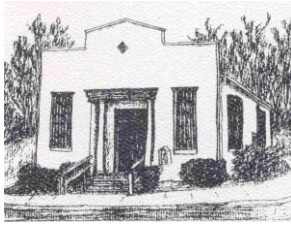


# THE GERMANTOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY



## NEWSLETTER



Volume XXIX Number 1

Winter 2020



### History of the Germantown Historical Society

The Germantown Historical Society was formed in January 1990. By the spring of 1991 the organization had by-laws, was incorporated in the State of Maryland, had been accepted by the IRS as a non-profit, and had a bank account – but very little money. The founding members were Susan Soderberg, Elaine Huey, Marcia Geoghan, Audrey Thews and Dana Witt. Susan and Elaine are still on the Board of Directors.

The mission of the Society is to preserve buildings, structures, objects and spaces that contribute to the historic character of Germantown; the development and implementation of plans for restoring and effectively using these resources; and the promotion of research and public education in local history.

For the first twelve years the Board met in members' homes, and events were mainly held at the UpCounty Government Services Center. In 2003 the Society began leasing the Historic Germantown Bank from the county and purchased the building from the County in 2016.

The Society has been active in protecting Germantown Historic sites by writing letters to and testifying before the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission, the Montgomery County Planning Board, and the Montgomery County Council. They were instrumental in saving the Pumphrey-Mateny House, the Basil/William Waters House, the Madeline Waters House site, two stone culverts constructed by Master stonemason James Boyd under the railroad track, and three local burial grounds, part of the Germantown Historic District.

For the past 30 years the Society has sponsored a spring and a fall lecture, and been a participant in the Germantown Oktoberfest every year until 2012 when the event was moved out of Germantown, and Heritage Montgomery Days since it began. From 1992 to 1999 it held an annual Maryland Day celebration with the Darnestown Historical Society until that organization dissolved. From 1991-1993 it sponsored Memorial Day cemetery tours. The Society has had a booth at various events through the years including the Germantown Spring Festival, the annual celebration of the founding of the County, and Germantown "Community Nights," Germantown Parade, and has been collecting Oral Histories from local residents. The Society is a member of Montgomery Preservation, Inc., Montgomery History, the Coalition to Preserve Maryland Burial Sites, the Germantown Alliance, and the Archeological Society Mid-Atlantic Chapter.

In order to raise funds the Society has produced T-shirts with the Liberty Mill logos on them, note cards of Germantown historic sites, Germantown train station decorative blocks, book on the History of Germantown, a video on the history of Germantown, a Germantown Landmarks map, and booklets on local history to sell, but their biggest fundraiser is the monthly Germantown Community Flea Markets. The Flea Markets began in 1993 at the MARC parking lot across from the train station. In 1996 the venue moved to the parking lot behind the old library and in 2002 back to the newly enlarged MARC parking lot where it has continued ever since.

The Germantown Historical Society has a brochure, a quarterly newsletter and a website:

[www.germantownmdhistory.org](http://www.germantownmdhistory.org) , and a Facebook page: [facebook.com/germantownmdhistory](https://facebook.com/germantownmdhistory)

Here are some highlights of the Germantown Historical Society's projects over 30 years:

- Did research on the Grusendorf log house for the State before the dismantling and moving of the building (1990)
- Sponsored the Gassaway/Hammond reunion at the historic Gassaway House (1990)
- Walking Tour of Germantown for Heritage Days (2002, 2016, 2018, 2019)
- Advised the artist on the sculpture at the UpCounty Government Center (1991)
- Had a unit in the "Germantown Glory" 3<sup>rd</sup> of July Parade (1996)
- Coordinated a county-wide celebration of the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the B & O Railroad with an excursion train, banners, entertainment on the train and at the end stop, and celebrations historic stations (1998)
- Published The MET: A History of the Metropolitan Branch of the B & O Railroad (1998, revised 2015)
- Created a video on the history of Germantown (1998)
- Helped to save the James and Macie King Barn at the Germantown Soccerplex & served as an umbrella for the Mooseum until it achieved its own status (1999-2001)
- Published a report, "Lost Germantown Historic Buildings" and "Currently Endangered Historic Sites" (1999) which helped to place the Cider Barrel on the State Endangered List.
- Created a framed picture of a local historic site for every school and public building in Germantown, with interpretation (2000)
- Worked with the County to plan the rebuilding of the Germantown Train Station and the rehabilitation of the Germantown Bank building (2000-2002)
- Created an exhibit on "Black Rock and the Blackrock Mill" for the grand opening of the Black Rock Center for the Arts (2003)
- Presented 2 books for inclusion in the Time Capsule at the Germantown Library (2007)
- Put the Stone Culverts of the B & O Railroad on the County Landmarks Atlas (2008)
- Gave \$500 scholarships to a graduating student from Seneca Valley High School and from Northwest High School (2010-2016)
- Created exhibits on "Germantown History" (1993 & 1995), "Germantown in the Civil War"(2012), On the "Metropolitan Branch of the B & O Railroad" (2015), on "Famous Germantowners" (2017), on the Cider Barrel (2018) in the Germantown Library
- Helped to save the Zachariah Waters Burial Ground from destruction (2017-2019)
- Helped devise a new County Ordinance for the protection of burial grounds (2018)
- Worked with the County on the MARC Rail Communities Plan (2018-19)
- Participated in the County-wide re-survey of cemeteries (2018)
- Co-sponsored with the Boyds Historical Society the 2019 Montgomery Preservation Awards Ceremony at Seneca Lodge.
- Had a unit in the Oktoberfest Parade (2019)
- Helped to find a proprietor and use for the Cider Barrel and help with operation (2019-present)
- Continues to present, on request, a powerpoint lecture on the history of Germantown
- Sponsored 2 public lectures on local history every year 1990-present

## News and Notes

### We got the grant!

GHS has been awarded a matching grant from the Maryland Heritage Area Authority for \$26,500 to constructing a drainage system on the outside of the building and waterproof the foundation. We will match the grant with cash, volunteer hours and material donation. Action Waterproofing will begin the work in March and should be finished in 6 weeks. For the first couple of weeks there will be a large dumpster behind the building as they demolish the sidewalk and remove earth.

### Cider Barrel Update

Laura Richman has acquired the permits and work has begun on the rehabilitation of the Cider Barrel. She hopes to open a weekend market there selling local organic produce and cider in the spring. This will be an outdoor stand and only employees and volunteers will be allowed inside. Any profits made will be funneled back into the community. We are extremely happy to see this historic icon of Germantown coming back to life.

### **Germantown Community Flea Markets 2020 SEASON**

**First Saturdays starting April 7  
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.

## *SPRING PROGRAM*

SATURDAY MAY 2, 3-4PM

GERMANTOWN LIBRARY



### **The Nuclear Age in Montgomery County: The Atomic Energy Commission and its Site at Germantown, Maryland**

Speaker: Eric W. Boyle

This PowerPoint slide lecture explores what life was like for persons living in Montgomery County during the 1950s. Eric W. Boyle, Chief Historian for the Department of Energy, will discuss the Atomic Energy Commission's move to upper Montgomery County during the early days of the Cold War. After considering over 50 locations, farmland near Germantown, Maryland, was determined to be a distance far enough from Washington D.C. to survive a nuclear blast on the Nation's Capital from the Soviet Union. Thus, the headquarters for the Atomic Energy Commission was built in Germantown, Maryland, in 1957. Today, the site is one of two administrative complexes of the US Department of Energy in the DC area. In this talk, Boyle will share archival research and new insight on the detailed criteria used to determine the Germantown headquarters' location.

## **LOCAL HISTORY CALENDAR**

**Ongoing Exhibit** "Woman of Damascus" honoring influential local women and women's organizations. Damascus Heritage Museum, located behind the Damascus Library. Open Wed. & Sat. 12-4pm. 301-253-6150.

**March 14** **Montgomery Preservation Awards Ceremony.** Grace United Methodist Church, Gaithersburg. Go to [www.montgomerypreservation.org](http://www.montgomerypreservation.org) for time and more information.

**For more Montgomery County events go to: [www.heritagemontgomery.org](http://www.heritagemontgomery.org)**

**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](http://www.germantonMDhistory.org)**

**The Germantown Historical Society**  
**P.O. Box 475**  
**Germantown, MD 20875**