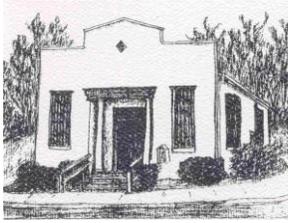
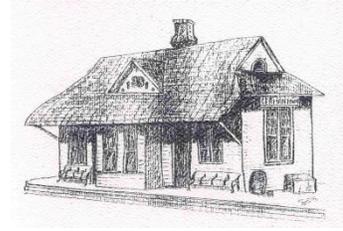


THE GERMANTOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER



Volume XXX Number 1

Winter 2021

SPOTLIGHT on a *Germantown Historic Site*

This column is a new feature of the Germantown Historical Society *Newsletter* highlighting one of our Master Planned Historic Resources (identified with a number in parentheses). For a complete listing of these historic sites, and also those that we have lost, go to our website www.germantownmdhistory.org.

Woodbourne (14-51)

Woodbourne is a historic house in the Germantown planning area that may not be familiar to everyone because it is off the beaten path. It is located at 21000 Blunt Road, near the intersection of that road with Brink Road, within the Germantown Planning Area. It is the second oldest house in Germantown, the first being the Basil Waters House, Pleasant Fields. This large brick house looks out over Seneca Creek, and was once part of a large farm.

Richard Thomas, a Quaker from Sandy Spring owned the land that the house was built on in the late 1700s. The original log structure, which now forms part of the house may have been built about 1815 by a tenant farmer as Richard Thomas lived in Sandy Spring. In those days land was named, rather than numbered, and this particular tract was called "Thomas' Hog Pasture." It was purchased by Harry Woodward Dorsey in 1817.



One of Harry Dorsey's daughters, Harriet, married Samuel Blunt in 1818 and they moved to the property. It was they who added the brick building to the east of the log house, covering that original structure with brick facing to create a handsome five-bay two story house. A frame two-story wing was added later on the west side, and a kitchen attached to the north side, with several porches both front and rear. Apparently, Harry did not take to his son-in-law because he specifically stated in his will that Samuel would never inherit any of the Dorsey property. So when Harriet died her son William took over the estate, including thirty slaves. William was a prosperous farmer and a member of the Montgomery County Agricultural Society, an organization with great influence when 90% of the county's population lived on farms. He was also elected to the County Commission (now the County Council) in 1863.

William Blunt owned not only Woodbourne, but also a large tract of land in central Germantown where the B & O Railroad came through in 1873. That is why we have a Blunt Road on the east side of Germantown, and a Blunt Avenue in the center. William died around 1900, leaving all his property to his wife, Elizabeth. The freed enslaved people of the Blunts were mainly Prathers and founded Prathertown at the intersection of Brink Road and Seneca Creek.

The Woodbourne house is also associated with a gorgeous quilt currently held by Montgomery History. The Woodbourne Quilt is a masterpiece of craftsmanship and design. The Montgomery County Historical Society published a book about the quilt in 1985: *Heirloom Quilting Designs from the Woodbourne Quilt*. It is also featured in *A Maryland Album: Quilting Traditions, 1634-1934* by Gloria Seaman Allen

and Nancy Gibson Tuckhorn. One of the things that makes the quilt special is that it is accompanied by a collection of original illustrations that were used to create the patterns stitched into the quilt. These patterns cannot be seen in pictures of the quilt for they are all stitched into the white parts using white thread, but are quite remarkable when the actual quilt is seen. The red and black mariners compass quilted pieces, a very difficult pattern, are sewn onto a white cloth. The tiny stitches of quilting in the white cloth depict birds with long tails, hunters with guns, running dogs, and plants. Whole scenes are created by stitching for the background.

The quilt is signed so we know that it was made in the 1850s by Susan Maria Waters Dorsey and Harriet Woodward Dorsey Blunt. Susan was married to Harriet's half-brother, Henry Woodward Dorsey, who was also Susan's brother-in-law, having been previously married to her younger sister who had died earlier.

Information from the Maryland Historic Trust Inventory, and Places from the Past, Clare Lise Cavicchi, published by M-NCPPC, 2001.

NEWS & NOTES

Bank Museum Update

Through a generous non-matching grant from the Maryland Center for History and Culture we were able to hire museum designer, Elizabeth Lay, who has laid out a detailed plan of action.

The Bank Museum Advisory Committee, consisting of the GHS Board, met with Ms. Lay on November 17 and December 15 after the regular Board meeting.

So far, we have decided on the wording of a Mission Statement and are working on deciding on a picture of the Bank vault locking mechanism which will be sent to a graphic artist for the creation of a Logo.

Before we can create the museum, however, we need to raise matching funds for a grant for the restoration of the interior of the building that has been damaged over the years by water run-off seeping inside from the surrounding parking lot. To donate to this fund go to www.germantownMDhistory and click on the donate button, or send a check to the Germantown Historical Society, PO Box 475, Germantown, MD 20875.

Covid-19 Relief Funding

Through complicated application processes the Germantown Historical Society has been granted two funds from the County and one from the Arts and Humanities Commission of Montgomery County to keep us afloat, since we have lost our main fund-raiser, the monthly flea markets. We greatly appreciate this help from the County and the AHCMC that did not require any matching funds on our part and has enabled us to pay for the maintenance of our Historic Bank Building, insurance, office supplies and real estate taxes.

Graffiti on our Building

Sometime in the week before November 20 gang-related graffiti was spray painted on the back wall of the Historic Germantown Bank Building. This was reported to the police. After getting two estimates ranging from \$200 to \$770 to clean it off and re-paint, GHS president Susan Soderberg and her husband Bill, having the materials on hand from work on their own house, cleaned it off and repainted – almost like new!



Any information on the perpetrators would be appreciated.

Cider Barrel Update

The Germantown Historical Society has recommended Laura Richman for a Montgomery Preservation Award for her work on bringing the Cider barrel back to life. As with last year, the awards will be presented in a video format in the spring. To view last year's MPI Awards video go to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m3ttdbnxTwU&feature=youtu.be>

Burial Ground Committee Update

The Burial Ground Committee met via Zoom on November 11. According to the Burial Ground Survey, managed by the archaeologist, Brian Crane, at Montgomery County Planning (available online at: <https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/historic/montgomery-county-burial-sites-inventory/>), there are 12 burial grounds within the Germantown Planning Area. Members of the Committee will oversee these by visiting their assigned burial ground in pairs, taking photos and filling in a form on the condition, which will be forwarded to the County archeologist.

Heritage Area Capital Grant Update

This grant for \$25,500, with a match of \$19,000 plus "In kind" by GHS, was awarded for the waterproofing of the building and the rehabilitation of the exterior damage caused by water seepage and insect infestation treatment. So far \$30,087 has been spent on waterproofing and on-going termite control. Unfortunately, although the basement under 1/3 of the building is now dry, the crawl space under the rest of the building still has water entering from the outside below grade. The waterproofing company has a guarantee, so we continue to negotiate.

The remaining grant funds will be used to replace the handicap sidewalk entrance. We had to wait for the ground to settle before attempting this. After that, we will be looking at putting in bricks. We may be having a campaign to sell engraved bricks.



Celebration of Maryland Emancipation Day

The Germantown Historical Society had a booth at a live event in November – the Celebration Of Maryland Emancipation Day at the Button Farm. Our outdoor booth was tended by Susan Soderberg, Andrew Saundry and member Wanda Diggs. Susan gave a presentation on the 2013 Maryland General Assembly bill making November 1 the official day of celebration in Maryland. Since the event was actually held on October 31, some of the attendees came in costume

For the 2021 session a bill (SB 142) introduced by Maryland Senator Arthur Ellis, Charles County’s 28th District, proposing to make this day a legal state holiday.

Zachariah Waters Burial Ground

Symmetry at Cloverleaf has made adjustments to its plan for the development surrounding the Burial Ground. These adjustments do not seem to affect the Burial Ground on the property, but GHS will be sending in a letter to the Planning Board before the January 21 public hearing to make sure that the sacred ground, holding the remains of one of Germantown’s founders and Revolutionary War Patriot, is protected and maintained.

Bi-Annual Lecture

Our Spring lecture on the “Atomic Energy Commission in Germantown” was cancelled because of the Covid-19 restrictions and because of the unavailability of the lecturer, even on-line. The fall lecture on the “History of Germantown” by Susan Soderberg was held on November 14 via Zoom and was attended by 26 people.

Heritage Montgomery Mini-grant

The Society has received a grant from Heritage Montgomery to purchase a laser printer and an upgrade for our PastPerfect Museum database software to aid in our Germantown Bank Archive project. This Project is to organize and scan important papers from 1924-1934 left in boxes in the Bank’s high shelves and to conduct further research. Some amazing discoveries have already been made that will enhance the interpretation of the museum.

LOCAL HISTORY CALENDAR

LIVE

Unfortunately, there are no live historical programs planned for the near future due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

VIRTUAL

January 19 at noon -- The Country Doctor in the 1800s: Dr. Edward Stonestreet of Rockville

Join Peerless Rockville and Clarence Hickey for this illustrated presentation on the life and historic times of Dr. Edward Stonestreet, a Rockville doctor who practiced medicine in Montgomery County from 1852-1903, including many rare old photos of the Rockville area. The program is free, but you must register at: <http://www.peerlessrockville.org/>

Jan. 22-30 -- The 15th annual Montgomery County History Conference. This entirely virtual event is taking place over eight days, offering three keynote sessions, twelve breakout sessions, a musical performance, and—new this year—a Trivia Night! Topics will cover the nationwide movement to remove Confederate statues from public spaces, local Hispanic entrepreneurship, 17th century Native Americans, genealogy of enslaved peoples, Maryland musical traditions, and much more, -- there is something for everyone. Ticket prices range from \$25-\$75. REGISTER TODAY by visiting tinyurl.com/2021HistoryCon or find out more at <https://montgomeryhistory.org/2021-mchc/>.

Weekly Programs by Montgomery History (Montgomery County Historical Society): *These talks will be streamed on Zoom. Beginning again in February. Pre-registering is recommended but not required.* <https://montgomeryhistory.org>

The Maryland Historical Society, now renamed the **Maryland Center for History and Culture**, continues to present a series of fascinating and informative lectures – for free! For a listing and to register (required) go to: <https://www.mdhistory.org/events/>
