

---

January/February 1999

Our 47<sup>th</sup> Year

XXVIII Number 1

---

## MEMORIALS

In celebration of Black History month and presidential birthdays, we suggest the following foray into local museums, historic homes and cultural institutions:

At the National Portrait Gallery, Washington, D.C.: "**Paul Robeson: Artist and Citizen** (January 29-April 18). Son of an escaped slave, possessor of a magnificent voice, a sports-champion body, a Phi Beta Kappa brain and a fierce hatred of racism and oppression, Robeson (1899-1976) was one of the most colorful, controversial and consequential Americans of his time. His career is examined with the aid of more than 150 artifacts, including paintings, photos and movie stills, sculptures, Robeson's writings and his personal memorabilia."

Also at the National Portrait Gallery: "**Portraits of George and Martha Washington in the Presidential Years, 1789-1797** (February 19-August 8). Twenty-five likenesses — sculptures, paintings and drawings assembled to mark the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of the first president, including works by Gilbert Stuart, Charles Willson Peale, Edward Savage and John Trumbull." (From: *Washington Post*, January 8, 1999)

When was the last time you actually visited **Mount Vernon**? The February 10th issue of the *Washington Post* describes a "year's worth of unique activities" related to the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Washington's death. Special tours "focusing on Washington's death are being offered daily throughout the year."

1999 is also the One-Hundredth-Birthday Celebration of Washington's own **Duke Ellington**. Sponsored by the Kennedy Center and the Smithsonian Institution, the *Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra* began this celebration on February 5<sup>th</sup> in the Concert Hall. Watch the newspapers for future concerts. The Masterworks Orchestra has also recorded a Jazz collection which is available in museum shops. The Kennedy Center is also hosting a show called "**Beyond Category: The Musical Genius of Duke Ellington**" through April 30. It's superb!

## President's Ramblings

The year 1999 looks promising for the Society. There are a number of events planned that I think our members will enjoy. The Valentine Tea will be over by the time you read this, but I hope you came and enjoyed it.

We are pleased to have the Duvall Society more involved with Marietta and the Society. The March 6 meeting will be with the Duvall Society. We will be looking at and learning about the Duvall items at Marietta and also any other Duvall artifacts brought in that day for "show and tell." We will "tour" Marietta and look at the artifacts in an appropriate setting. It is going to be fun to have our own Antiques Roadshow. Mark your calendar and come out for a pleasant afternoon, March 6 at 1:00pm.

Susan Wolfe and I met with Chris Wagon of the MNCPPC regarding the use agreement we have with them. The original agreement is quite different that the way we are operating; however, it is the last agreement signed. There was another agreement drafted, but never signed, thus never in effect. The proposed agreement is written to reflect the way we are operating now. It was a pleasure to sit down with Chris and Susan and work through it.

Over the last several years I have tried to have a pleasant and positive relationship with the MNCPPC staff. I think they now understand and appreciate our purpose in the county and we understand their role as proprietors of the historic buildings. This is reflected in the proposed agreement. Their legal department has approved it and now we shall review it for approval.

In the fall I asked to have a model of

Marietta built to use in our educational programs. We now have this fabulous model and everyone who has seen it is impressed with it. Clyde Draughn, a friend of mine built it. He is a retired teacher from our county who taught design and engineering at Bowie High School. He was educated at Beret College in Kentucky, the source of many beautiful pieces of furniture. We are very pleased with the model and know you will enjoy seeing it also. It will be helpful in giving tours for those who cannot climb the stairs to the second floor.

Helen Smith is Susan Wolf's part-time assistant. She has been a great help to Susan and has accomplished a lot in her short time of being a part of Marietta. She has organized a Junior Docents of Marietta group and they are a real help. This is a wonderful way for students to meet their community service requirement. Perhaps you know a young person who would be interested in joining them. There are about 12 who have already begun; they have already hosted the Parlor Games program on two Sunday afternoons. They will also serve the Valentine's Tea and be an integral part of the Mad Hatter's Tea party.

You know that April is a special month for us. This year it will be even more special. We are planning to have the St. George's Dinner at St. Ignatius Church in Oxon Hill on Sunday, April 25. The church is celebrating their 150th Anniversary and we will be a part of their yearlong celebration. The Hall of Fame will be honoring Howard Zahniser, the author of the Wilderness Act of 1964. One of his contemporaries and fellow conservationists will be the guest speaker. We have also invited the African American Genealogical and Historical Society to join us. This church is their usual meeting place. Be sure to mark this date on your calendar

and plan to celebrate this special day.

There are some members who have not renewed their membership this year. Some have moved away to other areas, but others simply have not sent in their checks. A second notice will be sent to them in March. It would be very helpful if our present members reached out and asked their friends to join the Society.

This society is quite small and really accomplishes a lot. The Board Members are the real workers and the doers in the group. They need your support and help. Let us know the type of thing you are willing to do. We don't want to ask the impossible, but you could volunteer to help with the refreshments for a meeting, work in the gift shop on a weekend, help sew junior docent costumes, or offer to make fancy tea cookies for a tea. You could be responsible for the detail work of a program, offer to help with the school groups or go to the schools and work with a group there. There are many ways you could provide the support that is needed to fulfill the mission of the Society.

In our effort to educate the public and others we have invited the County Council members, the County executive, and several members of his staff to lunch on September 23rd at Marietta. We already have several acceptances and are looking forward to having them as our guests. This is how we can educate our officials about the historic properties and activities in our county. Only if they have some knowledge of it can we hope to get this support.

**SPECIAL NOTE:** If you borrowed Jane's photographs of the Candlelights Tours, could you please return them. Reward is offered.

## **NEW MEMBERS WELCOME TO**

**Cassandra Harper  
Mary Frazer  
Donna McQuade**

## **WOODWORKER NEEDED**

Someone needed to construct a mail box/bird house to be used to distribute brochures for the Historical Society. If you have good woodworking abilities, I would like to talk to you. Contact: **Bob Crawley**, 301-702-0799.

**Shirley Vlasak Baltz Wins**  
Irma Mae Prosser Community Award  
for Genealogical Excellence

On January 6th, the Genealogical Society of Prince George's County, presented Shirley Vlasak Baltz, City of Bowie Historian, the Prosser Award. This award honors Irma Mae Prosser Nicholson McCafferty, a long time member of the Prince George's County Genealogical Society who was a consummate genealogist. Shirley was honored for: "*A Chronicle of Bel Air*," "*Town of Bowie, Maryland*," and "*Prince Georges County, Maryland Marriages and Deaths in 19th Century Newspapers*," in 2 volumes.

# **The Burning of Washington The British Invasion of 1814**

**By Anthony S. Pitch**

For anyone who lives in Prince George's County, there is a special fascination with what has been called the 'Second War for Independence' - the War of 1812 between an upstart United States of America and the most formidable foe of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century - George the Third's United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. Many books have been written about that era, and all mention the biggest defeat suffered by the young country - that of having its beautiful but unfinished capital sacked and burned by hordes of redcoats.

Since the British invaders crossed Prince George's County en route from their fleet to the capital, this month-long series of clashes holds some fascination for Prince Georgians, especially as the final denouement before Washington fell was the Battle of Bladensburg. This is, of course, often taught as one of the blackest days in the history of that 250 year old town.

Yet, in this slime volume by Anthony Pitch of Potomac, Maryland, one never sees the term "Bladensburg Races" - an epithet often used to describe the ignominious flight of the defenders under the hail of the redcoat rockets and shells. And, surprisingly, the words Prince George's County are not found either. Oh well - it is a national issue I guess.

But, leaving that aside, this 236 page, tightly written, account of the month between the landing at Benedict and the battle of Baltimore is highly readable and recommended for those who know little of the specifics of the march on and retreat from Washington. It is fascinating to read of the Cabinet members rushing back and forth from the battlefield to the White House, the attempts to salvage government documents by the harried clerks, and what was not salvaged. The personal glimpses of combatants and non-combatants alike make this more understandable than the usual military history with its maps, unit designations and dry factual reporting.

I found the following passage, toward the end of the book, to be most readable:

## *Chapter 17. The Birth of an Anthem*

*John Skinner and Frances Scott Key had spent the night on the deck of their ship trying to guess at possible damage to Fort McHenry. They monitored shells by listening raptly after each firing to hear whether it was followed by an explosion. So long as the bombardment continued, they knew the fort had not fallen. The exhausting vigil held hour after hour. But when the shelling slackened in the darkness before dawn, they did not know whether Fort McHenry had surrendered or whether the bombardment had been abandoned. Nervously pacing the wet deck and constantly looking at their watches to see how long they had to wait for daylight, the two men futilely trained their glasses on the darkened fort to see whose flag flew above the ramparts. Then the light quickened, and*



# 7<sup>th</sup> Annual *Marching Through Time*

Multi-Period Living History Civilian and Military Encampments.

☛ Romans ☛ Vikings ☛ Knights ☛ Musketeers ☛  
☛ Minute Men ☛ American Civil War ☛

Activities to be performed

Period Cooking, Crafts, Merchants, Food Vendors, Military  
Drills, fighting and tactical demonstrations

*April 10-11, 1999*

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

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

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



Marietta is a facility of the M-NCPPC  
Prince George's Parks & Recreation Dept.  
Natural and Historical Resources Division

*as the breeze cleared away the mist, Key marveled. A gigantic star-spangled banner flew conspicuously above the fort. "Our flag was still there!" he later told Roger Taney, his brother-in-law.*

*The night had been calamitous for the British. They had been punished and beaten back. Americans, by contrast, could hold their heads high as the new day dawned. They had refused to yield, heroically withstanding a full day and long night of sustained terror and frightening blasts without protective cover. The flag flew triumphantly over the fort, fluttering with a new sheen to its glory. Never before had Francis Scott Key looked with such reverence upon the symbol of his country. The patriot within him swelled with pride. He was overcome by a profound need to pay tribute to the gallant defenders. As Key focused on the red, white, and blue cloth, words and phrases tumbled through his mind. He took a letter out of his pocket and began to scribble on the back. Under the sway of an inner compulsion, he tried to record instant sensations, fearful that he might never recapture their intensity once the historic moment had passed. He jotted down lines of poetry and notes that would help him recall his fervor.*

Thus was born the Star Spangled Banner, which became our national anthem in 1940.

Les Sweeting

## **We get letters:**

Our faithful correspondent **Paul Lanham** writes on the story of the Knickerbocker Theatre disaster and his interest therein:

The house known as the Col. Hynes home is located on the north side of 4<sup>th</sup> street in Lanham and is very interesting. My mother, deceased in 1969 at the age of 82 told me many stories of old Lanham folks and one of these concerned Col. Hynes.

It seems that he deserted a wife and family in the mid-west sometime after the Civil War and subsequently settled in the Lanham area. His new life was quite secure until the day the roof of the Knickerbocker Theatre collapsed under a heavy load of snow. Col. Hynes made the local paper as being among the injured and consequently came to the attention of his legal (deserted) wife.

The local Lanham folks apparently greatly enjoyed the resultant scandal as by now the local Civil War hassles between Lanham neighbors were losing their shock appeal.

**Prince George's County  
Historical Society**

**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Please circle

New Membership    Renewal  
Additional contribution    \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Category

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

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

**Board of Directors**

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

**Treasurer** - Joyce Uber **Membership** - Phyllis Herdon

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

**Directors**

Julie Bright    John Michell    William Uber    Wallis Cain    George Denny    Kathryn Clagett  
Mildred Ridgeley Gray    Iris McConnel    Robert Crawley

**Past Presidents**

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

**CALENDAR**

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

March 6    PGCHS Board Meeting, Marietta 10:00am

***Joint Meeting with Duvall Society, Marietta 1:00pm***

April 23    County Executive and Council lunch at Marietta

April 25    St. George's Day at St. Ignatius, Oxon Hill (details next issue)

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## HISTORIC SITES

- March 20     ***Easter Bonnet Tea Party.*** Decorate an Easter Bonnet and have Tea afterwards. 1:00 pm and 3:00 pm  
\$15.00 for adults; \$10.00 children  
Riversdale Mansion     Reservations required  
Address: 4811 Riverdale Road, Riverdale Park (301) 864-0420
- March 21     ***Tom Reilly,*** author and aviation historian will share the little known story of aviation pioneer Tony Jannus. Jannus, a daredevil test pilot started at College Park and went on to pilot the world's first scheduled airline - St. Petersburg to Tampa in 1914. After the lecture Tom will sign his book, *Jannus, An American Flier*. Light refreshments will be served..  
College Park Aviation Museum, 1985 Corporal Frank Scott Drive  
(301) 864-6029     Time: 2:00 pm
- March 27     Annual ***Mad Hatter's Tea Party,*** 1:00 pm and 3:00 pm  
Marietta House Museum; Reservations required  
\$8.00 for adults; \$5.00 students (4-18 years)  
Not recommended for children under 4  
Address: 5626 Bell Station Road, Glenn Dale (301) 464-5291
- March-  
April     Exhibit: "***In your Easter Bonnet: Hats From the University of Maryland Collection***" Riversdale Mansion. Regular tour hours.
- April 10-11     **7<sup>th</sup> Annual Marching Through Time, Marietta** (see enclosed flier for details)
- April 18     Ken Hyde, owner of the Virginia Aviation and Machine Company and renowned builder of historic aircraft will share with us the process of creating a Wright aeroplane. He will highlight the Wright model B he is building for the College Park Aviation Museum. Light refreshments will be served.  
College Park Aviation Museum,     Time 2:00 pm



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

NON-PROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
RIVERDALE, MD  
PERMIT NO. 1948

**DATED MATERIAL**

### **HOURS OF OPERATION**

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

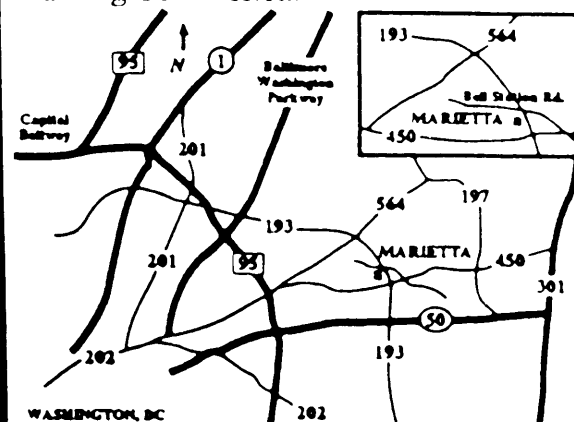
Marietta Tours -Friday, 11 - 3, Sunday,  
12 - 4 - and by appointment -  
Information 301-464-5291

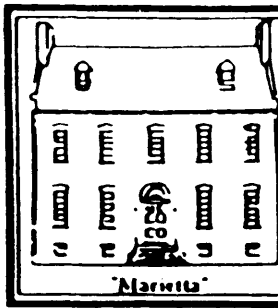
### **THE SOCIETY GIFT SHOP**

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.





# News and Notes

## Prince George's County Historical Society



March 1999

Our 47<sup>th</sup> Year

XXVIII Number 2

### St. George's Day Awards Presented at Historic Church



Our 1999 St. George's Day celebration will take place on **Sunday, April 25** at *St. Ignatius Roman Catholic Church in Oxon Hill*. The awards are given to honor individuals and organizations which have made a significant contribution to the preservation of the county's heritage. We are delighted that the parish led by Father Hughes will be our hosts.

The Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) description follows: "St. Ignatius Church is the finest Queen Anne style ecclesiastic structure in Prince George's County, and, founded in 1849, is the oldest Roman Catholic church in the southwestern region of the county. The current structure, built in 1890-91, replaces the original 1849 church. St. Ignatius exemplifies the Queen Anne Style as seen in a small rural church structure. Contrasting materials are used to add texture, enlivening the building's surfaces; the steep gable roof, bell tower with steeple, buttresses, and high arched windows emphasize the verticality of the structure.

Fronting directly on the old road between Upper Marlboro and the Alexandria Ferry, the church has a well-shaded cemetery to the east where the graves bear the names of some of the county's oldest Catholic families, including the Hill and Brooke families.

St. Ignatius church is a rectangular, six-bay-by-three-bay structure with a steeply pitched gable-front roof, and a tower to the center of the north front facade. The walls of the church are a lively multi-textured mix of board-and-batten, clapboard and scalloped shingles. The church is lit by long round-arched, leaded stained-glass windows in floral and geometric designs. The front tower rises to three stories, housing the entry and bell cote, and is topped with a steeple. It too incorporates a variety of siding types, and includes ornamental corner buttresses which rise to the height of a tripartite window above the entry. The entry has double paneled doors, surmounted by a stained-glass, semi-circular light in a sunburst pattern. The interior of the church is as exuberant as the exterior; the walls and ceiling are covered with wainscoting and beaded boards in alternating patterns, reflective of those of the exterior siding. The center aisle has a barrel-vault ceiling supported by fluted square posts, with ribs springing from the posts. The windows and the doorways are enhanced by symmetrically molded trim with bull's-eye corner blocks. There is a gallery with an antique organ to the north, and the chancel is recessed in arched alcove to the south.

St. Ignatius Church was founded by Father Joseph M. Finotti in 1849, upon the completion of the original church structure. St. Ignatius was originally a mission under the charge of the Pastors of St. Mary's Catholic Church of Alexandria, Virginia, built to serve the community of southwestern Prince George's County, from the Potomac River to the west and the town of District Heights to the east. The current church was begun in 1890, as indicated by the cornerstone (the original 1849 cornerstone has been built into the foundation of the current church). It was built by Charles Beers, contractor of Anacostia, at the cost of \$5,000, and was consecrated on the 21<sup>st</sup> of October 1891 by the Cardinal of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, James Gibbons, who referred to it as "the prettiest little church in Southern Maryland."



During our April 25<sup>th</sup> celebration of St. George's Day, the *Prince George's Hall of Fame* will also announce their 1999 inductee. The *Hall of Fame* "was established in 1975 to recognize superior achievement, extraordinary creativity and natural talent of distinguished Prince Georgians of the past."

"Although created by the Prince George's Chamber of Commerce, with approval of the Prince George's County Council, the Hall of Fame is an autonomous organization. Its mission is to educate the public about outstanding men and women of achievement, who were born in, or lived in Prince George's County. By honoring these outstanding individuals, the Hall of Fame hopes that County residents will be encouraged to emulate their achievement."

"The Hall of Fame honors these individuals by commissioning portraits of them that are then displayed in public buildings in the County. ... The Hall of Fame is supported solely by contributions, all of which are tax deductible, and go toward the commissioning of portraits of the inductees, and also toward public education. Donations may be directed to the Hall of Fame, P.O. Box 1513, Upper Marlboro, MD 20773."

Historian **Susan Pearl** provided this list of inductees beginning in 1978:

**John Carroll** (1735-1815) of Upper Marlborough; first archbishop of Catholic Church in America (1978)

France; engineer, created plan for Washington, D.C. Died at Green Hill (now Hyattsville), reinterred Arlington National Cemetery 1909 (1981)

**Thomas John Claggett** (1743-1816) of Croom; First Episcopal bishop of Maryland, and first consecrated in America (1978)

**Charles Benedict Calvert** (1808-1864) of Riversdale; agriculturalist, House of Delegates, U.S. House of Representatives, prime mover in establishment of Maryland Agricultural College (University of Maryland, College Park) (1982)

**John Rogers** (17??-1789) of Upper Marlborough; delegate to Continental Congress, Chancellor of Maryland (1979)

**Oden Bowie** (1826-1894) of Fairview; state senator, thoroughbred horse breeder, director of Baltimore and Potomac Railroad, Governor of Maryland (1869-72) (1983)

**Dr. William Beanes** (1749-1828) of Upper Marlborough; surgeon, one of founders of what became University of Maryland Medical School, hostage during British bombardment of Fort McHenry in 1814 (1979)

**Robert Bowie** (1750-1818) of Mattaponi and Nottingham; politician, Revolutionary War military, Governor of Maryland (1803-05, 1811-12) (1984)

**Gabriel Duvall** (1752-1844) of Marietta; Maryland House of Delegates, U.S. Congress, Comptroller of U.S. Treasury; U.S. Supreme Court Justice, 1811-35 (1980)

**Dr. James Harris Rogers** (1850-1929) of Hyattsville; scientist, experimenter, holder of 50 patents in electrical science (1985)

**Pierre L'Enfant** (1754-1825) of Paris,

**Joseph Kent** (1779-1837) of Rose Mount, U.S. Congressman, Governor of Maryland (1826-29) (1986)

**Daniel Carroll** (1730-96) of Upper Marlborough and Rock Creek; statesman, delegate to Constitutional Convention, U.S. Congress, Commissioner of District of Columbia (1987)

**Four Statesmen: George Digges** (1742-92) of Warburton Manor; **Fielder Bowie** (1745-94) of Nottingham; **Benjamin Hall** (1735-1803) of Partnership; and **Osborn Sprigg** (1741-1815) of Northampton, represented Prince George's County at Ratification Convention for Constitution, 1788, and voted in favor of ratification (1988)

**Leonard Covington** (1768-1813) of Aquasco; U.S. Congressman, General during War of 1812 (1989)

**Thomas George Pratt** (1804-69) of Georgetown and Upper Marlborough; House of Delegates, Maryland Senate, Governor of Maryland (1845-48) (1990)

**Samuel Sprigg** (circa 1781-1855) of Northampton; Governor of Maryland (1819-22) (1991)

**Frederick Sasscer** (1856-1929) of Upper Marlborough; educator, Editor of *Prince George's Enquirer* and of *Enquirer-Gazette*, Superintendent of Prince George's County Schools (1992)

**Thomas Sim Lee** (1745-1819) of Upper Marlborough; Governor of Maryland (1779-81, 1792) (1993)

**Three Colonial Painters: Justus Engelhardt Kuhn** (d. 1717); **Gustavus Hesselius**, (1682-1755); **John Hesselius**,

(1728-78), portraitists working in Prince George's County during eighteenth century (1994)

**Adele H. Stamp** (1893-1974) of Catonsville and College Park; first Dean of Women at University of Maryland at College Park (1995)

**Three Agricultural Scientists: Richard Brooke** (1716-83) of Croom area, planter, physician, made meteorological observations related to agriculture; **Horace Capron** (1804-85) of Laurel, U.S. Commissioner of Agriculture, advisor on agricultural development in Japan; and **George M. Darrow** (1889-1983), U.S.D.A. scientist, premier breeder of strawberries and blueberries (1996)

**Pioneers of Flight: Benjamin Foulois** (1879-1967) instructed in flight by Wilbur Wright at College Park, he went on to become Chief of Army Air Corps and Major General, active in support of military air power; **John W. Greene, Jr.**, (1901-1989) the second American to receive a commercial pilot's license and the first African-American to operate an airfield (Columbia Air Center near Croom) in the United States (1997/98)

**Howard Zahniser**, former resident of Prince George's County and father of the National Wilderness Act which provides protection for millions of acres of wilderness in United States (1999)

**J. Michael McCloskey**  
**Sierra Club Chairman**  
**St. George's Day Speaker**

J. Michael McCloskey, Chairman of the Sierra Club since 1985, Director of the Natural Value Mapping Project and Adjunct Professor of Public Policy, School of Natural Resources and the Environment at the University of Michigan will be the featured speaker on April 25<sup>th</sup> at St. Ignatius Church.

Educated at the University of Oregon and Harvard, Mr. McCloskey is the recipient of many awards and was listed as "one of the ten top environmentalists in the United States" by *Backpacker* magazine. He lists among his accomplishments the five-fold growth of the Sierra Club and its influence on America's environmental programs. The first world wilderness and wild rivers inventories were originated by him and he served as a key draftsman for the U.N. Charter for Nature in 1983. His contributions to wilderness

literature is awesome.

We hope you will join us for this important event at the historic site described earlier.

**VIRTA UPDATE**

Don't forget to purchase the third, revised and updated version of this important illustrated history of Prince George's County. Copies are available at Marietta, Riversdale, Darnall's Change, Belair Mansion and the College Park Aviation Museum; or send \$42.95 plus \$4.00 for shipping and handling to: PGCHS, Box 14 Riverdale, Maryland 20738.

April *News and Notes* will include an update on the Anacostia Trails Heritage Area prepared by Susan Pearl for the Spring issue of *Friends of Preservation Newsletter*. You will recall that Pat Parker and Dick Charlton spoke to us about this important project at the Calvert Inn last November.

**Prince George's County  
Historical Society**

**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please circle

New Membership    Renewal  
Additional contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Category

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

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

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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

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

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

**Directors**

Julie Bright    John Mitchell    William Uber    Wallis Cain    George Denny    Kathryn Clagett  
Mildred Ridgeley Gray    Iris McConnell    Robert Crawley

**Past Presidents**

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

**CALENDAR**

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

April 3        PGCHS Board Meeting, Marietta 10:00am  
April 23        County Executive and Council lunch at Marietta  
April 25        St. George's Day at St. Ignatius, Oxon Hill (invitations are in the mail)

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## HISTORIC SITES

- March 27      Annual ***Mad Hatter's Tea Party***, 1:00 pm and 3:00 pm  
 Marietta House Museum; Reservations required  
 \$8.00 for adults; \$5.00 students (4-18 years)  
 5626 Bell Station Road, Glenn Dale (301) 464-5291
- Mar.-      ***Girl Scout Badge Program***, Darnall's Chance, Upper Marlboro.  
 Apr.      Sun., 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm      Fee      301-952-8010
- Mar. -      ***"In Your Easter Bonnet"*** Exhibit of hats from University of  
 Apr.      Maryland Costume Collection. Riversdale, Riverdale Park.  
 Sundays, Noon to 4:00 pm      Fee      301-864-0420
- Mar. -      ***"General Nye & His Diaries"*** Exhibit, Laurel Museum, Laurel  
 Sundays, 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm; Wed. 10-2      Free      301-725-7975
- Mar. -      ***"Women on the Move"*** Exhibit on the changing roles for 19<sup>th</sup>  
 May      Century women. Surratt House, Clinton      Fee      Call 301-868-1121  
 for hours
- April 5      ***Easter Egg Roll***. 2-4 pm. Oxon Hill Manor, Oxon Hill. Free  
 Call 301-839-7782
- April 7      ***Prince George's County Genealogical Society*** meeting at Greenbelt  
 Public Library, Greenbelt      7:00 pm      Call 301-345-5230 for details
- April 10-11      ***Annual Marching Through Time***, multi-period living history encamp-  
 ment. Marietta, Glenn Dale      11am - 5 pm      Fee
- April 10 &      ***John Wilkes Booth Escape Route Tour***. Surratt House, Clinton  
 24      Fee      For reservations      301-868-1121
- April 11 &      ***House Tours***. Billingsley Manor. Upper Marlboro. Noon -  
 18      4 pm.      Fee      301-627-0730
- April 11      ***Satellites, Children's Program*** (ages 9-12) NASA/Goddard Space  
 25      Visitor Center, Greenbelt      2 pm      Free      301-286-8981
- April 15      ***"Queen Anne Town"*** brown bag lunch lecture by Shirley Baltz  
 Belair Mansion, Bowie      12:00 pm      Free      301-809-3089



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

NON-PROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
RIVERDALE, MD  
PERMIT NO. 1948

**DATED MATERIAL**

#### **HOURS OF OPERATION**

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

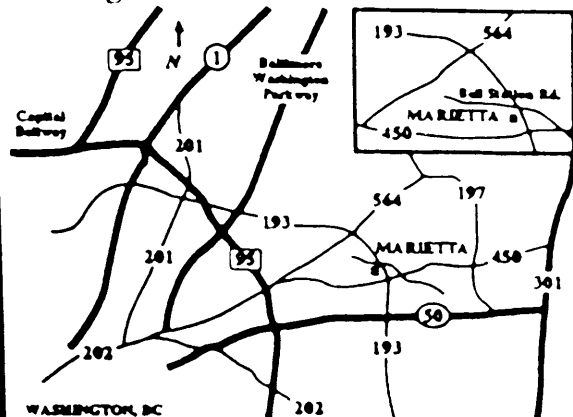
Marietta Tours -Friday, 11 - 3, Sunday,  
12 - 4 - and by appointment -  
Information 301-464-5291

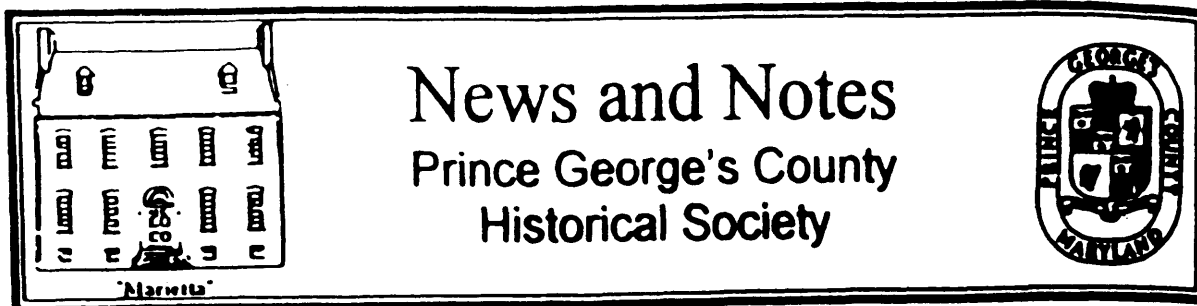
#### **THE SOCIETY GIFT SHOP**

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.





---

April 1999

Our 47<sup>th</sup> Year

XXVIII Number 3

---

## May 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting at Boxlee

Mr. Courtland Lee will host the May meeting of the Prince George's County Historical Society at the Boxlee Azalea Farm on Saturday, May 8<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 pm. Located on 10 acres in Glenn Dale, the farm strives "to propagate and grow plants of historical and natural significance." In addition to propagating boxwoods and other native plants, the farm is best known for the Glenn Dale Azalea. An informational flier on Boxlee describes its background: "Ben Morrison began an ambitious project for the Department of Agriculture to introduce evergreen azaleas which were hardy in the Washington area. He did the bulk of his hybridizing at the Plant Introduction Center, here in Glenn Dale. Over four hundred and fifty cultivars were introduced and sent to nurseries and gardens throughout the country. Some are available in local garden centers, nurseries and mail order outlets, but the majority have been lost to the nursery trade."

Their efforts are further described: "We have an extensive collection of the Glenn Dales in display beds and in containers. Over the years, we have sought out public and private collections to assemble one of the most complete collections of Glenn Dales in the country. We are proud to be cooperating with the Ten Oaks Glenn Dale reintroduction program in their efforts to bring back the Glenn Dale azalea. We are establishing display and propagating beds of true-to-name Glenn Dales that will allow us to offer these long lost treasures to both the azalea connoisseur and the casual gardener looking for something truly special."

All of this will be on view although Mr. Lee warns that while many Glenn Dale Azaleas will be in bloom, not all are in bloom at the same time. The Glenn Dale Azalea (450 varieties) is the Prince George's County shrub. Boxlee is a commercial grower and is open to the public on Saturdays during the Azalea session from mid-April to early June. Mr. Lee will give us a special tour of the farm located at 6106 Hillmeade Road, Glenn Dale. (See map)



In addition to the azalea farm, Boxlee is an historic property located at 6106 Hillmeade Road, Glenn Dale. It is described in *Illustrated Inventory of Historic Sites* as follows: " Built in 1923, Boxlee is a 2-1/2-story, side-gabled frame house, with flared eaves and fine Colonial Revival-style decorative features. It was built by local carpenter Millard Schafer, for French Bowie Addison on his portion of the Bowie-Addison family property, Maple Shade. Boxlee is an excellent example of the Colonial Revival style, and a noticeable landmark in its community."

### Boxlee Azalea Farm

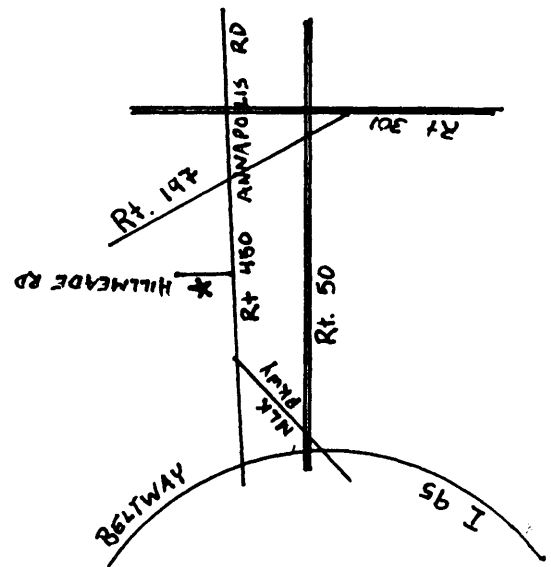
We are located in Glenn Dale, near Bowie, Maryland on Hillmeade Road.

#### From the Beltway:

Take Rt 50 East and exit on Martin Luther King Parkway (the first exit). Follow MLK Parkway East until it merges with Rt. 450 (Annapolis Rd.) Go East on Rt. 450 through two traffic lights. The third light will be Hillmead Road. Go Left (the only turn). We are on the left side of the road about 400 meters from the Rt. 450 intersection.

#### From Bowie:

Follow Rt. 450 West to Hillmeade Road. Take a right (the only turn). We are on the left side of the road. Look for the tall trees and our sign.



## Anacostia Trails Heritage Area

Exciting things are happening as work continues on the Heritage Area in the northernmost section of Prince George's County. A large area bordering on the District of Columbia near Bladensburg, and continuing northeast to the Patuxent River (including Federal properties such as NASA Goddard, Beltsville Agricultural Research Center and Patuxent Wildlife Research Refuge), has been recognized as the Anacostia Trails Heritage Area. The present effort is the development of a management plan which will lead to official certification of the Heritage Area.

A heritage area is a region united by a common history, and the Anacostia Trails Heritage Area is united by a shared history of colonial settlement and agriculture, transportation innovations and small towns. Six generations ago, most of the region was farmland, and large plantations like Riversdale grew tobacco and shipped it to Europe through the port of Bladensburg. Small communities grew up along the Washington and Baltimore Turnpike that began carrying traffic between those two cities at the turn of the nineteenth century. More towns began to develop after the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad ran its first train in 1835, and residential suburbs began to fill in the spaces when streetcar lines were constructed a century ago. Contained in this area is the oldest airport in continuous use in the work, as well as the birthplace of the U.S. space program.

The Maryland Heritage Area program helps to enhance and promote special areas for tourism. A Heritage Area must first be certified, and then, through the Maryland

Heritage Areas Authority, it may be awarded grants, loans, and tax credits for local economic development and capital improvement projects that will benefit heritage tourism. Part of this effort is making history more visible to residents and tourists, developing signs pointing out historic places, and linking them through trails and designated tourist routes. Such efforts can help initiate revitalization, neighborhood improvement, and streetscape beautification projects. Local museums and educational facilities can be targeted, and recreational opportunities can be developed. The results can be an increase in both tourism and community quality of life.

Consultants for the Anacostia Trails Heritage Area have begun to develop a management plan, working with a Board which includes representatives of the municipalities, the County government, State and Federal agencies, and non-profit organizations and private corporations. Two visioning workshops have been held, to elicit ideas and proposals from individuals and communities that have an interest in the future of this area.

***Editor's note:*** This update was provided by Historian **Susan Pearl** and previously appeared in the ***Friends of Preservation Newsletter***.



Prince George 1653 - 1708

## St. George's Day Awards

On Sunday, April 25, 1999, we celebrated the County's 303<sup>rd</sup> birthday at St. Ignatius Church, Oxon Hill. Receiving awards were: Catherine W. Allen (College Park Airport Museum); Tom Amlie and Penny Hayas (Buena Vista), Eugene Meyer (Washington Post reporter); Sam and Pat Hayes-Parker (historic preservation and heritage activities); Anthony Pitch ("Burning of Washington"); Ruth Prendable (Riversdale Historical Society); James M. Wolfe (High school teacher and caretaker of Marietta); Gethsemane United Methodist Church (Ridgeley chapel); and the Quander Family Society, Inc. (Oral history publication). We congratulate all the winners and will feature their accomplishments beginning with this and continue into future issues.

The winners, who are not already members, will also receive gift memberships.

Since Susan Pearl has brought us up to date with the Anacostia Trails Heritage area, it seems like a good time to introduce to our readers 1999 St. George's Day winners Samuel J. Parker, Jr. and Patricia Hayes-Parker who were recognized for their work in the area of historic preservation and county heritage.

Sam trained as an urban planner and has worked for Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission in both Prince George's Historic Preservation Section and Revitalization offices. Pat is an architect and trained at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. She worked in the Historic Preservation office of Montgomery County and currently is employed by the office of Jack Johnson, Prince George's County States' Attorney. She also serves as Executive Director of the Anacostia Trails Heritage area. Pat, while chair of Prince George's Heritage, guided that organization through the application process and tenaciously pursued the designation of the Anacostia Trails Heritage Area to official state recognition. Pat also serves as Vice-Chair of the County Historic Preservation Commission. Pat and Sam live in the Browning-Baines House in Riverdale. "Built in 1896 by the Browning family, and became the home of their associate, James E. Baines, an officer of the Browning and Baines Coffee Wholesaling Company."

Your editor had the good fortune to accompany Pat and Sam on their recent return to Paris where they lived 27 years ago. In accepting the award, Sam challenged those present to pursue the rich cultural diversity of the county and to instill a love of history in youngsters.

## New Members

We welcome the following new Members:

**Katharine Bryant**  
**Richard and Betty Dodson**  
**Roy Labs**

**A PICTORIAL HISTORY  
of  
PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY**

**by**

**Alan Virta**

**This third edition has an updated county history and a twenty page color section of recent photographs, including the 1996 Tricentennial Celebration.**

**\$ 42.95 plus tax**

**available at the Gift Shop at Marietta Mansion or by mail from PGCHS  
PO Box 14 Riverdale, MD 20738**

---

\_\_\_\_\_ **copies of A PICTORIAL HISTORY @ \$42.95**  
**(Maryland residents add \$2.15 sales tax)**  
**shipping & handling \$4.00 per copy**  
**make check payable to PGCHS**  
**Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

**NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## *More St. George's Day Award Winners*

Historian Susan Pearl presented the following two awards:

### ***Tenant/Caretakers of Buena Vista***

"I wish that **Tom Amlie** and **Penny Hayas** were here today to receive this St. George's Day award for their extraordinary efforts to preserve and care for Buena Vista, a mid-19th-century frame house of the Duvall family in the Glenn Dale area. The house at Buena Vista has for the last 15 years been gradually deteriorating as the property passed from one owner (potential developer) to another. Tom and Penny were tenants for 14 years, living in conditions most of us would not have tolerated. But they constantly and repeatedly fixed what they could, and demanded from the owners repairs to what they could not - then themselves continued to paint and patch and just love the place. Now, having finished their college and graduate work, they have (just this month) moved out to a job in upstate New York, and the house at Buena Vista is again vulnerable; we realize again how fortunate the house was to have had them for all those years. Thank you, Penny and Tom!"

### ***Ridgeley Church***

"I am very pleased to present the St. George's Day award to the **Ridgely Restoration Committee** of Gethsemane United Methodist Church for their ongoing care and active stewardship of historic Ridgely Methodist Church. I was first introduced to Ridgely nearly 20 years ago through Mildred Ridgely Gray, granddaughter of the principal founder of the church. Through her efforts, Ridgely Church was designated as a County Historic Site, recognized for its importance in the African-American history of Prince George's County. Later through her efforts, and those of other preservation organizations as well as of the State Highway Administration, Ridgely Church was moved back from Central Avenue and set on a new foundation. This past year Gethsemane, owner of the historic Ridgely Church, undertook exterior restoration of the old building. The work was carried out by Oak Grove Restoration Company, well known to us for their fine work on other historic buildings in the County, funded by Gethsemane and a grant from *Preservation Maryland*. Today the little church looks wonderful! I am sorry that Mildred could not be here today, but I congratulate the committee and would like to recognize its members: **Myra** and **Charles Williams**, **Hortense Currie**, and **Norman Hall**."

# CALENDAR

**Wednesday, May 5** Curtis Smith and Robin Galender from the Library of Congress will Speak on "Copyright Laws, How they Effect the Genealogist" 7:00 p.m. Greenbelt Public Library, 11 Crescent Road, Greenbelt Sponsored by the Prince George's County Genealogical Society.(Contact: 301-345-5230) (Free)

**Thursday, May 13** Historic Preservation Week Reception at Newton White Mansion, 5:30-8:00 pm. For information and reservations call 301-952-3520.

**Sunday, May 16** 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Historic Hyattsville House Tour. 1:00-5:00pm  
Tickets: \$8:00 in advance; \$10:00 day of tour. Advance tickets available at Franklin's Deli, 5121 Baltimore Avenue, Hyattsville (Call 301-927-4514 for additional information)

**Sunday, May 16** 31<sup>st</sup> annual Bowie Heritage Day; 1:00-4:00pm; Belair Mansion and Stable, 12207 Tulip Grove Drive, Bowie (Free)

**Wednesday, May 19** Lecture by Eric G. Grundset on "Finding the Women of the American Revolution" 12:30-1:30 pm; Library of Congress, Dining Room A; 6<sup>th</sup> Floor Madison Building

**Wednesday, May 19** Lecture by Mary Thompson entitled "Better Fed Than Negroes Usually Are: Diet of the Mt. Vernon Slaves" 7:30 pm; Montpelier Mansion Call: 301-953-1376 (Free)

**Monday, May 24** "How to write a Collections Policy, or, is all, that Legalese Really necessary?" A Small Museum Association Workshop. The Historical Society of Harford County, 143 N. Main Street, Bel Air, Md. 21014. Call: 410-838-7691 (Fee: \$10.00)

## Mother's Day Tea

**May 8, 1999**  
Sittings at 1:00 p.m.  
& 3:00 p.m.

**At Marietta  
House Museum**



**Reservations Required: 301-464-5291**  
FEE \$8.00 /Adults \$5/Students (Ages 4-18)

5626 Bell Station Road, Glenn Dale  
Marietta is a facility of the Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission



**Prince George's County  
Historical Society**

**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Please circle

Category

New Membership    Renewal  
Additional contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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

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

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

**Directors**

Julie Bright    John Mitchell    William Uber    Wallis Cain    George Denny    Kathryn Clagett  
Mildred Ridgeley Gray    Iris McConnell    Robert Crawley

**Past Presidents**

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

**CALENDAR**

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

May 8    PGCHS Board Meeting, Marietta 11:00am

Meeting at Boxlee (see previous articles for details and directions) 1:00 pm

Mother's Day Tea at Marietta; (see flier for details)

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

NON-PROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
RIVERDALE, MD  
PERMIT NO. 1948

**DATED MATERIAL**

### **HOURS OF OPERATION**

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

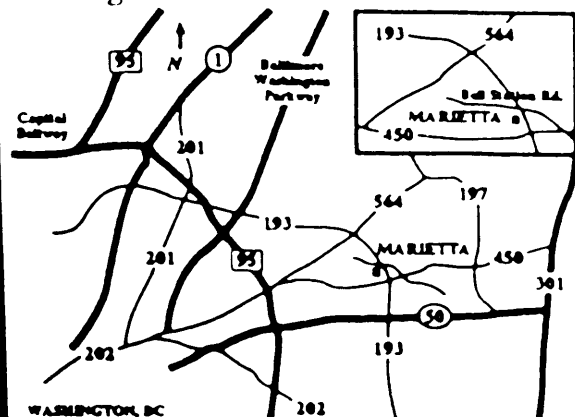
Marietta Tours -Friday, 11 - 3, Sunday,  
12 - 4 - and by appointment -  
Information 301-464-5291

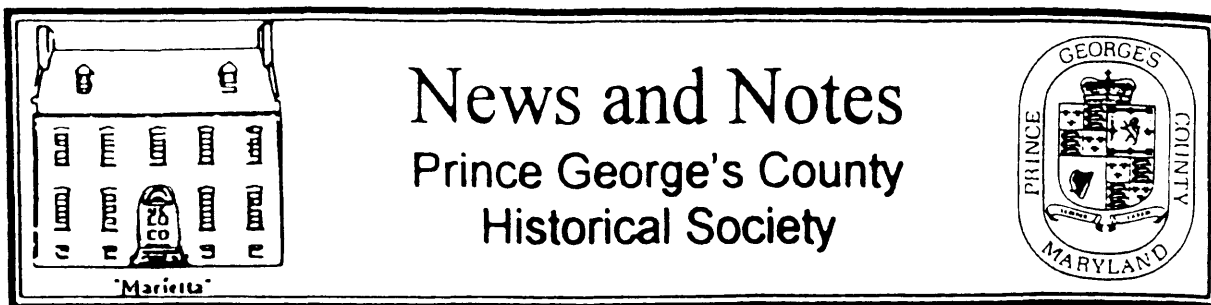
### **THE SOCIETY GIFT SHOP**

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.






---

May/June 1999

Our 47<sup>th</sup> Year

XXVII Number 4

---

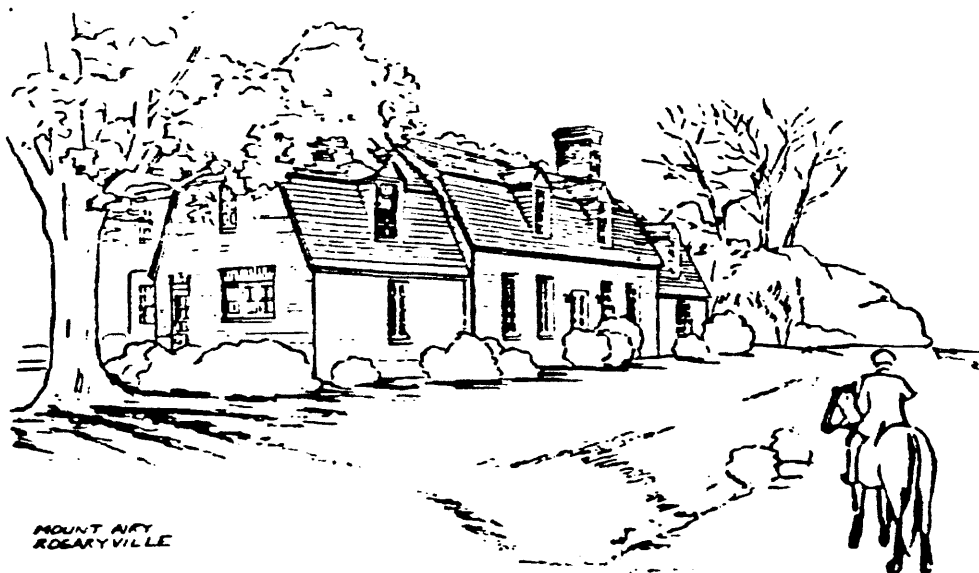
## *VISITING HISTORIC SITES*

Mark your calendars for two Historical Society events at two important County sites. On **Sunday, August 22 at 4:00 p.m., Mr. Anthony S. Pitch**, 1999 St. George's Day Award winner and author of *"The Burning of Washington: The British Invasion of 1814,"* will discuss his book at Bostwick in Bladensburg. For members who have only admired Bostwick from a distance, this is a rare opportunity. The October 1998 issue of *News and Notes* featured **Bostwick** on the occasion of the celebration of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Department of the Navy and of Benjamin Stoddert's residence at Bostwick. On this year's occasion, the 185<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Bladensburg, Mr. Pitch will talk about the War of 1812 and the role of Bladensburg in that conflict. His book was reviewed by Lester Sweeting in the January/February 1999 issue of this publication.

**Bostwick**, at 3901 48<sup>th</sup> Street in Bladensburg, is described in MNCPPC's *Illustrated Inventory of Historic Sites: Prince George's County, Maryland*: "Built in 1746 — Bostwick is a 2-1/2-story, Georgian brick house, with a flared gable roof and bracketed cornice, a high buttress at the south gable end, and a kitchen wing to the north. It was built for Christopher Lowndes, merchant and Town Commissioner, and was later the home of Lowndes' son-in-law, Benjamin Stoddert, first Secretary of the Navy. [In a letter to Benjamin Lowndes dated 26 May 1798, Stoddert ruminates on whether to accept the post: "I suppose you have heard of my appointment to the 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 no 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 an important and highly responsible appointment. And at all times, there is as much Vanity in refusing, as in accepting a post, beyond a man's 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. ..."]

The earliest surviving building in Bladensburg, Bostwick stands high on a terraced lawn, and is a prominent landmark in the town. Bostwick is also associated with three generations of the family of Susanna Kyner Cristofane, one of the founders of the Historical Society. (*Editors's Note:* In September 1973, *News and Notes* reported: "On September 15, 1952, twelve distinguished citizens of Prince George's County met in the Music Room of Riversdale (Calvert Mansion) [with] plans to organize an historical society. Those in attendance were **T. Howard Duckett, Oden Bowie, M. Hampton Magruder, John S. Stanley, Leroy Pumphrey, Kent R. Mullikin, Robert M. Watkins, A. Gwynn Bowie, T. Hammond Welch, Jr., Mrs. Rhoda Christmas, Mrs. G.W.S. Musgrave and Mrs. Felix Cristofane.** Mr. Duckett was elected Temporary Chairman and Mr. Stanley served as Membership Chairman.)

Bostwick was purchased in November of 1997 by the Town of Bladensburg. ***Please bring your favorite finger food; drinks will be provided. Join us for this literary and historic August afternoon .***



On **Sunday, September 19**, the *Prince of a County* reception will be held at **Mount Airy** in Rosaryville. On June 16 **Eugene L. Meyer**, another St. George's Day award winner, wrote in the Prince George's Extra of the *Washington Post* an article called "*Reviving A House In the Country.*" Captioned: "*Once a Hunting Lodge for Lord Baltimore, Mount Airy to Try Again as a Place for Entertaining,*" he described the manor's recent, nearly fatal, history. The current managers, Pineapple Alley Catering, have invited the Society to **Mount Airy** for our fall event which celebrates important properties around the county. Located at 8714 Rosaryville Road, the various stages of Mt. Airy's development are described in the *Illustrated Inventory of Historic Sites* : "Built circa 1740, late eighteenth century, and 1931 — **Mount Airy** is a complex three-part brick structure, which incorporates an early eighteenth-century gambrel-roof dwelling, a late eighteenth-century gable-roof wing, and a columned pedimented passage which connects them. Begun circa 1740, Mount Airy was the home of the Calvert family from the Provincial period continuously until 1902. During the late eighteenth century George Washington

frequently visited. In 1931 during the residence of Mathilda R. Duvall, the house was seriously damaged by fire. Eleanor "Cissy" Patterson then purchased the 844-acre estate and restored and beautified it as her country home. Mount Airy is now in use as a rental facility. Historic outbuildings include a stable and greenhouse." More details and invitations will be sent to our members as the planning process for this fund raiser proceeds.

## BRICK BY BRICK

Board Member **Bob Crawley** reports on this well-received program began during the Tricentennial. A little red school house (built by Clyde Draughn), has been placed in the plaza in front of the County Administration Building in Upper Marlboro, and contains the brochures on how to buy a brick. Bob reports that he refills the school house every other week.

This brochure describes the project: "Beginning in 1996, our Tricentennial year, the Tricentennial Celebration Committee paved the brick plaza in Upper Marlboro between the County Administration Building and the County Courthouse. This heavily traveled thoroughfare was selected not only as a beautification and improvement project for the committee but also as a site to establish enduring public artifacts to commemorate our anniversary."

"The newly-dubbed "***Walk of History***" in Upper Marlboro will ultimately be filled with engraved bricks that celebrate the richness and diversity of Prince George's County citizens past and present. Sections of the walkway will be anchored by centerstones bearing the names and dates of historically significant Prince Georgians. Surrounding each center block will be personalized bricks with the names, messages and/or memorials of other important individuals — *specifically you*,

*your family and your friends.*

These bricks make great gifts for special people in your life. Birthdays, graduations, weddings, anniversaries, "firsts" and "bests" are just a few of the events and sentiments worth remembering for years to come. Show your pride and appreciation with an engraved brick and make your happy memories a lasting part of our shared history.

Funds raised from this project, after the purchases and installation of the bricks, will go toward our Heritage Center. To become a part of our county's heritage; to join and support this effort; to make your mark along the path of Prince George's County history — simply fill out....the form" (*Editor's note: we also have copies of the brochure at the Historical Society library.*).



# PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY COMMEMORATIVE BRICK ORDER FORM

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please print information exactly as you wish it to appear\*; use all capital letters; 15 characters per line, including spaces and punctuation marks.*

Line 1: 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

 (\$30)

Line 2: 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

 (\$60)

Line 3: 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

 (\$90)

*Please send this form along with check or money order made payable to:*

THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY\*\*

*Mail information to:*

COMMEMORATIVE BRICKS  
THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
POST OFFICE BOX 14  
RIVERDALE, MARYLAND 20738



\* Information will be printed at the discretion of the Historical Society. Inflammatory, profane, or slanderous material will not be accepted.

\*\* The Prince George's County Historical Society is a private, not-for-profit, tax exempt 501(c)(3) organization. A portion of your contribution will be tax deductible.

## Calendar of Historical Society Events

- July 10 P.G.C.H.S. Board Meeting, Marietta, 9:30am
- August 22 Anthony S. Pitch lecture at Bostwick in Bladensburg 4:00pm; Bring finger food
- September 19 Prince of a County Reception; Mount Airy, Rosaryville (details to follow)
- October 24 Harvest Festival and Yard sale at Marietta. (The Yard Sale will be possible only if there are enough volunteers and if donations are received by October 1<sup>st</sup>.)  
Contact: Bill Uber, 301-937-6379
- November 6 Annual Membership Meeting at the Fish House in Clinton
- December 11 Holiday Party, Marietta, 1:00 pm.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**President** - Jane Eagen **Vice President** - Eugene B. Roberts, J. **Secretary** - Sarah Bourne  
**Treasurer** - Joyce Uber **Membership** - Phyllis Herndon  
**Historian** - Susan Pearl **Editor** - Sharon Howe Sweeting

### Directors

Julie Bright John Mitchell William Uber Wallis Cain George Denny Kathryn Clagett  
Mildred Ridgeley Gray Iris McConnell Robert Crawley

### Past Presidents

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

**The Sunday Star, Washington D.C.  
August 23, 1914**

*One hundred years ago the British, camped on the Chesapeake Bay, Desired to imitate Napoleon by capturing capital--Lack of preparation by American Forces, primitive conditions of the city- Capitol Building unfinished. Armies meet at Bladensburg- President brings news of Enemy's Victory - Marauders march to Washington - Burn wings of Capitol - Destroy valuable documents. March to White House. "Dolly" Madison forewarned of their approach-- \$1,000,000. Damages.*

"War" said Napoleon, "is a trade of barbarians, the whole art of which consists of being the strongest in a given point." And by strongest it is agreed that Napoleon meant strongest in efficiency, not merely in numbers. These words of the invincible leader made the ignominy of the capture of Washington August 24, 1814, a little easier to bear even though we view the fracas through the lengthened perspective of 100 years. It is, however, but a meager consolation that the fact that our soldiers were unable to withstand the onslaught upon our infant capital, a hundred summers back, was not their fault, but their misfortune.

The burning of the Capitol and White House during this second war with the mother country were the most humiliating episodes of that conflict. Other events incidental to the capture of Washington smacked of guerrilla warfare.

\* \* \*

In fact, the predatory warfare carried on by the British forces of the Chesapeake Bay was so greatly in contrast with the "war of the Titan" which they were waging at the same time on the other side of the Atlantic as to be almost ridiculous. In Europe, they

were conducting their military operations on gigantic scale; grand armies were disputing the possession of principalities, kingdoms and empires. In our humble portion of the globe, the armed hosts of his Britannic majesty were robbing Maryland hen roosts and Virginia pig styes. Their military skill, valor and enterprise were signalized in burning farmhouses and carousing in churches.

Piqued, perhaps because their comrades across the waters were participating in the glorifying triumph over Napoleon, British officers fighting in America were stimulated to heroic action and with the Corsican's example of dashing through all obstacles to the capital of the enemy fresh in their minds. It is not unnatural that their general should be eager to disport himself in similar fashion, especially as he was reinforced by a few of Wellington's veteran regiments.

At any rate, with the pretense of controlling our commerce in the Chesapeake Bay, the British forces were constantly accumulating strength, and from this close point of vantage, bidding (sic) their time until the American iron was hot enough to strike.

\* \* \*

The presiding genius of these forces, whose later actions would have disgraced bandits, was Rear Admiral Sir George Cockburn, who is known to have resided in Washington in disguise some time previous to the attack, and from his own personal observations have obtained a minute and accurate knowledge of the topography of the surrounding country, the state of the defenses and of public resources.

Outmatching Cockburn in daredeviltry, was his companion officer, Gen. Robert Ross, who when he landed in Chesapeake Bay in the middle of August with twenty-two

vessels, boasted that he could wipe out the American flotilla and dine in Washington the following Sunday.

But in extraordinary contrast with these men of confidence and bravado was the American commander, General William Winder. He was appointed to take command of ten or twelve thousand men, who, as he was told, were in readiness to obey his orders. When he entered upon his duties he found that he did not have even a corporal's guard.

President Madison, a peace loving man, did not desire to mix into the war even when it was upon him, and his two cabinet members of the Revolutionary memory disregarded the condition of Winder's force in the face of the proximity of the British force until after the news of General Ross' threat was noised about. Then reinforcements were called from Baltimore, Alexandria and militia districts of Maryland. Meanwhile, the British had pursued the American flotilla, in command of Commander Joshua Barney, up the Patuxent River until seeing no chance of escape, he blew up his ships and joined the hodgepodge of companies gathered under Winder.

\* \* \*

Though the number was by no means small, they lacked the essential of being governed by a single will. In the little time of preparation, every one took a controlling hand. Furthermore, the men lacked discipline and experience. They were capable behind defensive works or in strong natural positions where they did not have to execute maneuvers. But of practical application of the theory of war, they were ignorant.

Thus the situation stood on the 23rd of August. The enemy, camping within

marching distance of Washington, had a force estimated at about 9,000 or 10,000 strong, but actually 4,500; while ours consisted of 6,500 or 7,000; their troops were experienced regulars, ours, raw recruits; they were united, we, divided into two corps separated from each other, but near to the enemy. Our troops had been under arms for four days and had traveled the whole time, exposed to the burning sun of sultry days. They had drawn but two rations during this period and hardship had sorely distressed them. Under Secretary Monroe, they had reconnoitered the vicinity of Benedict--the enemy's camp-- and were discouraged at the formidable size of their adversary. In fact, their strategic movements seemed as futile to them as the exploits of the French king, who

*with twenty thousand men  
marched up the hill and down again.*

On the other hand, the British had been but lately released from the confinement of shipboard and were strengthened and refreshed by the contemplation of an opportunity for action.

\* \* \*

Washington, at the time, was a primitive metropolis. It would have had the aspect of a straggling country village but for the size and beauty of its public buildings. Pennsylvania Avenue, now beautiful enough to rank with the famous thoroughfares of the world, was a forest-bordered roadway with ruts so deep that the coaches of the President and Secretaries were stalled whenever they attempted to drive from the executive mansion to the Capitol. There were few houses of imposing size or architectural beauty. The population numbered only about 8,000. The Capitol itself was unfinished; its north and south wings were completed, but the central building was not



yet begun. The two disjointed parts, now the Supreme Court and Statuary Hall, were connected by a bridge of rough boards spanning the foundation of the rotunda.

Thus, insignificant, was the capital which the British officer wished to seize. They set out from their camp at Benedict, situated forty miles southeast of Washington and moved toward the small town of Bladensburg on August 23. They camped for the night, ten miles away from their objective point.

General Winder, at his headquarters heard of their rapid march and set out for Bladensburg, about five miles distant. The President, by law commander-in-chief of the Army, set out also accompanied by the Secretary of War Armstrong and Secretary of State Monroe. They all took a share in the practical operations of the small campaign. Even at this late date, our soldiers were undetermined whether Washington city or Fort Washington was the intended destination of the invaders. Winder left a force near Bladensburg and planted another battalion of troops to watch the highways leading in other directions. The little army had only twenty-six pieces of cannon, of which twenty were only six-pounders.

As the British approached, they commenced hurling rockets at the exposed Americans. At first they were repulsed by the American artillery, but being continually reinforced succeeded by judicious maneuvers in carrying everything before them with a rapidity and firmness that the raw troops were unable to resist.

\* \* \*

Ross, with Irish audacity, rushed across the bridge at Bladensburg, threw out sharpshooters and quickly dispersed our

skirmishers. That threw our first line into wildest disorder. Winder tried in vain to rally them. They retreated in panic and the British captured two pieces of our cannon left on the field before hardly any resistance had been made.

Then Ross approached our second line and with a flight of hissing rockets threw it into disorderly confusion. Our third line was better posted. Here the battle raged for one hour. But our success was short-lived for our flanks were turned by the assault of the British light troops, and General Winder ordered a general retreat. The dust rose above the woods in thick clouds and presently the Secretary of War and his suite came galloping in full sight, followed by crowds on horseback bawling out as they passed "Fly, fly, the ruffians are at hand." The great body of Americans who were not dispersed retreated toward Montgomery courthouse, leaving the battlefield in full possession of the British. The American loss was twenty-six killed and fifty wounded. The British lost more than 300 men, among them several officers of rank and distinction.

Our soldiers applied the abstract principles of warfare and attempted to guard a dozen avenues of approach with a force insufficient to protect one. The President and his fugitive party were the first to announce to the frightened citizens of the capital the loss of the battle and the march of the victors upon the city.

At twilight, the enemy made its appearance in Washington. Up to this time their conduct had been in accordance with the rules of modern warfare, but now they abandoned all rules. The wild Russian Cossacks, who had sacrificed their own sacred Moscow in 1812, spared Paris when

their vengeance struck it that same year, but it remained for civilized Britons to commit against their own blood, an act of vandalism worthy of the age of barbaric Aleric.

\* \* \*

The marauders bivouaced on Capitol Hill. From a house nearby they were fired upon by a single musket which killed the horse ridden by Gen. Ross. As punishment, they demolished the house from which this shot had been fired. This, some other houses nearby, and a tavern composed the bulk of the private property destroyed.

Ross had come to destroy public property and this he proceeded to do. Fortunately, he was accompanied by one who delighted in such spoilation - Admiral Cockburn, who literally served as his torchbearer.

First they approached the unfinished Capitol building. After discharging army rockets through the roof of each wing, they tore away the bridge connecting these structures and spanning the space on which the central edifice was to be built. They left the floors of the two legislative chambers strewn with valuable papers belonging to the Congressional Library and wantonly destroyed documents precious to the nation as memorials to its origin. Then they set fire to the building, but a heavy rainstorm arising later in the night prevented the flames from completely destroying the outer walls.

While the flames were illuminating the Capitol, the British continued their infamous mission by marching up Pennsylvania Avenue toward the White House. "Dolly" Madison, forewarned of their intended approach, had been driven away into the country. But not before she had ripped the famous Andrews portrait of George Washington from its frame and taken it with

her along with some valuable federal archives packed in her trunk, still preserved in the State Department.

When the Redcoats arrived they set President's palace in flames, the light of which could be seen in Baltimore, forty miles away. Soon only the blackened walls of the mansion remained. The Treasury and War Departments also came in for their share of depredation. Only the Post Office was spared.

While these public buildings were in flames, the national shipping stores and arsenal were blazing at the navy yard and Long bridge spanning the Potomac River between Washington and the Virginia shore, was in flames. Commander Tingley, in command of the navy yard, had received instructions to set the public property on fire rather than let it fall into the hands of the enemy. He applied his torch about the same time that Ross was igniting the foundations of the Capitol. Altogether the property destroyed was valued at \$2,000,000, half of which covered the damage inflicted by the British.

Ross and Cockburn, fearing that the band of retribution might cut off their retreat after their brigandage, stole away in the night of the 25th and with their forces, embarked four days later for England. The government of England thanked the victors and caused the Tower guns to be fired in their honor. Not long afterward, upon the death of Ross, it ordered a monument to his memory to be erected in Westminster Abbey.

c.1914 John Elfreth Watkins; transcribed by a facsimile by *Sarah Bourne*.

## WELCOME

### NEW MEMBERS

David & Marcia Stern  
Judy Moore  
Roberta Mattle

**WANTED:** The Library at Marietta would like to acquire a complete collection of memorabilia related to the County high schools. When you are cleaning out your attic (or your parent's attic) please save yearbooks, literary magazines, newspapers, etc. If you cannot bring them to the library on a Saturday afternoon, call for a pickup by a library committee member: Sharon (301-927-4514); Sarah (301-277-5468); and, Susan (301-262-3367). Many thanks.

### THINGS TO DO:

Stitching Pretty & The Friends of Montpelier present **NEEDLEART '99**. Displays will include beading, counted canvases, counted cross stitch, samplers, and mixed media pieces. Dates: July 16- 25: Opening - Friday, July 16, 3-7 p.m.; Daily: 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tues (7/20) & Thurs. (7/22), 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. *Montpelier Mansion*, a National Historic Landmark, is located at Route 197 & Muirkirk Road, Laurel, Maryland. For information call: 301-953-1376. Admission fee.

The Anne Arundel Genealogical Society will be holding a one day **genealogical seminar** on **Saturday, September 25, 1999**, at the Holiday Inn in Annapolis, Maryland. For additional information call Ms. Audrey Bagby, program chair, at **410-255-2889** or e-mail her at **AUD3666@aol.com** or write to

Anne Arundel Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 221, Pasadena, Maryland 21123-0221 or see their Web site at

**<http://geocities.com/>**

**Yosemite/Trails/4256/gensoc.htm.**

Information about the conference, including the registration form, is available on-line. Photocopies of the registration form are acceptable.

### PLACES TO VISIT:

**Snow Hill Manor**, a circa 1798 National Register Historic Site, is now open for rental. Located at 13301 Laurel-Bowie Road, Laurel (Intersection of Contee Road and Rt. 197), the *Manor* is suitable for weddings, receptions, meetings, and social gatherings. For information call: **301-725-6037**.

**Thrasher Carriage Museum**, houses one of the foremost collections of late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century horse drawn conveyances and accessories in the United States. Located at 19 Depot Street, Frostburg, Maryland, hours for May - September are Tuesday-Sunday, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Their Web site address is: [www.cumberland.com/thrasher](http://www.cumberland.com/thrasher). Call: 1-800-50-visit or 301-689-3380 for additional details.

**Radio-Television Museum** opened on June 12 in **Bowie**. Established by the Washington Radio History Society, the museum displays, "a good chunk of old radio technology," according to *Washington Post* writer Frank Ahrens. The museum is located at the corner of Mitchellville and Mount Oak Roads and is open from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays (except holidays).

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

Non-Profit Org  
U S Postage  
Paid  
Riverdale, MD  
Permit No. 1948

### **HOURS OF OPERATION**

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

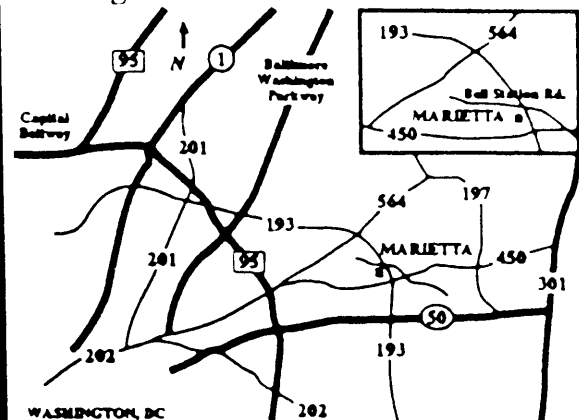
Marietta Tours -Friday, 11 - 3, Sunday,  
12 - 4 - and by appointment -  
Information 301-464-0591

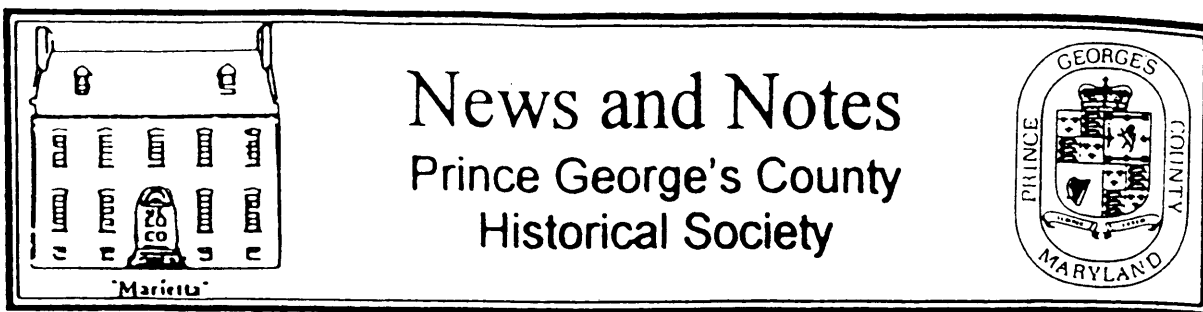
### **THE SOCIETY GIFT SHOP**

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, 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.





August/September 1999

Our 47<sup>th</sup> Year

XXVII Number 5

## **PRINCE OF A COUNTY RECEPTION MOUNT AIRY PLANTATION**



## **THE MANY LIVES OF A PLANTATION**

## *Adaptive Use of Historic Sites*

In September 1976, **John M. Walton, Jr.**, formerly, Senior Park Historian, M-NCPPC, presented a paper discussing the adaptive use of Mt. Airy to the Rosaryville State Park Citizen's Advisory Committee. He discussed a timetable for development of a historical site or structure by a public agency, types of uses for publicly owned historic sites, how these types of uses affect the historical and architectural integrity of a historic site, what to look at in order to determine what use or uses are best, the importance of Mt. Airy and its basic history. Since we are featuring this site at our annual Prince of a County Reception, I thought it would be interesting to share his presentation as we view this historic property in its latest aspect.

John outlined five phases in the timetable for developing a historical site. Phase one involves preliminary historical, architectural and archaeological research. In this phase, the relative value and worthiness of the site is determined. Phase two is the actual acquisition of the property. The third phase involves in-depth historical, architectural, and archaeological research. It is at this stage that critical information is gathered upon which decisions in the final two phases are based. Phase four concerns the restoration and/or preservation of the property and phase five focuses on programming and development of possible uses.

Types of uses for publicly owed historic sites are broken into interpretive and non-interpretive uses. An interpretive use might be a museum or period rooms. Non-interpretive uses can be sympathetic or non-sympathetic. A sympathetic use would be the location of the Prince George's County Historical Society at Marietta Mansion or, an organization whose principal activities or interests include matters pertaining to history, historic preservation or related areas. A non-sympathetic adaptive use might be a restaurant.

The presentation goes on to discuss the types of uses which affect the historical and architectural integrity of the building, with interpretive uses causing the least ill effect on the fabric of the property. Professional historical accuracy is an important element in this process.

How is the best use or uses determined for a historical site? "The following questions should be carefully considered: What is the relative historical and architectural value of a site compared with others, in the local area, in the state, in the region, in the nation? Do all areas of a historic site or structure have equal value, or are some more important than others? How much original fabric or fabric of significant age remains of a historic site or structure? What areas of a historic site or structure possess the largest amount of original fabric or fabric of significant age? In short, what use or uses will benefit the public most and preserve the historical integrity of a historic site the best." Keep in mind that it is possible to combine different types of use in a single property with sensitivity.

This presentation concludes with a discussion of the importance and history of Mt. Airy both of which we will consider.

"Mt. Airy was, is and should remain as one of the most important historical sites and structures in the State of Maryland. It is probably the closest remaining physical tie with the Calvert Family, the proprietary family of Maryland. Its history is rich but all too poorly known. Mt. Airy has been to many people a mystery house; its history is filled with legend and consequently its legends have become its history. Somewhere behind the legends lay important historical facts yet to be uncovered in the records and manuscripts left behind by the Calverts and their contemporaries. Still other important pieces of Mt. Airy's past are buried beneath the ground on which the house stands. The 1931 fire destroyed much, but much survived the fire. To assume otherwise is a mistake."

#### Chronology of Mt. Airy

- 1705 Darnalls Lodge Patented to Colonel Henry Darnall
- 1711 Colonel Darnall dies, willing Darnalls Lodge to his son Henry Darnall, II
- 1729 Henry and Ann Darnall sell property to John Hyde of Great Britain
- 1745 Samuel Hyde (son of John Hyde) sells property to Charles Calvert, 5<sup>th</sup> Lord Baltimore (1699-1751)
- ca. 1748 Charles Calvert, Lord Baltimore starts proceedings to turn Mt. Airy property over to his illegitimate son Benedict Swingate Calvert. Proceedings take about 3 years.
- 1748 April. Benedict Calvert marries his cousin Elizabeth Calvert
- 1752 April 30: The *Maryland Gazette* reports: "On the 21<sup>st</sup> Instant, a very good Dwelling-House, and sundry Out-houses, about five Miles from Upper Marlborough, belonging to Benedict Calvert, Esq.; of this City, was burnt down to the Ground, and as there had not been any Fire in the House for some Months, it seems to have been done on purpose by some very wicked Persons. Mr. Calvert and his Lady were about going thither to pass the Summer Season, and had just furnished it for their Reception. The Fire had got to such a Head before it was discovered, that it was with great Difficulty any of the Furniture was saved, a very few of the servants being then at the Plantation, and the Overseer, with Several of the Hands, gone a fishing."
- 1788 Benedict Calvert dies.
- 1790 Elizabeth Calvert is shown in the 1st Federal census as owning 228 slaves

- 1798 Federal Direct Tax for Grubb Hundred describes the Mt. Airy House as it existed at that time as follows: "Owner Occupant Edward H. Calvert (son) same part of Darnals Lodge; a Brick dwelling House one and (a) half stories 40 by 21 feet additions at each end 18 by 19 feet 32 windows 232sq. feet one addition 22 sq. feet. Kitchen, Meat House and Smoak House."
- 1800 Edward Henry Calvert, Owner and Occupant of Mt. Airy owned the following tracts of Land in Prince George's County in 1800: **Grubb Hundred**: 2208 ½ acres - pt. of Darnalls Lodge; 100 acres - pt. of Croom & Greenland; 310 acres - pt. of Timberland & General's Gift for a total of 2618 ½ acres. **Piscataway Hundred** 5700 acres - pt. of His Lordship's Kindness; **Mount Calvert Hundred** 273 acres - pt. of Goodluck, Greenland and Burgess's Discovery. *Grand Total: 8591.5 acres.*
- 1846 Edward Henry Calvert dies.
- 1857 Elisabeth Biscoe Calvert (wife of Edward Henry Calvert) dies
- 1861 Cecilius Calvert is shown on an 1861 map of Prince George's County as the owner of Mt. Airy
- 1878 Cecilius B. Calvert is shown in an 1878 atlas of Prince George's County as the owner of Mt. Airy
- ca. 1900 Cecilius B. Calvert dies
- ca. 1902 Eleanora Calvert, sister of Cecilius B. Calvert and owner of Mt. Airy dies. Her heirs sue for sale of the estate.
- 1903 March 7. Mt. Airy sold by Trustees to Washington Attorney William E. Ambrose. William E. Ambrose assigns his interest in the property to Wilcox Real Estate Company Ltd. of Pa.
- 1931 April 1931. Eleanor "Sissie" Patterson purchases Mt. Airy from Dower House, Inc. after the destructive fire which occurred in the same year.

**Editor's note:** We are grateful that John granted us permission to reprint this paper. He also provided editorial comment.



### *An Adaptive Use*

In the mid-1980s, the family-owned Chambord Corporation entered into a long-term lease with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to use Mt. Airy as a restaurant and inn. The following flier was issued at that time:

## **MOUNT AIRY PLANTATION**

### *An Historic Legacy*

“One of the most important historic properties in Maryland, Mount Airy was part of a 1632 land grant from King Charles I of England to Cecil Calvert, second Lord Baltimore. The mansion structure, the only surviving home of Maryland’s founding Calvert family from the proprietary period, was begun around 1725 and expanded over the next hundred years as the property developed into a working tobacco plantation. Architectural evidence uncovered in the west wing of the building during the recent renovation gave credence to a tradition that a circa 1660 hunting lodge used by the Lords Baltimore was incorporated into the present structure.

Benedict Calvert, son of Charles, fifth Lord Baltimore, moved to the property with his wife, Elizabeth, in 1749. Twenty five years later, on February 4, 1774, their daughter, Eleanor, married John Parke Custis, stepson of George Washington, before the fireplace in the mansion’s drawing room. A close personal friend of the Calverts, George Washington was a frequent visitor to Mount Airy. The wedding celebration that united the two families spanned a two-week period.

The Calvert family’s direct heirs occupied the mansion until 1903 when, at the death of Eleanor Calvert, the property was sold at auction to Matilda Duvall. She renamed it

the Dower House, and over the years entertained a wide range of celebrities from cellist Gregor Piatigorsky to Presidents Taft, Wilson, Hoover and Coolidge.

In 1931, Eleanor Medill “Cissy” Patterson, editor-publisher and eventually owner of the Washington Times-Herald, purchased the property and undertook the last complete restoration prior to the present effort. For a time an ardent supporter of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Cissy Patterson entertained the Roosevelts and their presidential guests at her country estate.

After her death in 1948, Mrs. Patterson bequeathed the property to her friend, Ann Bowie Smith, and Mount Airy was returned once more to descendants of the Calverts. The Smith family lived at Mount Airy until 1973 when it was acquired by the Maryland State Department of Natural Resources. Ten years later the Department entered into a long-term lease with the family-owned Chambord Corporation to restore the property and open it to the public as a fine restaurant and historic inn. Patricia and Frank Kulla, the small corporation’s operating officers, are in residence on the plantation and greet all guests with the same personal warmth and hospitality as generations of previous owners.

Despite its importance throughout American history as a gathering place for influential individuals, Mount Airy Plantation is also famous locally for its ghosts. According to local legend, an unhappy woman in white and a mysterious horseman in colonial attire have been seen in and around the house. Belief in these ethereal visitors is, of course, a matter of personal conviction. But it cannot be denied that the spirits of Washington, Roosevelt, the Lords Baltimore and others lend a sense of important and history to Mount Airy. Their presence here is the power that continues to draw persons of influence to this historic plantation."

And finally, *Historian Susan Pearl* prepared this description as Mt. Airy Plantation begins the next phase in its long life:

Mount Airy is a three-part brick mansion which dates from the early eighteenth century; it is one of the most historic and important places in Maryland, the only building known to have been the home of the family of the Lords Baltimore during the Provincial period. The first member of the family to make Mount Airy his permanent home was Benedict Calvert, natural son of Charles Calvert, the fifth Lord Baltimore. During Benedict Calvert's residence at Mount Airy, George Washington was a frequent guest. Washington's diary records many visits to Mount Airy, including the wedding of his step-son, John Parke Custis, to Eleanor, daughter of Benedict Calvert, on February 3, 1774.

After the death of Benedict Calvert in 1788, Mount Airy passed to his eldest son, whose children remained at Mount Airy until 1902. In the following year Mount Airy was purchased by Mrs. Mathilda R.

Duvall. During her residence, the mansion was renovated and renamed "The Dower House"; Mrs. Duvall entertained many of Washington's most prominent individuals, including President Woodrow Wilson and conductor Leopold Stokowski.

On February 1, 1931, a fire destroyed much of the east wing (the oldest section) and some of the central section of the Mount Airy mansion. Shortly afterwards, the 844-acre estate was purchased by Eleanor "Cissy" Patterson, who proceeded to rebuild the damaged mansion and make it her country home. After Mrs. Patterson's death in 1948, Mount Airy passed to her friend, Ann Bowie Smith, a descendant of the Calvert family; the Smiths sold the property to the State of Maryland in 1973. Ten years later the mansion and 100 acres were leased by the State to Chambord Corporation, which began the renovation of the deteriorating building. The work was carried out under the supervision of architect Michael Troste, and the Mount Airy Plantation Restaurant and Country Inn opened under the direction of Patricia and Frank Kulla in 1985. Closed again since the early 90's, Mount Airy is now reopening as a reception rental facility, leased to the Rosaryville Conservancy, and managed by Pineapple Alley Catering, Inc.

Mount Airy's living spaces have been converted into dining rooms, lounge and guest rooms, and the rear courtyard has been glass-enclosed to form the largest of the dining spaces. East of the mansion lies a formal garden, and to the south are several old outbuildings including a large brick stable and a brick green house, as well as the remnants of the twentieth century swimming pool, tennis court and greenhouse. Access to the mansion grounds of Rosaryville State Park.

## 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** Julie Bright John Mitchell  
William Uber Wallis Cain George Denny  
Kathryn Clagett Mildred Ridgeley Gray  
Iris McConnell Robert Crawley

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

## PLEASE NOTE

The Nominating Committee is accepting names for officers for 1999-2000. Anyone interested in joining the Board of Directors of the Prince George's County Historical Society should call William Uber on 301-937-6379.

## WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS:

**RICHARD and MARY LAMBERT**

## TO REMIND

The Harvest Festival and Yard sale at Marietta is scheduled for **October 24**. The Yard Sale will be possible only if there are enough volunteers and if donations are received by October 1<sup>st</sup>. Contact: Bill Uber, 301-937-6379.

## 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:

☐ 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

## HERITAGE CALENDAR

## September 1999

- 4- Emancipation Day Parade  
Laurel Museum TBA 301-725-7975 free
- 8- Slide/Lecture- *Old World Master Paintings at Riversdale*-Susan Pearl  
Belair Mansion 7PM 301-809-3089
- 9- Lecture/Reception-*The Burning of Washington*-Anthony Pitch  
Maryland Historical Society 6:30 PM 410-685-3750 \$\$
- 11- Concerts in the Woods Hollyfield & Spruill and the Amazons  
Hard Bargain Farm 301-292-5665
- 12- Lecture- *24 Years of Air Force Experiences*- Lt.Col.Joseph White USAF (ret)  
College Park Aviation Museum 2PM 301-864-6029 \$\$
- 12- *Happy Birthday, Montgomery County* at the Beall-Dawson House  
Montgomery County Historical Society 12-5 PM 301-762-1492
- 15 Lecture- "*Bound by God ..For Merryland- the voyage of the Constant  
Friendship*"  
Montpelier Mansion 7:30 301-953-1376 free
- 17-18 Theatre in the Woods- *Of Mice and Men*  
24-25 Hard Bargain Farm 301-292-5665 \$\$
- 18- 30th Annual Walking Tour Chestertown, MD  
Kent County HS 410-778-3499 \$\$
- 19- Gallery Talk-*The Inimitable Style of the Duchess of Windsor*  
Maryland Historical Society 2 PM 410-685-3750 \$\$
- 19- **Prince of a County Reception- Mount Airy, Rosaryville**  
**PGCHS 301-927-4514 \$\$**
- 19- "*Stories of the Piscataway in song, danse, & drums*"  
Darnell's Chance 4PM 301-952-8010 \$\$
- 22- Lunch Lecture-"*Heraldry: Symbols, Colors & Meanings*"  
Darnall's Chance 11 AM 301-952-8010 \$\$

- 24- Autumn Tea  
His Lordship's Kindness 2 PM 301-856-0358 \$\$
- 25- OKTOBERFEST  
Hard Bargain Farm 1-6 PM 301-292-5665 \$\$
- 25&26 Roman Legion XX & 100 Years War/LaBelle Compagnie Encampment  
Marietta 11-4 301-464-5291 \$\$
- 25&26 **AERO-FAIR**  
College Park Airport 10-5 301-864-6029 \$\$
- 26- Historic Old Bowie Fall Antique & Craft Festival  
Bowie RR Museum 10-5 301-809-3089 free

#### October 199

- 2- Herbal Wreath Demonstration  
Montpelier Mansion 10-12 301-953-1376 \$\$
- 2- Fort Washington 175th Birthday  
Fort Washington Park 12-5 301-763-4600 \$\$
- 9- Three Centuries of Kent- Driving Tour  
Kent County HS 410-778-3499 \$\$
- 9- "RIVERFEST" crafts, tours, activities  
Laurel Museum 10-4 301-725-7975 free
- 9&10 **Hasting Medieval Faire- Battle Re-enactments, living history, entertainment, food**  
**Marietta 11-5 301-464-5291 \$\$**
- 9&10 *The Science Show-Mysteries of Science Using Music, Magic & Comedy*  
College Park Aviation Museum 301-866029 \$\$
- 10- Progressive Tea  
Billingsley Mansion 11-4 301-627-0730 \$\$
- 15- Dinner/Lecture *Significant Maryland Women in History-* Gregory Stiverson  
Piney Church Hall Charles County 6 PM \$\$

- 15- Mason-Dixon Rug Hooking Exhibit  
Montpelier Mansion 10-4 301-953-1376 free
- 16- *Discover Your Heirlooms with the Help of the Experts*  
Frederick Armory 9-3 301-662-3265 \$\$
- 17- Lecture- *The Tuskegee Airmen*-Col. Charles E. McGee USAF (ret)  
College Park Aviation Museum 2PM 301-864-6029 \$\$
- 17- *"Irish Stories & Songs with a Maryland Twist"*  
Darnall's Chance 4PM 301-952-8010 \$\$
- 19- *"Con Viva Musicale"*  
Belair Mansion 7 PM 301-809-3089
- 20- Lecture- *"Taverns & Inns"* Kym S. Rice  
Montpelier Mansion 7:30 301-953-1376 free
- 22-23 Theatre in the Woods *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*  
29-30 Hard Bargain Farm 301-292-5665 \$\$
- 23- Bus Tour- Civil War Ferry Sites  
Frederick County HS 301-340-2825 \$\$
- 24- Symposium- *"Building the Capital Beltway"*  
Montgomery College-Rockville 301-340-2825
- 24- **Harvest Festival at Marietta**  
**PGCHS 1-4 301-464-0590 free**
- 24- 18th Century Military Encampment  
Montpelier Mansion 11-5 301-953-1376 free
- 29- "In Search of Ghosts"  
Beall-Dawson House 7 PM 301-340-2825 \$\$
- 28- Tales of the Crypt: a Moonlight Walk to Darnall's Chance  
Upper Marlboro Library 6:30 PM 301-627-9330 free
- 30- **Civil War Encampment: stories and refreshments**  
**Marietta Mansion 6-9 PM 301 301-464-5291 \$\$**
- 30- "House in Mourning" Early 19th Century Funeral Re-enactment  
Riversdale Mansion 7:30 PM 301-864-0420 \$\$

- 30- FLIGHT NIGHT: A Halloween Party With an Aviation Twist  
College Park Aviation Museum 709 PM 301-864-6029 \$\$

## November

- 4-7 1999 Antiques Show - Baltimore  
MHS 410-685-3750 \$\$
- 5-7 "Small Quilt Show"  
His Lordship's Kindness 10-3 301-855-0358 \$\$
- 7- Maryland Emancipation Day at Oakley Cabin Montgomery County  
2-4 PM 301-563-3400
- 6- Model Making Workshop  
College Park Aviation Museum 10-4 301-864-6029 \$\$
- 6- **Annual Meeting & Dinner- Fish House, Clinton**  
**PGCHS 301-464-0590 \$\$**
- 13- Kite Making Workshop  
College Park Aviation Museum 12-4 PM 301-864-6029 \$\$
- 14- Welsh Folk Music and Customs  
Montpelier Mansion TBA 301-953-1376 \$\$
- 14- Fireside Tea  
Billingsley Manor 2 PM 301-62700730 \$\$
- 16- Lynch Lecture "*Great Houses of Britain*"  
Belair mansion 11AM 301-809-3089 \$\$
- 17- Lecture "*The Battle of the Severn*" Jeff Holland  
Montpelier Mansion 7:30 301-953-1376 free
- 19- "*African American Tales & Traditional Drum Rolls*"  
Darnall's Chance 4 PM 301-952-8010 \$\$

## December

### **3-4-5 Candlelight Tours**

**Marietta Mansion 6-8:30 301-464-5291 \$\$**

4- Winter Solstice Celebration.  
National Colonial Farm 608 PM 301-283-2113

4- "Historic Mainstreet Holiday Parade"  
Laurel Museum, 3:30 PM 301-725-7975 free

5- Children's Holiday Pastimes  
Belair Mansion 12-4 301-809-3089 \$\$

5- Handbell Concert & Candlelight Tours  
Darnall's Chance 3 PM 301-952-8010 \$\$

8-10 Candlelight Tours  
Montpelier Mansion 6-9 301-953-1376 \$\$

9- Christmas Tea  
Belair Mansion 4PM 301-809-3089 \$\$

11- Holiday House Tour  
Laurel Historical Society 3-7:30 301-725-7975 \$\$

### **11- Christmas Party at Marietta PGCHS 301-464-0590**

11- Santa Claus Fly-In and Children's Holiday Party  
College Park Aviation Museum 1-4 301-864-6029 \$\$

11- Eighteenth Century Christmas Feast  
Darnall's Chance 7PM 301-952-8010 \$\$

12- Holiday Dessert Tea  
His Lordship's Kindness 1-3PM 301-856-0358 \$\$

29- Holiday Tea  
Belair Mansion 4PM 301-809-3089 \$\$



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

Non-Profit Org  
U S Postage  
Paid  
Riverdale, MD  
Permit No. 1948

### HOURS OF OPERATION

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

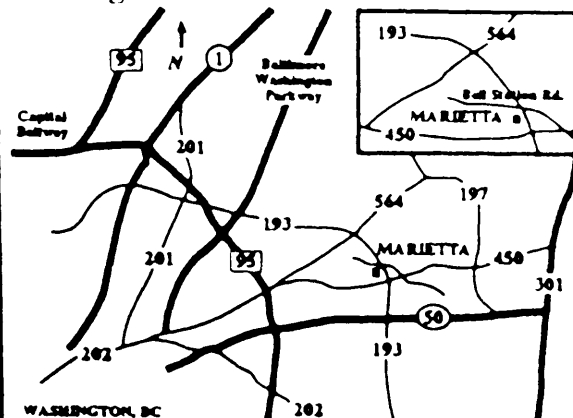
Marietta Tours -Friday, 11 - 3, Sunday,  
12 - 4 - and by appointment -  
Information 301-464-0591

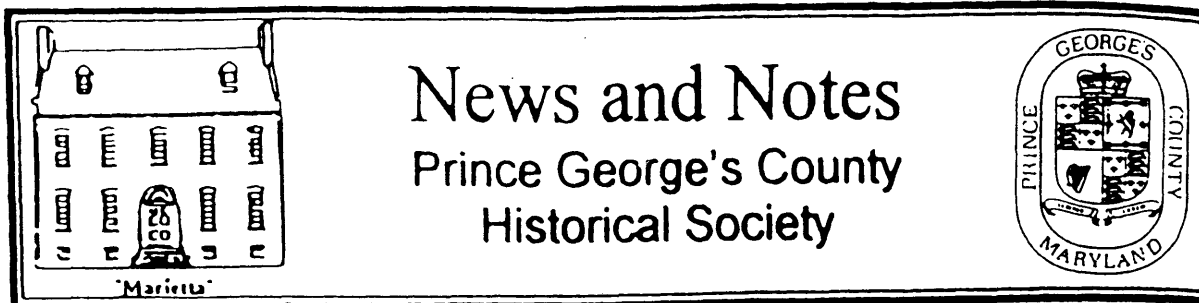
### THE SOCIETY GIFT SHOP

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, 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.





October 1999

Our 47<sup>th</sup> Year

XXVII Number 6

## THE HARVEST IS IN — LET'S CELEBRATE

There is an old tradition in virtually all agricultural societies the world over — when the harvest is in it is time to celebrate the successful completion of another season. Regardless of the fact that 1999 will go down as both the driest and the wettest year on record (depending on the month) there is still a need to thank our supreme being for the bounty of our land. Join us at Marietta on Sunday, October 24 beginning at 3 pm for the Fall Harvest Festival. Bring the kids and join in the games and festivities and celebrate the future.

## OCTOBER 1999 WEATHER FORECAST ZONE 1 \* NORTHEASTERN STATES

**1st-3rd.** Squally, then fair and cold. **4th-7th.** Fair, pleasant. **8th-11th.** Squally weather; heavy rain, especially for Mid-Atlantic region, then clearing, cold conditions. **12th-15th.** Showers, especially over Virginia/Maryland area. **16th-19th.** Blustery winds. **20th-23rd.** Lake-effect snow squalls for western sections of New York, northwestern Pennsylvania. Some snow for northern New England as well. Stormy weather spreads north to Mid-Atlantic region. **24th-27th.** Clearing skies, turning colder. **28th-31st.** Windy, rainy and chilly, some snow over higher elevations of New England, then turn fair by Halloween.

*Illustration and weather forecast from **Farmers' ALMANAC** for the Year of our Lord 2000*



## OUTBUILDINGS

In our November 1998 issue of *News and Notes*, we looked at various County outbuildings and dependencies in celebration of the newly restored root cellar at Marietta. Historian Susan Pearl identified some of her favorite unique examples around Prince George's County including the meat house/privy combination at **Hazelwood**, the icehouse at **The Cottage** near Upper Marlboro, the corn crib at **Bellevue** near Fort Washington, the dairy now located at **Mount Lubentia**, and the dependencies at **Compton Bassett**. This year, as we begin to think about preserving the still abundant fruits and vegetables available at our local farmer's markets, I think it is a good opportunity to look at these building types again, especially in view of their continued neglect. I think this is particularly important in view of our own rich agricultural heritage.

Our tour begins with a listing of what I hope you will agree is a wide variety of outbuildings. This list was compiled from *Everyday Architecture of the Mid-Atlantic: Looking at Buildings and Landscapes* by Gabrielle M. Lanier and Bernard L. Herman (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997). While the concentration of the buildings described are mainly from the New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware region, I think you will agree that the list is as interesting for the types of outbuildings included as for those omitted and illustrates regional differences in a fairly small geographic area. Susan Pearl has kindly provided photographic examples of some of these types of buildings which are located in Prince George's County. .

In the Glossary of Lanier & Herman's book, we find the following examples of outbuildings, defined as functionally specific buildings which are separate from the main dwellings.

**"Carriage house, chair house.** Outbuildings used to garage carriages."

**"Cart shed.** Building designed to garage farm equipment. Most commonly a low frame structure with an asymmetrical gable roof, open front, and sided back and gables."

**"Corn crib, stack, corn stack, corn house.** Long, narrow log or frame gable roofed structures designed to store corn."

**"Crib barn.** A one-story, gable front farm building, typically with double doors at each end, the interior of which is subdivided into compartments called cribs or pens."

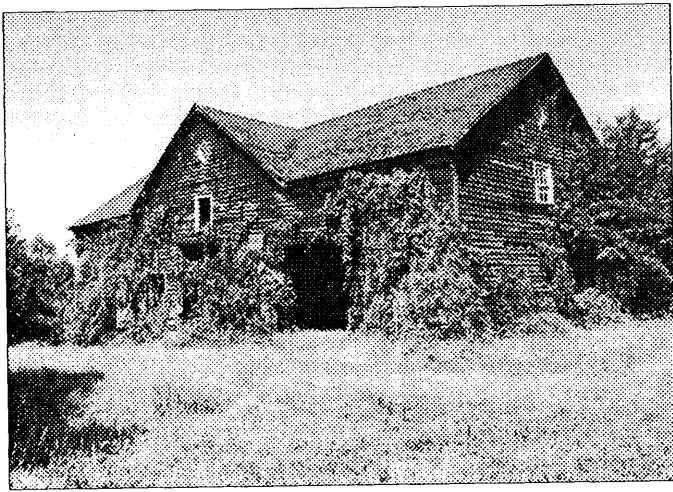
**"Dairy, milk house.** Outbuilding designed for keeping milk and processing butter and/or cheese."

**"English barn; feed barn; runway, three-bay, or Yankee barn.** A barn with a central runway and two flanking spaces. These barns are typically entered by tall double doors on either end of the runway."

**"Granary.** Agricultural buildings designed for the storage of grain."

**"Laying houses.** Agricultural building designed to house laying hens."

**"Mixed-use barn.** A barn designed for multiple agricultural purposes, such as grain storage, crop processing, housing of farm animals, and dairying activities."

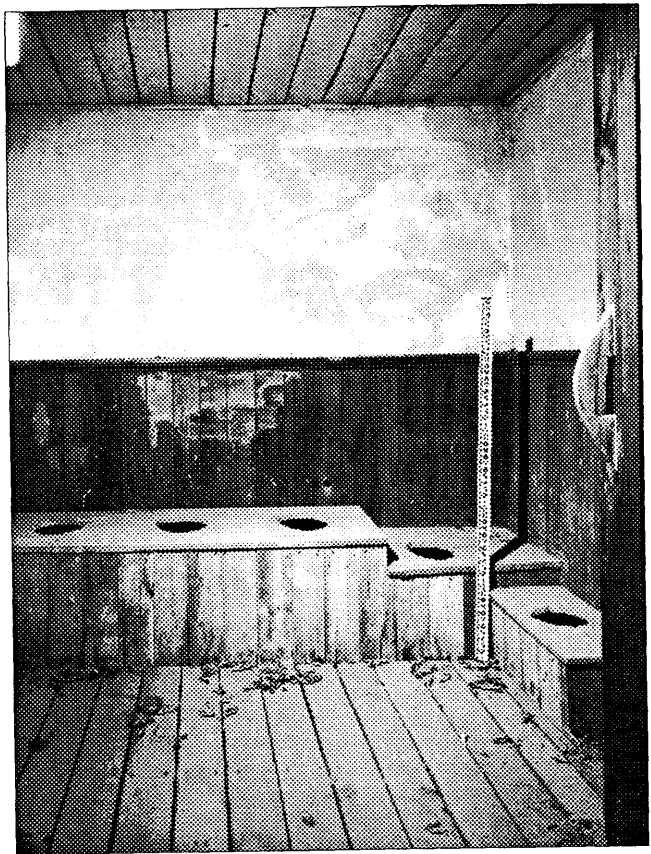


*Belt family barn, ca 1890*

**“Packing shed.** Agricultural building designed for packing farm produce.”

**“Potato pit, root pit.** Below-grade semifinished rectangular storage space common to the Chesapeake region and designed to keep root crops from freezing, excavated beneath the floor, usually just in front of the cooking hearth.”

**“Privy.** A small outbuilding used as a toilet, usually contains a bench, with one or more holes cut in it, built over a pit.”



**“Skinning shed.** Outbuilding used for skinning and processing muskrats. Skinning sheds were often converted smokehouses.”

**“Smokehouse.** Outbuilding designed for smoking meats.”

**“Springhouse.** Outbuilding built over a spring and used for cool storage of foods such as dairy products.

**“Summer kitchen.** A small kitchen or cooking shed, near or adjacent to the main dwelling, used as a kitchen in warm weather.”

**“Sweet potato house.** Specialized agricultural building designed exclusively for storage and curing sweet potatoes.”

**“Wagon barn.** Agricultural building designed for vehicle storage and other purposes; often combines the functions of crib barns, carriage houses, workshops, and cart sheds.



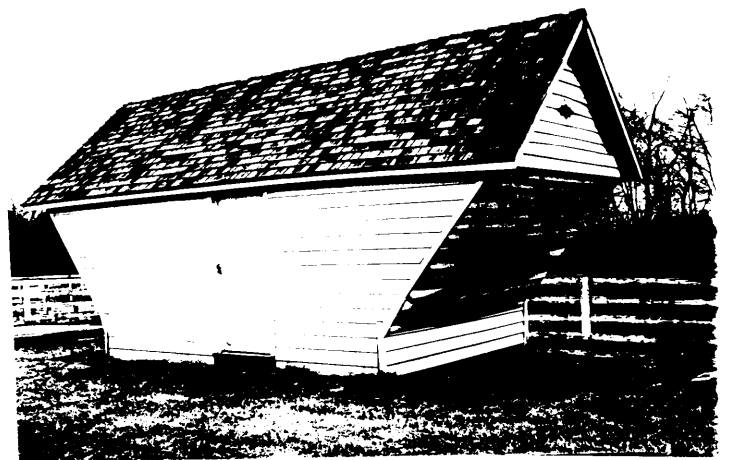
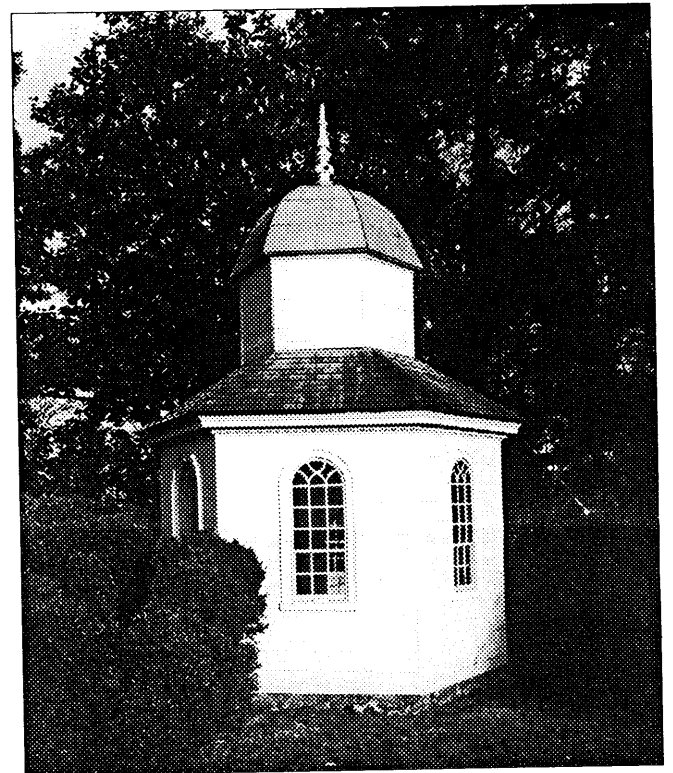
*Exterior and Interior, 19<sup>th</sup> cent. Privy, His Lordship's Kindness.*

Chapter Five of *Everyday Architecture of the Mid-Atlantic* is devoted to *Farm Outbuildings and Plans* which the authors declare “write the history of the agricultural landscape.” They proceed to describe early farm buildings, 1780-1830, including bank barns, three-bay barns, gable-fronted barns, corn cribs and granaries, and other farm buildings. References to Maryland agricultural buildings, such as tobacco barns, are limited and not included in the glossary. We have, however, chosen to illustrate this type of outbuilding with the Warington tobacco barn, ca. 1860:



Lanier and Herman write that “surviving barns and farm structures define three major periods in the region’s agricultural development. The first of these periods runs from the eighteenth century into the 1830s and is characterized by a grain-based agricultural economy in the Delaware valley and a tobacco-based economy in the Chesapeake. By the mid-1700s, however, Chesapeake Bay country farmers had also switched to grain.” We would note however, that Rosalie Steir Calvert, in the *Mistress of Riversdale*, describes the difficulties in exporting hogsheads of tobacco well after 1800.

Other, less “everyday” more exuberant outbuildings located in Prince George’s County, are pictured below and feature the late 18<sup>th</sup> century belvedere or summerhouse at Montpelier and the 19<sup>th</sup> century aviary or peacock house at His Lordship’s Kindness.



## **Registration for Dinner and Annual Meeting Prince George's County Historical Society**

Price \$ 25.00 - please make checks payable to PGCHS.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Number attending: \_\_\_\_\_

Please select from among the following five dishes - if you are reserving for more than one, please mark a number next to the dish for each person.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Vegetable Pasta in a light cream sauce & fresh broccoli
- \_\_\_\_\_ Chicken in a light cream sauce & fresh broccoli on a bed of pasta.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Crab Cake Platter - served with Captain's fries and cole slaw
- \_\_\_\_\_ Broiled Admiral's Platter - Shrimp, Scallops, Crab Imperial, & Fillet of Fish  
Served with Captain's fries and cole slaw.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Roasted Prime Rib of Beef Au Jus, served with vegetable of the day and roasted Red bliss potatoes.

There will be a cash bar. The price includes all non-alcoholic drinks, as well as tax and tip.

**ATTACH CHECK HERE**

---

---

---

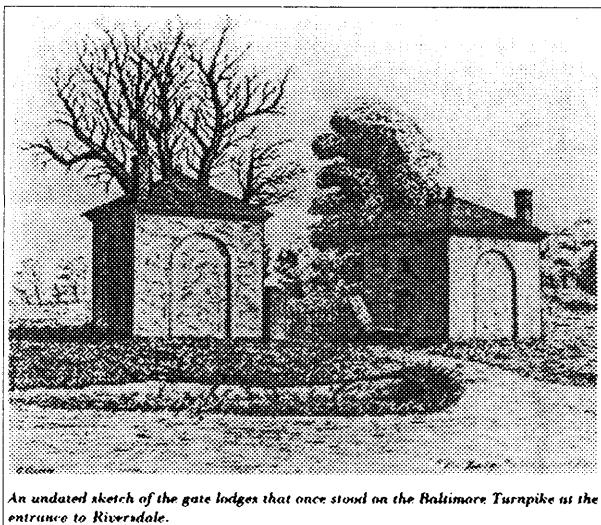
---

Place Stamp Here

Jane Eagen, President  
Prince George's County Historical Society  
16215 S. Audobon Lane  
Bowie, MD 20716

---

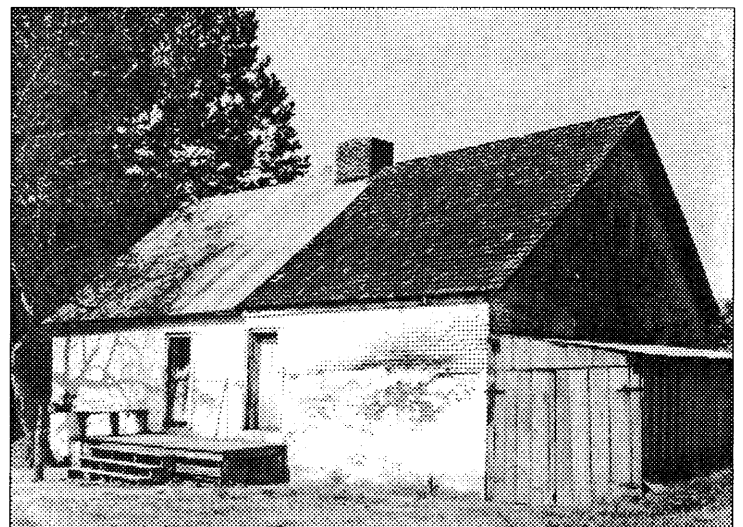
Related to this subject, we call your attention to three more outstanding examples of outbuildings found in the 1996 publication called *The Riverdale Story: Mansion to Municipality*, which celebrates 75 years of history in what is now Riverdale Park. Illustrated are an octagonal barn designed by Charles Benedict Calvert which was located at the corner of Riverdale and Taylor Roads (destroyed by fire in November 1904); a sketch of the gate lodges which once stood on the Baltimore Turnpike at the entrance to Riversdale; and finally, a gazebo on an island in the lake on the south side of the mansion. It's sad that, like many of the "everyday" outbuildings in the County, none of these more exuberant buildings remains.



Unfortunately, most of the County's large plantations and their agricultural economy were dependent upon large quantities of forced labor. Another type of outbuilding provided housing for this labor force and is described in *Back of the Big House: The American Architecture of Plantation Slavery* by John Michael Vlach (University of North Carolina Press, 1993).

We asked Board Member Iris McConnell for her observations on this subject related to

her ancestors. She reviewed this sensitive volume as one which portrays the African-Americans sense of place and family. It is illustrated with Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) photographs, mostly from the 1930s and is incredibly readable. Quoting from the back cover: "Behind the *Big Houses* of the antebellum South existed a different world, socially and architecturally, where slaves lived and worked. John Michael Vlach explores the structures and spaces that formed the slaves' environment. Through photographs and the words of former slaves, he portrays the plantation landscape from the slaves' own point of view." Two HABS photographs by John O. Brostrup, taken in 1936, illustrate buildings in Prince George's County. They reflect buildings on which so much of the economy, the culture, and the society depended. With Iris' permission we are illustrating her ancestor's quarters located at the Northampton plantation.



Dr. Vlach is professor of American studies and anthropology at George Washington University, and chair of the folk life program and the American studies program at the University.



## ANNUAL MEETING - NOVEMBER 6, 1999

The venue for the 1999 annual meeting is the Fish Market Restaurant of Maryland, 7611 Old Branch Avenue, Clinton. Telephone 301 599 7900. Members are, of course, encouraged to come. The restaurant is off Branch Ave at the Kirby Road Exit south of Allentown Road. We will gather at about 6PM, and there will be a dinner speaker, and the business meeting will take place after dinner.

The agenda includes election of officers and directors for the Society. The Nominations committee presented the following slate, and the Board of Directors recommends these nominees to you. Note, however, that nominations from the floor are welcome and encouraged. Each officer position will be considered separately, and the Directors will be elected after that. I should point out that it is in order to move election of the entire slate by acclamation, if that is the desire of the entire group. We hope each of you will join us for this festive, but important occasion.

### *The Slate:*

President	<b>Lester Sweeting</b>
Vice President	<b>Eugene B. Roberts, Jr.</b>
Secretary	<b>Sarah Bourne</b>
Treasurer	<b>Joyce Uber</b>
Historian	<b>Susan Pearl</b>
Editor	<b>Sharon Howe Sweeting</b>
Membership Chairman	<b>Phyllis Herndon</b>
Gift Shop Coordinator	<b>Stella Uber</b>

Director - 3 year term (2000, 2001, 2002)

**James Wolfe**  
**John Mitchell**  
**William Uber**

Director - Two Year Term (2000, 2001)

**John Petro**

Susan Wolfe, Facility Manager of Marietta, serves ex-officio

Board Members

**Wallis Cain** (2000, 2001)  
**Robert Crawley** (2000, 2001)  
**Mildred Ridgely Gray** (2000)  
**Katheryn Clagett** (2000)  
**Iris McConnell** (2000)

Past Presidents

**Jane Eagen; Joyce MacDonald; Bud Dutton; Dusty Rhoads**  
**John Giannetti; Paul T. Lanham**

In addition, you will find a separate sheet in the newsletter, with a return address on it. Please mail it, with your check for \$25.00 attached, no later than Friday, October 29<sup>th</sup>. Please also call Jane Eagen - 301 249 6409 to confirm. You may send the form by fax to 301 249 7090, but your check will have to be sent anyway. Thank you and see you there!

## New Members are Welcome

We would like to welcome the following new members to the Society:

Dorothy Hall  
Donald and Theresa Hillery  
Magi Buchheister

## Additions to Calendar

When we published the quarterly heritage activities calendar, we neglected to mention the following, which you should note:

**"Stories from the Attic" display of family heirlooms - Surratt House Museum through November 29, 1999**

**Annual Surratt House Museum - open house - November 20 and 21 - 12 to 4 PM  
December 11 - 13 - Victorian Yuletide by Candlelight - 24<sup>th</sup> annual holiday tours of Surratt House - hours vary - call 301 868 1121**

Laurie Verge writes: "Members might also like to know that Surratt House has been featured in programs on A&E, The History Channel and TNT over the past year, as well as feature articles in several national publications, including *Civil War Times Illustrated*.

## APPLE BUTTER

At the harvest festival on October 24, the junior docents will have for sale their newly prepared apple butter - come and sample and BUY!

## EACH ONE BRING ONE

Bill Uber reminds us that each member of the Society should contribute to our growth by bringing a new member into the Society - begin with the next one you see - ask them to join!

## 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:

☐ 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

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

Non-Profit Org  
U S Postage  
Paid  
Riverdale, MD  
Permit No. 1948

#### **HOURS OF OPERATION**

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

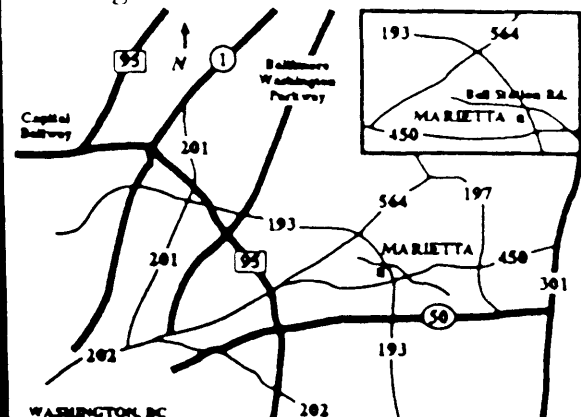
Marietta Tours -Friday, 11 - 3, Sunday,  
12 - 4 - and by appointment -  
Information 301-464-0591

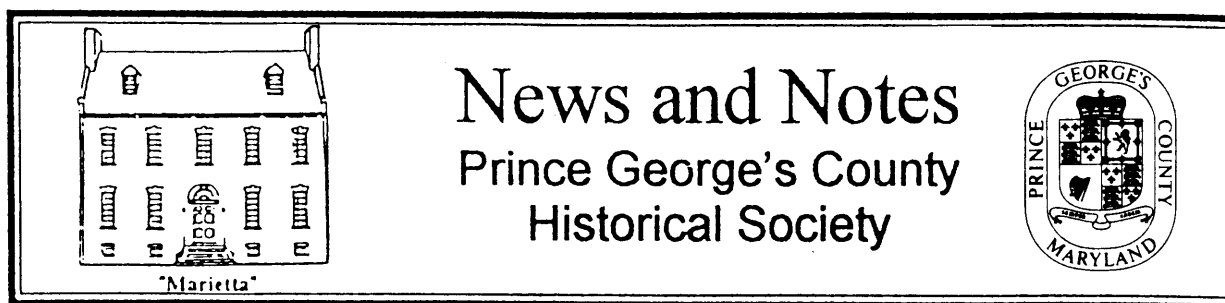
#### **THE SOCIETY GIFT SHOP**

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, 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.





November/December 1999

Our 47<sup>th</sup> Year

XXVII, No. 7

## HOLIDAY GALA

The Society will host its annual Holiday Gala at Marietta on Saturday, December 11 from 2PM. Entry is, as always, a sweet or savory to share. Please bring your friends and introduce them to the Society - all are welcome for this festive occasion. ***Other Prince George's County History Consortium events for December are:***

- 3-5 **Marietta House Museum, Glenn Dale** *Candlelight Tours*. Decorations from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, plus music and refreshments. 6-8:30pm 301-646-5291
- 4 **National Colonial Farm, Accokeek** *Winter Solstice Celebration*. 6-8pm 301-283-2113
- 4 **Belair Mansion, Bowie** *Christmas by Candlelight*. 6-9pm 301-809-3089
- 5 **Bowie Train Station, Old Bowie** *Holiday Open House*(Free) Noon-4pm 301-809-3089
- 5 **Darnall's Chance, Upper Marlboro** *Candlelight Tours*. 3-7pm 301-952-8010
- 5 **Belair Mansion, Bowie** *Twilight Tours by Candlelight*. 4-6pm 301-809-3089
- 6-21 **Marietta House Museum, Glenn Dale** *Christmas Tours--By Appointment*. Day & Evening. 301-464-5291 (Also: December 27-30)
- 6-21 **Belair Mansion, Bowie** *Candlelight Tours--week nights*. Group tours of 10 or more. By appointment only. 6-9pm 301-809-3089
- 8-11 **Montpelier Mansion, Laurel** *Christmas Candlelight Tours*. 6-9pm. 301-953-1376
- 11 **Laurel Museum, Laurel** *Gertrude Poe Holiday House Tour*. 8 homes, VIP reception, & silent auction. 3-7:30pm 301-725-7975
- 11-12 **Billingsley Manor, Upper Marlboro** *Candlelight Tours*. Saturday, 5-9pm; Sunday, 12-4pm Reservations required 301-627-0730
- 11-12 **His Lordship's Kindness, Clinton** *Candlelight Tours*. 6-9pm 301-856-0358
- 11-13 **Surratt House Museum, Clinton** *Victorian Yuletide by Candlelight*. Saturday, 5-9pm, Sunday, 3-9pm, Monday, 6-9pm 301-868-1121
- 12 **Riversdale Mansion, Riverdale** *Christmas Gala*. Noon-4pm 301-464-0420
- 27-30 **Riversdale Mansion, Riverdale** *House Tours: 27-30, Noon-4pm; Candlelight Tours 27 & 28, 7-9pm* 301-464-0420

***FEES VARY BY PROGRAM***

## **SOCIETY JOINS THE NET**

The Library Committee has been working diligently to rearrange, control and organize the large volume of materials in the Library . During the past 2 years, as well, the three S's as they are known (Sarah, Susan and Sharon), with the welcome assistance of Dusty Rhoads and others, have fielded a number of questions covering a wide range of issues. Over 500 hours of volunteer time has been recorded in the past 9 months.

In any event, in an effort to be of even greater service, the Library now has an e-mail account for the use of our patrons from near and far. We will post this on various web sites as we get a chance, but we thought our members should have the address as well.

You may contact the Society Library at **[PGCHSLibrary@aol.com](mailto:PGCHSLibrary@aol.com)**. Please recognize that we will only download messages when one of the committee is at Marietta (at least for the time being), so if your e-mail is not responded to immediately it is because we have not gotten to Marietta to download it.

We continue to welcome walk-in patrons and telephone enquiries, as well as written enquiries to PGCHS Library, P.O. Box 14, Riverdale, MD 20738-0014. The Library is open from 12 to 4 on Saturdays.

## **END NEARS FOR THE 99-YEAR CENTURY**

*(from <http://asia.yahoo.com/headlines/211099/world/940478580-91021040314.newsworld.html>)*

PARIS, Oct 21 (AFP) - Hundreds of millions of people all over the world will be celebrating the start of the third millennium on January 1, 2000. And they all will be

wrong. That's official.

Officials at Britain's Greenwich Observatory, guardians of the line of zero longitude, and at its American counterpart, the US Naval Observatory, are categorical: the end of the second millennium and the beginning of the third will be reached on January 1, 2001.

In a century of 100 years, century's end logically comes at the end of the 100th year, and as a result the millennium festivities commencing in just over 10 weeks time will be exactly a year early.

The reason for this is that there was no year zero in the AD (Anno Domini, "in the year of our Lord") calendar created by the sixth-century monk Dionysius Exiguus (Dennis the Short), and the millennium started out with the year 1 AD.

However, logic will take second place to the popular feeling that a year designated by such a round figure as 2000 is a more suitable starting point for a new millennium, not to mention the commercial imperative to cash in.

The money-making opportunities provided by the date-change have been such as to prompt Lord Falconer, Britain's minister in charge of the Millennium Dome -- the huge dome under construction east of London -- to observe earlier this year that the British would be "proper Charlies" if they waited till 2001 to mark the millennium.

It was very different 100 years ago. Virtually every important public celebration heralding the 20th century was held on or just before January 1, 1901.

Daily newspapers and weekly and monthly periodicals ran their first numbers of the century in the first days of 1901, and the previous year had been firmly earmarked as the closing chapter of the old era rather than the opening chapter of the new.

The lead headline of the New York Times on January 1, 1901 read: "Twentieth Century's Triumphant Entry".

There had been prominent advocates, Sigmund Freud and Germany's Kaiser Wilhelm among them, for starting the new century a year earlier in line with popular sentiment, but they made little headway against the consensus that then prevailed among decision-makers. The result has been that the 20th century, about to be declared dead by popular command, has lasted only 99 years.

Disputes over when to mark the end of the century have a history going back at least three hundred years.

Historian Hillel Schwartz, in his book "Century's End", traces the first major hassles to the period 1699-1701, while in the late 1790s the letters pages of newspapers in the English-speaking world conducted a lively debate on the subject.

But it was in the 1890s that the controversy reached its peak. Science writer Stephen Jay Gould notes in "Questioning the Millennium" that the schism between the "high culture" view -- that the new century begins when the Double-zero year is over -- and the "popular view" favoring a round-number year emerged most clearly at this time.

January 1, 1900 was the popular choice for the start of the 20th century, as evidenced by

a typical letter to the press cited by Schwartz: "I defy the most bigoted precisian to work up an enthusiasm over the year 1901, when we will already have had twelve months' experience of the 1900s."

A century on, the "bigoted precisians" have been relegated to the margins in the stampede to herald the new millennium at the earliest possible date.

But Gould notes that the "century-end" date dispute is an arbitrary problem in any case, to which an arbitrary solution is perfectly appropriate.

And adds that for the purist both sides are wrong.

Dennis the Short almost certainly miscalculated in establishing his benchmark, since there is objective evidence that Christ was born at least four years before the start of the calendar which bears his name.

That means that the second millennium of his birth happened some time around 1995, and the upcoming celebrations are somewhat late.

### **SOCIETY ELECTS NEW OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS**

About 25 people attended the meeting of the Society, held at the Maryland Seafood Factory in Clinton. One highlight of the evening (other than a quick visit by our own Thomas V. "Mike" Miller) was a lively discussion of Prince George's Proud by Phil Taylor, of the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission. Before the speaker, however, there were two items of business to discuss and this is a report of the decisions made at the business meeting.

First, on motion of Lester Sweeting, seconded by Bill Uber, the Society's schedule of dues was changed, effective for payments received on or after January 1, 2000. The new dues schedule is as follows:

Regular membership -	\$ 25.00
Sustaining Membership -	\$ 50.00
Institutional Membership -	\$ 50.00
Life Membership -	\$300.00

The category of Student Member was dropped. Regular membership includes one household. The new category of Institutional Membership is designed for copropations, businesses, municipalities, or other organizations.

The major business was, of course, the election of a new slate of officers and new directors. After the vote, which was by acclamation, the leadership of the Society, effective January 1, 2000, is as follows:

President	Lester Sweeting
Vice President	Eugene B. Roberts, Jr.
Secretary	Sarah Bourne
Treasurer	Joyce Uber
Editor	Sharon Howe Sweeting
Historian	Susan Pearl
Membership	Phyllis Herndon
Gift Shop	Stella Uber

**Directors (2000 - 2002**

James Wolfe  
John Mitchell  
William Uber

**Directors (2000-2001)**

John Petro  
Wallis Cain  
Robert Crawley

**Directors (2000)**

Mildred Ridgely Gray

Katheryn Clagett  
Iris McConnell

**Past Presidents**

Jane Eagen  
Joyce McDonald  
W. E. (Bud) Dutton  
Warren (Dusty) Rhoads  
John Giannetti  
Paul Lanham

The final order of business, and one most deserved, was the provision of thanks for a job well and truly done by our outgoing President, Jane Eagen, whose leadership, drive, enthusiasm, and dedication to the Society and Prince George's County have seen us through the last semi-decade. Vice President Eugene Roberts read an excellent letter of praise from an anonymous source, which was roundly cheered and applauded by all present.

**Welcome to NEW MEMBERS**

Anna M. Holmes  
Lady Alice Irené Prather  
Race and Joyce E. Dowling  
Dorayne Heyler  
Phil Taylor

**DUES ARE DUE**

As noted above, the dues schedule for annual memberships will change effective with dues payments made on or after January 1, 2000. Until that date, you can renew your membership for \$20.00, but then the amount will rise to \$25.00. Please send in your dues now - and consider giving a gift membership to your friends, or your children.

**Notes from the Historical Society  
Historian**

## Prince George's County: A Pictorial History

### Allan Virta

The following review appeared in the Summer issue of the Maryland Historical Society Magazine-

The images presented in this volume, the third edition, recall the people, places and events in the three-hundred-year history of Prince George's County. Portraits of the planters, preachers, and patriots and their women and children cover the period of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Informative captions not only identify the subjects and give a brief biography, but some-times quote from letters and diaries, illuminating their thoughts and opinions. Some of these pictures are poignant reminders of tragedy. Benjamin Lewis Latham, scion of an old county family, went to fight for the Confederacy and was killed at Gettysburg one month short of his nineteenth birthday. The accompanying poem recalls the grief of the roll call following that battle.

The book recalls not only the well-born and well-to-do but ordinary people as well. There are pictures of slave auctions, slaves walking in chains, and black troops at Fort Lincoln. We see Washingtonians riding the roller coasters at an amusement park in the 1890's, an early football team at the Maryland Agriculture College, a group of farm workers riding in an oxcart, and citizens gathered outside Casey's blacksmith shop in Bladensburg.

Many historic structures, some no longer standing, are pictured. Only one house, known as Mount Calvert, probably built in the early years of the nineteenth century, remains on the site of Charles Town, the first county seat of Prince George's County. Dumblane, home of many of the early generations of Magruders, was destroyed by a gas explosion in 1969. The Bladensburg Academy, a private school built early in the nineteenth century, has been torn down.

Not all of the buildings depicted are the imposing mansions often associated with colonial times. Bladensburg has the Market Masters House, a stone house built by Christopher Lowndes in 1760. Several mills, an octagon house, a row of residences converted by black families from an abandoned farm building, an ice cream parlor, and a gas plant help to recreate the scenes Prince Georgians saw as they went about their lives. A number of maps illustrate the settlement and growth and development of the county. Pictures illustrate the changes in travel, from seventeenth-century sailing vessels, oxcarts and stagecoaches to trolley cars, railroads, automobiles and the Washington DC Metro.

Several "firsts" are illustrated. Thomas John Clagett was the first Episcopal bishop consecrated in this country. *The Beggar's Opera*, by John Gay, was the first opera in America known to have been performed with an orchestra; it was presented in Upper Marlboro in 1752. the *Last Supper*, an important colonial painting by Gustavus Hesselius, hangs in St. Barnabas Church. The first documented balloon ascension took place near Bladensburg in 1784.

The compiler, who grew up in Prince George's County, and was the first chairman of the county's Historic Preservation Commission, from 1982 to 1986, has selected pictures and compiled text that traces the history of the county down to the 1990s. The final chapter includes color photographs of many activities from scientific research at Goddard Space Flight Center, to road construction and county roads clogged by commuter traffic. Quilts, parades and reenactments commemorating the county's Tricentennial are also included.



This is a delightful book to look at and informative to read, with many interesting nuggets. The reviewer was excited to learn of a seven-hundred page ledger kept by Reverend John Eversfield. The ledger, a copy of which is on microfilm at the Maryland State Archive, contains, among other things, notes on the Eversfield family in England.

Alan Virta has struck a balance between the past and the present, the county's old families and less well known folk, between the rural life of a hundred years ago and the urbanized life of today. The book is highly recommended, and the author is to be commended for a job well done.

Robert W. Barnes  
Perry Hall

After reading this review, we are confident that every household will want to purchase a copy for their personal library. This book will also make a thoughtful Christmas present to residents and families who have moved from the area.

You may order copies by mailing a check and the form below to :

**PGCHS**  
PO Box 14  
Riverdale, Maryland  
20738

\_\_\_\_\_ copies of **A PICTORIAL HISTORY** @ \$42.95 \_\_\_\_\_

(Maryland residents add \$2.15 sales tax) \_\_\_\_\_

shipping & handling \$4.00 per copy \_\_\_\_\_

total \_\_\_\_\_

make check payable to PGCHS

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Lots of interesting questions come to the Society Library, both by letter or by telephone. Some are whimsical, like queries about the historical background of the *Blair Witch Project* . . . , or the legendary local goatman, and some are technically challenging, like the sequential changes in the boundaries of the County's administrative "Hundreds" or the places visited by a travelling clergyman in 1789. One of the interesting questions that came in during the month of November requested the location of the home of General Rezin Beall. Knowing that the remains of General Beall (1723-1809) had, 30 years ago, been removed from his home property and reinterred at nearby St. John's Episcopal Church, Beltsville, I determined the exact location of the General's property, and returned the call in order to report that information.

I then asked (fortunately!) the reason for her inquiry. She reported that the question arose from a 1 November 1999 column in the *Washington Post*, part of the series "The Century in the Post." This column ("D.C. Shakes") quoted an article from the 1 November 1935 *Washington Post* as follows:

"Just after 1 a.m. today an earthquake shook Washington and vicinity. Thousands of persons were awakened by the shaking of their apartments and homes. . . . Newspaper offices were swamped with calls from frightened residents wondering what had happened."

"One of the first to call *The Post* was Labert St. Claire, transportation assistant to Secretary of Commerce Roper. He said the shock felt like his bed was being pulled from under him. He said the shock lasted about 30 seconds."

"The house shook so that his entire family was awakened. **Mr. St. Claire lives near College Park. He lives in the old Gen. Beall home which is of brick construction and solidly built.**"

My caller had heard of General Rezin Beall, assumed that it was his home to which the *Post* article referred, and wondered where this property was located. But as she read to me the *Post* account, I began to doubt the connection with Rezin Beall: the phrases "near College Park," "brick construction and solidly built," and the name "Beall," in combination with the oddly familiar name "St. Claire" made me think of Hitching Post Hill, that fine Greek Revival style brick house which was the home in the late nineteenth century of General Edward F. **Beale!** I checked the chain of title for Hitching Post Hill, and sure enough, its owner/residents at the time of the earthquake were Mr. and Mrs. Labert St. Claire!

So we now know that it was from **Hitching Post Hill** that the sleeping residents, suddenly jolted awake, had been the first to call the *Washington Post*! This beautiful house was built in 1840 for Robert Clark, but was the home during the 1870s of General Edward F. Beale, who had made his name during the Mexican War. General Beale's city residence was the Latrobe-designed Decatur House on Lafayette Square, but Hitching Post Hill was for a short time his country estate - the place where he entertained such friends as former president U. S. Grant and Buffalo Bill Cody, and where he indulged his passion for raising horses. Hitching Post Hill, indeed solidly built, survived Washington's 1935 earthquake, and is today the home of the Historical Society's former president, John Giannetti!

By: **Susan Pearl**

10 November 1999

## LET'S MAKE IT HAPPEN!

The Education Outreach Committee of the Society Board (Jane Eagen, Mildred Ridgely Gray, and Susan Wolfe) are beginning a new project which we are confident will help the schools better educate our children in their history, including the history of Prince George's County. The Society is working on a potential partnership involving the Maryland Historical Society, the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission and the Board of Education, and are also looking for private partners in this effort. There are several hundred schools and thousands of school children who could benefit directly from this effort, but there is much to do.

The Maryland Historical Society produced several collections of copies of original documents and source materials for this use - in three parts: *Encountering Maryland's Past - Science, Technology and Invention*; *Turning Points in Maryland History*; and, *Out of Slavery*.

The packets include advertisements, broadsides, legal documents, maps, newspapers, oral history transcripts, pictures and photographs of objects. Since these are mainly from other areas of the State, our intention is to add similar items from Prince George's County to ensure that our local history is included.

The Prince George's County Education Department endorses this project.

So, where is the problem? MONEY!

The kits from the Maryland Historic Trust will cost a minimum of \$12.50 each - but that only covers the cost of one set. If we were to secure sufficient sets for each of the targeted schools, our cost is much higher. If we were

to seek to have the materials collated fully, the cost rises by \$2.50 per packet. Total cost for purchasing the Maryland materials for 250 schools is \$ 3,750.

Once we have the sets, we need to add the Prince George's County materials (which have to be copied as well) and then bind the materials in a comb binding or other useful manner. We need to then distribute the materials to the appropriate teacher or librarian in each school and provide direction on how they might be used. Teacher guides are available but would have to be supplemented.

Our current estimate is that it would cost at least \$5,000 to provide the minimum number of copies to ensure that specific schools could get the materials and use them. We are approaching both MNCPPC and the Board of Education to gauge whether they could assist in this effort, but also feel that there should be others willing to partner with us in this effort. We propose to have school sponsors - either businesses or individuals who would contribute to the cost of one or two copies for a particular school. Sponsors would be recognized with a special book plate in each of the volumes acknowledging their generous support.

We are therefore asking you, Dear Reader, to let us know (1) if you would like to sponsor a school, and (2) if you know of anyone else who might do so. If you need more information, or can become a sponsor, please call Jane Eagen at 301 249 6409, or send an e-mail to our new e-mail address [PGCHSLibrary@aol.com](mailto:PGCHSLibrary@aol.com), your reward will be knowing that your children and grandchildren will learn more about the place we all call home.

Jane Eagen

## Waterways of Prince George's County Then and Now

*by* James Walsh

Most nonnavigable streams in Prince Georges County have changes names at least once in the past 300 years.. Many have changed names twice; a few changed names trice. Nonnavigable streams, also known as runs, brances and creeks, were particularly susceptible to name changing because they were considered the private property of the landowner through which they flowed. Thus, many streams carried the name of the owner of the plantation through which the stream flowed. As ownership changed, the name of the stream changed. For instance, the creek flowing through Tottehay's plantation was originally named Tottehay's Creek. Later, when the plantation's ownership changed, so too did the creek name, to Covington's Creek.

Other streams were named for a dominant feature or structure such as a mill or tavern. Thus, Hunters Mill Branch and Horse Tavern Branch may be found on old maps of Prince Georges County. Some of these old names, such as Hunters Mill Branch, remain today. Others, as Horse Tavern Branch, have changed their name. Horse Tavern Branch is now Charles Branch Swamp.

Others were inexplicably named and inexplicably changed. For instance, what is the story behind "Hog Creek" and its later name change to Tanyard Branch. Why was Deep Creek later named Spice Creek. The reasons may never be known because the names of nonnaviable streams could be changed at will. There was no registry of stream names, no approving authority, and, often, no explanation. Only by diligent digging can the stream, run, branch, creek name changes of the past three hundred years can be identified. Some these changes are listed below. The rationale for many of these changes remain unknown.

NOW (Post Colonial)	THEN (Colonial Era)
Mataponi Creek	Brookes Creek
Lookout Creek	Patuxent Creek
Halls Creek	Lands Creek
Tanyard/Hotschkins Branch	Hog Creek
Nee Spring Creek	
Spice Creek	Rock Creek/Deep Creek
Western Branch	Charles Branch/Billingsley Branch
Charles Branch Swamp	Horse Tavern Branch
Beaverdam Creek	Hardwick Creek

Source: The Mid-Patuxent Estuarine Ecosystem Map 

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

Non-Profit Org  
U S Postage  
Paid  
Riverdale, MD  
Permit No. 1948

### 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, 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.

