

The HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF HARFORD COUNTY, Inc.

Preserving Our Past For Your Future



143 N. Main Street
Bel Air, MD 21014

Society News

January / February 2012

Phone: (410) 838-7691

FAX: (410) 838-5257

E-Mail: HarcHis@msn.com

On the web: www.HarfordHistory.org



The Historical Society of
Harford County, Inc.,
headquarters.

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NEW MEMBERS

Richard Beards, Charles W. Burns,
Jean M. Calder, Peter J. Calabrese,
Tom and Fran Fink, John
Gladden, Robin Hawks, Wesley
and Elizabeth Herrmann, Robert
Maddox, Mr. and Mrs. Richard
Matthews, Jill Redding, James M.
Sacks, Alan and Kelly Sweatman,
James and Lorayne Thornton,
Christine Tolbert

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW EXCERPT

Interviewee: Mary Moses - - - - Interviewer: Kathi Santora

This interview took place in October 2011 at the Bel Air Town Hall, 39 Hickory Ave. Bel Air, MD. It was done as part of the Veterans Day initiative, providing a unique opportunity to capture the stories of local veterans. Participants included veterans from WW II, Korea, Vietnam and the Cold War era.

My name is Mary Moses. I attained the rank of sergeant in the U.S. Army. I joined delayed entry in December of 1976 during my senior year in high school. I went active duty right after graduation (on) August 1, 1977. I took basic training in Ft. Jackson, S.C. in an all-female WAC brigade. I went through AIT in Ft. Gordon, Georgia in communications. I was trained as a radio operator and then I was sent to Germany, 498 Support Battalion, part of 2nd Army Division Forward. We were Patton's Babies. We wore our unit patch over our heart. We were the only unit to do that.

We were part of the Cold War, which isn't legally acknowledged as a conflict. Technically, we are not acknowledged as wartime veterans. Served 3 ½ years in Germany. Then I got out and joined the Army Reserves. I was at 326 Maintenance Battalion in Baltimore; actually I think it is Owings Mills. Then I got a job at (Harford County) Emergency Operations, and then I went individual ready reserve until my time expired, about four years in reserves.

Kathi Santora: Tell me a little bit about what drew you to the service. As a woman, that was sort of an unusual decision to make.

It was a very unusual decision to make. My father had a very difficult time with it. I had always admired the military. I grew up watching reports from Vietnam. It seemed like something very valiant.

(Continued on Page 2)

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW EXCERPT

Continued from Page 1

I was never the greatest student. OK, I graduated with a 1.6 average and I didn't have much of a choice. I was looking at college, but it was difficult to get into. The only options around here, at the time, were going to work for Bata. I didn't want to do that. So I started looking at the military seriously.

When we were school shopping in downtown Bel Air, because the mall didn't exist then, I stopped – it's a funny story. My mother said, "I am going to buy your brother some clothes," and I said, "I am going to go back up here and look at something else." I went to the recruiting station. We met at Woolworth's for lunch. When we sat down she goes, "Well, what did you buy?" and I said "Nothing. I signed up to join the Army." And I'll never forget the look on her face.

(Laughter in the room from other participants)

O.K It was just total shock.

Kathi Santora: Talk a bit more about her reaction. Did she eventually come around?

Well, my parents stayed in a constant state of denial: "Oh, she's not going to do this, she's not going to do this. " When I brought home the paperwork, my Dad just sat there and looked at me for about 10 minutes. "You are not going to do this."

I said, yes, I am going to do this. So I went through and they were still in total denial up until the time I was packing my suitcases to leave. On July 31, it was my sister's birthday, and we were up all night. That morning I was

shipping out. I had to be up at o'dark thirty I had to go down and swear in and everything. My father came – my parents were separated at the time – and my father came back to the house just to stand there and watch me leave. He did not think I was going to do it. And they were still planning on bringing me home all the way up to the time of the swearing in. They said, "O.k. parents, say goodbye." It was just unbelievable.

Kathi Santora: Did your parents have to sign for you to join?

Yes, I did not turn 18 until the June 22nd of that year, which was after graduation. So yes, they had to sign for me to commit to the delayed entry program.

Kathi Santora: Tell me what happened then. You went to training?

Yes.

Kathi Santora: Talk a little about basic training for those of us who don't know much about it.

Well, this is where it got interesting, because the Women's Army Corps had been eliminated in '76. We didn't know that. The drill sergeant was still showing us all these nice little training films and the women wore bobby socks and doing, you know, feminine things, learning to roll your hair and stuff. But what we entered into was a whole different Army because the women were going away from the WAC Corps and becoming enlisted women. They were integrating women into, I guess, the normal population, regular army. So we were a test case. We had to do male PT (physical training), but tested on a female basis. We had people following us around with clipboards, we knew

they were higher ups, but we did not know exactly what they were doing there. They were making sure we could fire weapons; we had to qualify with weapons the same as men. What was really funny was the day we had to qualify with grenades. O.K., because the guys at the range were going nuts. We were the first class of women that had to throw grenades in this particular area. And they were scared to death. They didn't think we could throw. I said, you put something in my hand that could blow my head off, I can throw, O.K.? That's just the way – now we did pretty good, now we didn't get the qualification medal. It was just a test to see if we could do it.

We also had to, we were also a test case to see if we could shoot a tank with a LAW (Light Anti-tank Weapon). Again, there was controversy at the range, there were a lot of guys who were skeptical and afraid that we were going to hurt somebody. But we did it. And when we

graduated, we had to take off our WAC brass and put on regular brass. That was kind of a really big turning point.

Kathi Santora: How were you feeling about yourself at that point?

Um, pretty good. But then we went real world. We went into the fray, the non-segregated army. That's when we started seeing – I am sorry, gentlemen, I am not trying to – um – guys just weren't there. As far as accepting us as equals. You know we were always the secretaries, making coffee, doing those things. And suddenly we were put into a situation where we had to integrate with the guys and – um – prove ourselves as soldiers. That was kind of tough.

One of my first assignments in Germany, I was assigned to an S-3 Division. That's training. When I walked into report, the first thing he showed me was a coffeepot. So I had to make the coffee.

After that it got a little easier. We had a lot of good leaders who led the way and led us to where we are now. I am just so happy to see some of the accolades that women are getting now in the military.

Copies of the complete interview are available at the Historical Society Headquarters. Ms. Moses was one of eleven people interviewed for the Veteran's Series. Transcripts of the remaining interviews are not yet completed, but are expected to be transcribed in the next few months.



Mary Moses and Robert Smith sharing stories at the interview session – October 2011

VETERANS DAY EVENT

On November 10th and 11th, the Historical Society of Harford County, Inc, Harford County and the Town of Bel Air co-sponsored a major Veterans Day event at the Bel Air Reckord Armory. We thank all of our members who participated, and those who shared their stories with us. The following photographs, provided by Kathi Santora at the Writers Studio, are a small sample of the numerous activities. Please visit the Society's website at www.HarfordHistory.org or the Society's Facebook page to see more photographs and a video of the event.

"Parachute" Wedding Dress with Officers uniforms – one of numerous displays



Cornerstone Rededication Ceremony for the Reckord Armory led by the Grand Master of the Maryland Masonic Lodge

Baltimore Volunteers awaiting signal for Black Powder Salute



One of six Marching bands performing in the Veterans Day Parade

PRESIDENTS REPORT

First, let me welcome our two new Officers for the term beginning January 1, 2012 - Henry Peden, President, and Elizabeth Lehmann, Recording Secretary, and our returning Officers, Richard Sherrill, 1st VP, Richard Herbig, 2nd VP, Lesley Lookingbill, Treasurer, and Page Smart, Corresponding Secretary. Also, our three new Board Members – Adrienne DeRan, Carol Deibel and Larry Carmichael as well as our returning Board Members – Mary Cardwell, James Wollon, and Robert Preston.

As I am writing this a few days before Christmas, the year 2011 has not yet closed, so the final financials are not yet in, but the expectation is that the Society will not do as well financially as we had expected. Like all non-profits that depend on memberships and donations for their income, the Society continues to be negatively affected by the down economy. On the revenue side, donations are down and we were unable to secure any grant money this year to offset our significant repair expenditures as little money was available. Also, several of our fund raising events were not as profitable as expected. On the expense side, the Society incurred significant costs for repairs that could not be postponed any longer, namely repair of the broken handicap railing and ramp, the treatment of the underground oil tank as required by the Maryland Department of the Environment and repairs to the leaking roof.

We have already fixed the calendar for the major events of the Society for 2012, including the Hays House, and these events will be communicated to all beginning in January. As many of these events are a source of income to the Society, I hope everyone will put them on their calendars and plan to attend as many as possible throughout the year.

Finally, let me say that I have enjoyed my term as President the last two years and working with everyone to advance the Mission of the Historical Society of Harford County. I wish the new Officers and Board all success in the New Year.

Phil Brundrett, President

IN MEMORIAM

The last year closed on a sad note for the Society as we lost several of our long time, dedicated volunteers. We ask you to remember the families of:

Anne Baranowki

Lena Caron

Mary Crisco

Elizabeth Hicks

Lyman "Dutch" Meyers

ONE MAN'S JOURNEY BEL AIR IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) of Harford County is sponsoring an oral history project collecting the personal recollections of County citizens about life in Harford County in the 20th Century. The following is the first in a series of interviews which will be available at the Historical Society and at the County Planning & Zoning office for future researchers, providing a first person account of the last century. This article is based on an interview with Mr. Charles L. Robbins. If you are interested in telling your story of life in Harford County during the 20th century, please contact us at HSHCNewsletter@verizon.net or send contact information to the Historical Society, 143 N. Main St., Bel Air, MD 21014 c/o Carol Deibel.



Main Street Bel Air – circa 1940

Bel Air in 1900 was a sleepy rural community serving as the center of commerce and social interaction for the outlying farm community. Friday and Saturday nights were hopping with area farmers driving in on horse and wagon to the four block section of Main Street to purchase supplies, clothing, shoes and possibly to celebrate at a local restaurant or hotel. Sundays were set aside for church services at the numerous churches lining Main Street, Bond Street and Hickory Avenue. During the week, business centered on Court House Square. Law offices, banks, insurance companies, local newspaper offices surrounded the Court House and the Masonic Lodge which housed the Town Hall (until the mid-twentieth century), the Masonic Lodge facilities, as well as offices, and a hall for concerts, plays and dances. Local

hotels served those with court business, race track visitors and tourists, as well as the weekend restaurant patrons. Bel Air was the first area in the county to acquire telephone service in the 1920s. Electricity came earlier but was limited to a small section of town and was dependent on a generator operated by the owner of the Reckord Mill on North Main Street. By the twenties, electric service was available to most areas, although some outlying parts of the county did not have electricity until the 1950s.

During the Depression years hoboes moved from place to place seeking food and shelter, often hitching rides on the Ma & Pa railroad. They would come to the homes in Bel Air, seeking food, always offering to work first. Local housewives would provide soup or sandwiches to these men in return for yard work, repairs and the like. At that time in Bel Air, the hoboes were exclusively male.

From a child's perspective, this was an era of freedom and fun. Children had chores but once these were done they were free to wander the countryside. This was an idyllic time for youngsters in the Bel Air area, exploring the Heavenly Waters Valley with friends sometimes on horseback or on bikes, chasing

the Ma & Pa train, playing cowboys and Indians, exploring the "wilderness", fishing, hunting and building lifelong friendships.

The 40s brought World War II, paved roads and a new emphasis on the military. Everyone was part of the war effort, school teachers sold bonds, children acted as messengers, and plane spotters. Their parents and grandparents rolled bandages and worked with the civil defense agency. Every block, every farm had someone serving in the military. Soldiers left from Bel Air's Ma & Pa train station regularly. The Bel Air Armory functioned as a center for the draft board, social events for the soldiers, Red Cross activities and military activities of the National Guard. At that time, the National Guard was still a cavalry unit with horses kept in barns behind the building.

With the limited work force created by the war effort, many rules and regulations were changed. German and Italian prisoners from the North Africa campaign were held at APG and Edgewood Arsenal. Prisoners were needed to help with farm harvests, but trucks and men were in short supply. Boys were allowed to obtain a driver's license at fourteen to help transport the prisoners to local farms. Young boys transported them to farms throughout the County; however German and Italian prisoners were housed separately to limit fights, since there was a great deal of animosity between them, even though they were technically allies.

Peace brought new challenges and major changes, altering the face of the county forever. Tract housing replaced orchards and dairy farms that had surrounded the town. Many soldiers from APG and Edgewood Arsenal decided to stay in the area creating new demand for housing. Returning soldiers exacerbated housing demand as they started families postponed during the war years. The new subdivisions created demand for more

schools and better services. These "modern services" changed the face of Bel Air forever. The Ma & Pa railroad which had served the commuter population and farms since the late 1800s, no longer was deemed efficient or fast enough. It was replaced by improved roads and trucking. The Bel Air Race Track, which served as a center of entertainment for locals and as a tourist attraction for outsiders, was sold to accommodate a new shopping mall. The old Main Street shopping area began a sharp decline as shopping centers pulled away business and automobile oriented businesses along Route 1 became major destinations for the new residents brought in by the suburbanization of the county. Hotels were no longer needed with fast moving automobile connections and the shift of traffic to Route 40 and 1-95. These gave way to new shopping centers as well.

Harford County remained a rural enclave well into the Twentieth Century. However, by the 1960s, the county following national trends was becoming a bedroom community. Lifestyle changes coincided with the loss of many rural traditions. Friday night shopping on Bel Air's Main Street almost disappeared. The local school system was almost overwhelmed with the need for new facilities brought about by the baby boom and subsequently by "white flight" in the 1970s. As scientists from APG became more involved in their children's schooling in the 50s and early 60s, there was a strong emphasis on science, math and learning in general. PTA meetings were usually standing room only events. The 60s led to a new emphasis on vocational training, resulting in the first countywide technical high school. With the growth of Bel Air and Harford County as a bedroom community, life changed radically. Tourists who once used Broadway and Main Street (Route 1), stopping at local hotels and the Del Haven motel, began to use

Route 40 and 1-95 bypassing the county seat completely. No longer needed for the long term stays that they once served or for the tourists visiting the race track, local hotels closed. Today there are no hotels in the county seat. Main Street struggled to survive after the shopping centers arrived. It lost its theater and many Mom & Pop shops, giving way to government offices and professional services, i.e. lawyers, accountants, etc. The days of families living above the stores and small town connections shifted to the suburban hustle and bustle we know today. By 2000, Bel Air was firmly ensconced as the center of finance and government for Harford County. Main Street remained the center of the community although the focus changed from the retail center to a government service and specialty shop destination. The farms that once surrounded the Town are long gone, replaced

with numerous housing developments and businesses. Yet the town remains a vibrant community area known as the “Heart of Harford”.



Bel Air Race Track – Current site of Harford Mall

WANTED

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

The Society is seeking articles on local history for the newsletter. Articles should be no more than 750 words and should tell the story of a local family, event or place in Harford County. Articles may be mailed to C. Deibel c/o the Historical Society, 143 N. Main St. , Bel Air, MD 21014 or emailed to HSHCNewsletter@verizon.net.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Society hosts four lectures a year and sponsors several special events. If you could help with one of the events or chair one of the lectures, please contact Maryanna Skowronski, 410-838-7691. One volunteer has already agreed to chair this year’s bus trip, but we need individuals to help plan and organize the other events and lectures. Please consider helping us with this very worthwhile effort.

APG RAIL HISTORY - INFORMATION/STORIES WANTED

Mark Gallihue, a historian working at APG, is seeking anyone familiar with the history of rail operations at Aberdeen Proving Ground. If you know about that particular part of APG’s history, please contact Mr. Gallihue at 410-306-2282 and share your information/stories.

2012 HAYS HOUSE EVENT CALENDAR

| Date / Time | Event | Admission | Description |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| March 11 1pm-4pm | <i>Grand Re-Opening!</i> Timeless Furniture at Home in the Museum | \$5 adults \$3 Students & Seniors | Preserving our Past Series: Visit the Hays House with furniture restoration expert Arthur Benser as he examines major pieces of antique furniture from the Historical Society's collection. |
| April 15 1pm-4pm | Women's and Children's Medical Care in the Quaker Community | \$5 adults \$3 Students & Seniors | Preserving Our Past Series: Find out about the health issues and "cures" that plagued 18 th century women and children from Nancy Webster, a practicing Quaker and history interpreter who has studied 18 th century domestic life for more than 40 years. |
| May 6 1pm-4pm | Children's Games Day and May Day Celebration | \$5 adults \$3 Students & Seniors | Preserving Our Past Series: An afternoon of fun and games for the whole family. Board games, and weather permitting, outdoor activities enjoyed by our forefathers. |
| July 4 9am-12pm | Independence Day <i>Open House</i> | Free | Special activities! Period music by the <i>Catherine Street Consort</i> . |
| September 9 1pm-4pm | <i>Celebrate</i> <i>Grandparents Day!</i> Take a Walk on the Wild Side | \$5 adults \$3 Students & Seniors | Enjoy a visit with wildlife rehabilitator Kathy Woods and her feathered and scaled critters. Get answers to your wildlife rescue questions. Learn about honeybees from Dennis Hertzog of the Susquehanna Beekeepers Association. |
| October 28 6 pm | Parlor Concert featuring <i>Planxty</i> <i>Plaid</i> | \$8 Reservations Required | Listen to a concert of Celtic and traditional music in the Hays House parlor By <i>Planxty Plaid</i> —fiddle player JoAnn Appel and guitar player Jim Selway. Light Refreshments will be served. <u>Seating is limited.</u> Call 410-592-8693 or 410-838-7691. |

| Date / Time | Event | Admission | Description |
|------------------------|--|---|---|
| November 11 1pm-4pm | The Art of Hearth Cooking | \$5 adults \$3 students & seniors | Preserving Our Past Series: Be an 18 th century locavore! Experience the sounds and aromas of seasonal foods prepared at the hearth by Mercy Ingraham, a renowned 18 th century culinary expert, history interpreter, and food writer for <i>Early American Life</i> . |
| December 2 1pm-4pm | Holiday Open House | <i>Donations appreciated</i> | Visit while the Hays House is richly arrayed in natural decorations for the holidays. Music by the <i>Catherine Street Consort</i> . |
| December 9 4pm | Colonial Candlelight Christmas Concert and Tea <i>Emmanuel Church in Bel Air</i> | \$8 Reservations Required | Enjoy an exquisite holiday concert by <i>Musica Antiqua</i> performing on period instruments. Tea in the British tradition follows the concert. Call 410-592-8693 or 410-838-7691. |

The Hays House Museum is open March through mid-December, Sundays from 1 to 4 pm and to groups by appointment. Special events are made possible in part by a grant from the Maryland Council for the Arts through the Harford County Cultural Arts Board and Harford County Government. All events take place at Hays House unless otherwise indicated.

**2012 CALENDAR OF EVENTS
HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF HARFORD COUNTY
143 N. Main Street, Bel Air, MD 21014**

1/11 POWER POINT LECTURE ON HARFORD COUNTY CANNERIES –ARCHEOLOGICAL ASPECTS AND ARTIFACT INTERPRETATION

6:30 P.M. Havre de Grace City Hall. Sponsored by the Archeological Society of Northern Chesapeake (ASNC). Speaker Bernie Bodt. No Charge

2/8 BRITISH REAR ADMIRAL GEORGE COCKBURN ATTACKS HAVRE DE GRACE – MAY 3, 1813 – NEW FINDINGS

6:30 P.M. Historical Society Headquarters. Sponsored by the Archeological Society of Northern Chesapeake (ASNC). Speaker Christopher George. No Charge

4/29 SPRING HISTORICAL SOCIETY LECTURE & TEA.

2 pm – 4 pm. The first in a series of local history talks. Talk only – No Charge. Tea & Talk \$10 per person. 410-838-7691

5/17 BUS TRIP.

Bus leaves from the Historical Society, 143 N. Main Street. Annual fundraising bus trip to a unique regional historic site. Time and Site TBA. Cost TBA. 410-838-7691

6/7 ART EXHIBIT AND WINE & CHEESE EVENING.

6:30 pm – 10 pm. Exhibit featuring the Society's recently received gift of the collected artwork of the late Mary Woodward. Evening reception. Admission TBA. 410-838-7691

8/ 5 SUMMER HISTORICAL LECTURE & TEA.

2 pm. Second in a series of four local history lectures. Speaker TBA. Talk only – No Charge. Tea & talk - \$10. 410-838-7691

9/20 ANNUAL DINNER & LECTURE.

Maryland Golf and Country Clubs, 1338 E. MacPhail Road. 6:30 pm – 10 pm. Dinner and speaker TBA. Sponsored by The Historical Society of Harford County. Fee TBA. 410-838-7691

10/21 ANNUAL ARCHER LECTURE & TEA.

2 pm. Third in a series of local history talks and teas. Lecture only – Free. Tea & lecture - \$10 per person. 410-838-7691

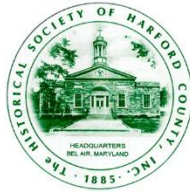
Nov. 17 to Mid Dec, ALUMINUM CHRISTMAS TREE EXHIBIT.

Largest collection of decorated and lighted vintage aluminum trees on the East Coast on display. Adults \$4; Children \$2; 6 & under free. 410-838-7691

12/9 GREENS SALE & OPEN HOUSE.

9 am – 3 pm. Live greens, both loose and holiday arrangements. Gift shop. Refreshments. Free Admission. 410-838-7691

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OFFICERS 2012-2013

| | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| <i>President</i> Henry Peden | <i>1st Vice President</i> Richard Sherrill | <i>2nd Vice President</i> Richard Herbig | <i>Recording Secretary</i> Elizabeth Lehmann |
| <i>Corresponding Secretary</i> Page Smart | <i>Treasurer</i> Lesley C. Lookingbill | | <i>Past President</i> Philipp Brundrett |

DIRECTORS 2011-2012

| | | |
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| <i>William White</i> | <i>Carol DeRan</i> | <i>Millicent Jordon</i> |

DIRECTORS 2012-2013

| | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>Carol Deibel</i> | <i>Larry Carmichael</i> | <i>Mary Cardwell</i> |
| <i>James Wollon</i> | <i>Adrienne DeRan</i> | <i>Robert Preston</i> |

DIRECTOR

Maryanna Skowronski

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Carol Deibel

HISTORICAL SOCIETY and GIFT SHOP HOURS

Tuesday
COURT RECORDS
10:00 A.M. - 2:30 P.M.

Wednesday
ARCHIVES
8:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.

Thursday
RESEARCH LIBRARY
9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.

Fourth Saturday
ARCHIVES and
RESEARCH LIBRARY
10:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.