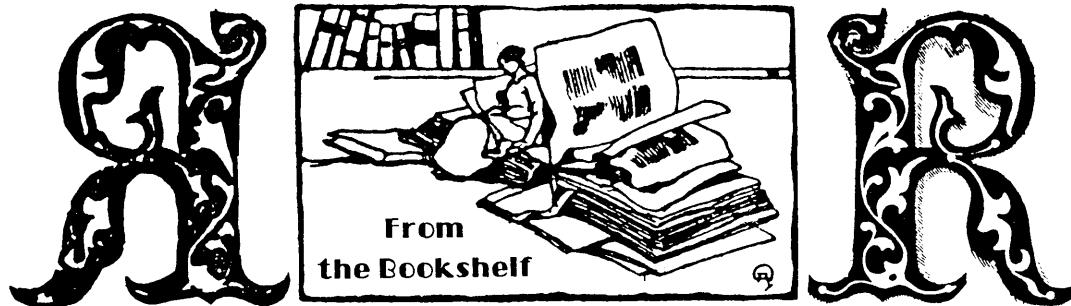
## Prince George's County Historical Society



June 1998

Our 46th Year

XXVII Number 5



It's summer, it's hot and the pace slows. And so, with this issue, we hope to entice our members into **Reading and 'Riting**. We have dedicated this issue to letters we have received and books we have read and hope our readers will do the same. The correspondence related to Presidential visits to the County has only encouraged us! We are also featuring a calendar of interesting things to do in case you prefer less sedentary endeavors than reading and writing. We warmly recommend an excursion to the **Smithsonian's Postal Museum** at number 2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE to view **The Graceful Envelope** show. This show "includes more than 75 winning handcrafted and decorated envelopes culled from a national contest that drew 260 entries. On a standardized envelope, participants used calligraphy, lettering and drawings to follow their imaginations," reports the June 25, 1998 issue of the *Washington Post*. If you are not already familiar with this superb museum, go and discover it across the street from Metrorail's Red Line Union Station stop. Besides, it's really cool deep inside this historic old post office.

### **WE GET LETTERS**

At the 1998 St. George's Day Dinner, the Prince George's County Historical Society presented one of the St. George's Day awards to the North Brentwood Historical Society for their work in promoting and preserving the heritage of their town, the first (1924) African-American town to be incorporated in Prince George's County. Specially cited was the *Footsteps from North Brentwood* exhibit and booklet, which have so successfully brought the town's history to the public over the last two years. The oral citation, given at the dinner, was printed, along with the other award citations, in the April/May 1998 *News and Notes*. In response we received the following letter from Ruth J. Wilson, director of the *Footsteps from North Brentwood* project; we print her letter in its entirety.



FOOTSTEPS FROM NORTH BRENTWOOD

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Funded by the Maryland Humanities Council

2249 13th Street N.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20018  
June 9, 1998

Ms. Sharon Howe Sweeting,  
Editor, News and Notes  
Prince George's County Historical Society  
4112 Gallatin Street  
Hyattsville, Maryland 20781

Re: Inaccuracies in the April/May News and Notes article,  
North Brentwood Historical Society, Concerning the  
Footsteps From North Brentwood Oral History Project,  
the Basis of the 1998 St. George's Day Award

Dear Ms. Sweeting,

As project director and official spokesperson of the Footsteps From North Brentwood Oral History Project, I object to the inaccuracies in the article North Brentwood Historical Society published in the April/May News and Notes 1998, XXVII-Number 4.

Since I was never consulted prior to the publication of the article, many questions are raised about the authenticity of the source of information.

A factual article is now requested to inform the public, including scholars of the facts and significance of an outstanding oral history project, Footsteps From North Brentwood that lasted for five years and was well publicized and accepted by the media in fourteen (14) newspapers articles, radio and television shows and was introduced to varied audiences throughout the state of Maryland, Washington D.C. and throughout the United States.

Susan Pearl, historian and self proclaimed author of the article, wrongfully wrote "In 1993 the society applied for and received a grant from the Maryland Humanities Council a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The grant supported the production of an exhibit and oral history "Footsteps From North Brentwood" as well as a narrative **BOOKLET** as a companion to the exhibit."

Page 2  
Sharon Howe Sweeting  
June 9, 1998

The fact is the Maryland Humanities Council through a grant from the National Endowment to the Humanities did more than give some money to the North Brentwood Historical Society in 1993.

On May 12, 1993 the North Brentwood Historical Society was granted an award pursuant to my application that specified details of how the Footsteps From North Brentwood Oral History Project would be implemented under my signature and direction as grant administrator and director.

The grant proposal was written by me, Ruth J. Wilson, with input and participation of three scholars, Dr. Elizabeth Clark-Lewis, oral historian, Howard University , Dr. Suzanne Randolph, evaluator, University of Maryland, College Park and Dr. Frank H. Wilson, sociologist, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee.

The project proposal required the participation of the Anacostia Museum of the Smithsonian Institution through the participation of Steven C. Newsome, director, Sharon A. Reinckens, deputy director and their staff who designed and installed the exhibits.

The author of this offending article states that "the grant provided for a narrative history **booklet** as a companion to the exhibit."

Without reading the grant proposal this conjecture was made by the author which is ludicrous.

The truth is the grant proposal required that a monograph, a scholarly book, be written. This was done. Many academicians, scholars, and laymen have received and accepted this book Footsteps From North Brentwood From Reconstruction to the Post World War II, Years as a scholarly contribution to the history of African Americans in Prince George's County.

Although the author and others were invited through a written notice of the book signing of Footsteps From North Brentwood From Reconstruction to the Post World War II Years on February 8, 1998 at the North Brentwood Community Center, she did not attend.

The St George's Award was given for a **Booklet**, something that does not exist. A well researched book written by a scholar Dr. Frank H. Wilson has been trivialized and ignored.

As an African American woman, the fourth generation descendant of Otho Johnson, the fifth person to settle in North Brentwood, I maintain the right to write and define my history.

Page 3  
Sharon Howe Sweeting  
June 9, 1998

I request an immediate written reply to this letter.

Sincerely yours,  
*Ruth J. Wilson*

Ruth J. Wilson  
Project Director

Incl.

CC: Honorable Wayne K. Curry, County Executive  
Gwen Gilmore, Afro American  
Retha Henry, President  
Colbert King, Washington Post  
Dr. Elizabeth Clark-Lewis,  
Steven E. Newsome, Anacostia Museum  
Susan Pearl, Historian, Prince George's Historical Society  
Dr. Suzanne Randolph,  
Sharon Reinckens, Anacostia Museum  
Dr. Frank H. Wilson,

*Response from Editor and author of the April/May 1998 News and Notes article:*

Since this St. George's Day award was an organizational (group) award, the Prince George's County Historical Society did not include any individuals' names in the citation. We are grateful to Mrs. Wilson for publicly enumerating them here.

Regarding the use of the term "booklet": the term "booklet" was used to denote the format of the publication; it in no way trivializes its content. Whatever it is called, this volume is a fascinating collection of facts, reminiscences, photographs and statistics, which will perpetuate the importance of the exhibit for years to come! - a major factor in the Society's enthusiastic and unanimous decision to recognize "the North Brentwood Historical Society, along with the project directors and professionals who assisted them, for the production of this exhibit, oral history and book(let)."

### Board of Directors - 1998

President - Jane Eagen	Directors 1998-2000	Directors 1998-1989
Vice President - Eugene Roberts	Julie Bright	Kathryn Clagett
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Membership - Phyllis Herndon	Wallis Cain	Editor - Sharon Howe Sweeting
Historian - Susan Pearl	Past Presidents	Warren Rhoads
John Giannetti	Paul T. Lanham	Joyce McDonald
W.C. (Bud) Dutton		

More letters: This one from our special correspondent **Mr. Paul Lanham**:

May 21, 1998

Hi Sharon:

***The Crypt on the Cliff***

April 1971 and the Prince George's Historical Society was delighted to accept the invitation of Mr. Fred N. Maloof to hold our monthly meeting at his historic Oxon Hill Manor property.

Digressing for some historical background, a review of "Oxon Hill," as this area was originally known, may be of interest. Col. John Addison of Maryland militia fame, commander of first Prince George's County Militia, who died in 1706 was initially connected with the original mansion house which burned in 1895 and his only son John was probably buried in the family "vault" on the site (according to Helen W. Ridgely in her *Historic Graves* book, page 267). The County Genealogy Society cemetery book *Stones and Bones* states that the "actual site of the 'vault' is unmarked and unknown." (As a result of our April 1971 visit, I could have dispelled this lack of information.)

More modern history recounts the 1929 construction of today's Oxon Hill Manor, a neo-Georgian brick mansion built for the world famous diplomat **Sumner Welles**. This imposing structure was once seriously considered as the site of an official home for the U.S. Vice President. Magnificently sited on the south eastern side of the Woodrow Wilson "Beltway" bridge over the Potomac, today the locale looks down on the preliminary clearing of Smoot's Cove in preparation for the National Harbor project.

In April 1971, the Society members had gathered around Mr. Maloof as he sat on the stairway of Oxon Hill Manor which was almost completely blocked, as was the entire manor interior, with the vast collection of his extensive travel memorabilia. Enjoying his comments, I was however the only member present who excitedly noted his comment of discovery of a burial crypt on the river cliff which he assumed to be the burial location of John Hanson known to have passed away at Oxon Hill. John Hanson, President of the United States of the congress assembled, 1781-2, died November 15, 1783 and some historians are of the opinion that his service negates George Washington's status as our 'first president.' His burial location is unknown but that fact lends strong credence to the Addison vault as a likely location.

Although, I was not appropriately dressed for cliff climbing, I was able to access the newly discovered crypt. Unwilling to risk entering the cave further, for fear of possible snakes or a cave in, I could however, barely observe the bricked up crypt within.

Since that exciting exploration, over the years, I have been frustrated not only by a complete lack of interest in this matter but also by no formal recognition that the crypt ever existed. Until in May 1998 when I brought it to the attention of Susan Pearl, a professional researcher and Historian of the Society. Her interest in my insistence that the crypt had existed occasioned her search of the archeological files of the Maryland National Capital Park & Planning Commission with spectacular success! Although the detailed study of the site is temporarily unavailable, the vault was positively documented prior to its destruction during recent grading.

Specifically noted was that the crypt was open and empty!

Recalling that Mr. Naji Maloof, an attorney of Upper Marlboro and Prince Frederick, was a relative of the late Fred N. Maloof, I contacted him by phone on this matter. His recollections were quite specific; as a boy, he had played around the crypt and it was positively sealed at that time! We can only speculate today on whether the vandals who invaded the crypt could have confirmed the identify of the occupant(s) therein. Most probably, this was John Hanson's final resting place.

#### References:

- Stones & Bones***, P.G. Co. Genealogy Society, 1984.
- Historic Graves of Maryland*** by Helen Ridgely
- Guide to the Historic Places of Prince George's County Maryland Prince George's Heritage*** by Louise J. Hienton, 1972.
- Across the Years*** by Effie Gwynn Bowie, 1953.
- Prince George's County Pictorial History*** by Alan Virta, 1984.

***Editor's note:*** On a related topic and for additional summer reading, Lester Sweeting recommends:

***Sumner Welles: FDR's Global Strategist: A Biography*** by Benjamin Welles, 1997.

Written by his son, the Los Angeles Times Sunday Book Review called it "...a compassionate but ruthlessly honest biography... Neither harsh nor apologetic, Benjamin Welles shows a deep understanding of his father's character; the

analysis of his policies is less rigorous."

And Kirkus Associates published the following synopsis on the Internet: "The son of a prominent family, **Sumner Welles** was a skillful international negotiator who held the position of Under-Secretary of State in the FDR administration. However, a scandal forced Welles to resign in 1943, ending his brilliant career. The life of Sumner Welles is candidly told here for the first time by his son, retired journalist Benjamin Welles."

More summer reading:

***Proud Past, Promising Future: Cities and Towns in Prince George's County, Maryland*** by **George D. Denny, Jr.** Printed by Tuxedo Press, Brentwood, Maryland.

Winner of a 1998 St. George's Day award, we recommend this fascinating volume which, in addition to the requisite alphabetical, historical descriptions of each town or city, includes a chart of municipalities by year of incorporation, a map of these municipalities, the definition of a municipality, a chapter called "*How Did it All Begin?*" and a thoughtful final chapter called "*What Lies Ahead?*" Each historical sketch concludes with the appropriate city/town seal, a list of current elected officials and a population estimate. Localized bibliographies are listed here and a more General Bibliography concludes the work.

In addition to being a useful reference tool, this is a very readable document profusely illustrated with many old photographs.

**Subject to change: Please call to confirm date,  
event, time, cost and reservation requirements**

**JULY**

1-31	Summer on the Farm Accokeek Foundation	Fee 301-283-2113
4	Independence Day Accokeek Foundation	Free 301-283-2113
5 & 18	Open House Tours Billingsley Manor (1695)	Fee 301-627-0739
7 1-4 pm	Woodcraft Demonstration by Guy Hilton Duvall Tool Museum	Free 301-627-6074
7	Conservators Workshop Lecture - Belair Mansion	Fee 301-809-3088
10 & 24	Tea in the Afternoon-by reservation Montpelier Mansion	Fee 301-953-1376
10-19	NeedleArt '98 Montpelier Mansion	Fee 301-953-1376
11 (1-4pm)	Basketmaking Workshop Accokeek Foundation	Fee 301-283-2113
11 & 19	Gun Battery Walk Fort Washington Park	Free 301-763-4600
12	Log Hewing Demonstration by Roger Weakley Duvall Tool Museum	Free 301-627-6074
12	Civil War Artillery Fort Washington Park	Fee 301-763-4600
18	Battery Decauter Tour Civil War Garrison Torchlight Tour Fort Washington Park	Free Fee Fee 301-763-4600
25	Afternoon Tea & Flower Arranging Party - His Lordship's Kindness	Fee 301-856-0358

27-28 Farm Heritage Festival at Prince George's Equestrian Center Free 301-627-2270

July-August "By the Rockets' Red Glare--The War of 1812 Fee the Battle of Bladensburg, & the Calvert Family" Riversdale Mansion 301-864-0420

July-August To Have and to Hold Surratt House Museum Fee 301-868-1121

Weekends 2:00 pm Tours of the Ecosystem Farm Fee Accokeek Foundation 301-283-2113

Weekends til end of summer Potomac River Dory Boat Service to and from Mount Vernon Fee Accokeek Foundation 301-283-2113

**AUGUST**

1 Home Front and Beyond Lantern Tour: Going home-1865 Fort Washington Park Free 301-763-4600

1 & 29 Battery Decauter Tour Fort Washington Park Free 301-763-4600

2 & 15 Open House Tours Billingsley Manor (1695) Fee 301-627-0730

4 "A Look at Levittowns" Lecture - Belair Mansion Fee 301-809-3088

16 Civil War Artillery Fort Washington Park Fee 301-763-4600

Through the 30 To Have and To Hold Surratt House Museum Fee 301-868-1121

22 Battle of Bladensburg Encampment Riversdale Mansion Free 301-864-0420

1-30 Food, Forests & Farming Accokeek Foundation Fee 301-283-2113

Weekends 2:00 pm Pumpkin Ash Trail Tours Accokeek Foundation Fee 301-283-2113

30 Basketry Demonstration Duvall Tool Museum Free 301-627-6074

**SEPTEMBER**

1-31 Children's Month Accokeek Foundation Fee 301-283-2113

6 & 19 Open House Tours Billingsley Manor (1695) Fee 301-627-0730

11 & 25 Tea in the Afternoon-by reservation Montpelier Mansion Fee 301-953-1376

12 Civil War Garrison Torchlight Tour Fort Washington Park Fee 301-763-4600

12 & 26 John Wilkes Booth Escape Route Tour Surratt House Museum Fee 301-868-1121

15 "The Architecture of Delano & Aldrich" Lecture/Exhibit - Belair Mansion Fee 301-809-3089

17 "Freeing Slaves in Early Maryland"-lecture Montpelier Mansion Fee 301-953-1376

20 Civil War Artillery Fort Washington Park Fee 301-763-4600

20 Walking Staff Demonstration Duvall Tool Museum Fee 301-627-6074

26 Children's Day Accokeek Foundation Fee 301-283-2113

26 Court Leet (Law Day) - by reservation Montpelier Mansion Fee 301-953-1376

26 War of 1812 Encampment His Lordship's Kindness Fee 301-856-0358

26 & 27 Roman Legion XX & LaBelle Compagnie Encampment - Marietta Fee 301-464-5291

27 Tea Time Traditions (12-4 pm) Billingsley Manor (1695) Fee 301-627-0730

Having spent a fair amount of time researching Hyattsville's history, I was impressed by Mr. Denny's comprehensiveness. This publication, like all others reviewed here, is available from the Historical Society Gift Shop at Marietta Mansion.

Also available at our Gift Shop is an important publication by **Susan Pearl** entitled ***African-American Heritage Survey, 1996*** and although it is not new, I have discovered that many of our members are not familiar with it.

The abstract defines this volume better than I could hope to so I am reprinting it in full here:

"This book presents individual properties and communities that are significant to the African-American history of Prince George's County. The 107 historic properties include residences, churches and cemeteries, schools, fraternal lodges, a monument and an airfield; the 14 historic communities include both urban subdivisions and rural villages, as well as early towns and retreat communities. For each individual property there is an illustration, an architectural description and a summary of its historical significance. For each community, there is a graphic illustration and a history of the community's development.

The book is divided into four major sections: an **Introduction** that explains the background of the study and offers a guide to use of the book; **African Americans in Prince George's County, Maryland: A Brief History of the First 300 Years,**

which presents an overall history; **Properties Within or Closely Associated With Historic Communities**, which presents the history and development of 14 early African-American communities as well as descriptive histories of 76 individual properties associated with them; and **Other Historic Properties**, which presents descriptive histories of 31 other properties located throughout the County.

Following the four major sections are two appendices: a listing of the properties and communities by type, and an explanation of the status of properties in relation to the Prince George's County Historic Sites and Districts Plan, 1992. The appendices are followed by a map showing the location of the historic communities and properties."



72-10      **Van Horn-Mitchell House**  
4706 Mann Street  
Deanwood

Built ca. 1803 -- 2-1/2 story brick, Federal style gable-roof plantation house with a five-bay main facade; significant because of the prominence of Archibald Van Horn, a state legislator and U.S. Congressman, and for its twentieth-century associations with the local black community

## **Simon Jonas Martenet**

The introduction to the Tricentennial reprinting of *Martenet's Map of Prince George's County, Maryland* included a brief summary of the life and career of Simon J. Martenet. Since that time, more information has come to light about this important surveyor/mapmaker. Robert Barnes has written a short piece on Martenet in *The Archivist's Bulldog* (Newsletter of the Maryland State Archives, 11 May 1998), and in it he reveals that the mapmaker was born 13 April 1832, son and namesake of Simon Jonas Martenet, who had immigrated from Switzerland when the younger Martenet was almost four years old.

Young Simon went to work after school and learned the surveyor's craft. By the late 1850s he had begun the surveys of at least five of the State's counties. By 1867 he had published a large map of Maryland so accurate that the General Assembly circulated copies to all the state's public schools. The Maryland State Archives includes among its present holdings Martenet maps and atlases spanning the years 1858 to 1886.

In August 1853, Simon Martenet married Philena Fussell; they had nine children, several of whom went on to distinguish themselves in a variety of professions. Son Jefferson followed in his father's footsteps as a civil engineer; son Simon went into the insurance field, son William became a veterinary surgeon, and son J. Fussell became a physician and served as President of the Medical and Chirurgical society of Maryland. Dr. Fussell Martenet's second wife, Ella Reed of Virginia, was herself a graduate of the Women's Medical College, and one of few female physicians in 19th-

century Maryland and Virginia.

Submitted by Historian Susan Pearl

*Atlas of Prince George's County, Maryland 1861* adapted from Matertenet's Map of Prince George's County, Maryland (reprinted by the Historical Society in 1996)

This publication, which celebrated the County's Tricentennial, is a fascinating "demographic picture of Prince George's county on the eve of the Civil War" even if the picture is not complete. As Joyce W. McDonald, Managing Editor of the publication and former president of the Society states in the foreword, the atlas is missing the names of the non-subscribers to Martenent's project, a large segment of the white population, plus the names of free Blacks and slaves. However, "this edition includes data from other sources such as the 1860 Federal Census, the Statistical Gazetteer of the State of Maryland, and the Planters' Advocate newspaper." The atlas is divided into nine districts extant at the time: Aquasco, Bladensburg, Marlborough, Nottingham, Piscataway, Queen Anne, Spaldings, Suratts, and Vansville. Statistical information, post offices, a chart of birth places and occupations complete this important document. If this *Atlas* is not already in your library, we strongly urge that you obtain a copy from our gift shop.

A useful companion to this publication is the *Atlas of Fifteen Miles Around Washington including the County of Prince George(sic) Maryland*, compiled, drawn and published from actual

Surveys by G.M. Hopkins, C.E., 1878 was reprinted first in 1975 to celebrate the County's 279th anniversary.

By 1878, the nine districts indentified in 1861, had been expanded to fourteen election districts adding Laurel, Brandywine, Oxen Hill, Kent and Bowie. Frank F. White, Jr., of the Hall of Records in Annapolis and a society member, edited this publication. He also indexed the residents listed on the various maps. In his Introduction, White directs the reader to the historical sketch by Dawson Lawrence and to statistical information relating to agriculture and population.

Lawrence's sketch begins:

"Among the twenty-three political divisions which constitute the State of Maryland, Prince George County may justly claim a remarkable and commanding position. The early date of its organization; its proximity to the national capital, and to one of the largest sea-ports on the Atlantic coast; its manufacturing industries; its picturesque scenery, its undulating surface; its numerous and abundant springs of clear, cold water; its running streams, tributary to its two grand historic boundary rivers, one of which will be memorable for washing ground, that will be holy during the existence of American independence; the number of distinguished occupants it has furnished to the gubernatorial and national political circles; its ores and its furnaces, its fisheries and its oyster beds; its commercial facilities, by its numerous railroads and rivers, traversed by steam and sail vessels; its educational institutions; its agricultural prominence as the largest tobacco producing county in the Union; the interest attached to the place on account of its connection with our early colonial and proprietary history; its historic

battle grounds, its mineral springs flowing forth for the healing of the people, all combine to make good the claim of Prince George to one of the proudest positions in the sisterhood of counties which constitute the good old State of Maryland."

**Prince George's County  
Historical Society**

**Annual Membership Application**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone—Home: \_\_\_\_\_

Business: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate:  New  Renewal

**Check below the category you select:**

<input type="checkbox"/> Full-time Student .....	\$ 10.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Member .....	\$ 20.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining .....	\$ 50.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Life Member .....	\$ 400.00

Additional Contribution \_\_\_\_\_

I am also interested in helping the Society as a volunteer. Please contact me regarding volunteer opportunities.

For membership in the **Maryland Historical Society**, include an additional \$30.00 for individual or \$40.00 for husband and wife.

Our operating support comes from your dues and contributions. All contributions qualify for tax deduction. We appreciate your support.

Please make checks payable to **PGCHS**  
Mail check and form to:

Prince George's County  
Historical Society  
Post Office Box 14  
Riverdale, Maryland 20738-0014  
301-464-0590

R. Lee Van Horn, *Out of the Past: Prince Georgians and Their Land*. PGCHS, 1996.

"R. Lee Van Horn was a Member of the Maryland House of Delegates, 1914-1918; Clerk, Board of Prince George's County Commissioners, 1954-1958; Master for Juvenile Causes, Prince George's County, 1958-1966; and served as Historian of Prince George's County Historical Society. A long-time resident of Glenn Dale, Judge Van Horn was known in Prince George's County as a public speaker and as a contributor to county newspapers on topics of local history.

The manuscript for this book was completed shortly before his death on December 18, 1972 and was originally published in 1976 through the encouragement and assistance of his wife, Elizabeth Parker Van Horn." The society reprinted this important volume in 1996.

"*Out of the Past* is a chronicle of everyday life in Prince George's County, Maryland from the time of its founding on St. George's Day, April 23, 1696 until the beginning of the Civil War.

From the public records and newspapers as well as private papers, the author has woven a fascinating tapestry of facts, seldom seen in published histories. In addition to the story of events as they unfolded, there is a massive listing of many ordinary inhabitants whose names have not appeared in print before, which makes this book a major source for genealogical purposes."

As a Librarian, I have rarely met a bibliography I didn't like!! And this volume satisfies this need with both a selected bibliography of Prince George's County and a selected list of articles in *Maryland Historical Magazine* about Prince George's. A recitation of the chapter titles from this volume provides a fine topical overview: Maryland's British Background; Colonial Maryland; Proprietary Governors; Prince George's County is Established; County Courts at Work; Problems of the 1720s and 1730s; County Events of the 1740s; The 1750s in Prince George's County; Social and Court Activities of the Mid-18th century; County Life under British Rule: 1762-1765; The Gathering Storm; Alarming News from the North; A look at County Life, 1770-1774; County Men Resist British Actions; Actors in the Drama of 1775-1776; During the Revolution, County Life: 1777-1779; Before the End of the Revolution; Maryland under New Government: 1783-1784; The post-War years, 1785-1789; Changes in County Government: 1790-1797; The Needs of a Growing Society: 1798-1802; County Matters, Large and Small: 1803-1808; War Looms Again: 1809-1814; A Busy Post-War Period: 1815-1820; People, Places and County Progress: 1821-1826; Railroads and Business: 1827-1832; News Media Reflects County History: 1830-1832; Variety Marks Court Calendars: 1833-1839; Mid-19th Century County Events: 1840-1847; Calm Years for the County: 1848-1853; and the Pre-Civil War Years: 1854-1861."

And now, see the *1861 Atlas for Visuals!!*

## PLACES TO GO

The old Pennsylvania Railroad Station in Old Bowie at Route 197 and Chestnut Avenue is now **The Huntington Railroad Museum**

The station was rebuilt after a fire that destroyed much the Old Town in 1910 and operated until 1989. When again threatened by demolition for construction of a new highway bridge, the Tower, the Freight Building and Passenger Shed were moved to the current location, restored and opened as a museum.

Railroad memorabilia and early photographs of the Town of Bowie are displayed clearly showing the impact that the railroad brought to this rural community. The museum is now open **every Sunday, April through October from noon until 4 PM.**

Take yourselves, your grandparents and your grandchildren and explore this very interesting, but little known glimpse of County history.

## ORDER BLANK

Add to your library and read while lying in your hammock in the heat of the day.

Use this form to order any of the publications reviewed in this issue.

<i>1861 Atlas:</i>	\$10.00	plus \$2.50 shipping and handling
<i>1878 Atlas</i>	7.00	plus \$2.50 shipping and handling
<i>African-American Sites</i>	6.00	plus \$2.50 shipping and handling
<i>Van-Horn's Out of the Past</i>	20.00	plus \$2.75 shipping and handling
<i>Denny's Proud Past, Promising Future</i>	19.95	plus \$2.50 shipping and handling

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**Time required 4 to 6 hours per month. Will train.**  
**Contact: Jane Eagen, phone: 301-249-6409.**

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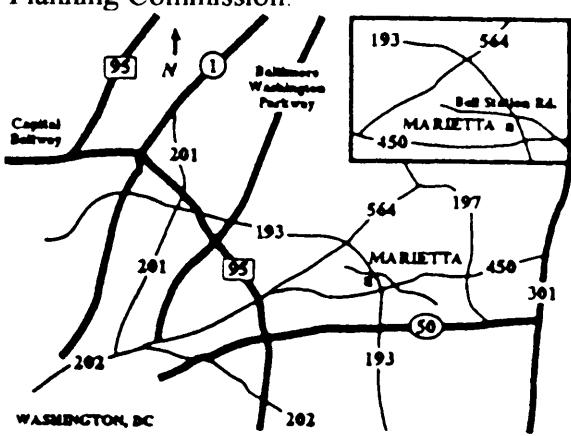
Marietta Tours -Friday, 11 - 3, Sunday,  
12 - 4 - and by appointment -  
Information 301-464-0591

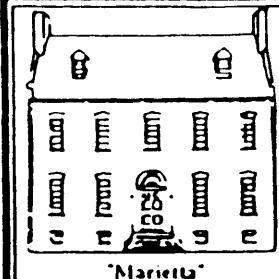
**THE SOCIETY GIFT SHOP**

Features a wide selection of books, gifts,  
toys and small antiques. Open Friday,  
Saturday and Sunday, 12 -4 PM and  
during special events. Call 301-464-  
0590.

**LOCATION OF THE SOCIETY**

The Society is located at Marietta, 5626  
Bell Station Road, in Glenn Dale, MD, off  
Route 193, near Route 450. This is a  
facility of the Maryland National Park and  
Planning Commission.





# News and Notes

## Prince George's County Historical Society



September 1998

Our 46th Year

XXVII Number 6

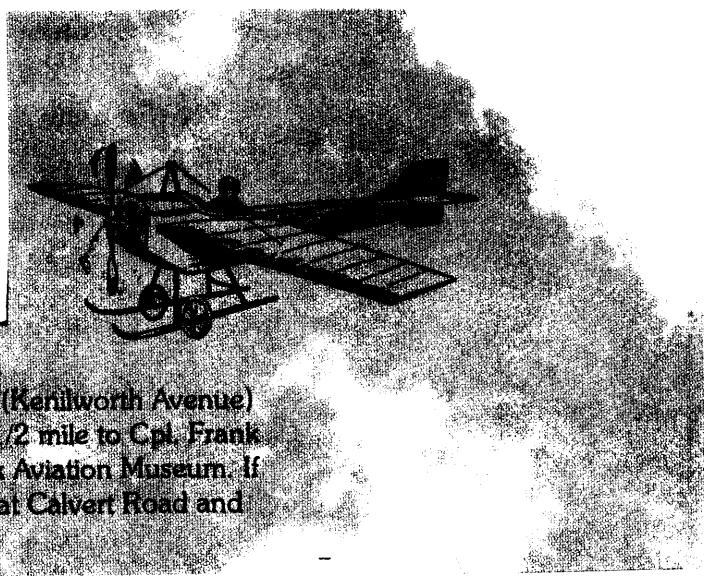
## COLLEGE PARK AVIATION MUSEUM OPENS SEPTEMBER 12, 1998



The College Park Aviation Museum, located on the grounds of the College Park Airport , will open on September 12. Everyone is invited to come and see **Wilbur Wright** in his 1909 hangar, a 1918 Jenny, a 1932 monocoupe, and the 1924 Berliner helicopter. The **Grand Opening** hours will be from **11 to 5**.

The Museum is looking for volunteers to become members of the **Ground Crew**. The volunteers will be trained and have opportunities to work in a variety of positions. Call Katrina Wood at 301-927-6472 for further information.

*The College Park Aviation Museum is located at the world's oldest continuously operating airport, established in 1909. At College Park, Wilbur Wright was the airfield's first flight instructor for Signal Corps officers. College Park was also the terminus for the world's first airmail service. In addition to displaying several historic aircraft, the museum also features an animatronic Wilbur Wright; aviation simulators; a research/reference library; and many interactive features such as the ability to fly an airmail plane and listen to local aviation control towers.*



### Directions:

From the Beltway (I-95/495) take exit 23B Menilworth Avenue) south to Paint Branch Parkway, then right 1/2 mile to Cpl. Frank Scott Drive and follow signs to College Park Aviation Museum. If needed, overflow parking will be provided at Calvert Road and Cpl. Frank Scott Dr.

## **IN MEMORIAM**

The recent death of **Louis L. Goldstein**, Comptroller of Maryland, lifelong resident of Calvert County, and friend of all Prince Georgians, was the occasion of many tributes. In 1979, the Prince George's County Historical Society presented a St. George's Day Award to: "**Louis L. Goldstein** of Prince Frederick, in recognition of his encouragement and direct assistance to many in this county on their quest to maintain our rich heritage, both as a private citizen and as a member of the State Board of Public Works, manifested most recently in the transfer of the State's title to the Magruder House in Bladensburg to the Prince George's County Committee of the Maryland Historical Trust." We mourn his loss.

It is also with great sadness that we mark the one-year anniversary of the death of our own beloved **Fred DeMarr** and as we continue to sort through boxes in the library, we came upon this clipping which seemed a fitting tribute. It was written by Pete Pichaske on **March 3, 1987**, for the *Journal* and is entitled: *Who best knows county history? Let's ask Fred.* "Admit it: You had no idea there was an official Prince George's County history library. And even if you did, you figured it was full of ... what? Books on tobacco growing? A complete set of Pickup Trucks Illustrated? Wrong, cheap-shot artist. There is indeed an official Prince George's County Historical Library, also known as the Frederick S. DeMarr Library of County History. It opened 16 months ago in a room of Marietta, the ancestral home of Gabriel Duvall that sits on 25 wooded acres in Glenn Dale.

The library has filing cabinets full of

clippings and letters. It has some 5,000 books and periodicals dealing with local history, including volumes on famous county families such as the Bowies and the Duvalls, historic homes such as Belair and Montpelier, and communities such as Beltsville and Berwyn Heights. It's worth a visit. But unless you're a history buff, you probably won't go back. ... Now that you've heard of the official history library, you should know that the best thing about the Frederick S. DeMarr Library of County History is Frederick S. DeMarr. ... He's no mover and shaker; he doesn't make headlines or the 6 o'clock news. But DeMarr probably knows more about Prince George's County history than anyone on the planet. ... 'Fred's the expert,' said Alan Virta, author of the recent 'Pictorial History of Prince George's County' and himself no slouch on county history. 'There's hardly a detail about Prince George's County that Fred doesn't know.' .... So let's ask Fred. Something hard. Something like: Who is this J. Enos Ray whose portrait hangs on the library wall? 'J. Enos Ray was speaker of the Maryland House from 1908 to 1910, and a political leader of Prince George's County,' relates DeMarr. 'He was also the first president of Prince George's Bank ... When he died in 1939, his honorary pallbearers were Gov. Ritchie, James A. Farley, the postmaster general under FDR and the president of the university'."

**Editor's note:** As one of the three Ss who manage Fred's Library each Saturday, I can say that there isn't a week that goes by that his spirit doesn't direct us to a book or file or fact that we had no idea we would find. *Susan Pearl* and *Sarah Bourne* and I toil to bring this library into the 21st century as a lasting memorial to Fred. We thank everyone who has contributed money and time and materials to assist us in this goal.

And now, if our readers will grant us one last favor we would be grateful: The ***Franklin Atlas of Prince George's County***, printed in Philadelphia in 1940, is missing. It is a large book (about 24" by 36") with red binding, and includes details of roads, lots and buildings in the area around the boundaries of the District of Columbia. If you know anything of its whereabouts, please let the Library Committee know at **301-464-0590**. Many thanks.

#### ***WANTED: Yearbooks/Annuals***

The Library has started a collection of Yearbooks or annuals from High Schools in the County. Please help with this project by looking in your closets for volumes that you no longer want. Leave a message at the library or with Sarah on 301-277-5468 or Sharon on 301-927-4514.

#### **We Get Letters and E-mails**

We received another letter, dated August 10, 1998, from **Ruth J. Wilson**, Project Director, Footsteps from North Brentwood Project, requesting that we refer to ***Footsteps from North Brentwood*** as a monograph, which we are happy to do. She concluded her letter by quoting Jose'Ortega y Gasset "To define is to exclude and negate." She went on to say that "... the myths of African American history are perpetuated and continued by a dominant few who refuse to listen, research read or acknowledge their errors."

And this E-mail was received from **Lester Sweeting** relating to President Woodrow Wilson and sheep on the White House lawn.

(You will recall Laurie Verge's letter about her grandfather and Wilson's trips to Prince George's County and his interest in sheep). "I am reading a biography of **Florence Harding** (subtitled: *The First Lady, the Jazz Age, and the Death of America's Most Scandalous President*) by Carl Sferrazza Anthony, William Morrow & Company, 1998) who succeeded Edith Boling Galt Wilson as First Lady in 1921. On page 123, I came across this in the chapter on Florence's first year in Washington as the wife of then Ohio Senator Warren Gamaliel Harding:

Touring constituents through the city-- frequently to the Smithsonian exhibits of First Ladies Gowns--she long recalled an incident at the White House Gates, where she had taken some Ohioans. "A policeman was herding sheep which were grazing on the lawn. Spying us, he promptly ordered us to 'move on' and to step lively. It was slushy and in my haste to obey orders, I slipped and fell in the mud. My dignity was wounded more than I was physically hurt, but right then and there I resolved that if ever I had any authority about the White House, and were given permission to issue any orders, the policeman at the Executive Mansion would have some duties to perform other than herding sheep....' She may also have been insulted that despite her status as a Senate wife, she was unrecognized."

#### **WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS**

*Steven Wall  
Connie Romanello  
Judith J. Ho*

## **FROM THE ARCHIVES OF NEWS AND NOTES**

*Given our lead story, the Editor (and her predecessor) thought it would be nice to include a few snippets from earlier editions relating to the College Park Airport Museum.*

**March 1973 (V. 1, no. 1)**

### COLLEGE PARK AIRPORT

We were pleased to learn from the public press last week that the Prince George's County Council has purchased historic College Park Airport. It was on this field that the Wright brothers trained the first military pilots, and many "firsts" in aviation were later accomplished here.

The field will be under the jurisdiction of the Park and Planning Commission. Meetings are to be held by the Commission with College Park Residents and other interested parties to determine whether flying should be continued from the field.

As a historic site which has great potential for tourism, College Park Airport should receive the attention of our Society.

**September, 1976 (V. 4, no. 9)**

### New Historical Marker

The newest historical marker in Prince George's County, recording the historic significance of the College Park Airport, was dedicated on August 14 (1976). Funded by the National Aerospace Education Memorial Center, Inc., the marker is located at the corner of Route 1 and Calvert Road in College Park.

The College Park Airport is the oldest continuously operated airport in the world, and the first military airfield in the United States. The marker lists ten of the many historic firsts occurring at the airport beginning in 1907. The airport is now owned by the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

The dedication was part of a two-day program at the airport, sponsored by the College Park Bicentennial Commission. Present at the ceremony were the Honorable St. Clair Reeves, Mayor of College Park, Mrs. Adma Shakhashiri, chairman of the College Park Bicentennial Commission, and Mr. Kenneth Lewis of the National Aerospace Education Memorial Center, Inc. Representing the Society was David Rinn, Vice-president.

**November, 1976 (V. 4, no. 11)**

### College Park Airport

On October 22 the Governors Consulting Committee approved the nomination of College Park Airport to the National Register of Historic Places. The nomination is now forwarded to the Department of Interior in Washington for final approval. The nominating report was completed by Robert Sellers and William Aleshire. An historical marker about the airport was recently erected at Route One and Calvert Road in College Park.

The street leading from Calvert Road along the railroad tracks back to the airport has never been formally named. On October 22 (1976) it was officially named for Corporal Frank S. Scott, who was the first enlisted man to die in a military air mishap in America. Corporal Scott flew out of the College Park Airport on September 28, 1912, and died in an accident. Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, is also named in his honor.

**PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY**  
**A Pictorial History**  
by  
**Alan Virta**

The third edition, with a color section of photographs from the Tricentennial, will be on sale in November

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for all mail orders received before  
November 1st

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DINNER FOR EIGHT AT  
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**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18, 1998**

DRAWING AT THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S FLEA MARKET  
SATURDAY, SEPT. 19, 1998

CONSOLATION DRAWING WINS A PICKER CHECK NECKLACE

**DONATION \$5.00**

FOR INFORMATION CALL - THURSDAY THRU SATURDAY - **410-768-9518**

## **ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

### **Mark Your Calendars Now**

The 1998 annual membership meeting will be held on November 14 at the Calvert House Inn restaurant in Riverdale.

The Program, in addition to the annual Society business meeting, will feature a discussion of the newly designated *Anacostia River Heritage Trail*. Election of Society Officers and two proposed bylaw amendments, which will be detailed in the next *News and Notes*, will be on the agenda. Full details and a form for dinner reservations will be found in this space in the next edition.

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### **COLLEGE PARK AVIATION MUSEUM NEEDS VOLUNTEERS**

**They Need YOU!** The new 26,000 square foot College Park Aviation Museum, a Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission facility, is forming its volunteer corps, **The Ground Crew**. The museum tells the unique story of the world's oldest continually operated airport, which was founded and frequented by the Wright Brothers. The new facility opens on September 12, 1998, and the managers are searching for enthusiastic, outgoing and dedicated volunteers to serve as greeters, docents, library staff, interpreters, researchers, aircraft restorers, and gift shop assistants.

Numerous benefits are available. **The Ground Crew** will have complimentary membership admission to the museum. Free training and continuing support, a discount at the gift shop, and free use of the library, which is exclusive to volunteers and Museum members.

If this sounds like the kind of exciting, rewarding and challenging volunteer opportunity for you, and you are 15 or older, please call the volunteer coordinator at 301-864-6029 to arrange for orientation.

The M-NCPPC Department of Parks and Recreation encourages individuals with and without disabilities to engage in leisure pursuits together. Reasonable accommodation will be provided for all programs. Advance notice of requirements is requested.

---

### **QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY**

*History of Queen Anne's County*, by Frederic Emory (\$50.00) is available by mail from the Historical Society of Queen Anne's County, Post Office Box 62, Centerville, MD 21617.

## **ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### **Membership Level**

- Individual (household) ..... \$ 2 0.00
- Sustaining Member ..... \$ 50.00
- Life Membership ..... \$400.00

Membership in the Maryland Historical Society is additional

Individual ..... \$ 30.00  
Husband / Wife ..... \$ 40.00

I am interested in helping as a volunteer

Please make checks payable to **PGCHS** Mail application and check to **PGCHS** Box 14  
Riverdale, MD 20737-0014

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## **BOOK ORDER FORM**

<i>Martenet Atlas 1861</i> .....	\$ 10.00	(\$2.50 S&H)
<i>Hopkins Atlas 1878</i> .....	\$ 7.00	(\$2.50 S&H)
<i>African American Sites</i> .....	\$ 6.00	(\$2.50 S&H)
<i>Van Horn - Out of the Past</i> .....	\$ 20.00	(\$2.75 S&H)
<i>Denny - Proud Past, Promising Future</i> .....	\$ 19.95	(\$2.50 S&H)

Md. Residents add 5% sales tax

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Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to Marietta Gift Shop and mail to-  
**PGCHS** Box 14 Riverdale, MD 20738

## Calendar

### September

- 12      Opening of College Park Aviation Museum, 11 to 5 (See cover for details)
- 13      Prince George's County Historical Society Board Social at The Sweeting's, 4112 Gallatin Street, Hyattsville, 5:00 pm; Pot luck (Call Sarah for details)

### October

- 8      PGCHS Board Meeting, 5:00 pm, Marietta Mansion
- 10     Navy Department Anniversary Celebration, Bostwick (details in October *News and Notes*)
- 18     Harvest Festival at Marietta (details in next issue)

### November

- 14     Annual Meeting at the Calvert House Inn, Riverdale Park (details next issue)

### December

- 12     Christmas Party at Marietta

## **THANK YOU and WELCOME**

At the June meeting of the Society Board of Directors the resignation of **Melinda Alter** was reluctantly accepted. Melinda has been a valuable board member and a reliable worker. We shall miss her organizational talents, but we expect to see both Melinda and Art at all of our functions.

We are delighted that **George Denny** has agreed to fill the vacancy on the Board of Directors. George received a St. George's Day Award this past year for his book *Proud Past, Promising Future*. We know that he will be a valuable addition to the Board and are fortunate to have caught him before his retirement!

### Board of Directors

**President** - Jane Eagen

Directors 1998 - 2000

Directors 1997 -1999

**Vice President** - Eugene B. Roberts, Jr.

Julie Bright

George Denny

**Secretary** - Sarah Bourne

John Mitchell

Kathryn Clagett

**Treasurer** - Joyce Huber

William Huber

Mildred Ridgeley Gray

**Membership** - Phyllis Herndon

Wallis Cain

Iris McConnel

**Historian** - Susan Pearl

**Editor** - Sharon Howe Sweeting

### Past Presidents

John Gianetti

W. C. (Bud) Dutton

Paul T. Lanham

Warren Rhoads

Joyce McDonald

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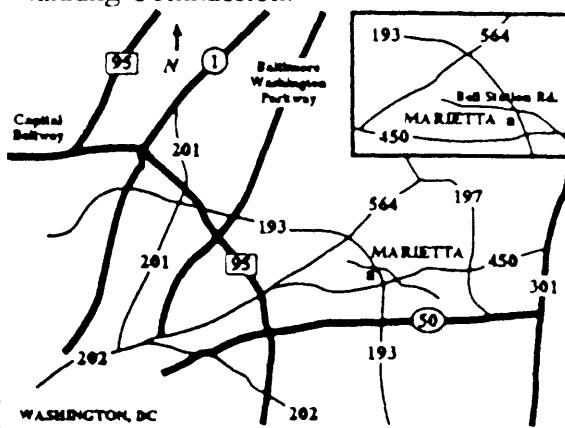
Marietta Tours -Friday, 11 - 3, Sunday,  
12 - 4 - and by appointment -  
Information 301-464-0591

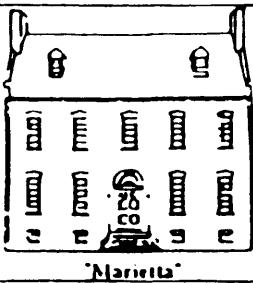
**THE SOCIETY GIFT SHOP**

Features a wide selection of books, gifts,  
toys and small antiques. Open Friday,  
Saturday and Sunday, 12 -4 PM and  
during special events Call 301-464-  
0590.

**LOCATION OF THE SOCIETY**

The Society is located at Marietta, 5626  
Bell Station Road, in Glenn Dale, MD, off  
Route 193, near Route 450. This is a  
facility of the Maryland National Park and  
Planning Commission.





# News and Notes

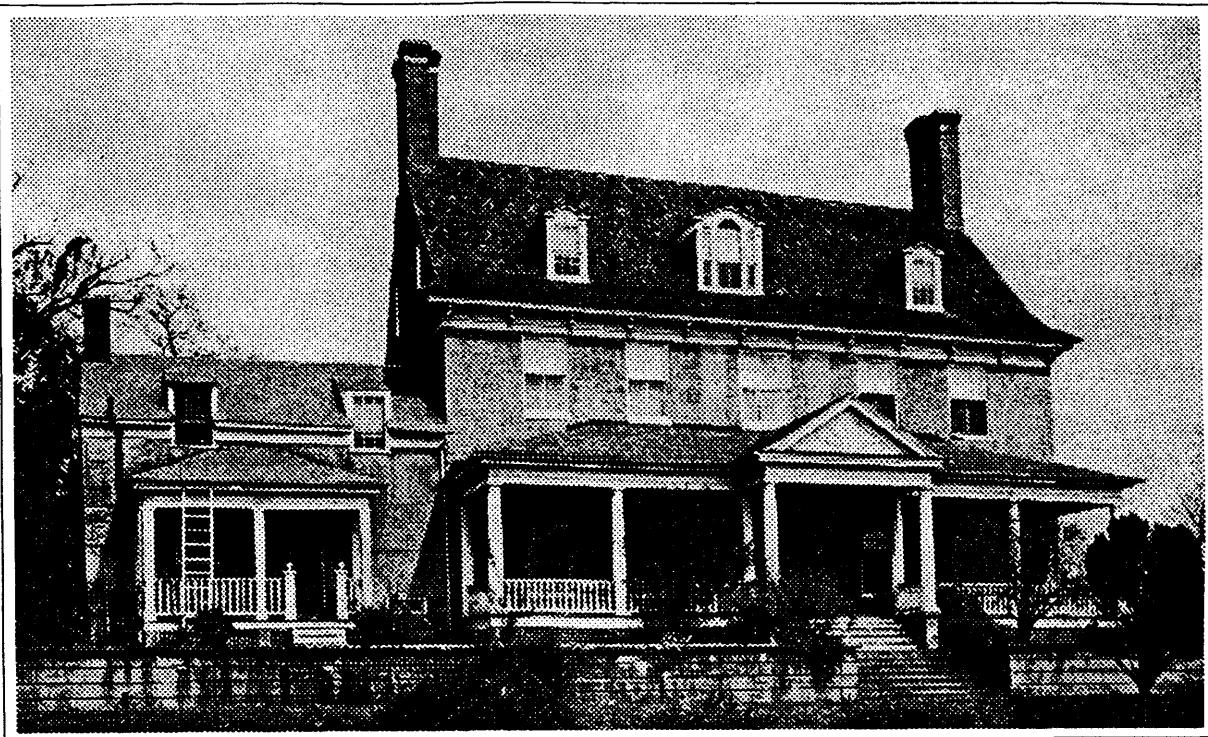
## Prince George's County Historical Society



October 1998

Our 46<sup>th</sup> Year

XXVII Number 7



**The Town of Bladensburg,  
the Bladensburg Promotion Committee,  
U.S. Naval Reserve Intelligence Area 19, and  
Prince George's County Historical Society  
dedicate Bostwick House, home of the First  
Secretary of the Navy, the Honorable Benjamin  
Stoddert in honor of the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of  
the Department of the Navy  
Saturday, October 10, 1998**

## BOSTWICK IN BLADENSBURG

Since 1975 Bostwick has been listed in the National Register of Historic Places because of its historic and architectural significance. The Prince George's County Historical Society has a special interest in Bostwick, not only because it is the oldest surviving building in historic Bladensburg, but also because of its long association with one of the founders of the Society, Susanna Kyner Cristofane. Three generations of Susanna Cristofane's family lived at Bostwick from 1904 to 1997. In November of 1997, Bostwick was purchased by the Town of Bladensburg, the Town has now begun a series of events which celebrate the history and significance of this remarkable landmark.

The Town of Bladensburg was established in 1742 by an Act of the General Assembly "for laying out and erecting a Town on the south side of the Eastern Branch of Potomack River in Prince George's County near a place called Garrison Landing." Commissioners were appointed to purchase 60 acres and lay out a town of 60 one-acre lots. Most of the lots were sold right away, and each of the new owners was required to construct a 400-square-foot (minimum) dwelling, with a brick or stone chimney, within 18 months of purchase. All of the lots were improved by 1787. In 1747, only five years after it was established, Bladensburg was named one of the County's official tobacco inspection stations. The town thrived, and became an important port town, with its wharves, market space, taverns, and stores operated by tobacco agents. Much of its early prominence was due to Christopher Lowndes, who was merchant, shipyard and

ropewalk owner, building contractor, postmaster and commissioner of the Town of Bladensburg from 1745 to his death forty years later. Bostwick was built in 1746 as the home of Christopher Lowndes.

In 1742 Christopher Lowndes purchased Lot 52 in Bladensburg, and within the next few years also purchased adjoining Lots 46 and 53. During this period, he began construction of Bostwick house on Lot 52; the house was completed in 1746. In May 1747 he married Elizabeth Tasker, daughter of Benjamin Tasker (President of the Governor's Council and later to be Acting Provincial Governor), and brought his bride to this handsome new house. Bostwick was a two-and one-half-story brick house with gable roof and Georgian plan; it had a grade level entrance to the basement beneath the principal west entrance, which was framed by decorative pilasters on first and second stories. Extending north from the northwest corner of the house was a brick garden wall, and affixed to the south gable-end chimney were the initials "C.L." and the date "1746." Original interior trim bears some resemblance to that of Belair, built in the 1740s for Provincial Governor Samuel Ogle and his wife, the sister of Elizabeth Tasker Lowndes. The construction of Belair was supervised by the brides' father, Benjamin Tasker, who may well have had some influence on the construction of Bostwick.

Christopher Lowndes died in 1785. His widow remained at Bostwick and it was there that she sat for a portrait by Charles Willson Peale shortly before her death in September 1789; in little more than two weeks at Bostwick in August/September 1789, Peale finished four oil portraits and three miniatures of Elizabeth Tasker Lowndes, which were then given, according to her wishes, to her seven children. All of

Christopher and Elizabeth Lowndes' Bladensburg property was inherited by their son, Benjamin Lowndes, who still resided in Bladensburg. The Bostwick property, was managed after Elizabeth Lowndes' death by her daughter and son-in-law, Rebecca and Benjamin Stoddert, soon to become (in 1798) the first Secretary of the Department of the Navy. Bostwick was actually purchased by Stoddert in 1799.

The Stodderts lived much of the year at Halcyon House in Georgetown, but spent considerable time in Bladensburg during the next decades. During these years, Benjamin Stoddert undertook alterations and additions to the Bostwick house: adding the north kitchen wing by using the garden wall as its west exterior wall; building the large buttress structure on the great south chimney, and probably putting in the beautiful large Federal-style mantel in the large south drawing room. At the end of the eighteenth century, there were eight outbuildings on the two acres comprising Lots 52 and 53: a brick store room, a brick meat house, a brick milk house, an older brick store house, a brick carriage and lumber house, a wood frame kitchen, a frame wash house, and a frame hen house.

In 1798 Benjamin Stoddert was appointed by President John Adams to serve as the Secretary of the newly established Department of the Navy. The Stoddert family spent much of the next two years in Philadelphia, then the location of the United States capital. (During some of this period, the fall of 1800 to August 1802, Bostwick was rented and occupied by Henri J. Stier and his wife, while they began construction of their own fine plantation house, Riversdale.) The Stodderts returned to their home in Georgetown during this period, and, after ensuring the establishment of the Navy

Yard in Washington, Stoddert resigned his position as Secretary in 1801.

Rebecca Lowndes Stoddert died in 1802, and Halcyon House became the home of one of the Stodderts' married daughters. Benjamin Stoddert spent most of the following years at Bostwick; he is recorded in the 1810 census as residing at Bostwick with four of his younger children. Stoddert had been much involved in Washington, D.C., real estate and commerce during the Capital's formative years, and as commerce in Georgetown began to wane in the early nineteenth century, he suffered severe financial reverses. He died heavily in debt in December 1813 at Bostwick. His estate was administered by his son-in-law, Thomas Ewell, and his Bladensburg property had to be sold to pay his debts. After being held for several years by William Knight, Bostwick was purchased in 1822 by Judge John Stephen, and remained in the Stephen family for three generations. The Stephen family made a number of alterations in the house, e.g., adding the decorative cornice brackets, and constructing a projecting gabled vestibule that enclosed the west central entrance on both the first and basement level and covered the decorative pilasters. Judge Stephen died in 1844; his property passed to his son, Nicholas Carroll Stephen, attorney and proprietor of the Paint Branch grist mill. Nicholas Carroll Stephen died in 1880, and Bostwick remained in the possession of his daughter, Julianna Stephen Dieudonne, until it was purchased in 1904 by James H. Kyner. The most interesting reminders of the Stephen family tenure are the paintings on the plaster panels above the doors of the large south drawing room, done by Jules Dieudonne, the artist husband of the last Stephen family owner.

Bostwick underwent major changes after its

purchase in 1904 by James H. Kyner, who had made his fortune in the railroads of the American West. He built the upper terrace and retaining wall, covering the basement foundations and entrance, and creating the present impressive terraced lawn. He removed the Stephen family's vestibule, shaved off the decorative brick pilasters, and built the Colonial Revival-style porch across the west facade. He rebuilt the west formal entrance, built the Palladian window in the east wall of the library, and rebuilt the main staircase in the central stairhall. On the grounds, he rebuilt several and removed several of the eighteenth-century outbuildings. Bostwick remained the home of his daughter, Susanna, after her marriage to Felix Cristofane, and, after her death in 1993, the home of their daughter, Susanna, and her husband, Tim Yatman. The Town of Bladensburg purchased Bostwick from the Yatmans in November 1997.

Bostwick is the oldest surviving structure in the historic port town of Bladensburg. From its prominent site, its first owner could survey his waterfront operations at the busy port of Bladensburg. A half century later, the first Secretary of the Navy busied himself with architectural changes to the fine house he had inherited, and that house itself soon witnessed the approach of British troops in August 1814. During the rest of the nineteenth century, as Bladensburg faded from prominence as a commercial riverport, Bostwick was home to three generations of Judge Stephen's family. Bostwick was subsequently the home of three generations of the Kyner-Cristofane family, including two Mayors of the Town of Bladensburg. The Prince George's County Historical Society is proud to join the Town of Bladensburg in celebrating its new ownership of this outstanding historic landmark.

By Susan G. Pearl, August 1998



#### FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

In 1937, James H. Kyner, Susanna Cristofane Yatman's grandfather, related the story of his fascinating life to Hawthorne Daniel. Called the **End of Track**, it was published by Caxton Printers and reviewed by me in the January 1993 issue of *News and Notes*. Such a good read bears repeating:

Interested in the reminiscences of an old man? One who says:

**"It is commonplace to say that men and women of great age recall the incidents of youth more clearly than the happenings of yesterday. Yet unlike many commonplace remarks, this one is true. Nor need one feel that such a fact is hard to understand. The zest a person has in life grows somewhat less if he is nearly ninety, and the incidents of yesterday are merely unimportant repetitions of events from which, long since, the juice has been extracted. The days tick by like seconds of a clock, the very sound of which no longer seems to reach the ear."**

Who lived through years of massive change

**PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY**  
**A Pictorial History**  
by  
**Alan Virta**

The third edition, with a color section of photographs from the Tricentennial, will be on sale in November

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# 1998 HASTINGS FAIRE & BATTLE

OCTOBER 10-11, 1998  
11:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.

*Battle re-enactments at 1 & 3*

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*The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Prince George's County, Department of Parks and Recreation, Division of Natural and Historical Resources.*

*Prince George's County Historical Society  
Annual Meeting*

*Saturday, November 14, 1998  
7PM*

*Calvert House Inn Restaurant*

*6211 Baltimore Avenue*

*Riverdale Park, Maryland*

*Cash Bar at 7:00*

*Dinner at 7:30*

*The menu will include*

*Chicken Marsala, Beef, Shrimp & Scallops*

*PROGRAM*

*Pat Parker and Dick Charlton will bring us up to date on the current status of the*

*Anacostia Trailway Heritage Area*

*There will be a brief business meeting to elect the officers for the coming year and to consider a by-law amendment. (details appear elsewhere in this News & Notes)*

---

*Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ places for the annual dinner meeting at \$22.00 per person.*

*Check made out to PGCHS enclosed for \$ \_\_\_\_\_*

*Name \_\_\_\_\_ Tel \_\_\_\_\_*

*Address \_\_\_\_\_*

*mail to Sarah Bourne 6808 Dartmouth Ave. College Park, Md. 20740*

*reservation deadline November 5*

## **AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS**

The Board of Directors of the Prince George's County Historical Society recommends the following additions to the Board. These proposals will be voted on at the annual meeting on November 14.

### **Article IV section 3:**

There will be nine (9) directors, each elected for a term of three (3) years, three (3) of whom shall be elected at each annual meeting.

### **Article IV section 4:**

The position of Marietta Facilities Manager shall be an ex-officio member of the Board so long as the Society maintains a headquarters at Marietta.

\* \* \* \* \*

## **SLATE OF OFFICERS**

President - Jane Eagen  
Vice President - Eugene Roberts  
Secretary - Sarah Bourne  
Treasurer - Joyce Uber  
Historian - Susan Pearl  
Librarian - Sharon Sweeting  
Membership Development - Phyllis Herndon  
Gift Shop Manager - Stella Uber

## **DIRECTORS 1999-2000**

Mildred Grey  
Kathryn Clagett  
Iris McConnell

in the United States, from the Civil War through to the Great War:

**"... we older ones have lived throughout a period of change, and the world in which we linger is not the one to which we came. We learned to live in other times than these — in simpler times to which we are attuned. We never were exotic plants, I know, and yet we do not like so much transplanting."**

Who at the age of nine, in 1855, became an abolitionist:

**"My father, I know, had always held that slavery was justified. Everyone in the community excepting only George Hamlin, felt much as he did. Yet here among the crowd that had gathered there were many who had opposed that Negro's return to his Kentucky master. Why? I asked myself. Why? Why, if slavery was right, should he NOT go? And suddenly I knew. It was NOT right. Their arguments were faulty. The thing was wrong."**

**"I walked out into the dusty pike and stared after those two disappearing horsemen and at the shackled figure that still walked there between them.. In that very moment, there on the Zanesville-Maysville Pike, I, at the age of nine, became an abolitionist."**

Who before the age of sixteen lost a leg at Shiloh:

**"I looked at my leg. It was shattered, I knew, beyond repair. My side hurt, too, and when I felt of it, my hand came away red with blood. The tears burst forth, I could not keep them back. ... I lay on the battlefield of Shiloh from Sunday**

**morning until hours after dark on Monday night ... and fourteen days after I had gone with my company into that bloody hollow at Shiloh, I was home."**

Who for three years attended Ohio University at Athens and then heeded Horace Greeley's advice to "GO WEST."

Who in 1881 took his seat in the Nebraska legislature with an agenda supportive of the growth of the railroads. That same year, he worked on his first railroad-building contract.

**"I had obtained it, of course, because I had stopped some anti-railroad legislation at Lincoln, and everyone knew that. The same sort of thing is being done in these days, but is glossed over and covered up by every sort of artifice."**

**"The work was simple enough, but even simple work like that requires constant care to see that the men don't waste their time. I was being paid fourteen cents a yard for all the cuts and fills, hauling the dirt one hundred feet free, and receiving two cents per year for every additional hundred feet of haul. With the single exception of Petersen, all the ninety or one hundred men I had were farmers, to whom efficiency was a thing unknown."**

Who taught himself to use a .44 in secret:

**"It has often amused me in later years to see stage and motion-picture representations of the wild West of the days when I was building railroads. The uniformity with which gunmen of the screen wear chaps and swing their artillery in great holsters at their hips is laughable. But cowmen in chaps were**

**always a very small minority in the West I know, while gunman more often carried their guns hidden than exposed."**

Who in the 1880s, while railroading in Idaho, was confronted with the problem of transporting the twenty-thousand dollar a month payroll from Ogden through territory riddled with highwayman.

Who in the depression of 1893 lost nearly half a million dollars:

**"There are, I do not doubt, many men today who have been through similar experiences. How much I had lost I do not know, I never had the hardihood to figure it out. I know that the two hundred and fifty thousand dollars worth of property I owned in Omaha, the value of which had of course fallen terribly, was mortgaged for every dollar I could get. My outfits in Colorado and in Ohio were gone. Every cent I had had was spent. All the securities I had owned and everything else that could be sold had long since gone."**

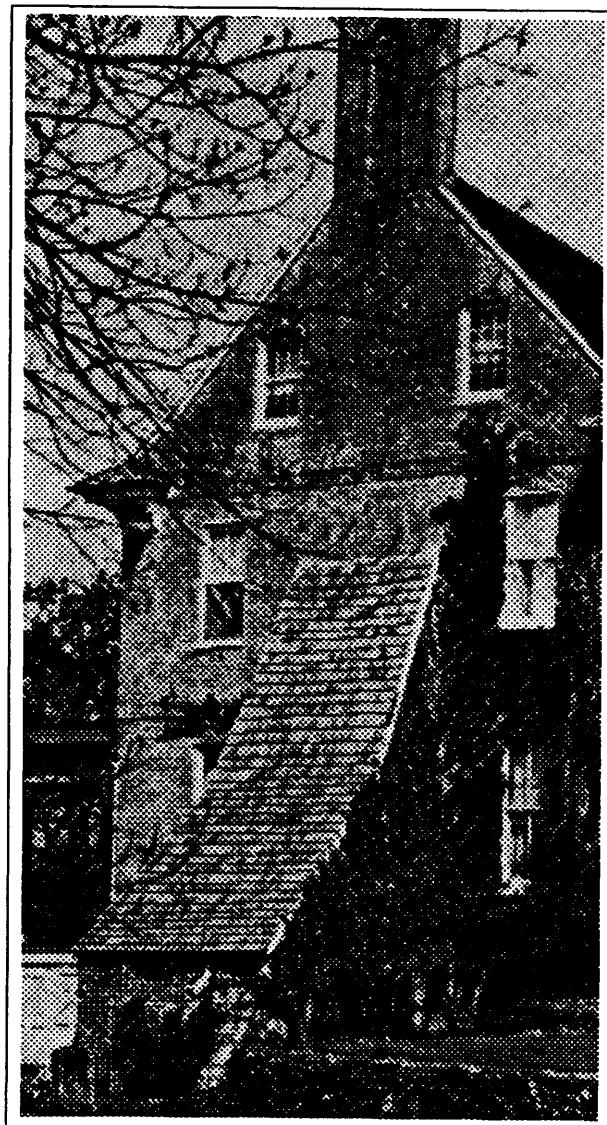
Who after four years and the death of his wife, with the assistance of his two sons, rebuilt his outfit and reestablished his business to such an extent that he could retire in 1904:

**"And finally, going east with my wife and very young daughter, I bought an old colonial home just outside the District of Columbia, within six miles of the White House. The old house appealed to me in part, perhaps, because the date high up on one of its tall chimneys is 1746, which antedates my own arrival in this world by just one hundred years.**

Here, with seven acres of garden and

**orchard and lawn to interest me, I have stood aside for the past thirty years and let the world go by. Busying myself with bees and dogs, with chickens and with a horse or two, modernizing and reconstructing this old, old house of mine, I have played no part that could be felt so very far beyond the pillars of my gate."**

Few others who lived at Bostwick could make that claim!



## Calendar

### October

- 8 PGCHS Board Meeting, 5:00pm, Marietta Mansion  
10 Navy Department Anniversary Celebration, Bostwick (Invitations already sent)  
10-11 Annual Hastings Medieval Faire: Re-enactments of the Battle of Hastings and Stamford Bridge; Viking, Celt and Saxon living history camps, musicians, medieval crafts, dancing, period vendors. (See enclosed flier)

### November

- 8 Historic Christmas Crafts: Glenn Dale Community Center. 1 pm. Free  
14 Annual Meeting at Calvert House Inn, Riverdale Park (Details next issue)

### December

- 4,5,6 Candlelight Tours Friday, Saturday and Sunday, 6:30pm-8:30pm. and Sunday afternoon, 1-3pm. Decorations and Christmas traditions from the Federal, Civil War and late Victorian periods; music; light refreshments. Fee. Marietta  
12 PGCHS Holiday Party, Marietta, 2:00 pm

### Antique Toys and Dolls Needed for Marietta Candlelight Tours

Marietta will again be decked out for Christmas Candlelight tours on December 4, 5, 6. Three rooms will be decorated to reflect the early, mid, and late periods of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Last year, we also had a display of nativity sets. This year we would like to have a display of 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century toys and dolls. If you have a treasure from the past that you would be willing to loan us for the month of December, please call Susan Wolfe by November 16 at 301-464-5291. The objects will be displayed in a secure way and the house is alarmed and hooked directly to M-NCPark Police.

Anyone who would like to help with cutting greens or decorating the house November 30-December 4, or can donate homemade cookies for refreshments, call Susan as well.

### Board of Directors

<b>President</b> - Jane Eagen	<b>Directors 1998 - 2000</b>	<b>Directors 1997 -1999</b>
<b>Vice President</b> - Eugene B. Roberts, Jr.	Julie Bright	George Denny
<b>Secretary</b> - Sarah Bourne	John Mitchell	Kathryn Clagett
<b>Treasurer</b> - Joyce Huber	William Huber	Mildred Ridgeley Gray
<b>Membership</b> - Phyllis Herndon	Wallis Cain	Iris McConnel
<b>Historian</b> - Susan Pearl	<b>Editor</b> - Sharon Howe Sweeting	

### Past Presidents

John Gianetti	W. C. (Bud) Dutton	Paul T. Lanham
Warren Rhoads		Joyce McDonald

**PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
**POST OFFICE BOX 14**  
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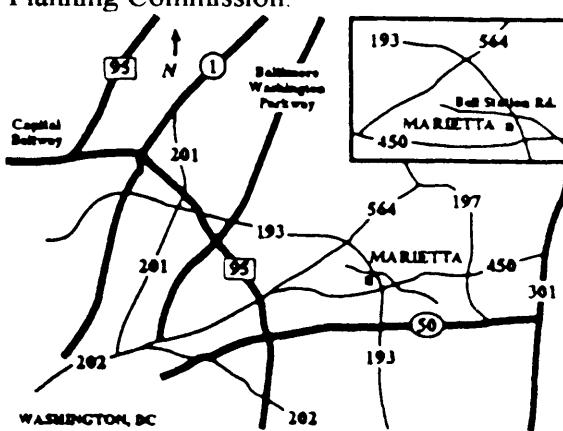
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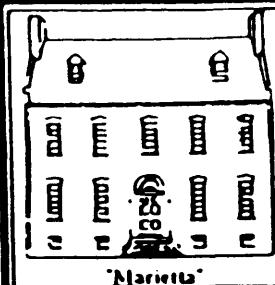
**THE SOCIETY GIFT SHOP**

Features a wide selection of books, gifts,  
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Saturday and Sunday, 12 -4 PM and  
during special events. Call 301-464-  
0590.

**LOCATION OF THE SOCIETY**

The Society is located at Marietta, 5626  
Bell Station Road, in Glenn Dale, MD, off  
Route 193, near Route 450. This is a  
facility of the Maryland National Park and  
Planning Commission.





# News and Notes

## Prince George's County Historical Society



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November 1998

Our 46th Year

XXVII Number 8

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**Marietta Mansion**

*View from the South*

**Root cellar**

*Photo by HABS Photographer John O. Brostrup, 1936*

**Law Office**

**OUTBUILDINGS AND DEPENDENCIES**

Following the dedication of the root cellar at Marietta Mansion on Sunday, October 18, I began to think about other outbuildings and dependencies associated with historic properties in the County. These important structures are frequently those at greatest risk. At Marietta, one of Judge Duvall's great-granddaughters describes the law office and the root cellar: "... You come to Great Grandfathers office, a two story brick building with windows North and South, also 2 entrances, down-stairs large fireplace, his desk and easy chairs and upstairs nothing but books and papers, walls lined with shelves and tables all in the center of room filled with Books. When you come out [of the Law Office] turn left and you pass an entrance to the large front lawn and then a little stone house where saddles, harness and so forth was kept and the lower floor which opened below the terrace was a root cellar where winter fruit and vegetables were kept."

Root cellars are described in **Bobbie Kalman** "Food for the Settler" as follows: "Many fruits and vegetables would last the winter when they were stored in the root cellar. Root cellars were built under houses or into the sides of hills. The root cellar was below the frost line so the fruits and vegetables would not freeze in the winter. Because the root cellar was deep in the ground, the food was kept cool in summer. Cider, pickled meat, pickled vegetables, fruit preserves, and eggs were also kept in the root cellar. Eggs could be stored and kept fresh. They were coated with fat or melted wax, and packed in ashes, sawdust, or straw."

Historian Susan Pearl delineated the difference between an outbuilding and a dependency and then offered a list of her favorite outbuildings in Prince George's

County. Her selection includes the meat house/privy at **Hazelwood**, a 19<sup>th</sup> century Plantation in Queen Anne. "A little farther south of the garage is an historic brick outbuilding of considerable historic and architectural significance. This outbuilding is roughly square with hip roof, and contains a meathouse on the west and small privy on the east. The hip roof is covered with deteriorating wood shingles, and highlighted by a turned wood finial at the peak. The deeply overhanging boxed cornice is decorated with large and deeply-profiled jigsaw brackets.

There is a batten door centered in the west facade; it hangs on long iron strap hinges. This door leads into the meat storage section of the building. The southeast corner of the building is recessed, and a door in its south elevation leads into the small privy section of the building. The grounds around the meathouse /privy are partially wooded and overgrown, and to the east the land, still wooded, drops steeply to the edge of the Patuxent River."

Her second choice, the icehouse at **The Cottage**, is more traditional but still spectacular. This mid-nineteenth century plantation house, located near Upper Marlboro, has a complex of domestic outbuildings, including a unique oval brick icehouse. "North of the well-house is an oval brick icehouse with a framed gable-roof superstructure above, a structure which is unique in Prince George's County. The superstructure is roughly 20 feet by 20, with east-west axis. The oval substructure is constructed of brick laid in 6:1 American bond, and extends a substantial depth into the ground. Above this brick icehouse foundation, a gable roof is supported by heavy hewn sill and collar beams, and is

sided in the gable ends with wide horizontal board, its overhanging eaves rests on brick piers. The structure is built into a slope (which rises toward the south) so that the eaves extend nearly to the ground on the south. The gable roof is covered with wood shingle. There is a small door fashioned of wide vertical planks and fastened with strap hinges, in each of the east and west gable ends."

Susan also selected the corn crib located at the 19<sup>th</sup> century plantation of **Belleview** near Fort Washington. "Located to the southwest of the main house and the meat house, the crib is relatively large and of heavy timber construction. It is constructed of both pit-sawn and machine -sawn timbers and machine nails. Interesting features include an early ladder to the loft and the hardware on the east door. This building and the meat house may have been constructed at the same approximate time (ca. 1830) that the house was enlarged or were perhaps constructed some years later."

Another choice outbuilding is the dairy now located at **Mount Lubentia** near Upper Marlboro. "Approximately 200 feet north of the mansion is an eighteenth century octagonal dairy, which was moved, for the purpose of preservation, from the Graden plantation, circa 1 ½ miles north of Mount Lubentia, in the early 1970s. (All other buildings in the Graden property, including the plantation house, were at that time demolished, and the Capital Centre was built on the site.) The Graden dairy is circa 12 feet in diameter; it has heavy hewn sill beams joined with mortise and tenon, and now rests (temporarily) on steel I-beams. The door in the south face is constructed of wide vertical boards, and has plain jambs and surround. Unglazed windows have vertical board-and-batten shutters hanging

on original HL hinges. The structure has a deep boxed cornice, and the pyramidal roof is now covered with green asphalt shingles."

As examples of dependencies, Susan choose those at **Compton Bassett**, nr. Upper Marlboro, circa. 1783. She describes dependencies as two outbuildings of similar size and shape. The diary/spring house is one-story, Flemish-bond brick structure, one-bay-by-one-bay with a gable-front roof and a one-story-rectangular board-and-batten addition (for the pump). The entry is to the center of the south facade with a plain board surround and a vertical board door. There are short arched windows with brick lintels to the center of the north, east and west walls. There is a brick center chimney. The roof is covered with wooden shingles.

The meat house is similar. It is also a one-story, approximately 12' by 16', brick

structure, but in a common bond pattern with random glazed headers. The gable front roof (also covered with wooden shingles) is slightly steeper in pitch, and in the gable ends are missing headers for ventilation. The vertical board door is to the center of the south facade, and there is a brick lintel.

Another outbuilding at Compton Bassett is a Catholic chapel. This chapel is a rare example of a private Catholic chapel, perhaps the only such structure extant in Prince George's County. It is relatively simple in its styling, being a one-and-a-half story brick structure with simple Georgian detailing. It is also unique in that interior features of the chapel, such as the altar platform and communion rail, are intact.

The above descriptions were taken from the texts of National Register nominations and Historic American Buildings Survey forms.

Another fascinating look at outhouses can be found in quotes from The Federal Direct Tax of 1798 as reported in the *News and Notes* of March 1974 as edited by Frank F. White, Jr.

"Here are specific entries for Tobias Belt, who was enumerated in the lists pertaining to Horsepen and Patuxent Hundreds:

List A: General List of Dwelling Houses which, with the outhouses thereto appurtenant and the Lots on which the same are erected, not exceeding two acres in any case, were owned, possessed, or occupied on the 1st Day of October 1798 within the Fourth Assessment District in the State of Maryland, and exceeding in value the sum of one hundred dollars:

Tobias Belt: 1 dwelling 6  
outhouses 2 acres

List B: Particular List—Dwelling Houses:

Tobias Belt: Part of Good Luck, a framed dwelling house, 30 by 20, nursery adjoining, 16 feet square, kitchen 20 by 16, one Negro house 16 by 12, meat house 16 by 12, milk house 12 feet square, poultry (sic) house 16 by 6, corn house 16 by 8, all out of repair.  
Valuation \$200.

#### WE REPRINT LETTERS:

To Benjamin Lowndes, Esq. Bladensburg  
Georgetown 26 May 1798

I suppose you have heard of my appointment to be Secretary of the Navy of the United States. I have not determined to accept—and what you will think more extraordinary, I have not determined to refuse. I hate office—have not desire for fancies, or real importance—I wish to spend my life in retirement, and ease without bustle of any kind. Yet it seems cowardly, at such a time as this, to refuse any important and highly responsible appointment. And at all times, there is as much Vanity in refusing, as in accepting a post, beyond a mans Talents—for after all the modesty assumed on such occasions, who, examining well his motives, ever did refuse an office because he thought it above his abilities? You know I have heretofore managed peaceable ships very well. Why should I not be able to direct as well those of War! After all this preface, I think there is about 30 to 1 that I shall not accept. But that I may be able to consider every side of the question—pray let me know whether you will in case I do accept, and undertake to oversee as the owner of my concerns on the Beaver Dam for two years and a half. You would have to ride to each place once a week—oftener, if agreeable to you—and to issue orders for the week—to direct the operations of getting my wood in the low grounds only, send to market, as long as it would pay one dollar per cord, beyond expenses. To direct the sending of the hay to market, by water and to receive all money arising from such operations—and to pay out of the receipts all the expenses.

*Prince George's County Historical Society  
Annual Meeting*

*Saturday, November 14, 1998*

*7PM*

*Calvert House Inn Restaurant*

*6211 Baltimore Avenue*

*Riverdale Park, Maryland*

*Cash Bar at 7:00*

*Dinner at 7:30*

*The menu will include*

*Chicken Marsala, Beef, Shrimp & Scallops*

*PROGRAM*

*Pat Parker and Dick Charlton will bring us up to date on the current status of the*

*Anacostia Trailway Heritage Area*

*There will be a brief business meeting to elect the officers for the coming year and to consider a by-law amendment. (details appear elsewhere in this News & Notes)*

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*Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ places for the annual dinner meeting at \$22.00 per person.*

*Check made out to PGCHS enclosed for \$ \_\_\_\_\_*

*Name \_\_\_\_\_ Tel \_\_\_\_\_*

*Address \_\_\_\_\_*

*mail to Sarah Bourne 6808 Dartmouth Ave. College Park, Md. 20740*

*reservation deadline November 5*

## **AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS**

The Board of Directors of the Prince George's County Historical Society recommends the following additions to the Board. These proposals will be voted on at the annual meeting on November 14.

### **Article IV section 3:**

There will be nine (9) directors, each elected for a term of three (3) years, three (3) of whom shall be elected at each annual meeting.

### **Article IV section 4:**

The position of Marietta Facilities Manager shall be an ex-officio member of the Board so long as the Society maintains a headquarters at Marietta.

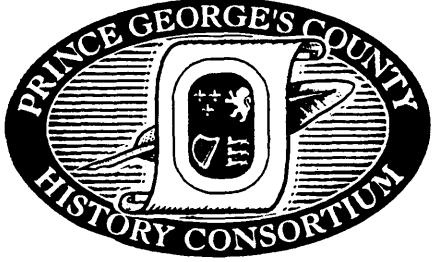
\* \* \* \* \*

## **SLATE OF OFFICERS**

President - Jane Eagen  
Vice President - Eugene Roberts  
Secretary - Sarah Bourne  
Treasurer - Joyce Uber  
Historian - Susan Pearl  
Librarian - Sharon Sweeting  
Membership Development - Phyllis Herndon  
Gift Shop Manager - Stella Uber

## **DIRECTORS 1999-2000**

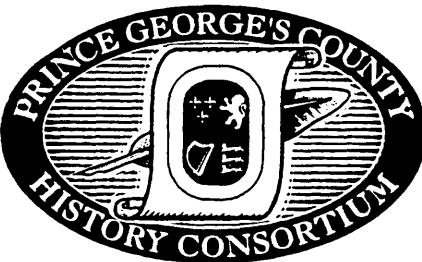
Mildred Grey  
Kathryn Clagett  
Iris McConnell



**Subject to change: Please call to confirm date,  
event, time, cost and reservation requirements**

**NOVEMBER**

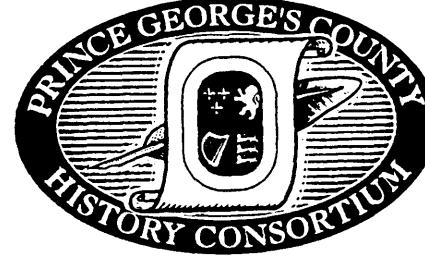
1 & 15	Open House Tours Billingsley Manor	Fee 301-627-0730
1 & 15	Chapel Tours Dorsey Chapel	Fee 301-352-5544
3 2 pm	Delta Wings Program-ages 8-12 College Pk. Aviation	Fee 301-864-6029
5 & 19 10:30 am	Peter Pan Club -ages 3-5 College Pk. Aviation	Fee 301-865-6029
6-8	Annual Small Quilt Show & Exhibit His Lord Kindness	Fee 301-856-0358
6&20	Afternoon Tea-by reservation Montpelier Mansion	Fee 301-953-1376
8 1 pm	19thc Christmas Decorations/Rersev. Glenn Dale Comm. Center	Free 301-352-8983 301-464-5291
11	Swing Wings Program College Pk. Aviation	Fee 301-864-6029
14 &15	Annual Fall Open House Surratt House Museum	Fee 301-868-1121
18 7:30pm	"Indentured Servants in Early America" Lecture-Montpelier Mansion	Free 301-953-1376



**Subject to change: Please call to confirm date,  
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19 7:30 pm	Lecture "Design In The Machine Age" Greenbelt Comm. Center	Free 301-507-6582	19 7:30 pm	Lecture "Design In The Machine Age" Greenbelt Comm. Center	Free 301-507-6582	19 7:30 pm	Lecture "Design In The Machine Age" Greenbelt Comm. Center	Free 301-507-6582
20	Exhibit opening "Fashionable Functional and Frugal" Greenbelt Museum House	301-507-6582	20	Exhibit opening "Fashionable Functional and Frugal" Greenbelt Museum House	301-507-6582	20	Exhibit opening "Fashionable Functional and Frugal" Greenbelt Museum House	301-507-6582
21 10 am	Demo of Wmsbrg Decorations Montpelier Mansion-by reservation	301-953-1376 Fee	21 10 am	Demo of Wmsbrg Decorations Montpelier Mansion-by reservation	301-953-1376 Fee	21 10 am	Demo of Wmsbrg Decorations Montpelier Mansion-by reservation	301-953-1376 Fee
21	Holiday Craft Show Oxon Hill Manor	Free 301-839-7782	21	Holiday Craft Show Oxon Hill Manor	Free 301-839-7782	21	Holiday Craft Show Oxon Hill Manor	Free 301-839-7782
22	Bridal Fashion Show Oxon Hill Manor	Fee 301-839-7782	22	Bridal Fashion Show Oxon Hill Manor	Fee 301-839-7782	22	Bridal Fashion Show Oxon Hill Manor	Fee 301-839-7782
Nov. 22- Dec. 27	Doll Exhibit Riversdale	Fee 301-864-0420	Nov. 22- Dec. 27	Doll Exhibit Riversdale	Fee 301-864-0420	Nov. 22- Dec. 27	Doll Exhibit Riversdale	Fee 301-864-0420
29 Noon-5	Children's Holiday Shopping Darnall's Chance	301-952-8010	29 Noon-5	Children's Holiday Shopping Darnall's Chance	301-952-8010	29 Noon-5	Children's Holiday Shopping Darnall's Chance	301-952-8010
Nov.	Hollywood Flyer's Film Series/ College Pk. Aviation	Call for Sch. 301-864-6029	Nov.	Hollywood Flyer's Film Series/ College Pk. Aviation	Call for Sch. 301-864-6029	Nov.	Hollywood Flyer's Film Series/ College Pk. Aviation	Call for Sch. 301-864-6029
Nov-Dec	"General Nye & his Diaries"Exhibit Laurel Museum	Free 301-725-7975	Nov.-Dec.	"General Nye & his Diaries"Exhibit Laurel Museum	Free 301-725-7975			84395XM 301-725-7975

Prince George's County History Consortium  
Information: 301-809-3089or 301-464-5291

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All this would require some of your time—and some attention. I know if you would take it all—it would be serve be to serve me{sic}—but to have a proper tie upon your conscience to give the attention required I should insist on your receiving all the money for the wood and other products of the place.

I don't believe I shall go, if you would undertake this—but most assuredly I shall not if you will not.

If I do I mean to have the bricks made at Bladensburg—and to have the fourth gable end taken down and rebuilt, and add a room to the house—but I shall not be in so much hurry to do this—but merely have prepared against my return. After 2 ½ years bustle, both Becky(who is not alarmed at the society at Phil.) nor myself, shall be fond enough of spending the rest of our times in tranquility at Bladensburg.

I am yours sincerely,  
Ben Stoddert

*Editor's note:* William Aleshire and John Brennan performed the difficult job of translating Stoddert's handwriting. The letter is from the Library of Congress Manuscript Division, George W. Campbell papers, AC9903. It first appeared in the May 1977 issue of *News and Notes*.

Member **Robert A. Crawley** wrote on August 18, 1998 with an update on his article on the U.S.S. Prince Georges County, the troop transport ship that served in the Pacific during the second world war. He writes: "While doing research I contact the American Legion to see if the ship ever had a reunion of their seaman. They had no record of a reunion, but several months later

the American Legion published my name in error as an organizer of a reunion of the ship. Needless to say, I received a number of calls from Navy veterans all over the county who had served on the U.S.S. Prince Georges County. I put them in touch with each other and sent them the article and pictures of the ship. In return, I received some additional information on the ship that I will share with you.

One seaman sent me his bronze star decoration papers for undergoing nine nights of aerials attacks by enemy forces at Betic Harbor, Tarawa, Gilbert Islands, Saipan Island, and the Marianas Group.

Another seaman sent me a note stating that U.S.S. Prince Georges docked at Auckland New Zealand 1-1-45 and departed 1-9-45 with troops and cargo bound for Iwo. He went on to say that Auckland was one hell of a liberty port - a sailor's dream. This is the reason for the punishment of the sailors that got caught. He sent me a copy of a punishment list dated 1-10-45 for misconduct and discipline for absent over leave. The list contains the names of one hundred and eleven names. Yes it must had been one hell of a liberty port as the ship only had a crew of about two hundred. It reminds me of the movie "Mr. Roberts" when the crew was granted leave after six months at sea. The crew went wild and caused so much havoc that the ship and it's crew where thrown out of port."

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

**George Easton**  
**John Oloughlin**  
**Deborah Cook**  
**Helen Smith**

## **President's Ramblings**

I hope that by the time you read this I will have seen you at the Root Cellar Opening. There are some interesting things happening in the hear future. The Society will begin a new year with a few changes which includes an increase to the board of directors to nine members. This change is subject to the approval of the membership at the annual meeting. Beginning in February the Board will meet on the first Saturday of the month at 9:15am. The time reflects the willingness to compromise, but no give up completely, by both early and late risers.

The Annual meeting is to be held at the Calvert House in Riverdale on November 14 at 7 pm. The theme for the meeting will be the Anacostia Heritage Trailways project. Pat Parker and Dick Charlton, will be our speakers. This project has passed the first hurdle on its way to becoming a MD. State Heritage Area. It needs the support and encouragement of everyone to make the next hurdle. Come to the annual meeting, vote for your officers and Board of Directors, learn about the Anacostia Project and have a great time with friends.

A small cadre of dedicated people does most of the work in the Society; but they have no desire to be an exclusive group. The gift shop needs people to work when there are tours, special events, and on weekends when Marietta is open. We need people to help with school tours. We need people to help on committees. It would be nice to know that when we have an event that the same small group does not need to do it all.

The holiday season is approaching rapidly, much faster than I am prepared for. This is the time of year when many people come to

our gift shop to find something handmade, different, or just quaint. We could use holiday craft items that you make. One of the favorite items of our holiday shoppers is the angel that Stella Uber makes. I am sure many of you can do similar things. We are not asking for 100 items, just a few. If you would like some ideas, call Stella at 301-937-6379.

Don't forget the candlelight tours on December 4, 5, and 6. The afternoon tour Sunday, 1-3 pm should be a nice way to spend a Sunday afternoon. Each room will be decorated with greens appropriate for the period of that room. You will be pleased to see how well the furnishing of the house has progressed. Light refreshments will be served. We could use some homemade cookies if you would be so kind to bake some. Call Susan Wolfe to let her know how many you are bringing. Musicians have already volunteered to play during the tour times.

Susan Wolfe, the site manager, is looking for persons to lend toys of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries for a display upstairs. There must be a doll collector in our membership. The items will not be touched and there will be docents with all visitors. This is another opportunity for you to volunteer your support. Please call her and let her know what you can lend so she can plan the exhibit.

I am pleased to be nominated for the office of President again this year. I will try my best to help the Society be a positive force in making the citizens of this county aware of their heritage.

# **Calendar**

## **November**

- 8      Historic Christmas Crafts, Glenn Dale Community Center 1pm Free  
14      Annual Meeting at Calvert House Inn, Riverdale Park (see enclosed filer)

## **December**

- 4      Marietta Candlelight Tour 6:30 - 8:30pm  
5      Marietta Candlelight Tours, 1:00 - 3:00 and 6:30 - 8:30 pm  
6      Marietta Candlelight Tour, 1:00 - 3:00 pm  
12      PGCHS Holiday Party, Marietta, 2:00pm Bring your favorite holiday treat or Family Recipe.

## **Antique Toys and Dolls Needed for Marietta Candlelight Tours**

Marietta will again be decked out for Christmas Candlelight tours on December 4, 5, 6. Three rooms will be decorated to reflect the early, mid, and late periods of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Last year, we also had a display of nativity sets. This year we would like to have a display of 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century toys and dolls. If you have a treasure from the past that you would be willing to loan us for the month of December, please call Susan Wolfe by November 16 at 301-464-5291. The objects will be displayed in a secure way and the house is alarmed and hooked directly to M-NCPark Police.

Anyone who would like to help with cutting greens or decorating the house November 30-December 4, or can donate homemade cookies for refreshments, call Susan as well.

## **Board of Directors**

**President** - Jane Eagen   **Vice President** - Eugene B. Roberts, Jr.   **Secretary** - Sarah Bourne

**Treasurer** - Joyce Uber   **Membership** - Phyllis Herndon

**Historian** - Susan Pearl   **Editor** - Sharon Howe Sweeting

### **Directors 1998-2000**

Julie Bright                  John Mitchell                  William Uber                  Wallis Cain

### **Directors 1997-1999**

George Denny                  Kathryn Clagett                  Mildred Ridgeley Gray                  Iris McConnel

### **Past Presidents**

John Giannetti                  W.C. (Bud) Dutton                  Paul T. Lanham  
Warren Rhoads                  Joyce McDonald

**PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
**POST OFFICE BOX 14**  
**RIVERDALE, MARYLAND 20738-0014**

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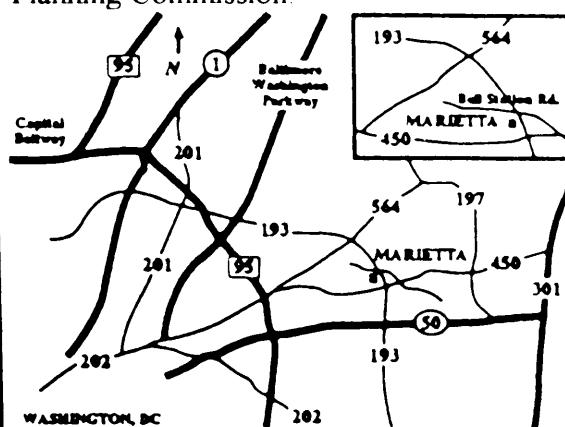
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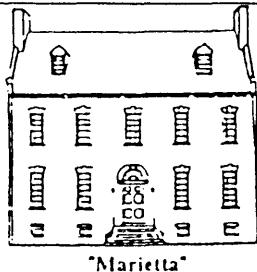
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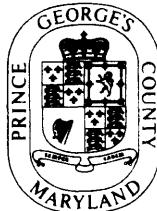




"Marietta"

# News and Notes

## Prince George's County Historical Society



---

December 1998

Our 46<sup>th</sup> Year

XXVII Number 9

---

**JOIN US FOR OUR  
ANNUAL HOLIDAY CELEBRATION**

**Marietta Mansion**

**Saturday, December 12**

**2:00 pm**

**BRING YOUR FAVORITE HOLIDAY TREAT**

**OR**

**HORS D'OEUVRE**

**Happy holidays**

## Traditions

The dictionary defines tradition as “a cultural continuity transmitted in the form of social attitudes, beliefs, principles and conventions of behavior, etc. deriving from past experience and helping to shape the present.” Tevye the Milkman in *“Fiddler On the Roof”* sings about **Tradition** and how he and his neighbors derive their strength from its age-old laws. We embrace and preserve traditions as a continuum, one which honors our past heritage and provides our children and grandchildren with unique memories and an anchor for the future. As a preservationist, I like to consider more than just our built environment and to look at how we live within that environment. It is to this principle that we dedicate this issue.

First we will consider a tradition of holiday decorations, a tradition which I have been accused of following to “wretched excess.” Doesn’t everyone have four theme trees and trim every available surface with red-plaid bows? The description of this particular tradition was developed by Susan Wolfe, Facility Manager, at Marietta Mansion in Glenn Dale. (This is also where I can be found on most Saturdays.) Marietta was built around 1813 for Gabriel Duvall who was “distinguished for a lifetime of public service.” In the *Illustrated Inventory of Historic Sites*, Marietta is described as a 2 ½ story, side-gabled brick plantation house with elegant Federal-style-decorative-detail and slightly later T-wing. “Active during the Revolution, Duvall served as Comptroller of the Treasury under Jefferson, and as Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court from 1811 to 1835.” Several generations of Duvalls occupied this house, and like any family home occupied over a long period of time, it was added to, updated, and its

footprint changed. To help demonstrate the changing fashions associated with this house, Susan has chosen to decorate various rooms as they might have appeared in the 1820s, the 1860s, and in the 1890s. In a nutshell, decorations have evolved from simple, natural ones to highly decorative, complex ones. Now you understand why mine are so “over the top” since I am celebrating in an 1897 house!

Holiday decorations in the 1820s usually featured a pineapple centered arrangement over the front door.

This traditional sign of hospitality and welcome led to a **Kissing (Bough)** in the front hall.

“A kissing ball was a round globe covered in mistletoe and ribbon and suspended from the hallway ceiling. Tradition was that couples who found themselves under the mistletoe ball had to kiss.” Another early tradition: “On Christmas Eve, the entire family went out to the woods to find the largest log they could. It was carried home on a cart, a sprig of holly (which symbolized putting an end to one’s troubles) was placed on the log and the log was put in the fireplace. A bit of last year’s **yule log** (which had been saved) was used to kindle the log. Other traditions revolved around food and family. “On the Sunday before Advent also known as “Stir-up Sunday,” families gathered in the kitchen to help mom make the **plum pudding** for



Christmas. In the 1820's, plum pudding was a sweet pudding that was boiled; all the members of the household took a turn stirring the pudding. To complete the process, a six penny piece was dropped into the pudding, and the pudding was boiled and left to mature until Christmas. As a grand finale to Christmas dinner, a sprig of holly was placed on top of the plum pudding and the pudding was set on fire with brandy. The lucky person who found the six penny in their portion was said to be blessed with wealth the following year." Some vestiges of 1820's traditions remain today. **Caroling** groups of singers still travel from house to house and sing "traditional" Christmas songs. "For their efforts, the lady of the house presented them with cake and a warm drink." **Christmas Day** in the 1820s is celebrated much like it is today. Many area residents spent the day exchanging presents with one another, attending church and enjoying a dinner with family and friends.

In 1822, Clement Clarke Moore wrote "*Twas the Night Before Christmas*" and the poem became a staple of that wonderful tradition of reading aloud.



"The tradition of the **Christmas tree** developed in Germany in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and was brought to the United States by members of the German Moravian Church in the mid-18th century. The Christmas tree in 1850-1860 would likely have been a table-top, and in Maryland it was probably a cedar tree. Shortly before Christmas, it was placed on a table (marble top, if you had one) in the center of the best parlor, where it was left until after New Year's Day. The tree would have had a skirt made out of a scarf, a small blanket, or household linens. Christmas trees were available for sale at Washington nurseries and by local vendors. Many rural families would have cut their own tree and gathered their own greenery locally."

**Greenery:** Christmas decorations were not invented by the Victorians; however, it was a custom which they enriched by their usual enthusiasm for detail. They popularized the use (and sometimes, overuse) of greenery: ivy, mistletoe, evergreen, and especially holly. The whole house would be decorated with greenery, acorns, and popcorn strings which would be hung from every available chandelier, picture frame; and piece of furniture.

Holly sprigs were often placed in a basket in the hallway for giving to Christmas callers. Holly sprigs were also used to decorate packages, fruit baskets, and place settings for Christmas dinner.

**Ornaments** and decorations on the tree might have included a tinsel garland. Tinsel was developed in Lyons, France, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century as a decoration for military uniforms. It was shortly thereafter adopted by German craftsmen and, in a cheaper version, accepted as adornment for Christmas trees. In 1850-1860, tinsel was available as garland strands and in the shape of stars, triangles, and

circles. Most other ornaments and decorations were handmade of paper, bits of cloth, and edibles. These might include: paper cornucopias filled with candy and nuts; paper garlands, paper fans, hearts, and stars; colored cut-out pictures from magazines decorated with ribbons, walnuts or walnut shells and pine cones, painted gold; cranberry strings; popcorn strings; United States flags (store bought); candy and treats; and apples and other fruits.

**Candles:** Lighting the Christmas tree was, and would be now if done authentically, very dangerous. Before the first tree was electrically lit in New York City in 1882 by Edward Johnson, an associate of Thomas Edison, the wax candle was the only means of lighting the tree. This method could be hazardous, and usually the candles were lit only once or twice. A bucket of water or sand was kept near at these times, just in case, and often the family had a ‘fire plan.’ For example, the oldest son might be responsible for running to open the door ahead of his father with the burning tree. Christmas tree candles were made short, about three inches, and slipped into a counter weighted holder which clamped onto the branch.”

Christmas holiday decorations continued to evolve and by the late 1800s the Victorians’ decorative traditions were pretty elaborate. The Christmas tree had become the focal point of most family’s holiday decorations and in the 1890s had moved to the floor and grown to a height of seven or more feet. Decorations included candles with clip-on holders, miniature oil lamps or tin lanterns; strings of popcorn or cranberries, and Brazil nuts (then only available at Christmas); ornaments made from pierced tin, in interesting shapes such as chairs, tables and watches, (then all made in Germany);

beautiful glass balls of all sizes and/or glass beads; glass icicles, birds, harps, steamboats, houses, etc.; cornucopias had become very elaborate and were sometimes made of silk and satin, as well as paper, and filled with candies or surprises; and wax angels. Trees were topped with tin stars, wax angels or blown glass spikes.

Late Victorians loved to “deck the halls” with cuttings of **greenery** from the outdoors. Mistletoe was hung in the hall and dining room. Christmas roses, primulas, and camellias were favorite flowers. To decorate

the stairway, fishnet was tacked along the balustrade and filled with holly, laurel, cedar and boxwood. Sprigs and garlands were placed everywhere, especially around picture frames, mirrors and doorways.

The largest piece of wood that could be found would be used as the **Yule log**. As earlier, it was decorated with holly, placed in the fireplace and lit with great ceremony.

**Nativity Scenes** were also very popular at the end of the century. In the 1890s a chromo lithography process was invented and the nativity scenes were printed on heavy



paper, embossed and die-cut. **Advent calendars:** During the late Victorian era, European artisans also made Advent calendars. Almost all had religious themes and illustrated the story of Christmas.

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**For Guests:** Victorians loved to welcome guests to their homes during the holidays. There was always something sweet offered such as pudding, cupcakes, popcorn balls, hard candies and hot cocoa.

### **Victorian Christmas Gifts**

"Advertisements for Christmas gifts filled local newspapers in early December and give evidence to what was available at the time. They listed dolls, toys, books, albums, vases, writing desks, silver watches, charms, thimbles, and a host of other items. Of course, what kind and types of gifts given depended on the wealth of the household, but in general, fewer gifts were given than today. Home-made gifts, such as hair jewelry, painted china, and wood carvings remained popular and added a personal touch. Ladies magazines offered many suggests for creative homemade gifts.

Possible gifts  
for Marietta  
(considering  
the wealth  
of the  
household)  
might include:

tea sets; muffs and collars, jewel boxes, dairies for women; ice skates and/or sleds; wood block puzzles; Backgammon games (very popular); China head dolls; optical toys, such as stereoscopes; handkerchiefs, neckwear, silk suspenders, cuffs for men; and watches.

Many gifts were not wrapped and were just placed under the table. Most wrapped gifts were in plain white paper with a red ribbon and bow, or with holly sprigs as decoration."



### **Christmas cards**

"There were two main reasons why people did not send Christmas greetings in the early part of the nineteenth century; there were no Christmas cards for sale, and sending anything in the mail was like making a collect telephone call—the person who received the letter had to pay its postage. People did not want their friends to be obliged to pay for a Christmas greeting. When the post office started charging the sender instead of the receiver, people were less hesitant about mailing greeting cards to friends."



# HOLIDAY TOURS

## IN PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MD.

*Please call to confirm information and directions.*

### **DECEMBER**

4	<i>Holiday Tea, Montpelier Mansion, Laurel.</i> 2 & 4 p.m. \$ Reservations	301-498-8486
4,5,6	<i>Candlelight Tours (Decorations from the early, mid and late 19<sup>th</sup> c., music, refreshments)</i> <i>Marietta House Museum, Glenn Dale.</i> 12/4 & 5, 6:30-8:30 p.m.; 12/6, 1-3 p.m. & 6:30 -8:30 p.m. \$ 301-464-5291	
4 & 5	<i>"In the Federal Taste", Belair By Candlelight, Belair Mansion, Bowie.</i> 6 p.m.-9 p.m. \$ 301-809-3089	
5	<i>Winter Solstice Celebration, (Bonfire, hot cider, popcorn, caroling), National Colonial Farm, Accokeek.</i> 5-7 p.m. Free. 301-283-2113	
5&6	<i>Candlelight Tours Billingsley Manor, Upper Marlboro.</i> 12/5, 12 Noon-4 pm 12/6, 6-9 p.m. \$ 301-627-0730	
6	<i>Open House, Bowie RR Station &amp; Huntington Museum, Bowie.</i> Free 301-809-3088	
6&20	<i>Chapel Tours, Dorsey Chapel, Glenn Dale.</i> 12 Noon - 4 p.m. \$ 301-352-5544	
9	<i>Holiday Tea Party , Belair Mansion, Bowie.</i> 4 p.m. Reservations \$ 301-809-3089	
9-12	<i>Candlelight Tours(entertainment, refreshments)</i> <i>Montpelier Mansion, Laurel.</i> 12/9-11, 6-9p.m.; 12/12, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. \$ 301-953-1376	
10	<i>Holiday Tea, Montpelier Mansion, Laurel.</i> 2 p.m. \$ Reservations 301-498-8486	
11-12	<i>18<sup>th</sup> Century Christmas Feast, Darnall's Chance, Upper Marlboro.</i> 7 p.m. \$ Reservations 301-952-8010	
12	<i>Tea with the Editor of Tea Magazine,</i> <i>Montpelier Mansion, Laurel.</i> 4 p.m. \$ Reservations 301-498-8486	

12	<i>Christmas Past: Children's Holiday Celebration, (Crafts, tour, refreshments), Belair Mansion, 1-4 p.m.</i> \$ Reservations	301-809-3089
12-14	<i>Victorian Candlelight Tours, Surratt House Museum, Clinton.</i> 12/12, 5-9 p.m.; 12/13, 3-9 p.m; 12/ 14, 6-9 p.m. \$ 301-868-1121	
12&14	<i>A Colonial Christmas (Candlelight Tours) His Lordship's Kindness, Clinton.</i> 5:30-9 p.m. \$	301-856-0358
13	<i>A Colonial Christmas Tea, His Lordship's Kindness, Clinton.</i> 3:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m. \$ Reservations	301-856-0358
13	<i>Christmas Gala, Riversdale Mansion, Riverdale.</i> 12 Noon-5 p.m. \$	301-864-0420
17	<i>Boston Tea Party, (High Tea), Montpelier Mansion, Laurel.</i> 7-9 p.m. \$ Reservations	301-498-8486
20	<i>Candlelight Tour, Oxon Hill Manor, Oxon Hill.</i> 6-8 p.m. \$ 301-839-7782	
29	<i>Mother/Daughter Tea, Belair Mansion, Bowie.</i> 4 p.m. Reservations \$ 301-809-3089	
Daily Clsd. 12/25	<i>Seasonal Decorations in lobby</i> <i>National Wildlife Visitor Center, Laurel.</i> Free	301-497-5760
1-13	<i>Preparing for the Season, National Colonial Farm, Accokeek.</i> Sat. & Sun. 10 a.m.- 4 p.m.; 1 p.m. Guided tour \$ 301-283-2113	
15-31	<i>Preparing for the Season, National Colonial Farm, Accokeek.</i> Tues.- Sun. 10 a.m- 4 p.m Self guided tours Free 301-383-2113	
Dec. 1-20	<i>"General Nye &amp; his Diaries" Exhibit, Laurel Museum, Laurel.</i> Sun. 1-4 p.m; Wed. 10 a.m.- 2 p.m. Free	301-725-7975
1-27	<i>Doll Exhibit, Riversdale Mansion, Riverdale.</i> Sundays, 12 Noon- 4 p.m. \$ 301-864-0420	

## MARIETTA GIFT SHOP

Christmas is coming to the Marietta Gift Shop. Pine cone angels, wreaths, napkin holders, table runners along with a variety of small items. Santas, Teddy Bears on tea towels, pot holders and even holiday touches on "Grabbitz" for handling those hot microwave dishes.

Books for gift giving or just for one's own pleasure, ranging from Virtas' *Pictorial History* of the county to inexpensive children's books.

The shop also stocks a variety of items, some antique, some collectibles and also some just odd. Come and browse and finish your shopping for the holidays.

### **Antique Toys and Dolls Needed for Marietta Candlelight Tours**

Marietta will again be decked out for Christmas Candlelight tours on December 4, 5, 6. Three rooms will be decorated to reflect the early, mid, and late periods of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Last year, we also had a display of nativity sets. This year we would like to have a display of 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century toys and dolls. If you have a treasure from the past that you would be willing to loan us for the month of December, please call Susan Wolfe by November 16 at 301-464-5291. The objects will be displayed in a secure way and the house is alarmed and hooked directly to M-NCPark Police.

Anyone who would like to help with cutting greens or decorating the house November 30-December 4, or can donate homemade cookies for refreshments, call Susan as well.

### **Board of Directors**

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Marietta Tours -Friday, 11 - 3, Sunday,  
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Information 301-464-5291

#### **THE SOCIETY GIFT SHOP**

Features a wide selection of books, gifts,  
toys and small antiques. Open Friday,  
Saturday and Sunday, 12 - 4 PM and  
during special events. Call 301-464-  
0590.

#### **LOCATION OF THE SOCIETY**

The Society is located at Marietta, 5626  
Bell Station Road, in Glenn Dale, MD, off  
Route 193, near Route 450. This is a  
facility of the Maryland National Park and  
Planning Commission.

