

# BULLETIN

OF  
THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF CECIL COUNTY

No. 6

Shawnah, Maryland

May 13, 1957

## JANUARY 1957 MEETING

Approximately 120 members braved the icy breath of Boreas to attend the winter meeting of the Society in the Singerly Fire House in Elkton on Monday evening, January 14, 1957. The Auxiliary of the Fire Company served a turkey dinner and the President, W. T. Mahoney, presided. He pointed out that the Society was observing the 25th anniversary of its formation and commented upon the growth of the organization since its first meeting on February 8, 1932, with fewer than 25 members, to its present membership of more than 400. The names of 15 new members were reported.

Restoration of the kitchen in the basement of the County Library was announced as a major project of the Society. Fletcher P. Williams reported that the long-awaited Cecil County Directory was ready for distribution and that the Society would serve as distributor on a commission basis.

A novel program in the form of a quiz contest on county history was then presented in which E. A. Howard, historian, propounded 50 questions to a panel composed of the following members: Miss Lenore Taylor, Miss Bertha M. Tyson, F. Rodney Frazer, George E. Gifford, Sr., J. Randolph Janney, and Wallace Williams, Sr. The contest brought to light a number of little known facts about the county's past and earned for each of the hard-pressed panelists an autographed copy of Governor McKeldin's booklet "Washington Bowed".

\* \* \*

## MORE NEW MEMBERS

The increase in membership which has prevailed since the Society acquired an official address continues at a healthy rate. Following are the new members who have matriculated since the previous report:

Miss Cornelia Abrahams	Mr. Angeles T. Limnios
Miss Grace M. Baker	Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth H. Mackie
Miss Ruth F. Bouchelle	Mrs. Evelyn Mendenhall
Mr. and Mrs. Wm. F. Burkley	Mr. W. Henry Pippin
Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Calary	Mr. Morris W. Rannels
Mr. and Mrs. F. C. Cobourn	Mr. J. Albert Roney, Jr.
Mrs. Otha Gibson	Miss Lizetta Rhudy
Mrs. J. T. C. Hopkins	Mr. and Mrs. M. J. Scibinico
Rev. and Mrs. Douglas T. Ibach	Mrs. Avery S. Stitchberry
Mr. and Mrs. Darby J. Johnson	Mr. David J. Stroup
Mrs. G. Roland Johnson	Mr. Frederick T. Turkington
Mr. and Mrs. John Mackall Young	

## FIRST FAMILIES OF ELK NECK

The Society meets this evening in a locality that was once the happy hunting ground of a family of Indians known as the Shawnah tribe. It is believed that these Indians originally lived farther south, but left their former habitation when threatened with extermination by a hostile tribe, migrated northward, and were finally absorbed by more powerful tribes near whom they located.

In the course of their migration some of the noble redmen stopped in Elk Neck and for many years after arrival of the English settlers that part of it along the North East River was called Shawnah. This name was bestowed on public school #6 in the Fifth District, which was built before the Civil War, and it is still perpetuated by Shawnah Lodge #105 of Red Men of North East. The name of the old chief, Hance, is preserved by the shore now called Hance's Point where picnics were held on May Day to celebrate the first haul of herring and shad.

The Shawnah Indians were industrious basketmakers and successful fishermen. They had a village close to Arundel Creek, the small stream which crosses Route #272 on the edge of North East. Some of them remained here for a long time after the white men took possession and a few accepted Christianity and were baptized as members of St. Mary Anne's Church. As they were a nomadic people they eventually sought for new homes and forsook Elk Neck, leaving only a name as a reminder of their existence.

## RECENT DONORS

The Society is the fortunate recipient of a handsome bookcase which has just been installed in the Howard Room. The case is made of mahogany with heavy plate glass doors and extends along the entire north side of the room and approximately one-half the length of the west side. It provides not only better means of displaying our historical items but also added security for their protection. The Society is indebted to the donor, Mr. William Pugh, who has a summer home on the Bohemia River, and to Wallace Williams, Sr. for his valuable assistance in securing this addition to the furnishing of the room.

Peyton B. Patterson has presented a book of autographs which is a prized accession to our Civil War collection. It contains the signatures of ardent Maryland secessionists and Southern sympathizers who were prisoners in Fort Warren in Boston in January 1862. Included are 15 members of the Maryland Legislature who were arrested in Frederick in September 1861, the marshal of police and two police commissioners of Baltimore, three newspaper editors, and the emissaries, Slidell and Mason, whose removal from the British steamer "TRENT" touched off a diplomatic rhubarb with Great Britain.

Grateful acknowledgment is also made to Mrs. Gladys N. Smith for loan of a notable display of pattern glass goblets which has attracted much favorable attention, to F. Rodney Frazer for loan of a framed photograph of George Johnston, Cecil County historian, and to Morton F. Taylor, curator, for his numerous gifts and for his diligence in arranging the various exhibits.

## HISTORIC EVENT

A large red automobile carrying three passengers, one of whom was a lady, passed through Elkton on Monday southbound. (Item in Cecil County News March 26, 1902)

## CECIL COUNTY ALMANAC

The record of important happenings in Cecil County during the month of August is presented as the fourth consecutive month in the County Almanac.

### AUGUST

### 8TH MONTH

1. First U. S. census started in the county, 1790
2. Sun rises 5:00 a.m., Eastern Standard Time
3. Cecil County Library acquired new home, 1955
4. Providence paper mill destroyed by fire, 1954
5. Andrew Job opened a tavern at Blue Ball, 1710
6. The Port Deposit Rock began publication, 1839
7. First issue of Cecil Whig published, 1841
8. The State Camp, R.O.S. of A. convened in Elkton, 1910
9. George Washington dined at Rodgers Tavern, 1795
10. Elkton sold 192 tickets for Tolchester excursion, 1905
11. Augustine Herman deeded 3750 acres of land to Labadists, 1684
12. Woodlawn campmeeting opened for season, 1879
13. Jacob Tome born in Hanover, York County, Pa., 1810
14. Cecil County delegates at first State Convention, 1776
15. Hay fever season begins, 1957
16. Site for first Susquehanna River bridge surveyed, 1813
17. John L. Clayton postmaster at Chesapeake City, 1840
18. Hurricane "Diane" inundated county, 1955
19. Dr. Amos Evans in Constitution-Guerriere fight, 1812
20. General Thomas Marsh Foreman born, 1758
21. Turkey Point patented to Richard Wright, 1658
22. Corn sold at 75 cents a bushel, oats 28 cents, 1859
23. Judge James McCauley born near Mechanics Valley, 1809
24. British fleet anchored in Elk River, 1777
25. D.A.R. placed tablet on Hollingsworth Tavern, 1932
26. General Howe's army occupied Head of Elk, 1777
27. Captain Edward Veazey killed at Long Island, 1776
28. Susquehanna River toll bridge completed, 1940
29. St. Francis Xavier Mission founded on Bohemia River, 1704
30. Snow's Battery organized at Port Deposit, 1861
31. Hessians pillaged Manor Chapel at St. Augustine, 1777

## EVOLUTION OF THE CLERK'S OFFICE

Throughout the history of Maryland as a Province and as a State one of the most important county officials has been the Clerk for the County Court. After Maryland became a State in 1776 provision was made in its first Constitution for the Judges to appoint clerks in the several counties. The office was a political plum, for the clerk's tenure continued during good behaviour, which was in effect for life.

This possibility caused much dissatisfaction and opposition, and by an Act of the General Assembly in 1837 the term of the clerk's service was fixed at seven years, and power of appointment was conferred upon the Governor, by and with consent of the State Senate. With the adoption of the second Constitution in 1851 the office of clerk became elective and the term of his office was reduced to six years. The title was also changed and thereafter he was called the Clerk of the Circuit Court. In the Constitution of 1867 this provision was retained and the clerks continued to serve for six years until an amendment in 1922 further reduced the term to four years.

The Clerk is eligible for re-election, provided he is not disqualified in the interim, and he may be removed for wilful neglect of duty or other dismeanor in office, on conviction in a court of law.

One of the numerous duties of the Clerk of the Circuit Court is the recording of all real estate transfers. These land records in Cecil County are kept by the Clerk in large books which are indexed by the initials of the incumbent and numbered seriatim. For example, a deed which is recorded in Liber WAS No. 10, folio 343, indicates that it will be found on page 343 of the tenth book of the present clerk, W. Andrew Seth. Each clerk begins a new series of books when he assumes office, after completing any partly filled Liber of his predecessor, and the number of books during his tenure of office may reach 100 or more.

Following is a list of specimen books in serial order showing the initials of all Clerks who have filled this office in Cecil County during the past two hundred years:

FK	1768	HHM	1853	JAD	1884	CSP	1915
BY	1776	WHR	1858	JTG	1892	WGP	1918
BW	1782	CHH	1862	WPH	1897	HWL	1919
JOB	1804	HRT	1866	JGW	1902	SRA	1927
JS	1816	DS	1870	MD	1903	WEB	1935
GMcC	1841	AWM	1876	CK	1909	RRC	1943
RCH	1849					WAS	1955

The first initials are those of Francis Key, grandfather of Francis Scott Key. The others are posed as a quiz for students of County names.