

The Inkwell

SPRING 2020

INSIDE

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Volunteer!
**410-398-
1790**

*Renew
your
membership
today!*

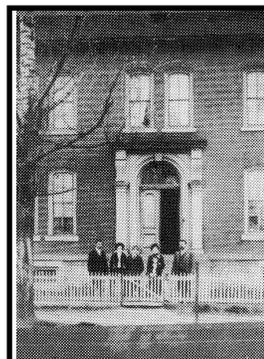
Dedicated Service to Cecil County

By Eric F. Mease

When I agreed to write this article for the *Inkwell* about the late Cecil County Sheriff John "Jack" DeWitt, I thought at best it might be a delayed obituary and at worst, a rehash of information everybody knew. As it turned out, with some research and a little help (OK, a lot of help) from Historian Mike Dixon, I discovered information about Sheriff DeWitt that didn't appear in any of the tribute articles or numerous obituaries written back over a quarter century ago. Since I am not from Cecil County, all of this information is news to me, mostly good news, and all of it interesting. First the old news. Sheriff DeWitt was born in Blackville, SC on November 9, 1927. His family brought him to Elkton when he was 12. Young John worked in several jobs including his father's Western Auto store until he joined the Marines in 1945. He served there until 1948, enlisted in the Marine Reserves, and served a hitch in the Korean War,

leaving the Corp a decorated Tech Sergeant. Again, after working for his father, DeWitt signed on, part time, with the Elkton Police department where he was known for directing traffic. Looking for steadier work, DeWitt joined the County Sheriff's department and worked his way up to Deputy Sheriff which he used as a steppingstone to the top job, election as Cecil County Sheriff in 1974. DeWitt would remain the county sheriff for 16 years, winning re-election 3 more times until losing to Sheriff Rodney Kennedy in 1990. DeWitt remains the only Cecil County Sheriff elected to 4 terms dating back to 1674.

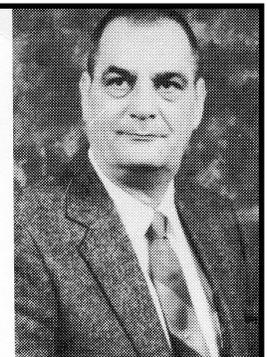
As the County's top law enforcement officer, DeWitt grew the force from 14 to over 100 people. He spearheaded the construction of the state-of-the-art County Detention Center and instituted Community Policing way ahead of its time. Sheriff DeWitt was seen at numerous County church suppers, funerals, The



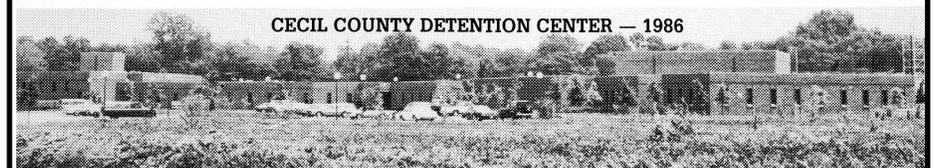
CECIL COUNTY JAIL — 1901

**YOU'VE COME A
LONG WAY
CECIL COUNTY !**

—•—
**RE-ELECT
SHERIFF DeWITT**



JOHN F. DeWITT



CECIL COUNTY DETENTION CENTER — 1986

President's Corner

Hello Members,

Here we are looking forward to Spring. The over 300 bulbs we planted in our new side garden are peeking through the dirt so we should have a stunning display that you need to see. The Historical Society's home at 135 E. Main St., Elkton is also home to Cecil Land Trust and Cecil County Arts Council. The staff and volunteers from our organizations have a wonderful working relationship where we support one another's efforts and join forces to host events and make improvements to the property. We have come to refer to ourselves as "135." We have a unique partnership where art and history combine to make an unforgettable experience for our patrons.

Our volunteers took 2 weeks off during the Christmas holidays, but have been busier than ever since we returned in the New Year. I have been

writing letters and grant proposals in an effort to fund the two major projects we have going on and there is more about that further along in the Inkwell. We've also been blessed with a variety of donations to the library and the museum. Space is a real issue, but we are doing some rearranging so please be patient while we get our house back in order.

The Society will be having several fundraising events. You should have received a notice along with tickets for our Spring Raffle. The winner will be chosen at the "Dancing Through The Decades" Costume Party. Put on your dancing shoes along with your favorite fashion from a past decade and

come join us at the Elkton VFW. Visit our Facebook page and website for updates and announcements.

Don't forget about First Friday every month. It is an enjoyable time with food, drink and great conversation. Also, come sit a spell in our garden and let yourself relax. The lights come on at dusk.

Warm regards,

Paula

Paula Newton
President

Officers

- ◆ PAULA NEWTON, PRESIDENT
- ◆ BETH MOORE, VICE PRESIDENT
- ◆ PAMELA HOWARD, TREASURER
- ◆ MIKE DIXON, HISTORIAN
- ◆ CAROL DONACHE, LIBRARIAN
- ◆ BETH MOORE, CORRESPONDING SECRETARY
- ◆ MARGIE BLYSTONE, MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY
- ◆ LISA DOLOR, CURATOR

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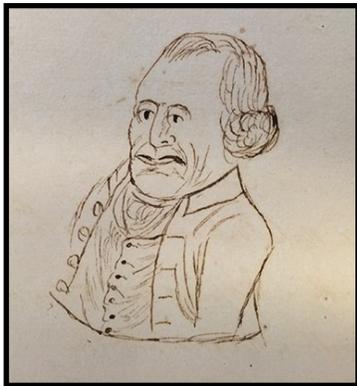
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- ◆ ALLYN NICKLE
- ◆ CHUCK DOLOR
- ◆ KAREN PETERSON
- ◆ WANDA OWENS

***Do you want to get involved?
Contact us!
cecilhhistory@gmail.com***

The story behind our curious little mascot.

While perusing the Cecil County Assessments book for 1786-94 our volunteers were surprised to find a whimsical drawing of a colonial gentlemen on a page entitled "Collector's Bond for the Foregoing Tax of 1789".

The document authorized Archibald Williams, Charles Williams and William Hamilton to be tax collectors for Cecil County and it was witnessed by Stephen Hyland, Richard Savin and Adam Wallace. The volunteers referred to him as "The Doodler" and began to use his image on correspondence. We soon realized that we had the perfect image to use as a brand for the Historical Society. Ideas for promotional possibilities flourished, but he needed a name. After much consideration, it seemed the obvious name for our colonial gentleman was Cecil.



EVENT

<u>EVENT</u>	<u>DATE</u>
FIRST FRIDAY	Fri, Apr 3
DANCIN' THROUGH THE DECADES	Fri, Apr 17
SPRING RAFFLE DRAWING	Fri, Apr 17
FIRST FRIDAY	Fri, May 1
STANLEY PARK BENCH DEDICATION	Fri, May 1
FIRST FRIDAY	Fri, Jun 5
FIRST FRIDAY	Fri, Jul 3
GARDEN PARTY	Fri, Jul 3
FIRST FRIDAY	Fri, Aug 7
CEMETERY WALK	Fri, Aug 7
FIRST FRIDAY	Fri, Sep 4
HSCC BOARD ELECTIONS	Fri, Oct 2
SECOND FRIDAY	Fri, Nov 13
RE-OPENING OF DEWITT MUSEUM	Fri, Nov 13
FIRST FRIDAY	Fri, Dec 4
SILENT AUCTION	Fri, Dec 4

Plans are underway for the Annual Membership Meeting . To be announced!

From page 1...

NAACP Annual Dinner/Meeting, and was a member and Trustee of the Historical Society of Cecil County. We'll flesh out that important fact later in this article.

According to an article in the *Cecil Whig* from April 25, 1991, p 1, "DeWitt kept a photograph of the county's last hanging in his office." He claimed," the article states, that "the 1910 execution served as inspiration. It was also a reminder that DeWitt believed in an old-fashioned sense of law and order." That may be true, but Sheriff DeWitt also believed in keeping his jail as modern as possible and the old Jail from 1875, just wasn't good enough by the 1980s. The County needed a new detention facility, so Sheriff DeWitt set about convincing the powers that be to build one.

In a *News Journal* article from May 2, 1991, titled *Sheriff DeWitt Left His Mark*, reporter Robin Brown remembered that during DeWitt's campaign for a new detention center, he called her to the old jail for a special tour. "There are bats in the belfry," he told her. "But when I met Jack DeWitt at the old Cecil County jail on North street," Brown wrote, "I found out he wasn't kidding a bit. We crawled up into the attic and there they were: bats aplenty. Big fat ones." "Walking through the jail later, still wiping off cobwebs and dust," Brown remembered, "I saw the more important point my pipe-toting companion was trying to make, the jail - long since obsolete - was a total mess and he knew it. He was having trouble persuading the county to see what he saw and cough up the money to change it." Sheriff DeWitt was ultimately successful in building the new detention center in 1984.

Not so successful was Sheriff DeWitt's efforts against the "Johnston Gang". According to a *Cecil Whig* article by David Healey back on March 2, 2005, titled "Longtime sheriff Jack DeWitt left a legacy" DeWitt "was once in a shootout with the **Johnston gang**- a band of thieves so notorious that a movie was made about them starring Sean Penn and Christopher Walken. DeWitt set out to capture the Johnston gang," Healey wrote, "almost single-handedly, but was quickly outgunned." According to Historian Mike Dixon, the Johnston gang was a band of thieves in Kennett, Pennsylvania where members of the gang had shot and killed 2 Kennett Square Police Officers. "DeWitt went to Nottingham, PA and engaged in a gun battle." Mike says. "PA State Police came to his rescue as he was chased back across the MD line."

According to Healey, DeWitt "survived the shootout and other political woes, prompting a *Cecil Whig*

editorial writer to dub him 'The Teflon Sheriff.' Instead of taking offense at the *Whig's* comments, DeWitt took delight in the nickname."

On another occasion Sheriff DeWitt's relationship with Pennsylvania law enforcement officers was not quite as cordial. The encounter was known as the "Liquor Wars." These so called "Liquor Wars" date back at least a decade before DeWitt became Sheriff. Simply put, the "wars" erupted in the 1960s when Pennsylvania liquor buyers decided to escape the Commonwealth's higher prices and taxes and make their purchases across the Mason Dixon line in Maryland where both the price and the tax were considerably lower.

This displeased Pennsylvania's state liquor control board officials. According to an April 1, 2015 *Window on Cecil County's Past* blog post by historian Dixon, Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board agents (LCB) decided to discourage their fellow citizens from shopping across the border and enforcing the state's liquor smuggling law by crossing into Maryland and checking out who was making the purchases. According to Dixon, "when they spotted Pennsylvania cars loading up cases of whiskey, they radioed across the border, advising men on the other side to seize the car." The Maryland retailers would then complain to the Cecil County Sheriff's department which reacted by arresting Pennsylvania agents and charging them with disorderly conduct. This tit-for-tat continued for a bit over ten years until Sheriff DeWitt came into office. Again, according to Dixon, in 1979, when DeWitt was sheriff, "the Pennsylvania agents were charged again, and (as) that case made its way through the courts, DeWitt explained the merchants thought they were being staked out for a hold-up. A former Sheriff, Edgar U. Startt, who was by this time a whiskey salesman, recalled warning

a Pennsylvania agent (that) if (he) snuck (into) Maryland and was seen on the highway he would be charged with moving violations." Dixon wrote that "The Commonwealth's attorney argued that Cecil County's annual distilled spirit sales of 16.10 gallons per person was over five times that of Baltimore. 'It could be explained only by bootlegging activities,' he told the judge."

Meanwhile, in Cecil County, Dixon says that "store owners were posting lookouts of their own, equipped with CB radios to keep track of the agents. Sometimes tractor-trailers were parked to prevent agents from viewing the premises. At other places," Dixon wrote, "'no trespassing' signs were posted in the woods and almost overnight 'no parking' signs appeared on the shoulders of the public roadways in the area of liquor stores." In addition, the county began enforcing a registration law that "required 30-days notice from the LCB" before they could stage one of their stake outs in Maryland.

Somehow, the liquor dealers were finding out about the stakeouts and the number of patrons from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania fell off the statistical cliff. As a result, the "cost to benefit" ratio to enforcing Pennsylvania's alcohol smuggling law just wasn't worth it and the famed cross border liquor wars came to an end. During his time as Sheriff, DeWitt became a member of the board of trustees of the Historical Society of Cecil County. He was not an "in name only" member of the board. He took the job seriously and worked tirelessly to improve the board's position in the community and its reputation as a historical repository.

That relationship with the Historical Society was strengthened about 30 years ago, when Sheriff DeWitt happened to be in the basement of the county's old Civil Defense building. There he spotted boxes of



what looked like old record books. He began rooting around and discovered that they were indeed old record books, record books of Cecil County dating back to colonial times through 1850! What a find! What a save! These invaluable research books were destined for the trash heap and now they would be saved for future generations to review and take note for countless research papers and genealogical documentation. Historian and Society board member, Dixon, notes the content of the books. The Road Books surveyed all county roads listing not only the roads, but the houses and other structures along them, plus the names of persons living along the roads. In addition to the Road Books, there were county tax records, court records, Poor House books, Insane Asylum books, and the Slave Schedules which were the censuses of the slaves living and working in Cecil County over the decades.

Following this close call with ancient county documents, Sheriff DeWitt successfully worked to have the Historical Society named the County Archive allowing the Society to help retrieve and preserve valuable research resources.

Historically speaking, Sheriff DeWitt's special interest lie, not just with county record books and traditional museum artifacts, but with military history. As a veteran of the Marine Corp and the Korean War, DeWitt began collecting military artifacts years before his own military experience, when he was just 11 years old. His collection grew until it included memorabilia from the American Civil War right up through Operation Desert Storm. According to an *Inkwell* article in 2019, it was "his dream to open a military museum when he retired." One of DeWitt's obituaries from the *Wilmington News Journal* on April 25, 1991 reported that the military museum was originally set for Franklin Hall in Chesapeake City.

Upon his defeat for a fifth term as county sheriff, DeWitt threw himself into finalizing those museum plans. Unfortunately, before those plans were finished, Sheriff DeWitt died of congestive heart failure on April 24, 1991 leaving the job of establishing the military museum to his children. After consulting with members of the board of trustees of the Historical Society of Cecil County, it was decided to put the museum in the society's building on East Main Street in Elkton

where it remains today. *The Times of North East and Elkton* in its April 29, 1992 edition wrote that the museum would be dedicated at the Society on May 7, 1992. It would be funded, according to the article, through contributions from Veterans of Foreign Wars (\$12,000), the American Legion, the Elk Creek Preservation Society, and the Cecil County Round Table. Additional collection donations were made by DeWitt's children: Cynthia DeWitt Marsh, Robert J. DeWitt, and Carol De Witt Focht. On November 20, 1992, the *Cecil Whig* reported that the museum "received the Magruder Award from the Marine Corps Historical Foundation. The award, and a \$1000 donation, was presented to Betty Eliason at a recent banquet in Washington, D.C." In addition, "The Cecil County Historical Trust approved a \$5000 grant for the project."

Since its opening nearly 3 decades ago, the DeWitt museum has been visited by hundreds if not thousands of individuals, both young and old. However, the years and the visitors have taken their toll on the little museum and it is in dire need of renovation, which began in 2019. See the Fall 2019 edition of the *Inkwell* for details. Suffice it to say that the work continues, but is nearing the finish line. As was written in that article, the Historical Society of Cecil County is supervising the museum's renovation

and will gladly accept any donation you may wish to make to finish the job of creating a renovated and revitalized DeWitt Museum that will "enhance the quality of the display," "better preserve the artifacts," and "highlight the personal stories of the Cecil County men and women who served their country...."

Finally, Sheriff DeWitt also made considerable contributions to corrections in both Cecil County and the state of Maryland. They were recognized by Maryland's Correctional Administration Association (MCAA) with the John "Jack" DeWitt Award in 1993.

In the words of the past President of MCAA, Steven R. Williams, *Sheriff Jack Dewitt was a large framed man that always smiled in such a way that you immediately felt comfortable to be with him. He had the unique ability to let others know he cared about them and their problems. Sheriff Jack Dewitt will always be remembered as a Cecil County Sheriff that was respected by everyone he came in contact with, a Sheriff that instilled integrity in the Cecil County Sheriff's Office. He was a man who showed respect to his deputies and correctional officers. Sheriff Jack Dewitt was honored by this Association by making the "Jack Dewitt Award" the most prestigious award given by the Maryland Correctional Administrators Association for recognition to outstanding corrections professionals and their associates.*

What better way to remember and honor a man who once wrote as his epitaph, "Dedicated Service to Cecil County"





The Historical Society of Cecil County is moving forward with the refurbishment of the Sheriff John F. DeWitt Military Museum.

John F. DeWitt, the only Sheriff in the history of Cecil County to be elected for four consecutive terms, started collecting military memorabilia when he was eleven. His dream was to open a military museum when he retired. Three months after his retirement, while finalizing those plans, Sheriff DeWitt died suddenly on April 24, 1991. A group of his friends fulfilled his dream and opened the Museum on May 7, 1992 at the Historical Society of Cecil County. This museum is in memory of Sheriff DeWitt and is dedicated to Cecil County veterans of all wars.

This refurbishment is to enhance the quality of the displays and better preserve the artifacts within the collection and to highlight the personal stories of the Cecil County men and women that have served our country and their role in our country's military history. The Society is also endeavoring to create an educational tool and a more interactive experience for patrons with children specifically in mind. We will be installing electronics that will present 3D images of the artifacts, video to explain the United States military history and audio to narrate personal stories from Cecil County residents. Artifacts will be identified using signage and signage rails will be used to give an overview of that period in time. The total project cost is approximately \$112,000 which will include new paint, carpeting, display cabinets, lighting and

technology. The Society will be applying for grant funding, but this project will not be possible without community and member support.

In 1992 the Colonel John H. Magruder Memorial Award was presented to the DeWitt Museum in recognition of the Museum's display of military memorabilia representing veterans of Cecil County and its emphasis on Marine Corps artifacts that cover history from the Civil War through Operation Desert Storm as judged by the Marine Corps Historical Foundation. This award winning museum is a Cecil County treasure that needs our attention. We would appreciate any financial assistance you can give us allowing us to realize our goal of making the DeWitt museum an engaging and interactive history of Cecil County's military.

Checks should be made payable to the Historical Society of Cecil County, 135 E. Main St., Elkton, MD 21921. Please indicate on your check that this is designated for the DeWitt Museum Renovation.



Red man ceremonial shawl

Donations 2019

John Polk

books
Colonial Families of the Eastern Shore of Maryland vol 15
Judgment Records of Dorchester, Queen Anne's & Talbot Counties
Colonial Delaware: A History
Abstracts of Chancery Court Records of Maryland 1669-1782
Eastern Shore Indians of Virginia and Maryland
Delaware Archives: Military and Navel Records vols II & III

Wasserman

Centennial Belles Ribbon 1860-1960

Joseph Mitchell

placemat from the Frenchtown Tavern

Daniel M Popek

book
The true story of Rhode Island's Black Regiment and the failure of segregation in Rhode Island's Continental Line 1777-1783

Clara Feucht

4-H books
elementary school newspaper
postcards
Elhisco newspaper vol 1 no 1-6
Elhisco newspaper vol 2 no 1,2,4,5,6,8

Jack Shagena

Chesapeake City maps and postcards enlargements
issue of the Times
photos Port herman horse, Jack and Signe at the races
bag of matches from local Cecil County restaurants

Henry Peden

book
Harford County, Maryland Equity Court Cases 1803-1860

Stephanie Andrews

copies of
You and Triumph
World War II extracts
TNT

Historical Society of Kent County
Account ledger of Thomas Ricketts 1814-1816

Kay Collins

booklet
Mushroom Recipes
Victory Snakes fireworks box

Chester County Press

booklets
Celebrating our first fifty years of progress 1921-1971
Community Fire Company of Rising Sun Md
Community Fire Company of Rising Sun
Dedication of our new station

Ruth Ann Ewing Johnson

22 pieces of vintage of clothing from 1920's- 1960's

Davie Maulsby

Oil portrait of Milicent Lum



Dorothy Loveless Stubbs

Red man ceremonial shawl

Melinda Morgan

Teacher's Life Certificate
Cecil Chapter of the Daughters of the Confederacy Certificate
HS diploma Chesapeake Academy 1895

Wedding announcement Henry Jones/Ann Elizabeth Barwick 1854
vintage clothing
scrapbook



Teacher's Life Certificate

Will Minster

Collection of items from Minster's Jewelry Store

Nora Ryan

Collection of Perryville Fire Company history

Robert Harlan Clarke

Ledger of Samuel J Harlan farm Col-ora Maryland 1891-1895

Rev Thomas Peterman

book
John James Monaghan, D.D: Third bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Wilmington

John Cameron

accounts ledger for Cecil County doctor's practice
hand drawn plat of Wallace Road

Miriam Irwin

1940's dress

Robert Jones

Losten's Dairy bottle

Virginia Moore

Brantwood Farms glass milk bottle

Wayne Pearman

Thomas Miller Civil War discharge papers

Charles Robbins, Jr.

two dollar note, Farmers and Merchants Bank of Cecil County



Become a Member!

All members are invited to attend meetings and functions sponsored by the HSCC, receive discounts on books and items, use the HSCC library for free and get a subscription to *The Inkwell*, our newsletter.

For over 75 years, we have connected people with Cecil's past by collecting and preserving the county's history and we count on membership dues to help fund this endeavor.

Through your membership you help connect people to the county's past through our library and its significant collection of rare books, manuscripts and photographs; our outreach services, helping others understand county history; a website that attracts hundreds of visitors monthly; our museum, which contains fascinating displays; and our widely distributed print newsletter.

Ways to Join

Become a member online or send your payment by mail. Membership renewal is on an annual, calendar year basis.

By Mail

Historical Society of Cecil County
135 E Main St.
Elkton, MD 21921

Online Payment with Paypal

Select the appropriate category and click on the "buy now" button. It will take you to a secure PayPal page for payment.



Volunteer Spotlight

Beth Boulden Moore is originally from Elkton and now resides in Chesapeake City. She graduated from Elkton High School in 1978 and received her bachelor's degree in elementary education from West Chester in 1983.

Beth was an elementary school teacher in Cecil County Public Schools for 30 years. She retired in 2014 and is now an instructor at the Department of Social Services and a realtor with EXIT Preferred Realty. Currently Beth serves as our Vice President, but she also fulfills the Recording Secretary responsibilities and is responsible for our Saturday opening.

Elkton history is Beth's area of expertise. She was encouraged to volunteer at the Society because she has always been interested in local history and her family has lived in the county since the 1600s. Her grandmother, Mazie Boulden, also served on the board of trustees at one time. Beth is interested in genealogy, local history and travel.



Spring Raffle Basket!

This year we have chosen a Spartina Chesapeake Bay Tote bag as our fundraiser. It is filled with summertime fun and the best our area has to offer. Gifts and gift cards have been donated by local businesses and individuals. Watch our Facebook page or website, www.cecilhistory.org, for updates on the contents of the basket. Tickets are \$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00. The winner will be chosen at our Dancing Through the Decades Costume Party held on Friday, April 17th - see page 10 for details.

Donations — Thank You!

The Historical Society would like to thank everyone for making our fall fundraising event successful. Every contribution is important to help us meet our goals of preserving the history of Cecil County.

Thanks to the following donors for the Dewitt Museum:

- American Legion Post #15 \$1000
- Elkton Moose Lodge #851 \$500
- VFW Post 8175 \$1500
- American Legion Post #153 \$250
- Melanie Duff \$100
- American Legion Post #194 \$300
- Delmarva Power \$250
- W. L. Gore and Associates \$250

Thanks to the following donors for the Duke Log House Restoration:

- Andrew Dower \$100
- Wanda Owens \$100
- Head of Elk DAR \$75
- George Thomas \$250
- Helen Long \$1,000
- Paula Newton \$1,000
- Elkton Presbyterian Women \$50
- Judith Cole \$100
- Steven Remillard \$75

Welcome, New Members!

**Do you know someone who should become a member?
Let us know! Send us an email or give a call.**

Here is the list of Members who joined

between Aug. 2019 and Mid-Feb. 2020

- Phil Aliff
- Steven M. Appler
- Diana Baggett
- George & Barbara Balog
- Richard Beardsley
- Melanie Ginn
- Frances Horzempa
- Jennifer Howaniec
- Kristina R. Johnson
- Carol Law
- Ronda McAllen
- Monica Nickle-Naylor
- Jane Patterson
- Patricia Phillips-Holbert
- Margit Pruett
- Marty Rogers
- Walter & Dorothy Rozanski
- Larry Williams
- Michael Stilwell
- Scott Stone



DANCING
through the
DECADES

Costume Party
TICKETS \$25PP

FRIDAY, APRIL 17TH 2020 - 7-10PM

Food, Prizes, Raffle & Cash Bar

All proceeds benefit the
Historical Society of Cecil County

Elkton VFW Post #8175 - 208 W. High St.

For Tickets & Info: (410) 398-1790
or visit www.cecilhistory.org



The Rev. Duke Cabin: Can It Survive Its 3rd Century?

Since 1972, a historic log cabin has resided in the backyard of the Historical Society of Cecil County. The centuries old structure, with its Cecil County Arts Council garden, is a lovely sight, but it's in danger of falling down.

The cabin began life on Bow Street in Elkton around 1800 and has served multiple purposes: a residence, a barber shop, a store, and perhaps even a weaver's shop! But the cabin is historically significant for another reason. It was once the home of The Rev. William Duke, who took title of the cabin and the land upon which it stood in 1820. He used it for both his residence and his own school. Rev. Duke was an Episcopal Priest and the school master of at least 4 schools, one of which was the Elkton Academy. He died on May 31st, 1840 and is buried, along with his wife and daughter, on the north side of the cemetery at St. Mary Anne's Episcopal Church in North East.

As for Rev. Duke's cabin, time has taken its toll. The cabin's structural defects were first brought to light in December of 2006 by a group of students from Harford Community College. The students conducted a study of the cabin, including its history, its physical condition, and suggestions to both repair and maintain it. We continued to make necessary repairs and followed recommendations to deter deterioration of the logs, but despite our efforts the elements are winning.



Historical Society Board of Trustees President, Paula Newton says both the old and new problems threaten the structure's very life. We have consulted with a timber frame contractor and log house restoration contractor who have pointed out to the Society's Board the critical issues as follows:

- many logs are rotted due to age and water damage
- openings where the outside can be seen from inside the cabin (without a window!)
- a portion of the floor has collapsed in the fireplace room due to a rotten floor joist
- steps to the second floor are separated from the floor planks of the first floor
- missing chinking between logs
- floor slopes in "school" room
- numerous soft spots in the floor everywhere
- worsening bow in the back wall
- window frames are separating from log walls

The inward sagging is putting pressure on the corner interlocking logs putting them in danger of giving way. As in any restoration, we don't know what other issues may lurk behind interior walls, the flooring, and the roof. We do know that without substantial repairs, the cabin's long life may soon come to an end. And those repairs will not come cheaply. The timber frame contractor estimated that the cost to repair the two hundred year old log cabin will top out at \$150,000. The extent of the damage is that severe.

It is the Society's vision that, if restored, the cabin will once again serve as a living history museum with historical interpretation and special events emphasizing the life of the cabin, it's historic occupant, and Cecil County. We see Rev. Duke himself, strolling the rooms of his former home, telling the story of his life, that of his family, and the students he taught. The site and sound of school children scrambling through the cabin would once more echo off the walls of the ancient structure as the students size-up the

school master's and student desks, check out where the Dukes cooked meals, slept, and read by the fireplace long ago. These are just a few of the learning opportunities for the next generation of children and adults as we endeavor to pass on this rich history, unique to Cecil County. But we need your help.

As noted, the cabin's history is rich and the cost to repair it will be equally rich. Judging from the relatively quick advance of the cabin's structural issues, we don't have much time.

Please consider making a contribution to repair, restore, and preserve this marvelous piece of Cecil County history. You may become a part of this worthy endeavor by contacting us through our web site or call us at 410-398-1790. Checks should be made payable to Historical Society of Cecil County and sent to 135 E. Main St., Elkton, MD 21921. Thank you.

Your contribution can either be made by check or through our secure PayPal page.

\$5,290 raised!



Watch our progress on raising money for the Duke Log House restoration by following us on Facebook and seeing the "logs" fill up!

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF CECIL COUNTY

135 East Main Street Elkton, MD 21921

(410) 398-1790

Hours of Operation

Monday 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

Thursday 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

1st Saturday of each month

10:00 am – 2:00 pm

Since 1932, the Historical Society of Cecil County Maryland has been the go-to resource for researchers, students and history buffs looking for answers about the culture and materials that defined (and continue to define) our county. We are a 100% volunteer-based organization.