



The RECORD



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

January 2007

Kaye O'Kelley, President

Mary Ann Scott, Editor

January Meeting

Saturday, January 20, 2007 – 2 p.m.

La Plata United Methodist Church

Speaker: Christine L. Bergmark, Ph.D.

The January Meeting of the Historical Society of Charles County will be Saturday, January 20, 2007, at La Plata United Methodist Church, at the intersection of Route 6 (Port Tobacco Road) and Route 301. The gathering will begin at 2:00 p.m. with a short business meeting, followed by a presentation by Christine L. Bergmark, Ph.D., Executive Director of the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission. Dr. Bergmark will explain the role of the Agricultural Development Commission and their efforts to establish tourism trails in Charles, Calvert, and St. Mary's County. Check out the article on the front page.

This is an open general meeting where your guests and those wanting to find out more about the historical society are welcome to attend.



Christine Bergmark is currently the Director of Agricultural Development for the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland. She administers the Tobacco Buyout Program for the State of Maryland as well as an agricultural development program for the five county region of Southern Maryland. Christine has over 25 years of experience in international agriculture research and development. She also owns and co-operates a 104-acre organic farm in Southern Maryland.



What are the Southern Maryland Trails? The Trails are a network of partner sites published in a colorful and informative guidebook. The guidebook is arranged to make it easy for visitors to plan a "trail trip" for a day or a weekend.

Who is on the Trails? Trails include sites that celebrate our area's natural culture and heritage: farms, art studios and galleries, eateries, lodgings and more. The emphasis is on quality and authenticity: things that are hand-made, locally grown and harvested, etc.

How much is the guidebook? Trails books are absolutely FREE.

Where are the Trails? The Trails encompass the five Southern Maryland Counties: Ann Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Prince Georges and St. Mary's.

Why do the Trails exist? The purpose of the Trails is to encourage visitors from inside and outside this area to explore the farm-based activities, original arts and local hospitality this area has to offer.

When will the Trails launch? In the fall of 2006.

Where can I get a Trails guidebook? The books will be distributed in area visitors' centers, libraries, at many partner sites, and at the the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (Hughesville). They will also be made available by mail to tourists from outside the area.

What's ahead for the Trails? A planned feature of the Trails program is a collection of "Packages" in which several partners will team up to offer a "themed" series of events to groups. For example, a weekend-long package may include a tour and wine-tasting at a local winery, a session in a potter's studio making a wine goblet, a stay at a local B&B, and a dinner featuring local wine at an area restaurant.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Reserve This Date on Your Calendar!

SPRING MEETING

Saturday, May 19, 2007

Charles County, Maryland Genealogical Society Cemetery Transcription Project

The tombstones of our ancestors were always meant to be loving and lasting memorials to the lives of those gone before. It is distressing to see how these memorials are suffering the ravages of time and weather. Many of the stones are difficult to read and



some have already become so faint that deciphering them is next to impossible. In March 2005, the Charles County Maryland Genealogical Society received a grant from the Charles County Historic

Trust to further the work on the cemetery project. This project consists of transcribing, photographing and taking GPS readings of the cemeteries in Charles County. Thus far, we have found 134 cemeteries and gravesites. Of these, we have thoroughly documented 59 sites. The oldest headstone we have found to date is for Thomas Crabb 1672-1719.

All efforts are made to determine the owners of the properties, and then field work can begin. While some cemeteries are well known and easily accessible, other sites are well off the beaten path. Little did we know that this endeavor would provide such healthy, physical benefits! To reach one location, we were assisted by the landowner who kindly shoved aside his cows so that we could reach the site. We learned to adroitly climb fences and dodge cow patties. At another area, we battled the elements as we draped ourselves over tree trunks in order to take the photographs. For some cemeteries, we found it necessary to use rakes, weed whackers, chain saws, pruning shears, and lots of elbow grease in order to clear the area before our documentation could proceed. Our experiences soon taught us to be prepared with "cemetery kits:" chalk, brushes, hand trowels, spray bottles of water, gloves, wet wipes, grass clippers and the all important bug spray. Even in some of the well established cemeteries, we cleared the stones from overgrown grass and weeds. Because some of the markings were so faint, we had to use chalk or water to enhance the lettering.

In order to achieve good quality photographs we needed to compensate for the glare of the sun by scrounging for items to provide shade for the area. Our creativity had a work out as we repurposed car sunshields, old maps, poster boards and articles of clothing. If all else failed, human shields were called into play. One of the questionable blessings of this work is that a number of us have become experts in the treatment of poison ivy.

Once the field work has been completed, data entry of the transcriptions is then inputted into a computerized spreadsheet. The photos are then numbered and linked to the data and all information is subsequently proofread and uploaded to our website at: http://www.rootsweb.com/~mdccmgs/cemetery_transcription/index.htm

Much to our delight we found that other cemeteries have been maintained in pristine condition. We remain grateful to those who have worked to preserve this heritage and have made our documentation so much easier. Also invaluable are the previous records compiled by the Historical Society. Not only have they served as a reference for our current work, but they have truly been an inspiration for our whole project. The Charles County Planning and Growth Department has also been instrumental in providing information to aid us in locating elusive gravesites.



This project is ongoing and could not be accomplished without the cooperation of our community. We are grateful for this opportunity to help preserve and promote the historical heritage of Charles County.

Joyce Clerico
Cemetery Chair
Charles County, Maryland
Genealogical Society

**OFFICERS,
BOARD OF DIRECTORS, AND
COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

OFFICERS

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* Watson M. Perrygo, 70-78
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** Richard E. Heise, II, 85-86
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Dr. Lloyd Bowling, 92-98
Wayne Winkler, 98-04
* Deceased
** Acting President

COMMITTEES

Arrangements:
Vacant
Cemetery:
Vacant
Genealogy and Research:
Ruby Dyson, *Chairperson*
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Carol Donohue, Representative
**Coalition to Protect Maryland
Burial Sites:**
George C. Dyson, Representative
Historical Trust Representative:
Ruby W. Dyson

**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.

Please reserve Saturday evening, May 19, 2007 for our spring meeting. We are working on a location and menu. Linda Reno from St. Mary's County will speak on the "Maryland 400" – The Battle of Brooklyn and the 400 Marylanders who fought to save the newly formed American army. Ms. Reno will also include a short video.

Membership

At the dinner meeting in October the attending members approved a motion to raise the membership dues for 2007 and for lifetime. Individual will be raised to \$25.00, family to \$40.00 and lifetime to \$200.00. This increase is necessary because the Historical Society operates at a loss each year.

In January 2007, membership renewal notices will be sent to members. Please return your money by the deadline in the notice so the Historical Society can avoid incurring the expenses of reminder notices and additional postage. It is helpful if members include any change in name, address, or phone number on the return envelope so we may keep our database current. Lifetime members may send any changes to:

Michael Ruth, Chairperson
P.O. Box 2806
La Plata, MD 20646

You may also contact Michael at 301-934-5717.

Train Station Decorated

The La Plata Community Garden Club decorated the Train Station in December. Swags and wreaths of live greens were made for each door and most windows of the station and caboose. Homemade gingerbread men were hung at each window from burgundy ribbon. A 50 foot garland also of live greens was made and hung on the front railing. Window lights were installed, a round table was dressed in a festive tablecloth, a pinecone tree and plates of gingerbread men completed the festive look.

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

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
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Cellar Museum & Shop

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

Ways & Means

Ruby Dyson
Sandra Mitchell

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF CHARLES COUNTY

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