

# The RECORD



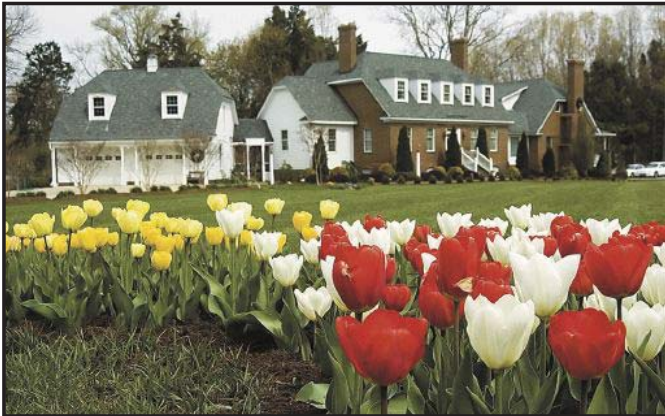
Volume 104, No. 2

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

May 2010

Joyce Candland, President

Mary Ann Scott, Editor



*The Historical Society of Charles County  
is excited to invite you to its first*

## *Strawberry Social*

**Sunday, May 23, 2010**

### *Berry's Contrary*

*The Home of Jim & Mary Pat Berry  
Port Tobacco*

*2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.*

*Entertainment, Fun & Surprises for Historical  
Society Members, Family & Prospective Members*

#### **Entrance "Fee"**

Please bring your favorite Southern Maryland Dessert, (strawberry related if possible) or an Hors D'oeuvre with the **written recipe**. Please include your name on your Southern Maryland recipe and any history or person associated with the recipe (we will provide copies of these Southern Maryland delights at a future meeting). If you wish beverages other than tea or water, please bring your choice.

R.s.v.p. by May 17th to Mary Pat Berry  
(301) 934-2999 • P.O. Box 227, Port Tobacco, MD 20677  
berrybugs@wildblue.net

*See Strawberry Social for more information, Page 10* ➔

## *President's Message*

Our last meeting of the Historical Society of Charles County was held on Saturday, January 23, 2010 where we heard exciting tales of the Vikings. Our thanks to the Longship Company Ltd. for their presentation and kind offer to provide our members with a ride in their Viking ship next year.

We're sorry that our meeting scheduled for April 24th was canceled, but are happy to note that our speaker, Dr. Bradley Gottfried, President of the College of Southern Maryland, will be speaking to us at our October 23rd meeting.

Our "Strawberry Social" on Sunday, May 23rd, (see page 1, and continued on page 10) promises to be a fun day of getting to know our fellow members, sharing our Southern Maryland recipes and enjoying the charming surroundings of Mary Pat and Jim Berry's beautiful home.

Welcome to new members Sherry Harding, Paige and Chuck Jackson, and Elizabeth Keller.

We're happy to include in this edition of *The Record*, an account of the World War II experience of D. H. Steffens, written by his granddaughter, Hope Steffens. Hope was one of the 2009 Charles County Public Schools' History Day winners who received a Special Award from the Historical Society.

We hope to see each of you at the coming events.

# Officers, Board of Directors, and Committee Members

## OFFICERS

President . . . . . Joyce B. Candland  
Vice-President . . . . . Mary Pat Berry  
Recording Secretary . . . . . Vacant  
Corresponding Secretary . . . . . Danielle Webber  
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\* Bennett Crain . . . . . 1962-1963  
\* Eugene A. Jenkins, Jr. . . . . 1963-1964, 1966-1967  
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Dr. Lloyd Bowling . . . . . 1992-1998  
Wayne Winkler . . . . . 1998-2004  
Kaye O'Kelley . . . . . 2004-2008

\* Deceased \*\* Acting President

## COMMITTEES

### Charles County Heritage Committee:

Carol Donohue, Representative

### Genealogy and Research:

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Tom Pike

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### Projects:

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### Publications:

Mary Ann Scott, *Editor, The Record*

### Publicity:

Tom Pike

### Southern Maryland Studies Center

### Collections Committee:

Joyce B. Candland, *Representative*

### Train Station:

Kaye O'Kelley, *Chairperson*

## 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

### Administration

George C. Dyson, Administrator  
H. Maxwell Mitchell

### Cellar Museum & Shop

James H. Berry, Jr.  
Mary Pat Berry

### Foundation

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

### Furnishings

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

### Ways & Means

Ruby Dyson  
Sandra Mitchell

# *Dietrich Steffens – A Soldier's Story*

*By Hope Steffens*

*In 2009 Hope Steffens received a Special Award from the Historical Society of Charles County for her History Day Exhibit about her grandfather, Dietrich Steffens.*

*The following is an excerpt from Hope's History Day project.*

**D**ietrich Steffens was one among many Americans whose bravery and determination helped the United States win World War II. Dietrich Steffens was born in 1922 in Charlotte Hall, Maryland. He attended Washington College where he graduated with a degree in Chemistry. After college he signed up for Army boot camp and in November 1944 his division was shipped out to the European Theatre. He returned home and took over his father's surveying business until his death in 2006. Dietrich Steffens and other young men were drafted in the military to serve their country. Their bravery and sacrifices helped all of us enjoy the freedom we know today.

- **December 7, 1941** – Japan bombed Pear Harbor, Hawaii; the United States entered World War II.
- **1943** – Dietrick Steffens graduated from Washington College and signed up for army boot camp. He went to Purdue University for a program to train Army engineers.
- **1944** – Shipped off to England as a Army engineer. While on the ship, Dwight Eisenhower decided that the Army had enough engineers and Dietrich became an infantryman.
- **November 1944** – Pfc. Steffens who was part of the 78th division of the 310th infantry was called to war.
- **December 12, 1944** – The Battle of the Bulge began. German troops were in Kesternich which served as a staying area for the battle.
- **December 16 1944** – Pfc. Steffens and two other American soldiers got separated from their division in Kesternich. They found a vacant house and hid in the cellar.
- **December 16-21, 1944** – Five days without water, heat and light Pfc. Steffens and the other two soldiers hid in the cellar. All they could find was two bottles of wine and jars of string beans.



*Hope Steffens, 13, of Milton M. Somers Middle School stands by her history fair project about her grandfather, U.S. Army Pfc. Dietrich Steffens. Hope said she learned a lot about her grandfather while doing the project. County students focused projects on individuals throughout history.*

- **December 21, 1944** – When trying to find out if Americans had reclaimed Kesternich, Pfc. Steffens and his fellow soldiers were captured by the German Army.
- **December 21-25, 1944** – Stuffed in an overcrowded boxcar like human livestock, Steffens and the other Prisoner were taken to a German Prisoner of War Camp.
- **December 25, 1944** – Arrived at the Prisoner of War Camp Stalag IV B in Muhlenburg, Germany.
- **January 4, 1944** – Letters reveal to family that Pfc. Steffens has been missing in action since December 16.
- **April 18, 1945** – The family of Pfc. Steffens got a letter via the Red Cross, written in January, telling about the conditions of the camp.
- **April 21, 1945** – German soldiers guarding the camp flee because of the approaching Russian

*See Dietrick Steffens – A Soldier's Story, continued on Page 4*

troops. Russian troops take over the camp and let all Russian prisoners go. All non-Russian prisoners are held and subsequently marched to Riesa in Germany.

- **May Day 1945** – On this Russian holiday, Pfc. Steffens and the two other soldiers escape to freedom. They travel west to the river Elbe and find American soldiers.
- **May 7, 1945** – Germany surrenders and the war in Europe is ended.
- **June 21, 1945** – After going to France for debriefing, Pfc. Steffens arrives back in the United States.
- **July-November, 1945** – Steffens is stationed at Fort Belvoir as a dental assistant
- **November 1945** – Pfc. Steffens was discharged from the Army.

Dietrich Steffens and the bravery and determination of many Americans helped the United States win World War II. My topic is on an individual in history because without Dietrich and other soldiers like him, World War II could have had a different outcome. These soldiers not only led the United States to victory, but helped to provide honor and freedom for future generations as well.

#### *Post Script*

*D. H. Steffens was a long time member of the Historical Society of Charles County. A registered professional land surveyor, Mr. Steffens was the president of D.H. Steffens Co. in La Plata and Lexington Park. He received a B.S. in 1943 from Washington College in Chestertown and completed graduate work in civil engineering at Purdue University (1943) and Johns Hopkins University (1946). After World War II, he took over the business founded by his father, Louis Henry Steffens, and was elected county surveyor in 1954. He and his wife, Peggy, lived at the 19th century historic home, the Lindens near Bryantown.*

## Medals



1. *The Purple Heart was awarded to Pfc. Dietrich Steffens for being wounded in combat.*
2. *The Prisoner of War Medal was awarded to Pfc. Dietrich Steffens for Honorable service while a Prisoner of War.*
3. *The Bronze Star was awarded to Pfc. Dietrich Steffens for Bravery.*

# *“Share Your Stuff” Day Seeks Wartime Memorabilia*

*Event to Boost Southern Maryland Studies Center’s  
Digital Preservation Effort*

**“Share Your Stuff” Day for CSM’s Southern Maryland Studies Center.** 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturday, June 12, College of Southern Maryland La Plata Campus, Center for Business and Industry, Room BI-113, 8750 Mitchell Road, LaPlata. The public is invited to share photographs, documents, and artifacts relating to Southern Maryland’s role and the community’s efforts during wars of the 20th century with the goal of preserving items of historical significance through digital scans. The photograph and document scans will be housed in the CSM Southern Maryland Studies Center collection and on its web site. Exhibit tables, scanners and preservation experts will be available. Only materials relating to 20th century war and



peace theme will be scanned, and exhibitors must take all materials home at the end of the event. Light refreshments and tours of Friendship House, a reconstructed colonial home located in the center of the La Plata Campus, will be provided. Free. Event is co-sponsored by the Historical Society of Charles County and the Society for the Restoration of Port Tobacco. Participants should pre-register items they wish to share through SMSC web site at [www.csmd.edu/library/smsc](http://www.csmd.edu/library/smsc), by emailing [SMSC@csmd.edu](mailto:SMSC@csmd.edu), or by calling SMSC Coordinator Amanda Pike at 301-934-7606. RSVP encouraged, but not required. To volunteer, contact the SMSC.



## *We Need Your Help!*

Saturday, June 12th is “Share Your Stuff Day” at the Center for Business and Industry at the La Plata campus of the College of Southern Maryland. The Center for Business & Industry is the building located next to Friendship House. As co-sponsor, the Historical Society needs volunteers for the following:

- Serve as Seating Escorts to help those who have brought items to display. We need 8 volunteers in two shifts: from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon (with an orientation with Mike Mazzeo & Peggy Schaumberg at 9:30) and from 12:00 noon to 2:00 p.m. (with an orientation at 11:30 a.m.)
- Serve as Scanning Escorts to help guide those to have their items scanned. We need 8 volunteers for the two shifts mentioned above.

- On-Call (floaters) to provide general help. We need 2 volunteers for the two shifts.
- Provide 2 dozen finger foods at Friendship House. Drop-off at Friendship House between 10:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.
- Serve as host and guides at Friendship House for the two shifts.

Please consider helping with this worthwhile endeavor. It will be through your generosity and commitment that will make the difference. To volunteer, please leave a voice message for Mike Mazzeo @ 240-776-4308 or contact him through email: [mjmazzeo47@yahoo.com](mailto:mjmazzeo47@yahoo.com). Thank you!

# Share Your Stuff!

REAL STUDENTS. REAL STORIES.  
Realize *your* potential



## Learn More:

Southern Maryland Studies Center  
Phone: 301-934-7626, ext. 7107  
E-Mail: [SMSC@csm.edu](mailto:SMSC@csm.edu)  
Web: [www.csm.edu/Library/SMSC](http://www.csm.edu/Library/SMSC)



## Co-Sponsors:

The Historical Society of Charles  
County and the Society for the  
Restoration of Port Tobacco

[www.csm.edu](http://www.csm.edu)

## “Share Your Stuff” Day: 20<sup>th</sup> Century War and Peace in Southern Maryland

**Date:** Saturday, June 12, 2010

**Time:** 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

**Location:** La Plata Campus, Center for Business and  
Industry, Room BI-113

Please join the **Southern Maryland Studies Center (SMSC)** and your fellow community members for “Share Your Stuff” Day! Use tabletop exhibit space to show off your family treasures relating to Southern Maryland’s role during the wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century:

- Photographs
- Letters
- Diaries and journals
- Records and documents
- Soldiers’ experiences
- Women’s roles
- Labor efforts on the home front
- Homecoming celebrations

To help preserve these valuable treasures, SMSC will digitally scan your materials to publish on our website!\*

Light refreshments will be available at **Friendship House!**

*\*Visitors will be required to sign a release form before scanning.*





## *In Memoriam*

*In memory of two long time members of the  
Historical Society of Charles County*

### ***Emma Middleton***

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Emma Middleton, 95, of Waldorf, died January 17, 2010. She was an active member of the Historical Society of Charles County and served on its Board of Directors from 1963 to 1982.

She attended Pomfret Elementary School and graduated from Sacred Heart High School in La Plata. She was the last survivor of the first graduating class of Sacred Heart High School. She received her undergraduate degree in history and library science from Marywood University in Scranton, Pennsylvania. She later did graduate studies in library science at Catholic University in Washington, D.C. In 1937, she began her teaching career in Charles County. She taught seventh grade at Lackey High School and also taught at Hughesville School. Later, she was the librarian at La Plata High School from 1951 to 1978.

After retiring in 1978, she and her husband, Leo F. Middleton, whom she married in 1939, traveled extensively in Europe and Australia. She was a Lauback literacy teacher and an active member of Delta Kappa Gamma, the Two in One Club, the Antique Arts Society, as well as the Historical Society. She received the Maryland Most Beautiful Senior Citizen Creative Writers Award in 1988.

Her daughters, Barbara Ehrenstrom and Muriel Werking are members of the Historical Society and like their mother, devoted supporters of the Society.

### ***Frances Donohue***

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Frances Donohue, 95, of Accokeek, died February 3, 2010. She was a charter member of the Historical Society of Charles County, was very active and attended many meetings of the society.

She graduated from Agnes Scott College, Decatur, Georgia, in 1936 with a Bachelor of Arts degree with a history major. She was a member of Mortar Board, the national college honor senior society and Who's Who in American Colleges and Universities. She served as secretary to the dean and as acting law librarian of the Lamar School of Law, Emory University, before moving to Washington, D.C., in 1940. She worked in the Domestic Personnel Office of the Department of State as a correspondence clerk from 1940 to 1941. Because of her lifelong interest in farming and agriculture, she then accepted a position in the Department of Agriculture. She took graduate courses in agricultural economics and statistics, thereby qualifying for a professional civil service rating. During World War II she served as an agricultural economist in the Dairy and Poultry Branch of the War Food Administration, an agency of the Department of Agriculture, until the war ended. She retired from the Department in 1947.

In 1946 she married Francis Robert Donohue of Logansport, Indiana. They purchased a tobacco farm in Accokeek and moved there in 1947. After her husband's death, she worked for the National Center for State Courts and became a residential real estate agent. Her membership in the Charles County Garden Club spanned 60 years. She was a member of the National Society of Colonial Dames of America, a past president of the Accokeek Library Association and a member of the Women's National Democratic Club for more than 50 years. She was a past member of the Board of Directors of the Hawthorne Country Club in La Plata and a charter member of the Port Tobacco Players and the Historical Society of Charles County.

Her son, Dan Donohue, and his wife Carol, are very active members of the Historical Society. Carol serves on the Board of Directors and is the Society's Heritage Commission Representative.

## History Day



Lauren Clements  
from Milton Somers  
Middle School  
with her winning  
exhibit from the  
2010 History Fair.

Charles County Public Schools held its Annual History Day Awards Ceremony on March 20th. This year's theme was *Innovation in History: Impact and Change*. The Historical Society of Charles County was proud to present the following Special Award winners with a \$100.00 Savings Bond: Sean Thomas from Westlake High School on his exhibit *Eli Whitney and the Cotton Gin*, Lauren Clements from Milton Somers Middle School on her exhibit *The Arrival of Co-op Power to Southern Maryland*, Emily Fleming from Piccowaxen Middle School on her exhibit *Connecting the Dots: How Braille Changed History*, Lilly Reese from Piccowaxen Middle School on her exhibit *Kevlaar: The Wonder Fiber* and Nathaniel Weavill from Benjamin Davis Middle School on his exhibit *Sweet Innovations*.

Charles Boone, Ron Brown and Tom Pike presented the awards.

The Friendship House Foundation also presented the following Special Award winners with a \$100.00 Savings Bond: Colton Simpson from Milton Somers Middle School on his exhibit *Maryland's Tobacco Buyout Program* and to Anthony Fontaine from Benjamin Stoddert Middle School on his exhibit *Airplanes & Warfare*. Madelyn Irish presented those awards.

Historical Society members representing other organizations at the awards ceremony were Anne Boone of the Governor William Smallwood Chapter, U.S. Daughters of 1812, Tom Pike of the Charles County Historic Trust, Ron Brown of the Charles County Heritage Commission, Charles Boone of the Thomas Stone Chapter, Sons of the American Revolution, Neal Johnson of the Charles County Genealogical Society and Sharon Bolton of the Smallwood Foundation. Michael J. Mazzeo, Jr. is the coordinator for the Special Awards for the Charles County Public Schools.

The National History Day theme for next year is *Debate and Diplomacy in History: Successes, Failures and Consequences*.

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## Your Society At Work

By Joyce Candland, President

As in the past, The Historical Society of Charles County participated in the Charles County Public School's History Day Competition where we presented six Savings Bonds to student winners. See article above.

Acting on concerns that the Travel and Visitors Center on Crain Highway was scheduled to close, your HSCC Board voted to send letters to Maryland elected officials requesting that it remain open. This was done and the Maryland Independent (4/16/10) notes that lawmakers restored partial funding to allow the Center to remain open.

The Historical Society will be participating in the Port Tobacco Market Day on Saturday, May 15, 2010 (see flyer on page 9). We have reserved a table and need volunteers to staff the table from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm for one or two hour blocks. We will be

handing out brochures about the Historical Society and Friendship House and will have some books to sell. Please let us know if you can help. Call Joyce Candland 301-246-4488 or email to [joyce.candland@gmail.com](mailto:joyce.candland@gmail.com)

Our Society is also participating the "Share Your Stuff" day sponsored by the Southern Maryland Studies Center at the La Plata Campus of the College of Southern Maryland (see page 5). This is an opportunity for the Southern Maryland Studies Center to add to its collection for future researchers and historians.

The La Plata Train Station will be opening in May on Saturdays 12:00 noon to 4:00 pm. If you can help, please contact Train Station Chair, Kaye O'Kelley, at email: [kayeokelley@yahoo.com](mailto:kayeokelley@yahoo.com).



## *Historical Organizations in Charles County*

- The African-American Heritage Society
- The Charles County Archeological Society
- The Charles County Genealogical Society
- The Charles County Heritage Commission
- The Charles County Historic Trust
- The Dr. Samuel A. Mudd Society
- The Historical Society of Charles County
- The Smallwood Foundation
- The Society for the Restoration of Port Tobacco

# 1st Annual Market Day

## Historic Port Tobacco Courthouse

Saturday May 15, 2010

10 am to 3pm

### FOOD \* FUN \* TOURS

- Fresh Produce
- Baked Goods
- Handmade Jewelry
- Local Artists
- Local Authors
- Yard Sale Items
- Antiques
- Crafts
- Plants

*Hosted by:*

**SOCIETY FOR THE RESTORATION OF PORT TOBACCO**

For more information please contact: Kay Volman at 301.934.2474 or [kayvolman@hotmail.com](mailto:kayvolman@hotmail.com)

***The Historical Society will be sponsoring an information table at Market Day.  
If you would like to help at the table, please contact President Joyce Candland.***

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## Mark Your Calendar

- May 8 – The Maryland House & Garden Pilgrimage in Charles County.
- May 15 – Market Day at the Port Tobacco Courthouse, sponsored by the Society for the Restoration of Port Tobacco.
- May 23 – Strawberry Social at “Berry’s Contrary,” sponsored by the Historical Society of Charles County.
- June 12 – “Share Your Stuff” Day, sponsored by the Southern Maryland Studies Advisory Board, the College of Southern Maryland, the Historical Society of Charles County and the Society for the Restoration of Port Tobacco.
- October 23 – The Historical Society of Charles County’s Fall Dinner Meeting at Durham Church with guest speaker Dr. Bradley Gottfried.

*Strawberry Social, continued from Page 1*

**Directions:** *Balloons at end of driveway.*

Coming from north or La Plata: Take Route 6 west for approximately 3 miles, veer left on Chapel Point Road, go 2.8 miles to 8505 Chapel Point Road on the right, long bluestone driveway.

Coming from south county: Go north on Route 301 to Mile Marker 10, make a left on Chapel Point Road, go 3 miles to left at 8505 Chapel Point Road, as above.

Coming from western county: Arrive at Chapel Point Road and follow directions above for La Plata.

*This is an outdoor event  
and will be cancelled due  
to inclement weather*



**THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
OF CHARLES COUNTY, INC.**

P.O. Box 2806 • La Plata, Maryland 20646  
(301) 934-2564