

BULLETIN

OF

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF CECIL COUNTY

No. 2

Head of Elk, Maryland

January 30, 1956

GREEN LIGHT

The first number of the Bulletin called forth some expressions of approval which seem to warrant a continuance of the journalistic venture. For this reason, and in the belief that it will promote the best interests of the Society, the project moves ahead with the second number.

It is neither the function nor the object of this publication to advocate the policies of the Historical Society. Its sole purpose is to record events as they occur, to present from time to time some unknown or forgotten incidents in the long and notable history of Cecil County, and in general to survey the situation in retrospect. Your observer's position is very much like that of a passenger who rides backward on a railroad train and views the scenery after it has passed.

THE GOVERNOR'S VISIT

A record attendance of 134 members greeted Governor Theodore R. McKeldin as guest of honor at the dinner meeting of the Society held in Fellowship Hall of the Methodist Church in Elkton on the evening of Tuesday, October 25, 1955. It was the first occasion on which a chief executive of the State had visited the Society since its formation in 1931. Earlier in the evening he had spoken briefly at the dedication of the new Cecil County Library.

Wearing the State's flower emblem, a black-eyed Susan, as a boutonniere, the Governor was introduced by Wallace Williams, Sr., acting as toastmaster. After an informal talk in a humorous and reminiscent vein, he read a prepared address which lack of time had prevented him from delivering at the dedication of the Library. The subject was "Maryland in Literature — a Tradition and an Opportunity".

At the conclusion of his remarks the Governor presented to the Society an oak plaque, measuring four by six inches, on which is imprinted a replica of the Great Seal of Maryland. He explained that the plaque was taken from a fallen limb of the Wye Oak of Talbot County. The memento was accepted by Lloyd Balderston III, the retiring President, and may be seen in the Howard Room of the Library.

NEW MEMBERS ENROLLED

The growing interest in this Society is reflected by the accession of an unusually large number of new members during the last six months of 1955. During that period 53 applications for membership were accepted; two resignations were received, and the loss of two members was sustained by the deaths of Mr. John P. Stelle on November 6th and of Mr. James W. Hughes on November 8th. The net gain of 49 increased the total enrollment to 265 members as of December 31, 1955.

The new members were:

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|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Mr. G. A. Allender | Mr. Cecil H. Grant |
| Miss Eula Lee Bartlett | Mr. Joseph L. Grant |
| Miss Ruth C. Bartlett | Miss Dorothy W. Greer |
| Mrs. Walter Blackson | Mr. & Mrs. Charles A. Higgins |
| Mr. & Mrs. Robert D. Bonney | Mr. & Mrs. Polk Steele Howard |
| Mr. & Mrs. H. Wirt Bouchelle | Mr. William N. Jefferson |
| Miss Katherine M. Bratton | Mr. Guy Johnson |
| Miss Susan E. Bratton | Mr. & Mrs. William G. Kemp |
| Miss Anna Haines Brown | Mrs. Frank Marklinè |
| Col. & Mrs. Milton M. Brown | Hon. Theodore R. McKeldin |
| Mr. John P. Bruce | Mr. & Mrs. John P. Phillips |
| Dr. & Mrs. Robert A. Carr | Mr. & Mrs. Argus F. Robinson |
| Mr. & Mrs. A. J. Cassatt | Dr. & Mrs. Henry A. Spangler |
| Mr. & Mrs. H. W. D. Cassidy | Mr. & Mrs. Nelson H. Spence |
| Mr. Benjamin L. Cole | Dr. & Mrs. J. Leroy Trone, Sr. |
| Mr. A. Victor Davis | Mr. William T. Warburton |
| Mrs. Alfred Drew | Mr. & Mrs. Emil A. Westerinen |
| Mrs. Murray J. Ewing | Mrs. Pierce M. Willard |
| Mrs. Raynor Garey | Mr. Harlan C. Williams |

TREASURER'S REPORT

The financial position of the Society will be noted from the following condensed statement of cash receipts and disbursements for the year 1955, as reported by the Treasurer:

January 1, 1955, Balance in bank\$ 557.31

RECEIPTS

Dinner tickets and dues collected\$855.50
 Cash contributions 25.00
880.50
 \$1,437.81

DISBURSEMENTS

Cost of three dinners\$565.50
 Postage, printing, and stationery 71.22
 Furnishings for Howard Room 765.60
1,402.32
 December 31, 1955\$ 35.49

A CHURCH HISTORY

A history of Rosebank Hall and Rosebank Church at Calvert has been compiled and published by Dr. George E. Gifford, Jr., a member of this Society. Dr. Gifford's work is an eight-page booklet, attractively printed, embellished with wood-cuts by Edward Plumstead, and bound in a cobalt blue cover.

It contains interesting information on the organization of the church in 1891, its founders, and those who have been prominently identified with it down to the present time. This is a valuable addition to church history of Cecil County and other churches would do well to preserve their records by such histories.

Copies may be obtained from Mrs. Frances Hubis of Calvert for One Dollar each.

WHERE OUR MEMBERS LIVE

At the end of 1955 the Society's enrollment was composed of 247 active and 18 honorary members, a total of 265. Of the 247 dues paying members, 40 were living outside of Cecil County and the remaining 207 were residents within the county. The subjoined tabulation shows, by election districts, the number of active members in each of the county's nine districts:

1st (Cecilton)	10	8th (Conowingo)	4
2nd (Chesapeake City)	12	9th (Calvert)	2
3rd (Elkton)	80		207
4th (Fair Hill)	6	Outside Cecil in Md.	7
5th (North East)	35	Delaware	17
6th (Rising Sun)	16	Other States	16
7th (Perryville)	42		247

KITCHEN RESTORATION

A committee under the chairmanship of Morton F. Taylor is planning the restoration of the early American kitchen in the basement of the County Library, which it is believed can be made an outstanding feature of the building. This work will require some financial outlay and a special fund for the purpose has been created. Contributions to this fund are solicited and will be gratefully received.

COMING EVENT

On Monday, April 16th, at 7:30 p.m., a seminar or round table discussion will be conducted in the Conference Room of the Public Library for the pur-

pose of developing information on the origin or significance of place names in Cecil County. As this county was founded almost 300 years ago the origin of many names is obscure or lost in the dim past. This will be an effort to collocate and record as much information as possible on this subject. Any one who can contribute to the discussion or who is interested in local history is invited to be present for this new feature of our Society's activities.

CECIL COUNTY'S HUNDREDS

The political ideas which the early colonists brought to Maryland were naturally those which they had known in England, and government by counties was in general a copy of the system then existing in the mother country. Part of the system established in Maryland was the division of each county into units called "hundreds". This name arose from the fact that in early times in England the hundred was a community which was expected to furnish 100 men for military service.

At first Cecil County was divided into five hundreds, but in course of time when most of the land was taken up and the population had increased it became necessary to subdivide these hundreds for the convenience of the inhabitants. When the first Federal census was taken in 1790 there were fifteen hundreds in Cecil County, as follows: North Sassafras, South Sassafras, Bohemia, Bohemia Manor, Middle Neck, Back Creek, Elk Neck, Charlestown, South Milford, North Milford, East Nottingham, West Nottingham, Octoraro, South Susquehanna, and North Susquehanna. There is no record of the bounds of these hundreds, although their names indicate their general location, nor is the time of their erection known.

Each hundred had a constable, who, in addition to discharging the usual duties of an officer of that name, had to make an annual return of the taxables in his hundred and to collect the tax. Each constable also had to look after the negro slaves and suppress any riotous or disorderly gatherings which came to his notice. The constable was appointed for a term of one year and as compensation for his services he received an allowance of tobacco. The hundreds eventually passed out of use and were supplanted by the nine election districts into which the county is now divided.

This transition occurred in 1798 when the county was divided into four election districts by commissioners who had been designated for that purpose by the State Legislature. These districts remained intact until 1835, in which year the Legislature authorized a new division of the county into seven districts. With some minor re-alignments these districts are the same at the present time, except that the 8th district was formed in 1852 out of parts of the 6th and 7th, and four years later the 9th was formed in similar manner out of parts of the 4th, 5th, and 6th.