

Bulletin

OF

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF CECIL COUNTY

No. 36.

Shannah, Maryland

May 18, 1970

JANUARY, 1970 MEETING

On Saturday, January 17, 1970, the Historical Society of Cecil County held its Winter Meeting in Fellowship Hall at the United Methodist Church in Elkton, Md. There were 148 members and guests present. A most delicious luncheon was served by the Gleaners of this Church. The invocation was given by Dr. Roy L. Tawes, pastor of the United Methodist Church.

Following the luncheon, Mrs. Argus Robinson presided at a short business session. Mr. Frank Krastel, Chairman of the Historical Markers Committee, reported that a request had been submitted to the Maryland Historical Society to have roadside markers erected at the following sites:

The Mitchell House
Hollingsworth Tavern
Partridge Hill
Woodlawn Camp Meeting Ground
Cross Keys Tavern
Creswell Hall

Mr. Krastel also reported that he had received a request for a marker at Rock Church.

Mr. Morton F. Taylor, Curator, gave a report on accessions received since the Fall Meeting. These included a "History Of Public Education in Cecil County Before 1876", (by purchase); "Roster of Registered National Historic Places" from Congressman Rogers C. B. Morton; "The Diary of Phoebe George Bradford", the Maryland portion of Sydney George Fisher's Diary, and a collection of books on history and genealogy from Mrs. Harry Clark Boden IV. We also obtained genealogical data on the Charsha and Sentman families by purchase. "The Life and Character of Henry Winter Davis" was given us by Mr. John Beers; a Blythedale School Certificate, a

poem, and files from the Armstrong Stove & Mfg. Company were given by Mrs. Carman F. DeMar. Maps, notebooks, sketch books and botany specimens were donated by Mrs. Guy McGrady. Mrs. Linder K. Larkin contributed four post card albums complete with cards for every occasion, which are being used in our various exhibits.

Mrs. Robinson reported that Mr. George E. Gifford had accepted the assignment of delegate to the Cecil County School Board Nominating Convention to be held in Elkton on April 1, 1970. If Mr. Gifford is selected as a candidate for this convention, we feel that we couldn't be represented by a more able and interested person.

Following this session, Mrs. Raymond P. Delano gave a delightfully entertaining talk on "Collectibles", which was illustrated by various items from her own, and others' antique collections. She stressed the idea that there is something that will appeal to everyone, no matter what its size or value. She showed the homely household wares from former days that make interesting collections; items of hand work from years back, showing the fine stitches made before the sewing machine; patterns of glassware based on the history of our country; and in addition pieces of furniture made entirely by hand by local handicraftsmen.

At the conclusion of the program, Mrs. Delano presented the Society with a framed photograph of a bake-shop at the turn-of-the-century, to be displayed in the Old Store Exhibit.

Both Mrs. Robinson and Mr. Taylor thanked Mrs. Delano for the very fine program she had presented and also for the framed photograph.

IN MEMORIAM

Major Alfred Norton Phillips died on January 18, 1970. Major Phillips was a long-time active member of the Society and had served as a Trustee. He served in this capacity until illness forced him to resign. Major Phillips also served as a member of the Society's Civil War Centennial Committee and was a donor to various of our collections. He was also an honorary Vice-President of the Old Bohemia Historical Society and was one of the organizers of that group. Major and Mrs. Phillips owned and restored historic Worsell Manor near Warwick. Major Phillips was buried in St. Stephen's Church yard in Earleville, Md.

Mrs. Herbert Baker (Blanche McCormick Baker) died on March 16, 1970 after a long illness. Mrs. Baker was buried in Bethel Cemetery near Chesapeake City, Md.

VESTRY HOUSE AT ST. MARY ANNE'S CHURCH

Historic St. Mary Anne's Church in North East has recently dedicated its authentically re-constructed Vestry House, with the Rev. George A. Taylor, Bishop of Easton, officiating. The original Vestry House was constructed in the early 1700's and was destroyed many years ago. The re-constructed building is on the same site in the churchyard as the original, and is one of four Vestry Houses now standing in what were Maryland's original 30 parishes.

NEW WINDOWS AT ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH

On Sunday, January 25, 1970, a number of the Society's members attended a special service at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church at Earleville, Md., when Bishop George Taylor, of the Diocese of Easton, dedicated 19 new stained glass windows. The windows, depicting scenes from the life of Christ, were made in England and were donated by Mrs. Harry Clark Boden IV to the Glory of God and in memory of members of the Loutitt and George families. In the words of Bishop Taylor, "these exquisite windows" greatly enhance the beauty of this restored historic Church.

PRESERVATION OF PRINCIPIO FURNACE

On Monday, February 2, 1970, ten interested persons attended a luncheon meeting at the Canvasback Inn, Perryville, Md., to discuss the possibilities of preserving Principio Furnace. The meeting was called at the request of Delegate Richard B. Mackie, a member of the Tourism Committee of the Legislative Council, Maryland General Assembly. This was an outgrowth of the Committee's visit to Cecil County on September 21, 1969. The Society was represented by Mr. Joseph Grant, Chairman of the Society's Committee for the Preservation of Principio Furnace; Miss Caroline W. Stump and Mr. Morton F. Taylor. Due to illness, our President was forced to cancel her reservation. Mr. Edward Plumstead, Chairman of the Cecil County Committee of the Maryland Historical Trust, was also present. After a lengthy discussion, a committee was formed with Mr. Mackie as Chairman, of those present, plus Mrs. Robinson, as members. Mr. Robert Stewart, President of York Building Products Company, was appointed to contact the President of the Whitaker Iron Company, owner of the property, to see what arrangements could be made for its preservation.

JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 14

As a result of its visit to Cecil County in September, 1969, the Tourism Committee introduced in the House of Delegates on January 21, 1970, a House Joint Resolution "requesting the Maryland Historical Trust to consider the possibility of acquiring the Rodgers Tavern in Perryville, Md." The Resolution was then referred to the Committee on Environmental Matters. On Wednesday, February 25, 1970, Mrs. Argus Robinson, President of our Society; Mrs. Raymond P. Delano, Chairman of the Rodgers Tavern Committee of the Society for the Preservation of Maryland Antiquities; and Mr. Morton F. Taylor, President of Friends of Rodgers Tavern, appeared before the Committee on Environmental Matters in Annapolis in the interest of Rodgers Tavern. It is hoped that this Resolution eventually will generate some State support for the restoration of this historic County landmark.

DOCTOR OF HUMANITIES

On Saturday, February 21, 1970, a number of the Society's members attended the annual George Washington Birthday Convocation at Washington College in Chestertown, Md., when Mr. Ernest A. Howard, Historian of our Society, was awarded an honorary Doctor of Humanities degree by the College. This honor was given in recognition of his services to his Alma Mater and community, and is the highest award the College can bestow. It is the latest in a long list of honorary degrees, beginning with one given in 1789 to George Washington for whom the College was named.

Dr. Howard was graduated from Washington College in 1905 and has served on its Board of Visitors and Governors continuously since 1936. He is the donor of the Ernest A. Howard Professorship in English and of the Howard Cecil County Scholarship; a generous subscriber to the College's many fund-raising programs; an important contributor to the College archives; and for some time has been engaged in compiling a biographical listing of recipients of honorary degrees from Washington College.

Dr. Howard's benefactions to the Historic Society of Cecil County have been most generous, and it is to him that we are indebted for our museum, the Ernest A. Howard Room, and the lovely gallery room. He was the major donor to the fund raised to purchase Cecil County Library's handsome home and he was also the subsequent donor of its Howard Wing.

In 1959 Dr. Howard was named "Citizen Of The Year" by the Elkton Chamber of Commerce.

Dr. Howard has helped to restore several historic churches in the county. He also has provided the funds to establish the Union Room at the Maryland Historical Society in Baltimore, which memorializes those citizens of Maryland, both military and civilian, who fought to preserve the country during the Civil War.

In recognition of his high honor, the Society opened an exhibit in the Gallery Room, on February 19, of interesting documents, letters, etc., connected with George Washington and Washington College. This display was arranged by Mr. Lee Dewitt, a member of our Society, and an alumnus of the College, who gives an outline as follows:

Washington College had its origin in an academy known as The Kent County Free School at Newtown (Chestertown), founded in 1706. This special exhibit traces the early history of the College from its establishment by Act of Maryland Legislature, financing by pledges, bonds and lotteries, through its association with George Washington to 1800 by means of letters, artifacts, student notebooks, and accounts.

The exhibit has been on loan from Washington College through the cooperation of Mr. Charles A. Cockey, Director of Public Relations, and Mr. Robert G. Bailey, Director of the Library. The items on display are as follows:

- (1) - Copy of Act of establishment — 1782.
- (2) - Copy of Washington's letter granting use of his name, service, and money.
- (3) - Lottery ticket and pledge of money and engraving of first building.
- (4) - Original handwritten copy of dedication program.
- (5) - Articles connected with first Washington College president, Dr. William Smith.
 - A - Copy of desk book of Dr. Smith during tenure as Provost of University of Pennsylvania.
 - B - Oration by Dr. Smith before Continental Congress on subject of campaign before Quebec.
- (6) - Articles connected with early students.
 - A - History notebook (1791).
 - B - Account sheet showing 1790 cost of tuition and firewood for four years.
 - C - Copy of First Edition of "Gustavus Vasa" printed in 1732. This is a play which was presented by Washington College students before George Washington in 1789.

(7) - Articles associated with George Washington.

- A - Copy of letter from George Washington to his Secretary of War, written while at Rodgers' Tavern.
- B - Drinking ladle used by George Washington at the well at Washington College in 1789.
- C - Copy of letter from George Washington written one month before his death in 1799, saying "alas our dancing days are over".
- D - Piece of elm tree under which George Washington took command of the Continental Army in Cambridge, Mass.
- E - Physicians scales used by Dr. Elisha Dick during George Washington's last illness.

(8) - Miscellany from Washington College Museum:

- A - Hand guns and long pieces.
- B - Cannoneers powder from Hepburn collection.
- C - Original commission (1790) of father of Francis Scott Key, as Lt. Col. in Maryland Militia.

This exhibit has been well attended since its opening on February 19. The support of the Library staff is gratefully acknowledged. Mr. Bailey of Washington College commented that the overall assets of the Museum and their unique method of display provide a local asset unequalled in any other Maryland county. The interest shown by the many visitors and their usual surprise at finding such a display, shows there is a definite need for establishing regular hours for staffed tours.

MISCELLANY

Mrs. Miles J. Boyer, of Charlotte, N.C., who had earlier sent our Society a colored photograph of Hezekiah Alexander's restored home in that city, has ordered a total of one dozen Cecil County Directories for distribution among Alexander descendants. Mrs. Boyer is descended from Hezekiah Alexander, who emigrated from Cecil County to North Carolina and subsequently was a signer of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence in 1775.

PEACH BLOSSOM FARM

The "Peach Blossom" farm of James Cassedy was about six miles from Cecilton on the road leading from that place to Grove Point. It included one of the most extensive peach orchards in the United States. The farm contained approximately 650 acres and extended to the Sassafras River where there was a steamboat landing.

Mr. Cassedy, who planted the first peach tree in 1839, was known as the peach king of Maryland. By 1850 his orchard covered 400 acres of the farm and contained between 30 and 40 thousand peach trees, which furnished in a normal season about 50,000 baskets of fruit of superior quality. These peaches were shipped daily by steamboat to Baltimore and Philadelphia. The peaches commenced ripening about the first of August and from that date until the close of the season late in September they were gathered and sent to market at the rate of from 1,000 to 1,500 baskets a day. During this period from 50 to 100 hands were employed in picking and shipping the fruit, and two steamboats were employed in carrying it to the city markets. Most of the fruit was shipped to Philadelphia because the market there commanded much better prices than Baltimore.

In 1854 the price which Mr. Cassedy received for peaches averaged \$1.14 a basket. The cost of getting his fruit to market was 22c a basket, viz., 10c a basket for freight and 12c a basket for picking and other expenses. The 1854 crop of 25,000 baskets yielded \$28,500 in gross receipts and netted about \$23,000.

The following year there was an immense peach crop in every section of the country and the city markets were constantly glutted with fruit. Because of this condition the average price which Mr. Cassedy received for 42,000 baskets of peaches in 1855 was only 36c a basket. As a result, he failed in business and his property was attached for benefit of creditors. It was sold to Mr. Anthony Reybold, of Delaware, for the sum of \$34,144.50.

The present owner of "Peach Blossom Farm" is Mr. Gordon Jess, an official of Scott Paper Company. It retains the name by which it was known more than a century ago.

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SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC

In addition to supplying information for genealogical research and term papers, our Society has recently performed two new and different kinds of public service.

In February our Society was able to satisfy the request of the Port Deposit Postmaster for the date of the establishment of a post office in his town, which was April 1, 1816.

In March we received an inquiry from an equities corporation in Silver City, Nevada, seeking information on the family of a Cecil Countian in whose name there was an asset which had been in a dormant account for a great number of years. The original date was about 44 years ago.

The Society was able to inform the company that the owner is deceased, the date of his death, the names and addresses of heirs, and other data from our files, pertinent to the case.

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MARKER FOR CIVIL WAR VETERAN

Mr. and Mrs. Patrick Coyle have recently erected a United States Government marble headstone which they obtained on the basis of information from the Society's files, for the unmarked grave of Civil War veteran Robert Jarvis, in the Cemetery at Union United Methodist Church at Union, Md. Private Jarvis served with Company B. 1st Regiment, Delaware Cavalry, and died in June 1909.

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In view of the fact that the soldier was no relation to Mr. and Mrs. Coyle, such an act is particularly commendable. The Society hereby expresses its thanks to them for this patriotic service.

GOV. VEAZEY'S PORTRAIT

An oil portrait, unsigned, of Thomas Ward Veazey, Governor of Maryland 1836-1839, and an Empire mahogany pier table have recently come to the Maryland Historical Society as a bequest of Mrs. Edna Veazey S. Reeves of Woodstown, N.J. The portrait's subject was born at "Cherry Grove", his family's home in the First District of Cecil County, and his grave is in the family burying ground, not far from the house.