



The RECORD



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January 2005

Kaye O'Kelley, President

Jackie Zilliox, Editor

January Meeting Notice

St. Nicholas Cemetery Restoration Project

Saturday, January 22nd, 2005 at 2:00 p.m.

United Methodist Church, La Plata

The guest speaker will be Scott Lawrence who was born, raised, and lives in St. Mary's County. Scott has been interested in cemeteries for over thirty years and has assisted Margaret Fresco in documenting the burials at Fenwick Free, in St. Inigoes, for her book on "Marriages and Deaths." Hopefully he can provide insight on how to locate old cemeteries in Charles County. There may be some burial grounds in the woods in and around where you live that we can bring back to dignity.

The event is free and reservations are not required.



Thank You from Joan L. Bowling

To: Charles County Historical Society
December 7, 2004

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Please except my sincere thanks for your welcome to me as speaker at your October meeting.

It was a pleasure to join so gracious a company and to share the delicious meal.

Your gift of the La Plata Railroad Station plate was a pleasant surprise which I shall cherish as a reminder of the occasion.

Sincerely,
Joan L. Bowling

President's Message

By Kaye O'Kelley
President, Charles County Historical Society

I hope that all of you had a wonderful Christmas and have a healthy and happy New Year for 2005.

The officers and board members are planning the activities for 2005. We welcome any suggestions that you might have.

Dates to put on your calendar are: May 21, 2005 and October 22, 2005.

If you are interested in participating in any committees or serving in any way, please get in touch with me or one of the officers.

I look forward to serving the Historical Society as President. I look forward to your participation.

Farm Museum

At the Dr. Samuel A. Mudd House Museum, Charles County, Maryland

By Danny Fluhart, President, Dr. Samuel A. Mudd Society, Inc.

Having grown up on a dairy farm in Ohio, I thought it would be nice to start a farm museum at the Dr. Samuel A. Mudd Farm. Perhaps the tourist might find the collection of horse machinery and old hand tools of interest while they were waiting for the house tour.



Spring Wagon originally belonged to Reuben Swarey, Mechanicsville, Maryland.

Allan Mudd and his father Joseph Mudd had erected a metal barn several years ago. The building was located just behind the house and sat empty. I decided to have the interior painted white and covered the ground with fourteen tons of pea gravel in order to use it for the exhibit area.

Louise Mudd Arehart, a granddaughter of Dr. Samuel A. Mudd, had contributed several old items while she operated the museum. The hand tools were the first pieces to be moved into the new area that opened to the public in August 2003. Since then the barn has filled rapidly with purchases, donations and a few items on loan.

The first big item we obtained for the future museum was a doctor's buggy that we found for sale near Dentsville. The buggy was made in Galion, Ohio. Before the Farm Museum was established, we would pull the buggy out of a shed each day for the tourist to see.

Christine Smith from Thomas Stone's home, near La Plata, donated three large glass showcases. Two of them now contain old tools for woodworking, wrenches and a huge hornet's nest from Leonardtown that was donated by Tom Williams of Charlotte Hall.

Probably the oldest item is a millstone, donated by Francis and Gregory Radcliff. A very old tobacco barn near La Plata was taken down and the stone was discovered in the ground at the corner of the building.

Our largest wooden item is the tobacco prize that came from a farm just off Goode Road near Hughesville. Mike Elwood of Lawrence, Kansas owns the farm. He had taken the prize out of a tobacco barn before it burned. Two employees, from the Calvert Maritime Museum in Solomons Island, helped place it



Doctor's Buggy, found in a tobacco barn near Dentsville, Maryland. Made by Galion Buggy Works, Galion, Ohio.

onto a boat trailer to move it to the museum. Ted Dent, a neighbor, used his tow truck to move it into the museum barn. I am now in need of a hogshead to place in the prize.

Bill White, of Loveville, has placed on loan a 1931 McCormick-Deering thrashing machine. We obtained an old grain binder from Judge Mitchell's farm near La Plata, "Thurston." Allan Mudd of Waldorf donated two of our walking plows. They were used for plowing on the Dr. Samuel A. Mudd farm many years

ago. We also have three wheelbarrow grass seeders. Pat Gardiner, great-grandson of Dr. Mudd, donated one, and the other two came from the Johnson Farm at Laurel Grove.



Interior view showing one of three glass showcases donated by Thomas Stone Museum, La Plata, Maryland.

Our spring wagon originally belonged to Amos Hertzler of Mechanicsville. I painted the wagon this fall and we used it in the front yard during our Victorian Christmas weekend on December fourth



Interior view of Museum.

and fifth. We filled the wagon full with Christmas packages.

The York County Historical Society of Pennsylvania donated a farm wagon, cultivator, broom corn-beater, and kettle boiler.

Joe Johnson of Waldorf donated his dad's grain

drill that is over 76 years old.

The cider press was obtained many years ago from James Buckler who resided on the Eva Chappelle Farm near Hughesville. Our cow stanchions came from an old barn on the farm that was destroyed this year.

Rosina Keller of Gallant Green donated several farm items, one being a three-row marker. A horse would pull the marker across a field from north to south then east to west. Where the rows intersected a tobacco plug would be planted by hand using a tobacco peg.



Interior view of the Farm Museum Barn.

Jacob Brubaker, near Morganza, donated the old case corn binder. This machine cut the corn stalks and tied them into bundles that were for setting up corn shocks. Before this, machine stalks had to be cut by hand.

One of my favorite books for research is "Encyclopedia of American Farm Implements and Antiques" by C. H. Wendell.

If you are inclined to help I would like to obtain the following items; lard press, milk cans, mowing machine, wood barrels, manure spreader, corn husking machine, riding plow, ox cart, hay loader, and a sleigh. Plus any old hand tools. We would greatly appreciate it. If you would like to make a donation, please call 301-274-9358. Down the road, plans call for an extension to the farm museum barn.

Rock Point

“The Point” at Rock Hall Farm

By Joan L. Bowling

When James Neale came to Maryland in 1636 he chose land between the Wicomico and Potomac Rivers. In 1641 Lord Baltimore requested his brother, Governor Leonard Calvert, to survey a manor of 2000 acres for James Neale, Gentlemen, with full manorial rights. He named it Wolleston Manor for his paternal grandfather's lordship in Northhamptonshire. It is now best known as Swan Point, Issue, Cobb Island and Rock Point. An indenture for the land tract known as Neale's Gift, part of the original Wooleston Manor, from Raphael Neale (James Neale's grandson) was granted to his daughter Elizabeth as dowry on her marriage to John Lancaster in 1731. Rock Hall, including Rock Point, was part of Neale's Gift.

During the American Revolution John Lancaster Senior was a Justice of the Peace for Lower William & Mary Hundred. In 1778 he served as Magistrate and administered Oaths of Allegiance. He furnished horses, wheat and clothing to the Revolutionary Army. During the War of 1812, the Wicomico River was invaded by British troops and crops and shipping were destroyed. At the time of the War Between the States, Union soldiers occupied Rock Hall and local shipping was destroyed to prevent traffic with the South. After the war Elizabeth Spearman Lancaster had a sick husband and a small work force. But their land terminated into an excellent harbor, then known as “Lancaster Wharf.” She hired a manager for the canning and packing plant that was built on “the Point” of Rock Hall. Fruits from her extensive orchards as well as vegetables grown on the nearby fields were packed in the popular tin can. Oysters and crabs, fish and wild duck were shipped to metropolitan markets. Oystering had always been a commercial asset in the Wicomico and Potomac Rivers from as early as the 1700's. However, during the Civil War no harvesting took place. Then, from 1880 until 1930, the largest oyster industry in the Potomac was operated at Lancaster Wharf.

Approximately 1000 gallons of shucked oysters were shipped weekly from this location for nearly twenty-five years.

In 1885, the U.S. Lighthouse Board recommended the construction of a lighthouse at the mouth of the Wicomico. Three steamboat lines that traded in oysters, tobacco and other products made regular runs into the rivers. This area gave important maritime shelter from storms and ice. As many as 350 vessels were said to have been anchored at one time. A screw pile lighthouse built at the mouth of the Wicomico in 1889 was said to have cost \$25,000.

Lancaster Wharf had a deep unsilted port, which made for excellent conditions for passenger and cargo steamboats to dock. One of the shipping lines ran a bus from La Plata and Port Tobacco to meet the boats and pick up passengers heading for Washington D.C., Baltimore and Norfolk. The area then became known as “Rock Point.” Without air conditioning, Washington D.C. residents sought a summer escape in cottages along the shores. Two of the Farm Security Administration's more famous photographers took photos of the oystering and crabbing operations in the 1930's. There was a post office, school, church and church hall, which was for social and civic events. Throughout World War II, current movies were shown on the weekends at the converted church hall. A variety of houses, summer cottages, hotels, boarding houses, stores and restaurants welcomed those in need of food and shelter.

Today, the ghosts of past events whisper through the trees. Waves wash bulkheads and stones where beaches used to be. The center of population has shifted. Nearly all of the old buildings are gone. Like many of the place names in the county which were not incorporated as towns, but served as centers of commerce for a time, Rock Point rests along the shore.

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