

The RECORD



Volume 104, No. 1

A Publication of the Historical Society of Charles County, Inc.

January 2010

Joyce Candland, President

Mary Ann Scott, Editor

January Meeting

Saturday, January 23, 2010 – 2:00 p.m.

La Plata Methodist Church Hall



Daily Life in the Viking Age

The Historical Society is proud to offer a totally different theme to bring in the New Year. Come see costumed Vikings portray their daily life. The Longship Company, Ltd. is a non-profit educational organization devoted to increasing understanding

See January Meeting, continued on Page 5

President's Message

Our last meeting of the Historical Society of Charles County was held on Saturday, October 17, 2009 at Old Durham Church. All attending can testify to the excellent dinner served by the Ladies Mite Society of Old Durham.

Elizabeth Stahl, who received a grant from HSCC to attend "Girls State" in June, reported on her experiences and expressed her appreciation for the opportunity to participate in this activity. We are proud of Lizzie and thank her for sharing her thoughts on her experience and her goals for the future.

Our speaker, Dr. Julia King, told of her archaeological adventures of identifying the site of a home of Lord Baltimore located in our own Charles County. One of her organization goals for 2010 is to locate the site of an Indian Fort thought to be nearby.

Thank you to HSCC Board member Jane Linton for sharing memorabilia found in the attic of Linton homeplace "Holly Springs." We will be co-sponsoring a sharing event just like this one on "Bring Your Stuff Day" at the College.

Welcome to new members Lorraine Berry, Peter Candland (life), Jay & Mary Lilly (Jay is the current president of the Society for Restoration of Port Tobacco), John Morris, Bonnie Rafer, Robert Stahl (life) and student member Elizabeth Stahl.

One of articles in this issue tells of the visit to Friendship House of the Gray and Dent families

See President's Message, continued on Page 5

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EDITOR'S NOTE

If you would like future newsletters sent to you by e-mail, please send us your e-mail address. Articles of historic interest on Southern Maryland are requested for publication in future issues of *The Record*. Please send your articles and photographs to: The Historical Society of Charles County, Publications, *The Record*, P.O. Box 2806, La Plata, Maryland 20646. Or you can email your articles and photographs to Joyce Candland at joyce.candland@gmail.com.

One of the largest expenses of our Society is the printing and mailing of our newsletter. In an effort to cut costs and keep our budget under control, we are asking those of you with email capability to consider receiving your copy of *The Record* by email. This would be of great benefit to the Society and you would receive your copy in color. If you can help us with this effort please notify Joyce Candland.

joyce.candland@gmail.com

Friendship House Committees

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Mary Pat Berry

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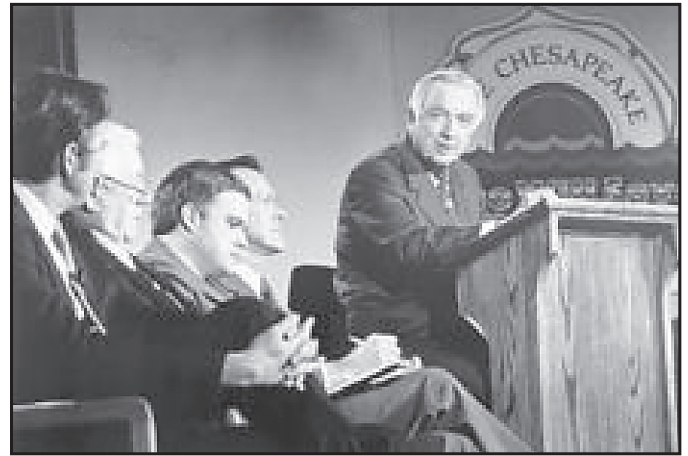
Willard Dutton, Waterman and Preservationist

By Mary Pat Berry, Vice President

*A*t a time when preservation of the environment is of vital concern to many Americans, Charles County can boast a man who devoted a large part of his life to the protection of the water and its way of life, long before it became popular to do so. When James Willard Dutton died at the age of 76 on December 28, 1995, he left his family a legacy of integrity and a model for staying true to your ideals.

My Uncle Willard was born May 4, 1919 in Indian Head, the second son of Notley Thomas Dutton and Mary Roberta (McCluskey) Dutton. His father was a veteran of the Spanish American War and we were told that he died relatively young (54) due to complications from “a sickness” he picked up from the war. Notley Dutton ran a bowling alley and store in the building that is located before the Naval Support Facility gate in Indian Head. As a youngster at Indian Head, an old friend reminisced about him and Willard playing in the neighbor’s garden and rolling watermelons as big as barrels down a hill and watching them smash open for fun.

The family moved to Ironsides for a small stay, running yet another store, then to Riverside to try farming. They slept on the leeward side of the house during the storms and stuffed rags into the chinks between the boards to keep out the snow. Summers were spent at his grandma Lucy’s (Dutton) farm on the Banks O’Dee, fishing and crabbing and camping out for weeks at a time. When his father died in 1935, his mother was left with six children to raise, Notley, Jr., age 20, Willard, age 16, Charlotte 14, Edwin 9, Lorraine 6, and Richard 5. Her brothers moved them to a “new house” on her family’s (McCluskey) farm in White Plains. And there they stayed. The Depression had made finding work off the farm all but impossible. There were few choices. So Willard, along with helping raise tobacco, turned to the water. Whether it was commercial fishing, boating or just the tranquility of the water, it was there where he found his true passion.



In this 1984 photo, Walter Cronkite chairs a panel discussion on the theme, “Who Will Save the Bay?” at the St. Mary’s College of Maryland. Panel members include, left to right, Dr. Torrey C. Brown, state Natural Resources secretary; Willard Dutton, waterman; Thomas Eichler, EPA regional administrator; and State Senator Bernie Fowler.

Fishing the nets, trapping for furs in the winter months, tobacco farming under the sweltering summer sun put him in the elements most of the time. With time to reflect, he grew a respect for the water and its ways of life. He developed a commitment for preserving the environment before it became the rage of the sixties. He held nature in high regard and with it came a spiritual connection to the land and water, born out of the day to day interaction. That, combined with his deep Catholicism, Republicanism and Irish wit, found him not content to just work with the water, but to speak out for the river, the watermen, and their way of life.

In the 1950’s, Maryland and Virginia officials had finally agreed to settle the disputes that had kept the states “at war” over the Potomac River for years. The compact formed the Potomac River Fisheries Commission and Maryland fisherman thought it gave an unfair advantage to Virginia waterman. An attorney was hired by the Maryland watermen to sue the State of Maryland and Governor J. Millard Tawes. However, no one would sign the court order

See Willard Dutton, continued on Page 4

to take the governor to court, that is, until Willard Dutton stepped up. Subsequently, they lost the case and, as he told us, every day for years after, there was always a “Tidewater man” (DNR policeman) waiting on the dock to check his catch and his boat, looking for the smallest of infractions. They never found any. A testament to his honesty.

Putting aside his earlier dislike, he threw himself into making the Potomac River Fisheries Commission work for the waterman and for the river. Many times I remember him standing in the kitchen of the old house running his hand through his white hair, talking about the changes coming. Clear blue eyes looked to the future. He thought it a waste of time for the watermen to fight among themselves, while “big money bought up all the waterfront and ruined the land.” He was a quiet man, but when he spoke, it was about what could happen, what should happen, and what he was doing to make things happen.

He ran for County Commissioner as an Independent and “Dutton Buttons” became a source of pride and merriment for his family. After his defeat he became a member of the Charles County Planning Commission to effect change, or at least slow it down. This was during my high school years and beyond and I always felt a bit of pride when his name came up as he was fighting for the common man. “*He was abrupt, but never rude.*” “*A man of character, not afraid of any body or any one.*” “*A man beyond reproach.*” “*He had the interest of the people at heart.*” These quotes were accolades given by his peers.

In 1983, Walter Cronkite, the esteemed newsman, came to St. Mary’s College to host a panel discussion on the theme “Who Will Save the Bay?” The panel included Dr. Torrey C. Brown, State Natural Resources Secretary, Thomas Eicher of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), then U.S. Congressman Roy Dyson, State Senator Bernie Fowler, Joe Mihursky of Chesapeake Biological Lab, Howard County Executive Hugh Nichols, University of Maryland agronomist James Miller, SMC Corporation CEO Vince Mazza, Jack Witten

of the Potomac River Association and **waterman, Willard Dutton.**

“Taking the form of a town meeting, the forum aired the views of watermen, agriculturists, environmentalists, politicians, and industrialists on the problems and options to cleaning up the waters of the Bay. Along with other similar forums around the same time, it played an important role in educating the public to support the Maryland General Assembly’s signing of the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Law. The law created a special planning area, known as the Critical Area, which places restrictions on construction taking place within 1,000 feet of the water’s edge.”

In 1984 the Charles County Commissioners decided to honor his service to the county when they replaced the old wooden bridge on Billingsley Road that crossed the Mattawoman Swamp. The Mattawoman bordered the Dutton family farm. At the Dedication Ceremony, the new bridge sign revealed the name *J. Willard Dutton Bridge*. At Uncle Willard’s request, my son, Jamie, an elementary school student, was one of the honored guests. There was a lot of laughter as earlier newspaper reports had called it a “memorial” dedication. Uncle Willard was quick to let every one know he wasn’t gone yet and would still be around to give his point of view on current events.

A bachelor, he provided guidance and direction to his dozens of nieces and nephews. A rite of passage came on your 18th birthday when he’d arrive in his beat up S-10 pick-up truck and drive you to the Board of Elections in La Plata and watch you register to vote. It had something to do about fighting for that right in World War II, which made him want to make sure the next generation and the next generation after that, took it seriously. He hunted arrow heads and urged us to find our past so we could know our future. He walked the fields and hills and marshes of Charles County until its grit was part of his determination. He told us stories about the “old days” and the legends of the county, until he became one himself.

When he left us in 1995, Parkinson’s disease had robbed him of his mobility but not his mind.

See Willard Dutton, continued on Page 5

and knowledge of the life, culture, technology, commerce, and exploration of the early northern European seafarers, and those with whom they came into contact. It is an all volunteer organization – the “Company” in their name refers to a ship’s company of its officers and crew.

Central to the activities of the Longship Company are authentic reconstructions of Viking era ships. Although these reconstructions are based on Scandinavian archaeological finds, most of their basic elements are common to ships of other cultures of the era, spanning across Europe from the Celts in the West to the Slavs in the East, with nautical and other cross-cultural contacts and influences having extended even to the Middle East and North Africa. In addition to the activities of sailing, maintaining, and exhibiting/demonstrating the vessels, the Longship Company participates in living history events, contributes to ongoing international archaeology-by-experiment efforts relative to early seafaring and technology, produces educational materials, and supports artistic and scholarly efforts related to the Vikings and their era.

In recent years the organization has taken part in an international gathering of replica and reconstruction Vikingships at the Norse archaeological

site at L’Anse aux Meadows, Newfoundland, participated in several parades of tall ships in the harbors of the Mid-Atlantic region, served as consultants to the Smithsonian Institution and the New York Museum of Natural History, provided a Viking exhibition for the Norwegian Embassy in Washington, DC, and produced a video adaptation of the medieval poetic account of the Battle of Maldon. In any given week some members may be lecturing at a school, museum, or cultural festival; others attending a scholarly conference on historical subjects or taking an advanced Coast Guard boating course; and others taking part in living history reenactments – providing a continual two way flow of knowledge from and to the organization. Yet like the independent, free-spirited seafarers of old, this diverse group still manages to work together as a team in the formidable tasks of keeping traditional-style wooden vessels in seaworthy condition – and in experiencing the unique thrill of moving such ships gracefully across the water by oars and sail in the same manner as would have been done 1000 years ago.

Let’s start the new year with a lively and interesting presentation on a fascinating topic. Guests are welcome, admission is free, desserts will be provided.

He was in the Charlotte Hall Veteran’s Home and I often took my son, Jamie, to visit him. They played a lively game of checkers and sometimes chess. He would get still and close his eyes: “Boy,” he’d say, “to see that sun shine on that water, it just seems like you’re living more in life than you do any other time.”

He was a waterman. Pure and simple.

Mary Pat Berry is the Vice-President of the Historical Society. She is a past regent and member of the Port Tobacco Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, President of the Governor William Smallwood Chapter, Daughters of 1812 and President of the Charles County Garden Club. She and her husband Jim reside at “Berry’s Contrary” in Port Tobacco.

and how excited they were to see the homes of their ancestors. Friendship House exists today because of the foresight of the early members of the Historical Society of Charles County. We owe them a debt of gratitude.

Thank you to Mary Pat Berry for sharing the story of her uncle, Willard Dutton, and his conservation efforts.

Joyce Candland, President
301-246-4488 • joyce.candland@gmail.com

Friendship House Foundation

The Friendship House Foundation was established to preserve, refurbish and promote this unique treasure of Charles County. Donations will help to maintain the historical integrity of the house through its furnishings, tours and educational programs and to honor those who have devoted countless hours of volunteer time in the preservation and promotion of this Maryland Tidewater Home.

Today, Friendship House sits proudly on the campus of the College of Southern Maryland. Please join the Historical Society of Charles County in contributing to the preservation of Friendship House for many generations to come.



Friendship House Foundation In Memory of

Warren E. Barley
Philip L. Griffith
Eleanor Higdon
Sue LaHood
Katherine S. W. Mitchell
Kathryn C. Newcomb
Velva Perrygo
Watson Perrygo

Friendship House Foundation Levels of giving:

Friend	(\$ 25.00-\$ 99.00)
Colonist.	(\$ 100.00-\$199.00)
Patriot	(\$ 200.00-\$499.00)
Statesman	(\$ 500.00-\$999.00)
Renaissance.	(\$1,000.00+)

To make donations, please make checks payable to the Friendship House Foundation and mail to the Historical Society.

*Friendship House
Foundation
Contributors*

Friend
Mrs. Hilda Karlsson Rodderick

Colonist
Mrs. Evelyn Karlsson Merritt
Ms. Shiela Smith
Mr. & Mrs. Budd Sturm
Ms. Mary Sturm

Patriot
Mr. & Mrs. Dan Donohue
Mr. Michael J. Mazzeo, Jr.
Ms. Catherine Sturm-Hughes

Renaissance
Mr. & Mrs. Ernest L. Irish

History of the Friendship House Tract

- 1657 – 900 acres “lying on the West side of Nangemy Creek” patented to **Nicholas Guither**...of which 650 acres were “for and in consideration that Nicholas Guither and Mary his wife have faithfully performed their time and service [and] have transported six persons into our Province here to inhabit” and the remaining 250 acres due from assignments Guither obtained from Anslowe Simpson, Charles Rawlings and John Metcalfe. Patents, Q:159, Annapolis.
- 1662 – Nicholas Guither sold the 900 acre tract at Nanjemoy to **Thomas Dent** and William Hatton. Deeds, B#1:125, La Plata.
- 1674 – Thomas Dent acquired brother-in-law William Hatton’s half-part of the original 900 acre Guither tract. Wills, 5:19, Annapolis.
- 1676 – **William Dent** inherited the 900 acre tract of land. Wills, 5:19, Annapolis. He is the first member of the Dent family to permanently reside on the Nanjemoy plantation.
- 1685 – William Dent conveyed 200 acres to **John Barker**. Deeds, L:187, La Plata.
- 1704 – **Thomas Dent** inherited the Nanjemoy plantation upon the death of his father, Colonel William Dent.
- 1725 – **William Dent** inherited the Nanjemoy plantation upon the death of his father, Thomas Dent.
- 1740 – The Charles County Rent Rolls name William Dent (son of Thomas) the owner of 700 acres of “Guither.”
- 1748 – A petition was presented to the Maryland General Assembly by “the inhabitants of upper Cedar Neck Point, and Durham parish,” requesting that a warehouse “be erected at or near Wm. Dents Landing.”
- 1753 – William Barker conveyed to **William Dent** the 200 acres which originally had been sold by Colonel William Dent to John Barker in 1685; “being part of a tract of land called **Friendship** or Guither.”
- 1756 – **Warren Dent** inherited “Friendship” upon the death of his father, William Dent.
- 1782/1783 – Tax Assessment for Lower Durham Hundred recorded Warren Dent as the owner of 822 acres known as “Friendship” bordering Nanjemoy Creek.
- 1795 – **George Dent** inherited “Friendship” upon the death of his brother, Warren Dent.
- 1802 – **William Dent** inherited “Friendship” upon the death of his father, George Dent.
- 1816 – William Dent deeded the entire “Friendship” tract to **Joseph Gray, Sr. and John Franklin Gray**. Deeds, IB#1:333, La Plata. John Franklin Gray and Joseph Gray, Sr. divide the “Friendship” tract. Joseph Gray, Sr. retained the “northern half” which continued to be known as “Friendship” and John F. Gray retained the “southern half” renamed as “Chinquapin.” Charles County Court Proceedings, 1821-1822:420.
- 1820 – **Robert F. Gray**, one of the sons of Joseph Gray, Sr. was allotted that part of the Friendship tract lying on the north side of Friendship Landing Road containing 227 $\frac{3}{4}$ acres.
- 1851 – **Joseph C. Gray** inherited the Friendship tract upon the death of his father, Robert F. Gray.
- 1880 – **Joseph C. Gray (Jr.)** inherited the Friendship Farm upon the death of his father, Joseph C. Gray.
- 1917 – **Ella Stonebreaker Gray** inherited the Friendship Farm upon the death of her husband, Joseph C. Gray.
- 1918 – Ella Gray deeded the Friendship tract to **Paul Gray**, nephew of her late husband, Joseph C. Gray.
- 1920 – Paul Gray sold the 224 acres “called *Friendship or Part of Friendship and being a subdivision of an original tract called Friendship as described in a survey made in 1821...as Lot 5 in the division of the real estate of Joseph Gray to Charles H. Shamel of Springfield, Illinois...as well as ‘the road leading to Friendship Landing,’ ‘the road leading from Friendship House.’* Deeds, WMA#33:8, La Plata.
- 1948 – Charles H. Shamel conveyed the Friendship Tract by a Deed of Trust to the **National Educational Association**. Deeds, 86:521, La Plata.

See Friendship House, continued on Page 9

Friendship House Reunion



A family reunion of sorts was held October 24th & 25th when, for the first time, descendants of the Gray & Dent family converged for a glorious weekend and tour of the home of their ancestors at Friendship House. Meeting for the first time, Gray descendants from Pennsylvania, Georgia, Virginia, Texas, North Carolina, Ohio, and D.C. toured the Port Tobacco Courthouse, Friendship House, the original Friendship House site, and Friendship Farm in Nanjemoy. While at Friendship Farm they presented and shared documents of their perspective family genealogies. They also

attended Sunday service at Durham Church. In the 17th century, their ancestor Colonel William Dent gave the Communion Silver still in use today. Of course, they couldn't leave the area without enjoying an evening of Southern Maryland fare at Captain Billy's on Popes Creek. The reunion was organized by Dr. Mary Sturm of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and the tour was coordinated by Evie Karlsson Merritt, one of our Board of Directors and their host at Friendship Farm.

Bring Your Stuff Day

The Southern Maryland Studies Center Advisory Committee will sponsor a *"Bring Your Stuff"* event in June at the College of Southern Maryland. This event will provide residents an opportunity to share their own slice of history while allowing the SMSC to make copies of these historical documents, which will be added to the research collections of the Center. Residents are encouraged to search their attics to collect prized documents, pictures and letters of local and historical interest on the theme of the day: **Twentieth Century War and Peace**. Tables will be provided for participants to display their treasures for sharing and the SMSC will make copies of the written materials before returning them to their owners to take back home. This event will be co-sponsored by the Historical Society of Charles County and the Society for the Restoration of Port Tobacco. Volunteers will be needed to help with the coordination of the event, provide tours of Friendship House and donate baked goods. Look for more specific information in the next issue of *"The Record."*

Southern Maryland Studies Center Advisory Committee

The President of the College of Southern Maryland has formed a Southern Maryland Studies Center Advisory Committee to assist the college in its mission of securing, organizing, maintaining and making available to the community research materials on Southern Maryland region. The committee is composed of representatives from Charles, St Mary's, and Calvert Counties who have a passion for history and an interest in preserving it. The committee includes long time members of local historical organizations and experts in the fields of archives and history museums. These historians and specialists bring their expertise to the tasks of extending the scope of the Center, expanding the collections, working with space limitations, and encouraging community use of the resources.

Members of the Southern Maryland Studies Center Advisory Committee from the Historical Society are: Michael J. Mazzeo, Jr., Peggy Schaumburg, Kay Volman & Michael J. Sullivan.

Your Society At Work

By Joyce Candland, President

*A*s in the past, The Historical Society of Charles County will be participating in the Charles County Public School's Charles County History Day Competition on Saturday, March 20, 2010. We will be awarding six \$100.00 Saving Bonds to student winners chosen by the school system.

A return visit to a the Gray family cemetery that the HSCC, along with the Charles County Maryland Genealogical Society, cleaned last March was made by HSCC members Joyce & John Candland, Evie Merritt and Cricket and John Morris (a new member). Leaves were raked and the area cleared of sticks, etc. Another return trip is planned this spring.

The Historical Society has been invited to participate on the Advisory Board and Collections Committee of the Southern Maryland Studies Center. See page 10.

The Train Station and caboose have been freshly painted, and the caboose received new windows. Thank you to Mayor Roy Hale and the Town of La Plata.

Volunteers are needed to staff the Train Station on Saturdays 12:00 noon to 4:00 p.m., May through October 2010. If you can help, please contact Train Station Chairman, Kaye O'Kelley, at email: kayeokelley@yahoo.com.

Friendship House, continued from Page 7

Documentation:

H. Chandlee Forman. Old Buildings, Gardens, and Furniture in Tidewater Maryland. Cambridge, Maryland: Tidewater Publishers, 1967.

Historical Society of Charles County, Inc. Historic Sites Files. Southern Maryland Studies Center, College of Southern Maryland.

Harry Wright Newman. Charles County Gentry. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc. 1971.

J. Richard Rivoire. A Tract History of the Nanjemoy Nature Reserve, Charles County, Maryland. March 1993.

Southern Maryland Studies Center



*Amanda Pike, Coordinator
of the Southern Maryland Studies Center*

*T*he College of Southern Maryland established the Southern Maryland Studies Center (SMSC) in 1976 to provide a central location for research on the historically important region of Southern Maryland. Today, the Center houses state and federal census records, newspapers, colonial records, church records, and local and state records on microfilm. The manuscript collections contain records of organizations, individuals, and families from the 18th century to the present, providing insights into the economic, social, and political currents that shaped this region. The collection of print materials includes books, newspapers, photographs, slides, and maps. And there are over 300 interviews with people from all walks of life contained in the oral history collection. The collections are utilized by students, faculty and staff, historians, genealogists, and the general public. The collection is increasingly utilized by families throughout the nation for research into their ancestry.



Mark Your Calendar

- January 23rd – Winter Meeting, La Plata Methodist Church Hall @ 2:00 p.m. – *Daily Life in the Viking Age*.
- April 24th – Spring Dinner Meeting, Hawthorne Country Club @ 6:00 p.m. – *The Civil War in Southern Maryland*, presented by Dr. Bradley Gottfried, President of the College of Southern Maryland.
- May 23rd – Social Event, *Berry's Contrary* in Port Tobacco @ 2:00 p.m. – Presentation, Music, Food & Fun.
- June 12th (tentative) – “Bring Your Stuff Day,” Center for Business & Industry at the College of Southern Maryland – Co-sponsored with the Society for the Restoration of Port Tobacco in conjunction with the Southern Maryland Studies Advisory Committee.
- October 23rd – Fall Dinner & Membership Meeting, Durham Church Hall @ 6:00 p.m.

Collections Committee

The College of Southern Maryland and the Southern Maryland Studies Center Advisory Committee encourage the continued expansion of the archival collections. Toward this end, the collections policy has been updated, and a collections committee has been formed to assist the Center coordinator in reviewing material offered for donation to the Center. The Collections Committee will make recommendations for refusal or acceptance of gifts to the College, using the criteria for donated materials established in the Collections Policy. The committee consists of the Coordinator as chair, a representative of each of the three County's Historical Societies, and a member representing the genealogical research community.

Representing the Historical Society of Charles County on the Collections Committee is Joyce Candland.



THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF CHARLES COUNTY, INC.

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