



The RECORD



Volume 102, No. 3

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

May 2008

Kaye O'Kelley, President

Mary Ann Scott, Editor

Transportation in 18th and 19th Century Maryland

By Karen Altieri-Briggs

The Spring Meeting of the Historical Society of Charles County will be held at Historic Linden on Sunday, May 18th. The Owners and Staff of Linden Farm will present several vehicles including farm vehicles, wagons and small pony traps. All are in good working order and will be shown harnessed to horses and ponies.

Ladies and Gentlemen, dressed in period riding attire, will demonstrate side-saddle riding and how to harness a horse, from a small pony to a large draft horse. Our hostess and the owner of Linden, Karen Altieri-Briggs, has a large collection of antique side



saddles and will explain how ladies dressed and traveled when unaccompanied and why riding side saddle is still a sport today.

If weather permits, the demonstrations will be held outside, but in the case of inclement weather, we will be in the large indoor arena. Please do not let anything prevent you from attending. This live demonstration will attract people of all ages and help generate interest in the rich history that is so much a part of county life.

A tour and brief history of Linden will be included in this unique and historic presentation.

SPRING MEETING

Linden

8530 Mitchell Road , La Plata, Maryland

Sunday, May 18, 2008

2:00 - 4:00 p.m.



MENU

Assorted meat and cheese and veggie pinwheels

Cheese & cracker tray • Veggies with dip tray

Fruit tray • Crab balls

Chicken Habachi • Beef wellington

Spanakopita • Assorted Desserts • Punch

\$23.00

R.s.v.p. by May 10 to:

Bob Pender, Treasurer,

P.O. Box 2806, La Plata, Maryland 20646

UPCOMING EVENTS

Reserve This Date on Your Calendar!

**ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING
AND DINNER**

Saturday, October 25, 2008

OFFICERS, BOARD OF DIRECTORS, AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

OFFICERS

President Kaye O'Kelley
301-259-0028
kayeokelley@yahoo.com
Vice-President Michael J. Mazzeo, Jr.
Friendshiphouse1968@yahoo.com
Recording Secretary Vacant
Corresponding
Secretary Danielle Webber
Treasurer Robert Pender

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Mary Pat Berry - '09	Linda Howard - '10
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Joyce B. Candland - '10	Thomas Pike - '09
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PAST PRESIDENTS

* Bennett Crain, 62-63
* Eugene A. Jenkins, Jr., 63-64, 66-67
H. Maxwell Mitchell, Jr. 64-66
* W. Preston Williams, 67-68
* John H. Mitchell, 68-70
* Watson M. Perrygo, 70-78
George C. Dyson, 78-82
William E. Garvey, Jr., 82-85
** Richard E. Heise, II, 85-86
Michael J. Mazzeo, Jr., 86-92
Dr. Lloyd Bowling, 92-98
Wayne Winkler, 98-2004
* Deceased ** Acting President

COMMITTEES

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Vacant
Cemetery:
Vacant
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George C. Dyson, Representative
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A Twentieth Century Waldorf Icon Relives its Heyday

By Jackie Zilliox 2008

In 1938 Clark and Ruby Boswell secured a contract to purchase property from the Hunt family to build their dream of a quality hotel and restaurant, with a ten-dollar deposit. It was to be situated on the new Crain Highway, also known as Route 301, at the northern tip of Waldorf. Construction crews kept hitting springs as they began to dig the foundation, so the new owners aptly named their hotel Spring Lake.



The Spring Lake Hotel was newly built in 1938 and ready for business in 1939. Parking lot markers and greenery were added shortly after. Also note the open porch.

The 1939 deed described the property boundary markers with seventeenth century language. The northern boundary was the Mattawoman Bridge, which spanned Mattawoman Creek and linked Charles County

to Prince George County. (The bridge in use today is the third constructed.) The Baltimore-Potomac Railroad, built in 1873, that ran across the back of the property was mentioned. A gum tree and a culvert head wall were also part of the verbiage. (A culvert is a pipe used under a driveway to provide drainage so excessive water will not wash out the driveway.) Why did they use such antiquated terms? Because that's all there physically was!

The Boswells finished Spring Lake Hotel in 1939, but before officially opening their doors, Clark died suddenly of a cerebral hemorrhage while returning from driving an employee home. Ruby took up the reins of daily business with young son Joseph in tow, and continued to live the dream of creating a cozy lodge in the countryside for their guests.

In the beginning, the Boswells ran it primarily as a hotel. There were thirteen rooms on the second floor. Usually filled every night with people traveling on Route 301. The third level was built about 1945 to accommodate two private apartments. One was for Ruby and the other for Joseph. Joseph's private apartment was given up on occasion for very special guests. During the race for governor of Maryland, republican candidate Theodore McKeldan, and democratic candidate George P. Mahoney were allowed to stay in the penthouse, at separate times, of course.

As you entered the hotel lobby, the restaurant was on the right,



As you entered the front door to the hotel, you had the option of turning to your right to enjoy a screened porch that provided a private vantage point to watch the traffic on Crane Highway.

and the bar on the left. The restaurant's lodge-styled interior featured a rustic stone fireplace as the focal point. There was also a banquet room that could accommodate up to 200 customers. Live music was a staple on weekends starting with a dance on Saturday night featuring a live trio band. On Sunday night local musician, Earl Montgomery, played either piano or the Hammond organ from 12:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Spring Lake Hotel was often chosen by the Restaurant Association to regularly hold a dinner dance in which all the proceeds went to charity.

About 1945 Ruby asked the state for assistance to create a lake out of the marshland to the left of her property. Since lake was in their name, she wanted a lake. The state agreed to help, and the Boswells provided the land, water, and equipment needed. The Boswells then stocked the lake with various lake fish for patrons to catch from the pier or rowboat. Many a hot day was spent taking a cool dip in the ten-foot deep lake. Eventually migratory birds also found "the Lake" to their liking and made a home there. The next time you cross the Mattawoman-Beantown bridge on your way out of the county take a quick glance to your right and you can still see the "lake".

Usually visitors to the hotel included representatives of tobacco manufacturers that came to purchase tobacco, or weary travelers going to or coming from some other destination. In the fall of 1950, Spring Lake Hotel accommodated two such travelers, the owners of RKO Radio Pictures, Mary and Harry Reiners. In a letter dated November 11th,

1950, they thanked Ruby for the "good service and hospitality." The letter also states they enjoyed dinner, drinks and the friendly poker game. The next day they hit the road to Fayetteville after enjoying a country breakfast and buying a jar of preserves.

Ruby eventually bought property to the right of the hotel that totaled approximately eighteen acres of land. They farmed it for a while, and even had a stable of horses. The property eventually sold and was developed to become Pinefield North and Cap City.

By 1955 running a business was proving to be tiresome for Ruby and she sold it to the Brown brothers, Leroy and Ray, who promptly renamed it Brownie's Spring Lake Hotel. There was more and more competition in the area, Dick Chaney



This is the hotel after the devastating fire that happened while the Brown's owned it. Even though it's of the rear of the building you can see the third story edition, the penthouse, added in 1945.

built the Waldorf Restaurant and Motel across the street, but even so, business remained strong at Brownie's Spring Lake Hotel. That is, until a major fire in the kitchen on Mother's Day closed them down for eighteen months. Eventually they sold and Brownie's Spring Lake Hotel became a nightclub called Spurs. It changed hands again to become a topless bar called Scandals Nite Club, which closed on March 31, 1995. It was torn down and in its place is the new connection for Mattawoman-Beantown Road and Route 301.

During the time when Spring Lake Hotel was in

Waldorf Icon, continued on Page 5

Testing Your Knowledge: Charles County Historic Sites

HISTORIC HOMES OF BRYANTOWN

Photos courtesy of Michael J. Mazzeo, Jr.

1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



7.



8.



Answers on back page.

Linden: Interesting Facts



Linden Farm is a rural working horse farm in the Port Tobacco Valley a few miles from La Plata. The farm is a site of historical preservation, not only of the buildings, but also of a way of life, through its equine studies and a Bed and Breakfast get-a-way.

Friends of Linden

Friends of Linden, formed in May 2004, is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting the horse industry and the history of Charles County. The mission of "Friends of Linden" is to raise funds and provide volunteer services in support of certain properties in Charles County that are on the National Register of Historic Places.

Preserving Historic Charles County

The Friends of Linden are dedicated to preserving the private residence and historic tobacco barns on the property. They also work to ensure that equestrian activities remain part of the Charles County landscape.

Two historic tobacco barns are clearly visible from Mitchell Road and are attractive subjects for local artists and photographers. The barn located closest to the driveway is a 19th century "cedar" barn. The original roof was cedar shingles and all of the beams are hand hewn. The barn closest to Linden Farm Place is an early 20th century barn and is currently used for hay storage by the owners of Linden Farm. Mr. and Mrs. Briggs, the owners, are working very hard to preserve these barns and to make repairs which support the historic accuracy of each structure but also to keep them in good repair.

Linden Farm Bed & Breakfast

Two guest rooms and one suite in a two-story Colonial farmhouse built in 1783 and furnished with antiques are available for get-a-ways. Amenities include a front porch, side porch, historic dependencies, gardens, pastures, wooded nature trails and lawn games. Horses permitted with notice.

Linden Farm Riding Academy

Established in September 2000, the Riding Academy has grown to over 100 students. Our students range in age from 3 years old to 63. Designed to introduce young people and adults to the wonderful world of horsemanship, Linden offers riding programs for beginning and intermediate students.

Classes are held every day of the week – some are for adults only. Whether you prefer to ride in the morning or evening, our schedule of classes is designed to accommodate your busy schedule. All classes are semi-private with no more than four students per instructor per class. Our facilities are among the finest in Charles County. We offer professional horse training as well.

Visit Linden Farm in Historic Charles County, Maryland

Karen Briggs
8530 Mitchell Road
La Plata, MD 20646

Waldorf Icon, continued from Page 3

its heyday, Route 301 was much like Route 66. It was a roadway that connected point A (Northern cities like Washington, Baltimore, and New York) to point B (Southern cities such as Richmond, Raleigh, and even Florida) with very little to see in between. But there was one little lodge of luxury that some found on their journey to pull into and smell the roses.

A Charles County 350th Event

Embracing Our Past, Celebrating Our Future



The Friendship House Foundation

in Partnership with

*The African-American Heritage Society &
The College of Southern Maryland*

Celebrating the Craftsmanship of Colonial Maryland

Survival of the skills and crafts that enabled early Marylanders to prosper and endure

Calendar of Events

Themed Weekends

*May 3rd & 4th
June 21st & 22nd*

Hours

*Saturdays 12:00 to 2:00
Sundays 2:00 to 4:00*



Special Event

*Sunday, October 19th
2:00 p.m.*

Colonial Holiday Event

*Sunday, November 16th
2:00 p.m.*

All events take place at Friendship House, on the campus of the College

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
Ms. Shiela Smith*

*Patriot
Mr. & Mrs. Dan Donohue
Mr. Michael J. Mazzeo, Jr.*

*Renaissance
Mr. & Mrs. Ernest L. Irish*

Friendship House Committees

Friendship House is up and running. We have established committees and they are listed below. If you are interested in serving on a Friendship House Committee, please contact Mike Mazzeo at 301-659-5369.

Administration

George C. Dyson,
Administrator
H. Maxwell Mitchell

Furnishings

Joyce Candland, Chair
Madelyn Irish
Louise B. Turner
Anita L. Wood

Tours & Special Programs

Barbara Abell
Carol Donohue
Maureen Golding
Katherine MacCormack

Cellar Museum & Shop

James H. Berry, Jr.
Mary Pat Berry

Foundation

Michael J. Mazzeo, Jr., Chair
Madelyn Irish
Vivian S. Malczyk
Anita L. Wood

Ways & Means

Ruby Dyson
Sandra Mitchell

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 possible 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 Kay O'Kelley at kayeokelley@yahoo.com

Answers to Testing Your Knowledge

1. Boarman's Manor, 1913
2. Bowling Green, 1790
3. Brick House Lot, 1820
4. Brinkwood, 1889
5. Evergreen, 1873
6. Mt. Eagle
7. Sunny Side Farm, 1869
8. Wiltshire Plains, 1760

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF CHARLES COUNTY

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(301) 934-2564