

THE GERMANTOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER



Volume XXVI Number 1

Winter 2017

100th ANNIVERSARY OF U.S. ENTRY INTO WORLD WAR I – April 6, 2017

“Our Boys on the Front in the Great War”

by Susan Soderberg

The animosities that had been simmering in Europe for many years burst into war on July 28, 1914. It was precipitated by the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Austria, by a Yugoslav nationalist. Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia, and alliances made in previous years were called in. As the war proceeded, other countries affected joined one side or the other.

It was called “The Great War for Civilization” by the Allies, which eventually included France, Great Britain, Russia (until their revolution in 1917), Serbia, Montenegro, Belgium, Greece, Siam, Japan, Italy, Portugal, Italy, Romania, Brazil, the United States, and Hejaz (western section of what is now Saudi Arabia – see T.E. Lawrence).

The Central Powers included Austria-Hungary, Germany, the Ottoman Empire (including Turkey), Bulgaria, Azerbaijan, Emirate of Rashid, Dervish State, Sultanate of Darfur, and some other small countries.

The War ended on November 11, 1918 with the Allies as victors. Over 9 million combatants and over 7 million civilians lost their lives in the more than four years of brutal warfare involving new weapons such as airplanes, heavy artillery, poison gas, and U-boats.

The United States did not enter the war until April 1917 even though we had been manufacturing weapons for the Allies since the war began, and beginning in 1915 German agents had been sabotaging U.S. ships, trains, canals, bridges, and plants.

In Montgomery County the local unit of the Maryland National guard was called up and formed Company K of the 1st Maryland Infantry in the 29th “Blue and Gray” Division. This division was made up of men from both the southern and northern states, and was, as such, a symbol of reconciliation after the Civil War. The 115th regiment was based on the original Revolutionary War Maryland Unit called the “Maryland 400” which fought with distinction in the Battle of Long Island, holding their line when all the other units retreated, giving to Maryland the nickname, “The Old Line State.”

Company K was led by Lieutenant E. Brooke Lee of Silver Spring. Lee and Frank Hewitt had organized the building of the first armory in Silver Spring in 1914. Other men from the County joined Company K, and they prided themselves on being an all-volunteer unit. They were sent to Camp McClellan near Anniston, Alabama for training. On arrival in Europe the division was assigned to guard the border between Germany and Switzerland. In September 1918 it was ordered to the Meuse-Argon offensive. Beginning October 8 the offensive began a steady advance against the German forces which lasted for 21 days with heavy losses. Company K lost 41 men in the War, nearly 1/3 of its strength. Armistice was declared on November 11.



*1914 Armory in Silver Spring,
remodeled as a fire station in 1927*

“Our Boys on the Front in the Great War” continued

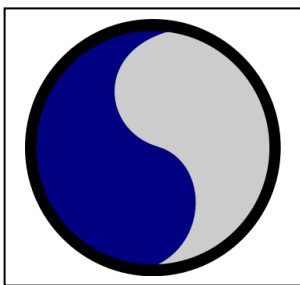
At the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 the “Big Four” (U.S., Great Britain, France, Italy) imposed terms on the defeated nations. National borders were redrawn, the Middle East was carved up into protectorates, and the Ottoman Empire and Austro-Hungarian Empire ceased to exist. Many say the harsh terms imposed on Germany led to World War II.

The 115th Regiment returned home in June 1919 after 21 months of mobilization. Two members were awarded the Medal of Honor, and five members of Company K were awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

Here is a list of the men from what is now Germantown who served in Company K, 115th Regiment infantry, 29th Division in World War I:

Vernon Bennett
John W. Best
Paul Burdette
Herman Devine
Clarence Duvall
Norman Duvall
Bernard Jones
Willie Lowe
Cicero Miller
Oliver Norwood
John Pearson
Dewey Thompson
John Walters -- Killed in Action, D.S.C.

We are grateful for their service. Unfortunately, there is no monument in Montgomery County to honor the men of Company K in World War I, although this War is included in two other war memorials in the County.



29th Division patch



115th Regiment infantry Coat of Arms



Original Log House of Zachariah and Ann Waters (now gone)

Update on the Zachariah Waters Burial Ground

A crew from the Coalition to Protect Maryland Burial Sites cleared all of the saplings and brush from inside the fenced area in November. This spring the Montgomery County Department of Transportation will be contracting with a company to do a ground-penetrating radar scan of the area outside the fencing to ascertain whether there are any graves there. Symmetry, owner of the property, will be participating in this on their side of the burial ground.

Our local Revolutionary War patriot, Zachariah Waters was born in 1748 in Brookeville, eldest son of William Waters and Mary Harris Waters. Zachariah Waters married Anna Baker, daughter of John and Judith Howard Wood Baker of Berkeley. Judith Howard Wood was the daughter of Peter Wood of Charles County, Maryland, and Susannah Howard, granddaughter of Lady Judith Howard of Howard Hall, England.

Zachariah Waters was an active patriot during the Revolutionary War. On March 7, 1778 he was commissioned Justice of the Peace for Montgomery County and was assigned to raise \$1,333 in Sugarloaf Hundred for the County's quota for arms and ammunition for the Continental Army. This is probably the time that he and Anna moved to Poplar Springs.

Additions to Our Collection

We recently received several photographs of famed baseball pitcher Walter “Big Train” Johnson and his Germantown home. Thank you to Henry Thomas, biographer and grandson of Walter Johnson. The Johnson house and dairy barns were located where Seneca Valley High School is today. He lived there from 1936 until his death in 1946.

News and Notes

2016 IN REVIEW

In 2016 the Germantown Historical Society:

- Held 7 Flea Markets (October was rained-out) for a net of more than \$8,000 for the GHS and an average of 150 vendors each first Saturday.
- Received the “Wayne Goldstein Preservation Action” Award from Montgomery Preservation, Inc.
- Participated in the annual Montgomery County Heritage Days on June 26 with Walking Tours of Old Germantown
- Held a spring program at the Germantown Library on “African American History in Montgomery County and the Boyds School” presented by Elaine Fors-McKellar of the Boyds Historical Society
- Awarded \$500 scholarships to students from Seneca Valley High School and Northwest High School
- Updated and republished our brochure with the addition of a Spanish language version
- Updated and republished the book on the railroad through Montgomery County, “The MET, A History of the Metropolitan Branch of the B & O Railroad”
- Applied for the state-wide “Six-to-Fix” grant – unsuccessful
- Sent letter to the County to preserve the current location of the Cider Barrel and have the historical significance of the Cider Barrel included in the County’s Bus Rapid Transit Plan
- Sent letter to the County to preserve the Zachariah Waters Cemetery from encroachment from the construction of the new Dorsey Mill Road and interchange
- Participated in the County Planning Department’s “MARC Rail Communities Plan” Open Houses and will continue work on this [parking expansion] plan.
- Held a fall program on “The History of Redwall and its architect, Katherine Cutler Ficken” by architectural historian Jillian Storms at our fundraiser at Redwall
- Held a “Wine and Cheese Fundraiser with Silent Auction” at the Redwall Mansion (Boyds Castle)
- Had a display in the Germantown Library in December on “the Metropolitan Branch of the B & O Railroad”

GHS has a representative on the Boards of **Montgomery Preservation, Inc.**, the **Germantown Alliance**, **UpCounty Citizens Advisory Board**, **King Farm Dairy Mooseum** and is in liaison with the **Boyds Historical Society**, and the **Damascus Heritage Society**.

UPCOMING EVENT

Tuesday, March 21, 7pm

Germantown Library

Susan Soderberg will be presenting “**Message of Myth: Quilts and the Underground Railroad**” as a part of the partnership between the Montgomery County Public Libraries and the Montgomery County Historical Society in celebrating Women’s History Month.



The Germantown Bank Building now has a new ductless heat pump HVAC system, replacing the old electric hot water radiators which were very expensive and broke down in December

Germantown Community Flea Markets 2017 SEASON

**First Saturdays starting April 1
8am-1pm**

The Flea Markets take place, weather permitting, at the MARC commuter parking lot, Rt. 118 and Bowman Mill Drive. Both adult and teen volunteers are needed. SSL hours apply. Hours to volunteer are 5:30-9:30am, or 9:30am-1:30pm. If you would like to help out with this fundraiser and fun event call 301-972-2707.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION (1 year)

Mail to: The Germantown Historical Society, P.O. Box 475, Germantown, MD 20875

Single: \$20

Senior: \$10

Family: \$25

Corporate: \$100

Supporting: \$100

Non-profit organization: \$30

Additional tax-deductible contribution

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone(s) _____ Date _____

e-mail _____

We're on the Web!
www.germantonMDhistory.org

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