Tobacco to Tomcats...
St. Mary's County since the Revolution

Written by
Sandy Shoemaker

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Illustrations by
Mary Lou Troutman

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Edited by
Lois Coryell, Karen Boyd, and Lynn Rudigier

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Acknowledgements

Further reading on local legends:
Moll Dyer: She Still Walks This Land by Janeen Grohsmeyer. Suitable for elementary school children. Contact folktales_smd@yahoo.com.
Moll Dyer: Sing My Soul to the Sea by Janeen Grohsmeyer. Suitable for teens and adults. Contact folktales_smd@yahoo.com.

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Introduction

What is History?

It is very easy to say that history is simply things that happened a long time ago, but how do we know what Maryland was like 100 years ago? What about 350 years ago when Maryland first became a colony? Think about what people who study history will be able to look at 350 years from now to learn about you and your family. There are records like your birth certificate, medical records at your doctor's office, and your school records in the principal's office. There are also photographs and videotapes to show what you look like and computer records that will last for hundreds of years. How many of these things do you think that historians have from 100 years ago? How about 300 years ago? Without all of these things, it can be more difficult to learn about the history of St. Mary's County.

We learn about the history of our county in several different ways. The first is through something called **primary sources**. Primary source documents are records with clues about the past left by the people who lived in Maryland. These include records from court cases and other government documents, wills and inventories taken when people died, journals or letters, pictures, and oral history, like stories and legends. Just like the records of your life, all of these records can give us clues about what life was like in Maryland in the past.

Unfortunately, there are problems with getting information from the past. Many things that are important now were not written down long ago. Also, technology has changed the way that we keep records. Most people did not have computers to keep information, even as little as 50 years ago. They had to write all records out by hand. Many of the records that were kept did not survive over the years. Paper is a very delicate material and only lasts if it is cared for properly. There were fires that destroyed documents and some were simply lost over time.

Another problem with using primary sources from the past is that they may only show one point of view on a particular topic. Sometimes people write to convince readers to think the same

way as the writer. Other times, writers may not have enough information to tell the whole story. This does not mean that we cannot use these documents. It simply means that we have to look at them very carefully and ask ourselves some very important questions. We have to think about who wrote the document, why it was written, and for whom it was written. For example, people write articles in the newspaper everyday. Some of these articles are designed to make people think a certain way. They are not always objective, or free from opinions and bias.

We also have to remember that for many years only wealthy men could afford to go to school and get an education. Many people never learned to read and write and, so could not leave us any letters or journals. There were many women, servants, and slaves that never got a chance to leave us any information, either. Also, the American Indians who lived in Maryland for thousands of years did not have a written language. All that is know about them comes from the Englishmen who met them when they arrived in Maryland. Despite all these problems, primary sources are often the best source of information about our past.

The other important way that we can learn about life in Maryland long ago is through a science called archaeology. Archaeology is the science of uncovering, or excavating, everything that people have left behind. Imagine everything that someone could discover about you if they looked at what you threw away. They could tell what you eat, what you wear, and what you do for fun. That is the kind of information that **archaeologists** try to discover by looking at things that the people who lived in Maryland left. These materials, called **artifacts**, are often the only clues that we have about the lives of most people in Maryland. Archaeology is especially important when learning about life in Maryland when it was still a colony. There are very few written records from that time still left.

Look around your room and think about what would be left if it were in the ground for 300 years. Cloth and wood can not survive for all that time, but what about things made of metal? Colonists used metal pots and pans to cook their food and metal tools to help them do their work. Archaeologists also find pieces of pottery that settlers used as dishes and clay pipes that they used for smoking tobacco. All of these things are clues about what colonists in Maryland used in their everyday lives.

Archaeologists also find clues about what life was like for the native people in Maryland before the English arrived. They find tools that the natives made from stone and from the bone of animals. They find arrowheads that the Indians used to hunt deer in the forests. Unfortunately, many of the things that natives used in their everyday life did not survive in the ground long enough for us to discover them. This can make learning about the lives of the natives even more difficult.

Archaeologists don't always have to find artifacts in the ground to tell us about people who lived long ago. Most colonists and natives built houses that were made of wood. Wood does not last in the ground for 350 years. In fact, very few buildings from the 17th century still survive today. But, as the wood rots in the ground, it leaves a stain in the soil that looks very different from the ground around it. Archaeologists can carefully look at the soil and see these differences. These stains are called postholes and when archaeologists find several of these, they know that a building once stood on that spot.

We are going to learn together in this book about the history of St. Mary's County after Maryland became a state in a new nation. We will learn about events that affected the country and the world like the Civil War and the World Wars. We will also learn about things that happened just here in the county. St. Mary's County has changed a great deal since the 1800's. Maybe members of your family have been here since then, or maybe you and your family have just moved here—either way, there is plenty of exciting history for us to study.

Chapter 1:
St. Mary's County
and the War of 1812
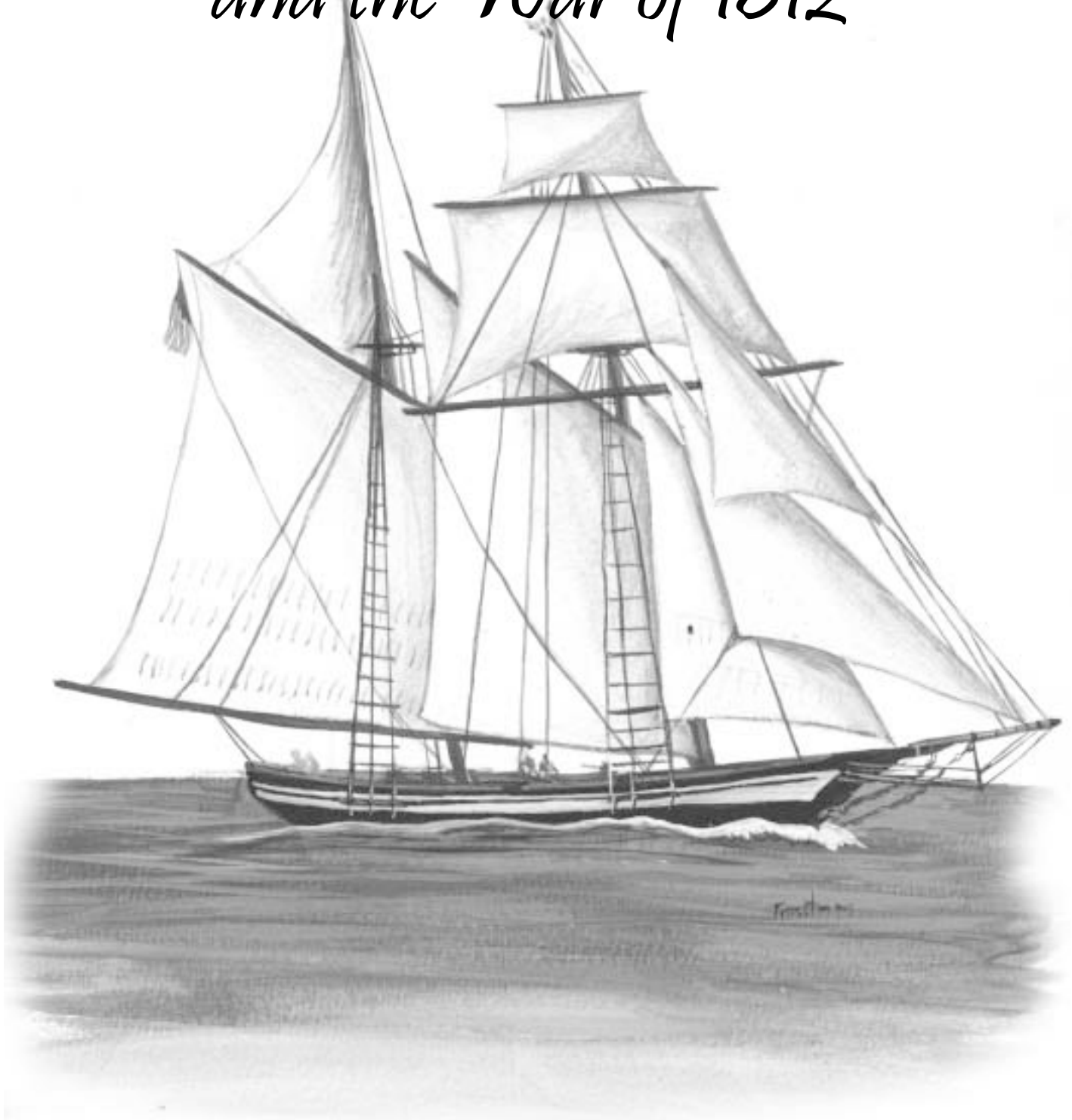
After the American Revolution, the United States officially became an independent country. Maryland was one of the brand new states in the young country. Despite all the drastic changes in government during the American Revolution, life in St. Mary's County continued much the same as ever. Most of the 15,000 people in the county were farmers, growing tobacco as their cash crop. Manufacturing and industry were beginning in other parts of the state, but St. Mary's County was still 98 percent agricultural.

American citizens were no longer under the control of Great Britain, but there were still problems between the United States and England. Many people thought that the English government was not treating the United States fairly. American ships trading with other countries were attacked by British ships. The government in England would not send representatives to meet with the new American government.

The British were also guilty of the **impressment** of American sailors. British ships would stop American ships claiming they were looking for deserters, or people who had run away from the British navy. If they could not find the people they were looking for, they would take American sailors and make them serve in the British Navy. Many Americans considered this kidnapping and were very angry. Some Americans called for a war against England.

A group of politicians from the South especially wanted the United States to go to war. They were called the "war hawks" and were led by two men named John Calhoun and Henry Clay. These men were also interested in the United States sending people to settle in the west. They called this **westward expansion**. People were afraid to live in the west because they were being attacked by tribes of American Indians living there. The war hawks believed that the British were helping the American Indians and encouraging them to attack

Americans. Politions thought that a war against England would stop the English from helping the American Indians and supplying them with weapons. The war hawks also thought that the United States should own all the land in North America. They wanted to own Canada, which was a British colony, Florida, which belonged to the Spanish, and the Louisiana Territory which was claimed by the French.

Not everyone agreed with the war hawks. Many people, some of them in Maryland, did not want another war with England. They thought that the problems with England could be solved by negotiations and compromise. These people were members of the **Federalist Party**. There were debates in the Congress about going to war. Eventually, there was a vote and the war hawks won. President James Madison declared war on Great Britain on June 18, 1812.

In many ways, the United States was not ready for another war against a powerful country like England. The United States did not have a navy to help fight battles on the water. England had the largest and strongest navy in the world. The United States also did not have a very large regular army. To help the soldiers, the U.S. government used **militia** units, or volunteers, just like they had during the Revolutionary War. The British army had been fighting wars for years. They were very well trained and had plenty of supplies.

Instead of a navy, the United States hired private owners of ships to help fight the British. These men were called **privateers**. They were paid to attack British ships and capture them. As a reward, they were allowed to keep some of the goods from the captured ships. Many ships, especially from Baltimore, helped the American cause in this way. Some of the ships were a type called schooners. They came to be known as "Baltimore Clippers." They were fast ships that could move around easily. The commanders of these ships had some success capturing British ships.

Baltimore Clippers

Possibly the most successful part of the American effort in the War of 1812 was the use of privately owned ships. The owners of these ships were called **privateers**. Their job was to capture as many British ships as they could. The most successful privateers were on ships that came to be called "Baltimore Clippers." The Clippers were a type of ship called a schooner. They were very fast ships that also maneuvered very easily. This meant that they could catch ships that they were chasing and outrun ships that were chasing them.

During the war, 126 privateers worked around the Chesapeake Bay out of Baltimore harbor. They captured over 500 British ships. The most successful privateering ships were the *Rossie*, the *Rolla*, the *Corn-et*, and the *Chasseur*. These ships were all built in Baltimore in a shipyard owned by a man named Thomas Kemp.

The most famous of the Baltimore Clippers was the *Chasseur*, which came to be known as the *Pride of Baltimore*. The captain of the *Chasseur* was a man named Thomas Boyle. In all, Captain Boyle and his crew captured or sank 17 British ships in just over a year between 1814 and 1815. Today, there is a replica of the original *Pride of Baltimore* that tourists can visit in the Baltimore harbor. The *Pride of Baltimore II* was built in 1988 to replace the first *Pride of Baltimore* replica which sank in 1986. When the *Pride II* is not in its home port, it travels all over the world as a representative of Maryland and its rich maritime history. The *Pride II* and its crew have traveled more than 200,000 miles since 1988.

Mary Lou Troutman

The United States was terribly overmatched at sea. The British set up a **blockade** of most of the East Coast. This blockade meant that no ships could trade goods to or from the United States. Many people relied on trade for their living. People were unable to get supplies that they needed for everyday life. Manufacturers could not get their goods to the people who wished to buy them. The economy was hurt by this lack of trade. St. Mary's County tobacco farmers could not trade their tobacco crop. It was the only way they had to make a living.

Unfortunately, the American army did not have much more success than its navy did. In December of 1812, the British Navy sailed into the Chesapeake Bay and then into the Patuxent River. They set a blockade that would last more than a year. In August, 1814, the British sent troops to march toward the capital city of Washington, DC. The British troops landed at Benedict in Calvert County then marched to Bladensburg where American troops attempted to stop them. The Americans were no match for the better trained and experienced British troops. Although the Americans fought bravely, the British marched on to Washington. When the British reached Washington, DC, there were only perhaps one thousand American soldiers to defend the city. In late August, 1814, the British captured Washington and burned many government and private buildings to the ground.

Mary Lou Troutman

From there, the British set their sights on Baltimore, the largest city in Maryland. They attacked Fort McHenry at the mouth of Baltimore harbor in what became the Battle of North Point, but American soldiers in the fort refused to surrender. The fort withstood a fierce attack that lasted long into the night. During the battle, a lawyer named Francis Scott Key who had family ties to St. Mary's County was trapped on a British ship in Baltimore harbor. He watched, afraid that the American soldiers in the fort would not be able to hold off the British attack. In the morn

ing, he saw that the American flag was still flying over the fort. He wrote a poem called *The Defense of Fort McHenry* that would become this country's national anthem, *The Star Spangled Banner.* The Americans proved that they could stand against the British.

Although Americans did have some success against the British during the War of 1812, many people in St. Mary's County suffered a great deal. No battles were fought here, but British ships remained in the waters around the county for the whole length of the war. These ships held soldiers that frequently came ashore and raided farms and homes. Unfortunately for the people living in the county, there were no regular army soldiers stationed in St. Mary's County. There were some volunteers, but american soldiers were needed to help with other parts of the war effort so they could not be spared to protect the county.

In July of 1813, the British landed soldiers on St. Clement's, St. Catherine's, and St. George Islands. They burned houses, cut down trees, and destroyed fences and other pieces of property. That same month, between two and three thousand British soldiers landed at Point Lookout. These soldiers stole property from people's homes and livestock from their farms. They even took four county residents prisoner—Benjamin Williams, Robert Armstrong, Mordecai Jones, and James Biscoe. One witness said that the British "plundered everything and anything robbing even the women and children of their clothes and destroying such articles as it did not suit

The Star Spangled Banner

On September 13, 1814, Francis Scott Key went to a British ship in Baltimore harbor to try and negotiate for the freedom of Dr. William Beanes. Dr. Beanes had been captured by the British on their march to Washington. While Key was in the harbor, the British attacked Fort McHenry in an attempt to invade Baltimore. The Americans fought off the British all night. In the morning, Key saw that the American flag was still flying over the fort meaning that the Americans had not been defeated. In commemoration, Key wrote a poem called the *Defense of Fort McHenry*. The poem was printed in a **handbill** and then in a Baltimore newspaper. The words were put to the British song *To Anacreon in Heaven* written by John Stafford Smith. *The Star Spangled Banner* became a popular anthem of the United States. It was officially adopted as the National Anthem on March 3, 1931 after 21 years of debate. The following is Francis Scott Key's original poem:

O say, can you see, by the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hail'd at the twilight's last gleaming?
Whose broad stripes and bright stars, thro' the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watch'd, were so gallantly streaming?
And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof thro' the night that our flag was still there.
O say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

On the shore dimly seen thro' the mists of the deep,
Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes,
What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep,
As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?
Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,
In full glory reflected, now shines on the stream:
'Tis the star-spangled banner: O, long may it wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

And where is that band who so vauntingly swore
That the havoc of war and the battle's confusion,
A home and a country should leave us no more?
Their blood has wash'd out their foul footsteps' pollution.
No refuge could save the hireling and slave
From the terror of flight or the gloom of the grave:
And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

O thus be it ever when free-men shall stand
Between their lov'd home and the war's desolation;
Blest with vict'ry and peace, may the heav'n-rescued land
Praise the Pow'r that hath made and preserv'd us a nation!
Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,
And this be our motto: "In God is our trust!"
And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

Thomas Swann at Point Lookout

In the summer of 1813, the Postmaster General of the United States, Gideon Granger, set up lookouts along the coast of the Chesapeake Bay to report to the military near Washington, DC. These lookouts were supposed to let the military know about any activity by the British that they could see. A letter was sent everyday from the lookouts to military commanders in the north. One of these stations was set up at Point Lookout. A man named Thomas Swann was there in the summer of 1813 sending letters every day about everything he saw from the point. Some of these letters have been found by historians. An historian named Stuart Lee Butler wrote an article about Thomas Swann's letters in 1978 called "Thomas Swann and the British in St. Mary's County."

According to Butler, Swann describes British ships off the point in all of his letters. These ships were a constant threat to the people who lived along the Chesapeake Bay and Potomac River. Swann describes several times when the British ships landed and took property from farms. On August 23, 1813, his letter says, "At 12 O Clock a Barge from the Brig with about 30 armed men landed at St. Jerome's and took from Caleb Jones all his Negroes & a quantity of Poultry." These soldiers had taken chickens for food and all of the slaves living on the farm belonging to Caleb Jones.

Swann knew that the British ships were staying close to the land for several reasons. He knew that they might land and steal things from American farms as they did at St. Jerome's.

They also had another reason for staying. A letter from Thomas Swann written on August 28, 1813, says, "the object of the Enemy for anchoring at his present station is to give the Negroes in the neighborhood an opportunity of joining him." The British offered freedom to any American slaves that were willing to fight in the British army. The British hoped that slaves would be willing to run away from their owners in America to live free as British subjects. Many slaves did just that. Historians think that between 3,000 and 5,000 slaves from the area around the Chesapeake Bay took advantage of the British offer.

The Key Family and Tudor Hall

Francis Scott Key, the author of the *Star Spangled Banner*, had family ties to St. Mary's County. His cousin, Philip, was the owner of Tudor Hall Mansion in Leonardtown. The Key family can trace its roots in America back to the first Philip Key. He arrived in St. Mary's County from England in 1720. Other prominent members of the family include John Ross Key who was an officer in the American army during the Revolutionary War and his brother, Philip Barton Key, who was an officer in the British army.

Tudor Hall was originally built in the mid-18th century and for many years was home to the prominent Barnes family. According to Aleck Loker in his book *A Most Convenient Place*, Philip Key purchased Tudor Hall from the heirs of the Barnes family on September 18, 1817 for $5,000. After just a year, the property was given to his son, Henry Greenfield Sothorn Key. Henry did a great deal of the work on the house. He added a second floor and refinished the outside. Reportedly, the work on Tudor Hall encouraged the building of other large homes and public buildings in the town of Leonardtown. After Henry died, the house passed to his son, Joseph Harris Key, who died in the house in 1917.

According to the *History of Tudor Hall* by Linda Davis Reno, after Joseph Key died, the house was rented to a number of families and then eventually was purchased by Margaret Patterson Davidson in the early 1950s. Mrs. Davidson intended to restore the house and then "give it to the county as a library dedicated to the memory of the soldiers of St. Mary's County who died in both World Wars." The project was completed, although Mrs. Patterson did not live to see it. Tudor Hall served as the public library for many years, undergoing extensive restoration in 1967-68. By 1984, the library outgrew the space at Tudor Hall. The old mansion was purchased by the St. Mary's County Historical Society to be its headquarters. Today, it is used as the Historical Society's research room which holds its collection of materials on St. Mary's County history.

St. Mary's County Historical Society

them to carry away . . ." People were hit very hard by these British raids. Many county residents thought that the government and the military were not doing enough to protect St. Mary's County from the British. The citizens of the county elected a committee to send a request for help to the government. This committee sent a letter with ten **grievances**, or complaints, to the state legislature. They asked the state for a **regiment**, or group, of soldiers to help the county protect itself. The end of their letter said:

> *It is therefore, in the opinion of this committee both just and reasonable that the United States*
>
> *should furnish a regiment to the county of St. Mary's, which would serve in conjunction with our*
>
> *militia, not only as a shield of security, but as a severe annoyance to the enemy. In the name of*
>
> *the Constitution, we ask it as the protection it has promised us. In the name of justice we solicit*
>
> *it to rescue and save us. In the name of God we crave it for the sake of suffering humanity.*

Photo by: S. Shoemaker

These soldiers were never sent and raids continued in St. Mary's County. On July 19, 1814, British Admiral George Cockburn sailed into Breton Bay with 1,500 marines. They took control of Leonardtown, but did little damage. Aleck Loker describes the invasion in his book, *A Most Convenient Place*, including a description printed in the *London Gazette* at the time. It said, "The Rear Admiral states that having been joined by a battalion of marines, he proceeded up the Potomac River with a view to attack Leonard's Town, the capital of St. Mary's County, where the 36th regiment was stationed. There marines were landed under Major Lewis, whilst the boats pulled up in front of the town; but on discovering the British, the enemy's armed force quitted the place and

suffered them to take quiet possession of it." Chaptico was not so lucky—much of the town was destroyed by British troops after they left Leonardtown. Many people were left with nothing after these raids. As a result, some people from St. Mary's County left to head west to Kentucky to try and start a new life. Finally, the war came to an end. A peace treaty was signed with England on December 24, 1814. It was reported that all British ships had finally left the area by January of 1815.

Photo by: S. Shoemaker
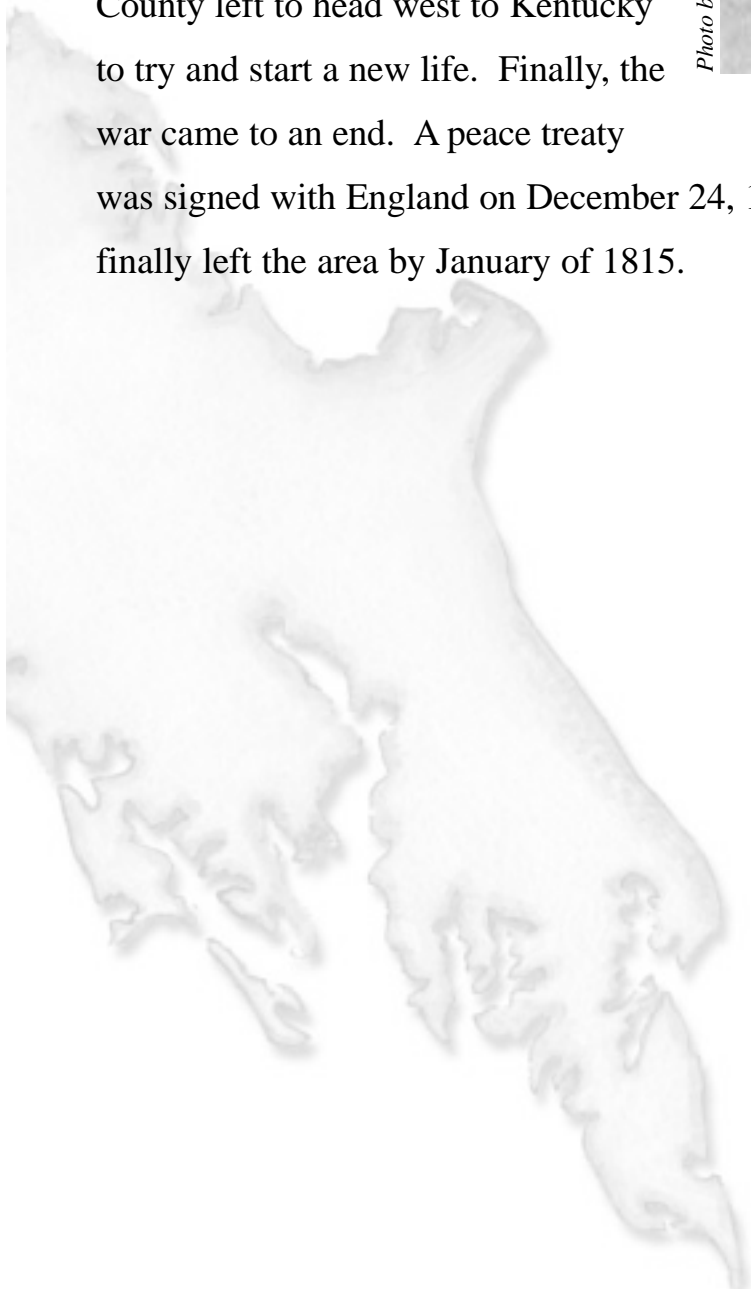
Chapter 2:
St. Mary's County

One of the biggest challenges to face the United States came almost 100 years after Maryland became a state. The American Civil War pitted state against state and brother against brother. A **civil war** is any war that is fought between people of the same country.

In December of 1860, South Carolina seceded, or officially withdrew, from the United States. Within two months, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas had also left the United States. These seven states organized their own government naming themselves the Confederate States of America. A temporary capital was set up in Montgomery, Alabama. Late in 1861 when Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina also seceded and joined the Confederacy, Jefferson Davis was elected president of the new country and its capital was moved to Richmond.

Many people in St. Mary's County thought that Maryland should secede, as well. They sympathized with people in the south and even began to form units of soldiers that they thought could help fight against the United States. After much debate, the Maryland Assembly voted to remain in the Union. This decision made people in St. Mary's County even more sympathetic to the states in the south. A meeting held in the county on April 23, 1861 ended with a crowd of over 1,000 people agreeing to a **resolution**, or statement of opinion. Part of the resolution read:

> *Therefore, we, the citizens of St. Mary's County, Maryland, in County meeting assembled, do earnestly and devotedly express our sympathies with the cause and people of the States which have seceded from the Union, and do pledge ourselves by every sacred obligation we can assume, to aid, by every means in our power in securing the Independence of all those States, and that of such others as may join them.*

Maryland! My Maryland!

During the Civil War, many people in southern Maryland sympathized with the cause of the south. There were many people who felt that Maryland should secede and join the Confederacy. Even as far north as Baltimore, there were **southern sympathizers**. On April 19, 1861, members of the Sixth Massachusetts Regiment of the Union Army were marching through Baltimore when they clashed with southern sympathizers. The situation turned violent and in the end four soldiers and eleven citizens were killed. Many more people on both sides were wounded. This was one of the first clashes of the Civil War—Fort Sumter had been fired on just days before. Newspapers all over the country reported the riot.

When a Louisiana newspaper covered the story, it was read by a Maryland man living there named James Ryder Randall. Randall was a southern sympathizer who was very upset by the story. In fact, he was friends with one of the civilians who had been killed, Frank X. Ward. To express his anger, Randall wrote a poem called "My Maryland." He sent the poem to the newspaper and soon it had been reprinted all over the south.

The poem reached southern sympathizers in Baltimore. Two sisters named Jennie and Hettie Cary set the poem to a song called "Lauriger Horatius," but had to make one small change to the lyrics. To fit the music, they changed the line that just read "Maryland" to "Maryland! My Maryland!" Eventually, a music publisher named Charles Ellerbrock changed the melody to the German Christmas carol, "Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum." Soon, it became a popular tune with the Confederate army. "Maryland! My Maryland!" was made the official state song by the Maryland General Assembly in 1939. Ironically, though the law says that the song should be sung to "Lauriger Horatius," "Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum" is almost always used. There are nine verses total. Here are the first two:

> The despot's heel is on thy shore
> Maryland!
> His torch is at thy temple door,
> Maryland!
> Avenge the patriotic gore
> That flecked the streets of Baltimore,
> And be the battle queen of yore,
> Maryland! My Maryland!
>
> Hark to an exiled son's appeal,
> Maryland!
> My mother State! to thee I kneel,
> Maryland!
> For life and death, for woe and weal,
> Thy peerless chivalry reveal,
> And gird thy beauteous limbs with steel,
> Maryland! My Maryland!

Similarly, when news of the fall of the first Union fort, Fort Sumter, reached St. Mary's County in April of 1861, there was great celebration. Aleck Loker quotes the *St. Mary's Beacon* newspaper in his book, *A Most Convenient Place*,

> *When the mail arrived in our village on Monday night, bringing the intelligence that Fort Sumpter had fallen, the wildest enthusiasm broke forth among our people, and huzzahs and congratulations and rejoicing were the order of the hour. The bells rang out a merry peal and the "Rifles" fired several volleys in honor of the event. We have never witnessed an excitement more general and intense than has prevailed in our midst since the news was received. It indicates in the most unmistakable manner that the sympathies of our people are exclusively with the South.*

Although everyone in the county might not have agreed with the resolution, the government saw the danger of many southern sympathizers in one small place. In the summer of 1861, the United States government sent soldiers to occupy St. Mary's County. These soldiers were there to make sure that no one in the county could support the southern cause. Many people still argued against the federal government. These people were often arrested for making statements against the government. Some of the people arrested were sent to the prisoner of war camp at Point Lookout.

In January of 1862, the legislature of Maryland passed a law that made speaking against the government or speaking for the cause of the south treason. The law was described in the *St. Mary's Beacon*, a newspaper printed in St. Mary's County. The writer said, "After April 15 it will not be lawful to write an article or make a speech which is calculated to encourage or promote the separation or secession of this state from the Government or Union of the United States." Many people in the county were arrested for speaking out after the treason law was passed.

On April 2, 1863, the editor of the newspaper, the *Beacon*, wrote an editorial, an article which expressed his opinion. He argued against the treason law and the occupation of St. Mary's County. The federal soldiers occupying Leonardtown thought that the article violated the treason act. The editor was arrested and sent to Point Lookout, and the newspaper was shut down. The county did not have a newspaper for the next five months.

Some people fought for the cause of the south by sending sup-

A daring escape . . .
Learning from primary sources—books

Before the Civil War, there were many slaves living in Maryland and the country's capital, Washington, DC. In fact, in Washington, not far from many capital buildings, there were places where slaves were bought and sold. Many slaves resisted their condition in a variety of different ways. In 1848, seventy-seven slaves from Maryland tried the most daring form of resistance—they tried to escape. Their journey would bring them all the way to Point Lookout in St. Mary's County.

On April 16, 1848, the slaves, including two young girls named Mary and Emily Edmonson and four of their brothers, got on board a ship in Washington, DC and tried to sail to freedom in the north. At the time, Mary was 15 and Emily only 13. The girls' father was a free man, but their mother was a slave who worked for a woman in Montgomery County, Maryland. By law, children always had the legal status of their mother, so Mary and Emily were legally slaves. Some families could buy the freedom of their relatives, but the Edmonsons had fourteen children and could not afford to free them all. The only alternative that the girls saw was to escape.

The ship sailed down the Potomac River, but hit a storm as it got to the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay and was forced to retreat to a safe harbor. That evening, the runaways were caught by an armed group of people sent by the slave masters to catch them. All the slaves were taken to jail in Washington, DC. Soon after, the two girls were purchased and sent to be sold in New Orleans, Louisiana. The girls' father continued to try to raise money to buy their freedom. Finally, with the help of church members, Mr. Edmonson was able to buy his children's freedom. The girls went on to go to school with the help of the same people who had helped to free them and spent their lives working for the rights of all African Americans.

These girls had an extraordinary struggle for freedom. Thousands of enslaved people just like them had the same challenges and obstacles. We know the story of these girls today because of several books that were written about them during their lifetimes. Many of these were written with the help of **oral history**, or stories told by the people who lived through the events. Books can be considered a primary source if they are written by people directly involved in an event. For instance, biographies can be considered a primary source. Like other sources, biographies have to be looked at carefully. Sometimes people don't remember events just as they happened. People's thoughts and beliefs can color their memory. Try this experiment: After a lesson in class, ask your classmates to write down a description of what they saw and what they learned. You will probably find many very different descriptions of the same lesson. Think about what makes the descriptions different. Why did you classmates remember the things that they did? How can you use this information to study primary sources?

plies to the soldiers there. It was illegal to send anything to the south, so these supplies were called **contraband**. People who were guilty of sending these illegal supplies were arrested. Soldiers guarded the routes to the south, so it was very hard and dangerous to try to run contraband to Confederate soldiers.

Many young men fought for the south by leaving their homes and joining the Confederate army. Although it was illegal for these men to leave the county, many would sneak across the river to Virginia to join the fight. Some of these men fought under General Stonewall Jackson and were captured at the Battle of Gettysburg. Ironically, the Confederate soldiers captured at Gettysburg were sent back to St. Mary's County to the prisoner of war camp at Point

The USS Tulip

Most Civil War battles were fought on land, but there were also some ships involved in the war. A group of ships called the Potomac Flotilla were based at Cross Manor in St. Mary's County. These ships fought Confederate ships in the Potomac River and tried to stop contraband from reaching the south through Virginia.

One of the ships of the Flotilla was a steamboat called the USS *Tulip*. The *Tulip* sailed on November 11, 1864 from Cross Manor headed for Washington, DC. One of the boilers which powered the ship was broken. The captain, William Smith, was told to come to Washington to have the boiler repaired, but not to use it on the trip. On his way up the Potomac River, the captain worried that the ship was moving too slowly with only one boiler. He was afraid of being attacked by Confederate soldiers on the Virginia shore. He ordered that the other boiler be started. Shortly after, the *Tulip* blew up. Only ten members of the 57-man crew survived. Many of the bodies were recovered and identified after the accident. Eight of the bodies were so badly damaged that they could not be identified. These eight men were buried at Cross Manor. For many years, the grave was unmarked and forgotten. In 1940, a small stone marker was placed at the site with the inscription, "in memory of those who perished in the explosion of the USS *Tulip*, November 11, 1864." Later a small plaque was placed at the site in a ceremony on the 100th anniversary of the explosion, Veteran's Day, November 11, 1964. The small monument still stands today.

Photo by: Karen Boyd

Photo by: Karen Boyd

Lookout. An estimated 22,000 Marylanders joined the Confederate Army—hundreds of which came from St. Mary's County. By contrast, before a draft was instated in 1862, county historian Regina Coombs Hammett estimates that only four St. Mary's County men volunteered for the Union Army. In the end, over 600 St. Mary's County men did fight for the Union Army, but of that total, at least 558 were African Americans. Some African Americans joined the Union army because they believed in the cause. Others were slaves that were sent by their masters to fight in their place to satisfy the draft. Of the total, at least 125 Union soldiers from St. Mary's County died of wounds or disease during the war.

   The Civil War lasted until 1865. Although there were no battles fought in St. Mary's County, other areas of the state were destroyed by major battles. In the end, the Civil War was the most costly the United States had ever seen. Over 620,000 Americans died in the war from battle wounds and disease. It would be years before the south would fully recover. Men from St. Mary's County died in the war, but the area of the county most affected was the strip of land to the south called Point Lookout.

Chapter 3: Hammond General Hospital
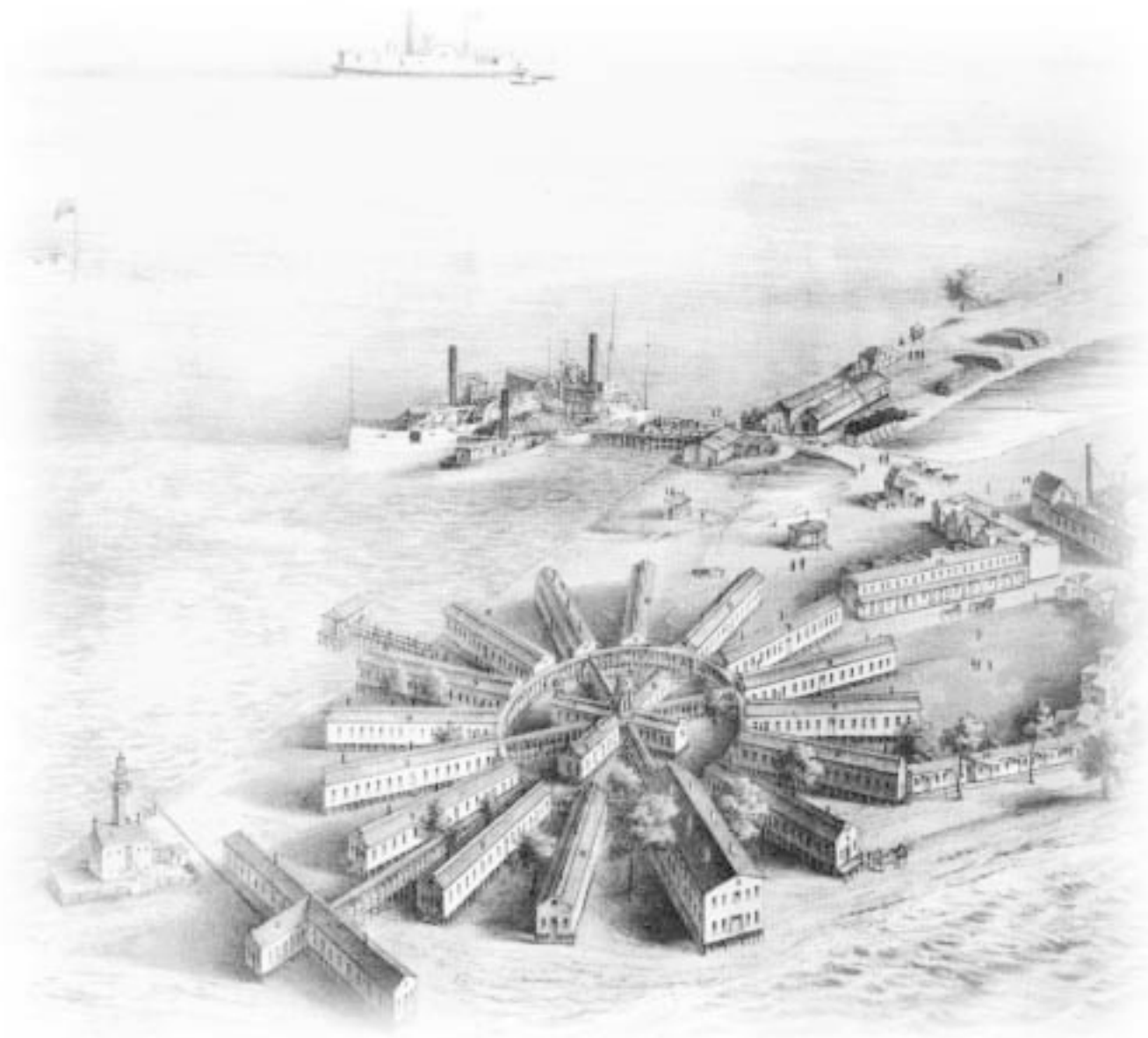
A t the southern tip of St. Mary's County is a strip of land between the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay known as Point Lookout. Before the Civil War, Point Lookout was a popular recreation area. There was a large hotel and as many as 100 resort cabins. People would travel from the Baltimore and Washington areas and beyond to enjoy the point. Durring the war, few people had the time or money for recreation. The developer, William Johnson, was soon in financial trouble. The property was mortgaged to William Allen of Baltimore who offered it and its buildings to the United States government for the site of a military hospital. In 1862, a rental agreement was arranged.

Captain L.C. Edwards arrived at Point Lookout on July 9, 1862 to begin arrangements for the hospital. At first, the hotel and cabins were used for the many injured and sick people sent to the point. Only a few improvements were needed on the property. Outbuildings were con-structed for a kitchen and other support services. Most patients arrived at the point by the wa-ter. A new pier was built when the old one collapsed on August 17, 1862. The steamer *State of Maine* arrived that day with a load of new patients and the pier could not stand under its weight and collapsed. Luckily, no one was seriously injured as a result. Operations were going very smoothly at the point, but soon it became clear that more space would be needed. The army decided to build a new hospital complex. On August 4, 1862, the contract was written for the construction.

The new hospital was built as a set of sixteen buildings arranged in a circle like the spokes of a wheel with four smaller buildings in the middle. The buildings were connected by a large round

roof. There was space for a kitchen, a chapel, a library, storage space, and the headquarters for the doctors who worked in the hospital. As many as 1,400 wounded soldiers could be treated in the hospital at one time. There was also a 20,000 gallon water tank built in the center of the circle of buildings. This tank could be used to flood the buildings in case of fire. The hospital became known as Hammond General Hospital and was completed in the spring of 1863. It was probably named after the Surgeon General of the United States at the time, W.A. Hammond.

Hammond Hospital was first used for Union soldiers who were sick or wounded in battle. It was run by military personnel as well as civilian doctors and nurses. In addition, the Sisters of Charity, a group of

St. Mary's Historical Society

nuns, worked in the kitchen and wards. By December 1863, there were 25 Sisters of Charity working at the hospital, including a native of St. Mary's County, Betty Morgan. There was even a news-

The smallpox hospital

In addition to Hammond Hospital, there was another hospital at Point Lookout. This was the smallpox hospital. Smallpox is a highly contagious disease that is easily spread though the air from person to person. It causes first a fever and aches and pains. Then, patients break out in a rash and get marks that look similar to chicken pox. Victims of the disease almost always die within two weeks.

During the Civil War, there was little that could be done for people with smallpox. Anyone who got it would be separated from other patients to try and keep the disease from spreading. Once at the smallpox hospital, patients would be given a vaccine as treatment, but it was not very effective. Even with treatment, most people who got smallpox died from it.

Eventually, children started to be vaccinated against smallpox when they were young. The disease was completely eradicated, or eliminated, from the United States by 1977. Now, it has been eliminated from the world and vaccinations are no longer necessary.

There were only two samples of the disease kept alive in case they were needed in the future. One is at the Centers for Disease Control in Georgia, the other in a facility in Russia. Smallpox is again in the news because there is a fear that it could be used as a weapon. If a terrorist organization were to get possession of one of the samples, they would be able to infect people with the smallpox virus. If they were to infect even a small group of people, the disease would spread quickly since no one has been vaccinated for it in many years. Currently, there are debates as to whether the vaccinations should be started again.

paper published at the hospital called the *Hammond Gazette*. It reported local news, new arrivals to the hospital, visitors, and deaths.

After the Battle of Gettysburg in 1863, a large prisoner of war camp was established near the hospital at Point Lookout. The hospital received many of the most seriously wounded and sick Confederate soldiers captured at Gettysburg. To make room, many federal soldiers who were patients at the hospital were sent to Baltimore. Even so, the hospital was not big enough for the more than 8,000 men wounded at Gettysburg.

Hammond Hospital continued to operate throughout the Civil War. Both Union and Confederate soldiers were treated there. After the war, there was no longer a need for the hospital. It was officially closed on August 18, 1865.

Chapter 4:
Camp Hoffman

After the Battle of Gettysburg, a prisoner of war camp was established near Hammond Hospital on Point Lookout. On July 20, 1863, the order came to establish a camp large enough to hold 10,000 prisoners. The camp was officially called Camp Hoffman, probably after the Federal Commissary General of Prisoners, Colonel William Hoffman. Most people knew it simply as Point Lookout.

The camp was 23 acres surrounded by a wooden fence that was 12 feet high. On the outside of the fence was a platform where armed guards would stand. Anyone attempting an escape could be shot. Some prisoners died while attempting to escape. Others found their way to freedom in Virginia across the Potomac River. Those caught trying to escape were punished. One reported punishment was for a prisoner to be "strung up to a pole by the thumbs with the tips of their toes just touching the ground."

Conditions in Camp Hoffman were very bad. Though some officers recommended that wooden buildings be built for the prisoners, the army put them in tents. The tents were small and were shared by two men. Prisoners lived in these tents even in the coldest winters. There was always a shortage of wood for fires. There were also reports of shortages

of almost all other supplies-blankets, clothes, food, and water. Some prisoners at Point Lookout kept diaries and others wrote letters to family and friends. These **primary sources** give us a great deal of information about life in the camp.

A soldier named Luther Hopkins wrote that Point Lookout was "such an unhealthy camp that the prisoners considered that they had a better chance for their lives fighting in the army." There was much sickness in camp and only a small camp hospital. Prisoners who were seriously ill were sent to Hammond Hospital. Everyone else had to remain in the camp and wait their turn for a space in the camp hospital.

Most prisoners agreed that the food at Camp Hoffman was good, but there never seemed to be enough of it. The water was often brackish—that is, fresh water combined with salt water—or otherwise polluted and not very good to drink. Some local people and family members wanted to send supplies to the prisoners including extra food, but the army would not allow any gifts. Family members only were allowed to send clothes to the prisoners. Even blankets that were considered extra would be taken from the prisoners if they were found during inspections. The army also allowed no visitors to the camp. Some prisoners went months or years without seeing their loved ones.

Captain Robert Park described Point Lookout in his diary when he met a prisoner from the camp, Alfred Parkins. Park describes conditions in the camp by saying, "food is insufficient, many are in rags and without blankets, and very little wood is furnished for fires." Even with these conditions, what the Captain describes most bitterly is the fact that African-American soldiers from the United States Colored Troops (USCT) were assigned to guard the camp.

Point Lookout after the war

Immediately after the Civil War, the government closed the prisoner of war camp and hospital at Point Lookout. A woman named Delphine Baker tried to get the government to use the land and buildings for a home for disabled sailors and soldiers. General Ulysses S. Grant approved the plan, but it never came about. Instead, the government sold all the buildings or tore them down and sold the materials as scrap at auction. Soon after the war, Point Lookout returned basically to its previous condition. Mr. William Johnson reestablished his resort, and the old hotel continued to operate until it burned down in 1878.

In 1929, a new hotel was built at Point Lookout. Like the old hotel, it was designed to bring visitors to the point from Washington, DC and Baltimore. Now a steamboat line brought the hotel guests. The hotel became less popular through the years. As more people had cars, they picked other places beside Point Lookout to visit on vacation. The hotel was open in the summer months

Some of these soldiers were former slaves from the south who were now guarding their former masters. "The bottom rail's on top now," some would say. Captain Park wrote that "this employment of former slaves to guard their masters is intended to insult and degrade the latter." He described instances of violence including black guards shooting prisoners for little reason. Although this may have happened, it was not the rule. In fact, there were some instances of kindness between former slaves and their masters.

There were many continued reports of poor conditions at the camp throughout the war. The winters were especially difficult. The tents given to prisoners did not protect them well from the cold weather. There was not enough wood to provide heat to everyone. There

until it closed for good on Labor Day, 1971. The building stood empty, falling apart, until it was torn down in 1990.

In the mid 1960s, the state of Maryland bought a farm on Point Lookout and made it into a state park. Throughout the years, the state bought more land, including the land around the old hotel, and added it to the park. Today, Point Lookout State Park covers over 2,000 total acres. The park has a Civil War museum that teaches people about the important role Point Lookout played during the war. It contains information about Hammond Hospital and about Camp Hoffman. Further down the point, the remains of Fort Lincoln are being preserved. Some of the buildings of the old fort have been reconstructed. Civil War reenactments are held there several times each year. In addition to the history of the point, many people visit the park for its great natural beauty. There is a large campground, a public beach, a large fishing pier, and a marina. At the very tip of the point there is a lighthouse that was built in the 1830s. The Point Lookout Lighthouse is open to the public just one day each November.

were also not enough blankets, clothes, or shoes. Some prisoners froze to death as a result. At its worst, as many as 9 prisoners died each day. The camp had been designed to hold 10,000 prisoners, but at times had more than 20,000. There were never enough supplies for everyone.

In July 1864, the Confederate army put into action a plan to free the prisoners at Point Lookout. General Jubal A. Early was to attack the point, free the prisoners, and then use them to march on and capture Washington, DC. The Union army found out about the plan and added fortifications, or protections, to the point. These fortifications were simply large trenches, or moats, dug around the fort. The dirt was then used to build large earthen walls. The walls were 15-20 feet high with a platform on top. Guns were mounted onto the tops of the walls. Only one of these forts, Fort Lincoln, is still in existence. The remains are now part of the state park at Point Lookout.   The army also ordered more protection in the waters around the point. Because the Union army learned of it, the Confederate plan was never put into action.

Today, there are two monuments to the men who died at the prisoner of war camp at Point Lookout during the war. One monument was erected by the state of Maryland; the other by the federal government. The federal monument is the only monument erected by the United States to honor an enemy of war. The monuments mark the site of the final burial place of some of the men who died at the camp. The bodies had originally been buried near the camp. They had to be moved when erosion from the river began to wash away the land. Some solders were reburied in their home states. The rest were buried

with the monument. The bodies buried there can no longer be identified. The inscription of one of the monuments reads, "At the call of Patriotism and duty they encountered the perils of the field, endured the trials of a Prison, and were faithful, even unto death."

Chapter 5:
Emancipation & Reconstruction

J anuary 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued the **Emancipation Proclamation**. To **emancipate** means to set free. This document said that all slaves in the states which had left the union would be free. By 1865, emancipation was extended to all enslaved people in the United States, including those living in St. Mary's County. For the first time, all African Americans had some control over their lives, but the time following emancipation was not easy.

Many former slaves still had few real choices when it came to their life and the lives of their family members. Some people left St. Mary's County to find work in large cities like Baltimore, but so many people went there that it was difficult to make a living. Many stayed on the same farms in St. Mary's County and worked for their former masters. Sometimes they even lived in the same quarters and did the same work. The only real difference in their lives was that they now were paid for their work and that they were free to leave if they chose.

Some of the former slaves that stayed in St. Mary's County were not being treated fairly. They com-

The Emancipation Proclamation

One of the most important documents in American history is the **Emancipation Proclamation** issued by President Abraham Lincoln on September 22, 1862. Many people think that the Proclamation freed all slaves in the United States. Read the following part of the Emancipation Proclamation and see if you can tell what it really says:

That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State, or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free; and the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom.

Looking at this carefully, does it apply to all slaves in the United States? Does it apply to the slaves living in St. Mary's County?

The Emancipation Proclamation says that all slaves that are in states "in *rebellion* against the United States" are free. That means that only slaves in Confederate states were freed by Lincoln's Proclamation. Since Maryland voted to stay in the Union, this document does not apply to people living here. Maryland's enslaved people would have to wait until the 13th Amendment to the Constitution was passed in 1865 making slavery illegal for good in the United States.

plained of being promised wages and then never being paid. They also complained of mistreatment by their employers and poor working conditions. Many employers complained about the people who worked for them, too. They said that freed slaves were lazy and unreliable. Most former slaves argued that they were willing to work and would work very hard if they were treated and paid fairly.

Some unfair laws were still in place in Maryland after emancipation. One law, called the Maryland Code of Public General Laws, stated that it was legal to force a free African-American child into an **apprenticeship** (to learn a trade) if the court thought that the child would be better off than with his own family. The law was only supposed to take children whose family could not take care of them, but children were often taken from families that could support them. In fact, many of these children could have helped to support their families by working on the family farm if they had been allowed to stay. Many African-American parents fought against this law. The courts did not allow them to speak on behalf of their children. Landowners argued that this law helped to take care of children whose families were very poor. Many people saw this law as an excuse to put African-American children back into a situation just like slavery.

Luckily for freed slaves in Maryland, there were people who helped them. The United States army had been stationed in St. Mary's County throughout the Civil War. These soldiers tried to help fight against the apprenticeship of African-American children. They also encouraged enslaved people and free blacks to enlist in the army and help fight the Civil War. Many African Americans, especially from the eastern shore of Maryland, did enlist and fight. The army also established Government Farms in St. Mary's County for freed slaves.

Government Farms

During the time of Reconstruction, the army tried to help the freed slaves of Maryland in a variety of ways. The Union army had been stationed in St. Mary's County throughout the war. These soldiers helped to found farms called the "Government Farms" on good farm-land along the Patuxent River.

The land for the Government Farms had been abandoned by John Sothoron and Joseph Forrest, two **southern sympathizers** who fled Maryland during the war. The army and the Freedmen's Bureau took the land and sent five hundred African-American men, women, and children to work on it. Many of these people were **refugees**, or people who no longer had a place to live after the war. The people on the government farms worked the land and the crops they grew helped to support them. Some freed slaves also had a part in running the farms, including supervising other workers.

The workers on the farms were paid for their work, and were given clothes, food, and a small piece of land where they could grow a garden. There were also two schools for the children on the farms. Many people were very encouraged by the success of the government farms. One agent of the Freedmen's Bureau who traveled to the farms said in a letter that "during a trip of 180 miles through St. Mary's and the adjoining counties, I saw no crops equal to those on the Government Farms." He went on to say that he "talked with many of them [former slaves] and believe they concealed no complaint . . . There was no lack of food. All were well-clad and tidy. The persons, clothing, and houses of the people were neat and clean." Despite the success of the Government Farms, they did not last. In fact, they were never meant to be a long-term solution to the problem of refugee former slaves. The government farms were designed to help freed slaves in the short term, but formerly enslaved people would struggle for many years to earn a decent living and get fair treatment under the law.

Charities were established to help freed slaves. Organizations like the Baltimore Association for the Moral and Educational Improvement of the Colored People raised money and organized people to help freed slaves all over the south. Some of these organizations tried to influence politicians to change the laws that were unfair to African Americans. Others sent teachers to the South to educate freed slaves. However, these organizations did not have enough money or people to help everyone in need.

The most aid for freed slaves was offered by a government agency called the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, commonly called the **Freedmen's Bureau**. The Freedmen's Bureau was established just before the end of the Civil War in March of 1865. It was designed to protect African Americans "in the Rebel States, or . . . any territory embraced

Community schools...
learning from primary sources—letters

Many people who lived in the north tried to help freed slaves in the South. Help especially came from middle class African-American communities in New England. One of the ways that these people tried to help was to send teachers to work in African-American community schools.

One woman who volunteered to come south and teach was a woman from Hartford, Connecticut named Rebecca Primus. Rebecca's family was a prosperous African-American family so she could afford to spend several years on the eastern shore of Maryland teaching. The reason we know so much about Rebecca's experiences in Maryland is because she wrote a series of letters to her friends and family at home. These letters are **primary sources** because they describe events in history first-hand. Years after they were written, the letters were discovered. Historians are lucky to find these kinds of sources after being lost for so long because paper is very easily damaged. Many valuable papers have been lost to fire or other accidents, or have simply disintegrated because they were not cared for properly.

Rebecca's letters tell us about some of her experiences in Maryland. She wrote of the people she met and of community events. She described her community's efforts to build a school and her efforts to raise money for it. "The schoolhouse is my theme in school and out of it, and I'm striving to induce those living upon farms to ask their employers who are favorable to the school, to give something towards it and they've promised to do so." She also worked hard to convince people in Hartford to raise money for the school. Her friends and family held fairs and other fundraisers and sent the money to Rebecca.

Along with these successes, Rebecca also wrote of the dangers and difficulties that African-American teachers faced in the south. There were many people who did not want to see former slaves educated. In 1866, Rebecca wrote of another teacher in Maryland named Miss Dickson. She received a letter from Miss Dickson which said "she has been ill for five weeks, brought on by the assaults, etc. that she receives from her enemies there, she writes that she lay totally unconscious for two days and received no nourishment for nearly a week—poor thing!" Later she wrote that Miss Dickson had recovered and would continue teaching, although in a different school.

In the same letter, Rebecca told her family of a "murder that occurred at Easton last Sunday night one week. It seems a very respectable colored man who resided with his family there was on his way to church and enroute he was shot by a white rascal so that he fell a dead man immediately." Rebecca wrote that though the killer was well known, he was being protected by other whites and had not yet been found. Despite all these dangers and difficulties, Rebecca and many others like her continued to teach in the south to try to help freed slaves to make new lives for themselves.

Think about the kinds of things that you might write in letters to your friends and family. Even without meaning to, you might be including information that could give historians clues about what your life is like. How do you think that historians could use your letters in the future to tell about daily life today? What would they learn? Would they be able to use that information to make assumptions about the lives of all people in the 21st century?

in the operations of the army." Because there was such a large army presence in and around Washington, DC, St. Mary's County was included. In fact, eventually all of Maryland was included in the territory covered by the Freedmen's Bureau. Though originally scheduled to operate only until 1866, another law was passed to allow the Bureau to operate until 1868.

The main job of agents of the Freedmen's Bureau was to help free African Americans get fair work contracts with their employers. The agents would help to write these contracts and help to enforce them. When someone felt that a contract was not being honored, they would register a complaint with an agent. The agent would then talk to the employee and the employer and try to negotiate a fair and reasonable solution. Most of the time, a solution could be reached with the help of these agents. When necessary, though, the agents could take employers to court.

In 1866, the federal government passed the Civil Rights Act. This law said that African Americans were allowed to take cases to court. Before this time, they were not allowed to testify in any court cases that involved whites. Unfortunately, even after the passage of the Civil Rights Act, many judges did not take the complaints and testimony of African Americans very seriously. The best chance that an African-American employee had of winning a case was to have a Freedmen's Bureau agent to represent him. These agents hoped that one day African Americans would have the same legal rights as whites.

Unfortunately, the Freedmen's Bureau could not always help. There were not enough agents to take care of all of the complaints. The Bureau also did not always have enough authority to solve problems. Most disputes were solved because both sides agreed, not because the Bureau could force anyone to do something.

Although agencies like the Freedmen's Bureau helped to improve the lives of freed slaves, they still had great obstacles to overcome. The biggest problem for these new freedmen was that white plantation owners still owned almost all the land and had a great deal of control over the people who worked for them. Even people who were committed to helping African Americans saw them only as farm workers on someone else's land. The best that they thought freed slaves could hope for was to get fair wages for a day's hard labor on someone else's farm.

The African-American community had different ideas. Some former slaves began to buy small plots of land when they could afford it. Communities began to form and people helped one another buy land. These communities began to establish schools to teach their children. They also built churches. Some of these churches were used as schools until school buildings could be built. By 1868, several thousand African-American students had enrolled in community schools throughout the country. Despite the success of these schools, the African-American community still faced great difficulties. Society was segregated. **Segregation** is the policy of making racial groups live apart from each other. Many businesses, clubs, and other institutions did not allowed African Americans. In some cases, the African-American community built their own businesses and clubs, but because they had so little control of the economy, they could not provide everything for themselves. Eventually, the policy of segregation led to African Americans being almost totally removed from white society. Even the services that the government was supposed to provide, like schools, were segregated. African-American students went to separate schools. The facilities were supposed to be "separate, but equal," but they rarely were equal. African Americans would have to live with these conditions for almost one hundred years.

Chapter 6:

Life on Cedar Point

From its founding in 1634 until the 1940s, most people in St. Mary's County were farmers. Agriculture accounted for as much as 98% of the county's economy. Most good land was cultivated—much of it with tobacco, the county's cash crop. Many people lived on their farms doing the same work in much the same way that their families had for more than 300 years. Even the population of the county did not change. The first recorded census in 1790 put the St. Mary's County population at just under 15,000 people. In 1940, the census still recorded about 15,000 people. The country endured the Depression and World War I, but everyday life in southern Maryland changed very little. All of that changed in 1942. That year, the Navy came to St. Mary's County.

In December, 1941, the United States entered into World War II after the attack on Pearl Harbor. The Navy sped up plans to build a large naval testing facility. They chose an area of St. Mary's County called Cedar Point for the site of the new base.

Some of the best farmland in the county could be found at Cedar Point. The point is a piece of land mid-county bordered by the Patuxent River and several of its tributaries including Harper's, Parson's, and Goose Creeks. In 1942, there were several large plantations on the point, including Susquehanna and Mattapany, and many smaller farms. Many families lived there. There were also several small towns including Jonestown, Hermanville, Jarboesville, Fordtown, and Pearson.

Days after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the Navy began to survey the land that would become the Naval Air Station at Patuxent River. They took photographs and made an inventory of all the buildings in the area and a list of everyone who lived there. In December 1941, **eviction**

notices for all residents were nailed to doors and fence posts. The families were told that they had to give up their land and move by March, 1942. The government claimed the land by the right of **eminent domain**. Eminent domain is the right of the government to take land that it thinks is necessary for public use, as long as the land is paid for fairly. The government brought in a company to determine the value of each person's property and buildings. They were supposed to pay a fair price for the land. Many people thought that they were not given all they were owed. Others argued that the true value of the land lay in the fact that it had been their family's home for many generations. They did not wish to sell at any price, but they had no choice. Tenant farmers and sharecroppers also lived on the point. They farmed other people's land and got a share of everything they grew in return. These people were not paid anything since they did not own land. They were left with very little and had to leave to find work elsewhere. In the end, the Navy bought over 6,000 acres of land and buildings for $712,287.

The History of Naval Air Station

As soon as notices were posted, the Navy's construction crews got to work. A gate was put up in January. People still living on the point had to get a pass to get on and off the government property and to their homes. As families moved out of buildings most of the structures were demolished. There are a few buildings from before 1942 that still exist, but the majority were not needed by the Navy, so they were bulldozed. The Navy also removed several cemeteries by relocating remains to other grave sites or by simply covering over the head stones. The coastline and waterways of the point were also changed. Some areas were dredged
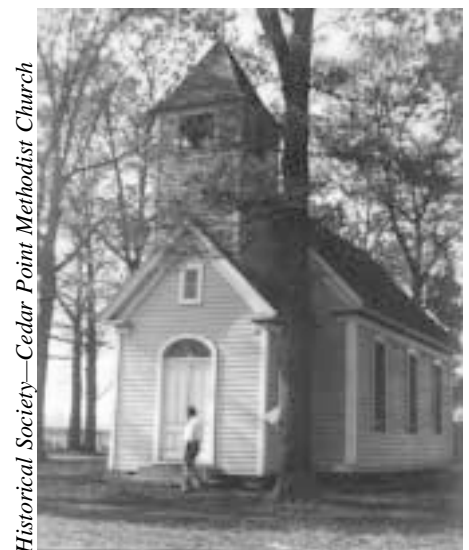
Historical Society—Cedar Point Methodist Church

to allow large seaplanes to land. Creeks were filled in. When the base was finished, the entire landscape of Cedar Point had been drastically altered. Everything, including entire towns, disappeared.

Have you ever heard of Pearson?   No such place exists today, but it was a thriving, albeit small, village in 1940. It was probably very similar to small farm towns all over the United States. The town post office was run by Frank Aud who also owned a store. Hiram Millison had a bar and store. There was a community hall where dances and other activities were held. Bell Motor Company was located just down the street. The steamboats from Washington, DC and Balti-

SlackWater~
Learning from the past-Oral history

One of the ways that we can learn about the interesting history of our county is through **oral history**. Sometimes, oral history is stories or legends that have been handed down from generation to generation. Another kind of oral history is people recalling stories from their lifetime. For instance, some tobacco farmers remember what growing up on a farm was like. They can tell stories about their childhood. This can be a valuable source of information, especially when a way of life like tobacco farming is threatened.

Students and teachers at St. Mary's College of Maryland are trying to preserve this important oral history through the Southern Maryland Documentation Project. They have interviewed people from different walks of life and created a series of journals called *SlackWater*. These journals tell the story of tobacco farming, watermen on St. George Island, and the Cedar Point area of the county. In some cases, information that might never have been known has been captured by the *SlackWater* books. Some of the people interviewed for the books have passed away. Their stories have been told and captured for future generations.

Oral history can be fun and very interesting even in your own family. As a project, interview an elderly member of your family or a neighbor or friend. Ask them to tell you about the most interesting time in their life or about a family member that you never got to meet. Or, you might want to prepare some questions to interview them. Here are some to get you started:

—Where were you born and what was your childhood like?

—What was your first job? How did you get it?

—Where did your family come from?

—What one day or event do you remember most from your childhood?

—What were your parents and grandparents like when you were growing up?

This is just the beginning. Your elders can share wonderful stories and experiences with you—all you have to do is listen!

more could come in and dock at Millstone Land-ing, bringing supplies and people to and from the big cities. The land all around the town was farmed by hard-working families. Several former residents of Pearson were interviewed for a project called the Southern Maryland Documen-tation Project.

These people lived on Cedar Point when they were children and remembered having to leave when the Navy arrived. Even though many people were sad and sometimes even bitter having to leave their family homes, ironically some of them went on to work at the base. Their memories have been combined into a journal called *SlackWater*.

Anne Lancaster's father, Frank Aud, ran the post office and store in Pearson. She recalled in *SlackWater* what things were like in her father's store. People grew much of the food they needed, but would go to the store for supplies like flour, sugar, and molasses that they could not grow themselves. They could also get "yard goods, shoes, groceries, the post office-you name it, just everything." She recalled people on the point being very close and helping one another. "Back then if something happened in any one family, you were sort of far apart, yet close. You knew everyone, and everyone was there to help, whether they were black or whether they were white. It really didn't make any difference. When someone needed, they needed. I can remem-ber taking boxes of food to people from my father's store over and over again. We were very close knit." Even so, Mrs. Lancaster says neither she nor her parents had any bitterness when they had to leave. She says her family prospered after leaving the point and she, herself, worked on the Navy base for most of her career.

Joseph Cullison, who was raised on Susquehanna farm, also remembered Mr. Aud's store. His mother would make butter and would collect eggs from the chickens she raised. She would trade these for all of the groceries that she needed. Mr. Aud, in turn, would sell the butter and eggs to other farmers who

The History of Naval Air Station

needed them. Mr. Cullison remembers that there were only some supplies that his family bought from the store-everything else they could grow themselves. "You didn't have to go to the store: the only things you were looking for were your staples like flour and sugar and those types of things. You didn't have to go out every day; you didn't have to go out every week for that matter! So, we were a little more self-supporting in those days than people are today."

In an interview conducted by Joseph Norris in 1990 for *New Horizons* magazine, Ernest Bell, who ran the Bell Motor Company with his brother Webster, remembered the community hall in Pearson. "The community hall was built by the members of the community. Some gave money and some gave services. Some gave manpower and so forth. The whole community was very close-knit. . . . [The community hall] was one of the outstanding places in the county when it came to holding dances and hosting entertainment that you could find. . . . It was a beautiful hall. They had wonderful orchestras."

Richard and Maguire Mattingly, Jr., lived on Susquehanna Farm. Their father, J. Maguire Mattingly was the manager there. They both remember growing up on Susquehanna and the the emotions they felt when they had to leave. Richard Mattingly said in *SlackWater*, "On December 13, 1941, we had a notice on the front door of our house—nailed to it with a twenty-penny

nail-that said we would have to vacate the property by April 17, 1942." Many families were given no warning before the eviction notices appeared. The Mattingly family had just completed a brand new barn on the property. The Navy ended up using it as a garage. Joseph Cullison also grew up on Susquehanna Farm. He recalled what little notice the families on the point were given. "We heard that they were going to take over, and the next thing that I remember, we were getting notices that the government was going to take the land, and the Navy was going to come in and build a test center. And then they started bringing in the equipment. They had started doing excavation for the runways before we left in the spring of 1942." Webster Bell also remembered how quickly the Navy took the property and the difficulties it caused the families there. He said, "People were in the dark. They did not know what was going on."

Same as it ever was . . .

As has been noted many times, St. Mary's County's economy was based on agriculture from its beginning. Even into the 1940s, almost everyone in the county relied on farming for their livelihood. The lives of people in St. Mary's County when the Naval Air Station came were not very different from people who lived 300 years before them. Read this description in SlackWater of an average day from Agnes Bean, who grew up on Susquehanna Farm on Cedar Point in the early 20th century:

Farming is hard work from sunup to sundown, seven days of the week. Livestock had to be fed and watered, and cows had to be milked. A farmer can not take a day off.
Mother raised chickens and turkeys for our own use and to sell for additional income. A girl's place was in the home, helping her mother. I helped with the housework, preparing meals, working in the garden, harvesting vegetables, and canning for winter. Being the oldest of seven, I also helped care for my younger brothers and sisters. We had two cows that had to be milked morning and evening, and the boys did that along with helping daddy in the fields.

Now, read this description of an average day on a 1660s tobacco plantation from *Where Maryland Began . . . the Colonial History of St. Mary's County:*

Father and the other men and boys go out to the fields to take care of the tobacco and the corn. At many times of the year, the men spend almost the whole day in the fields. It is very hard work, especially in the summertime. Even the boys as young as five or six work with the men in the fields.
Mother and the girls spend much of their time taking care of things in and around the house. The animals need to be looked after and the meals cooked for the family. After cleaning up the mid-day meal, they might spend the afternoon in the garden. It is very important that the garden is well cared for. Most of the vegetables that will feed your family are grown there.

How are the lives of these people the same? How are they different? Why do you think that life changed so little from 1660 to 1940? Why has it changed so much between 1940 and today? If you were to write a description of an average day in your life, how would it compare to these descriptions? In what time would you rather live?

Maguire Mattingly remembered what an difficult time it was for his family. He said, "Well, speaking for us, and speaking only for us, moving was a very emotional time, for mother and daddy particularly. When the machinery was sold there was not much emotion because the machinery was inanimate. But when we had the dispersal sale of the cattle, that hit very hard. . . . I can remember mother and daddy sobbing their hearts out." Even so, both Mattingly brothers agree that everything happened for the best. Maguire Mattingly was the first civilian hired at the base. He, and many others, made a great deal more money working for the Navy than they could working on the farm. J. Frank Raley is quoted in *SlackWater* as saying, "Where the farm income had been $1 or $2 a day, a laborer for one of these contractors would be paid $87^{1}/_{2}$ cents an hour. . . And if you were a carpenter, you could get $4 or $5 an hour. This is an enormous change."

People who were forced to leave their property on Cedar Point faced the added insult of being considered unpatriotic by some because they seemed unwilling to give up their land without a fight. Some people thought that to support the government in the war effort, Cedar Point residents should be willing to give up their property. A poem appeared in the *St. Mary's Beacon* on February 6, 1942, that said, "How can folks be so selfish and cold/ With casualties of war so manifold." Mary Catherine Bell answered the poem in the February 20 issue of the paper saying, "A person's home is a sacred institution, and its worth incalculable to its owner. It is just as natural for one to want to keep his home even in the face of demands of the Sovereignty, as for one to desire to live. It is only when the demands of the Government are absolutely necessary to the common good that a person should suppress his feelings. Until the need is apparent, anyone who will suffer or will be called upon to make the sacrifice, has a right to know and even to demand why he should have to relinquish so much, as well as to inquire into the feasi-

bility and necessity of any Government project that would result in so great a loss to him."

The difficulty of leaving their homes was made even more troubling by some people's feeling that landowners did not get paid fairly for their property. John Dawson remembered in *SlackWater* that his family and many others complained about the offers being made by the Navy. "The Navy offered what it [the properties] was assessed at, which was—dirt." His family challenged the assessment and was able to get a little bit more, but others did not know what to do. Most people did not want to go to court, so they just took what they were offered. Dawson recalled that African-American farmers, in particular, were not treated fairly. "None of them got too good a deal out of it. Some of the black families, some of them got taken. I've heard a couple of instances where they didn't get any value at all. Well, I don't care what kind of house it was, as long as that person was living in that house, that house meant something to him or her, and they should've gotten paid for it." This was particularly difficult for families that had to try to buy farmland elsewhere in the county, especially since, "the prices started to escalate quite a bit on property when people knew you were looking for farms."

By the spring of 1942, Pearson no longer existed. Most of the other towns on the point—Hermanville, Jonestown, and Fordtown, an African-American community, met the same fate. Jarboesville continued to exist, because it was located just outside the Naval Air Station main gate. In fact, it thrived serving all of the newcomers to St. Mary's County. Today it is known as Lexington Park.

Even though many families were hurt and saddened having to move away from Cedar Point, many people point to the huge benefit the economy got from the base. Some of the people that were forced out now sing the praises of the Navy base. Anne Lancaster, whose father ran the

Pearson store, said in her *SlackWater* interview that the area is now "a real cosmopolitan area. Life has changed, but definitely for the better." Life has most definitely changed. The population doubled between 1940 and 1950 and has grown steadily ever since. In 2002, there are as many people working on the base as there were living in the entire county in 1940. The Naval base has brought billions of dollars into the economy of the county, but now agriculture accounts for as little as 2%. We are lucky to have the memories of people who knew life on Cedar Point preserved for future generations.

Chapter 7:

Naval Air Station
Patuxent River, Maryland
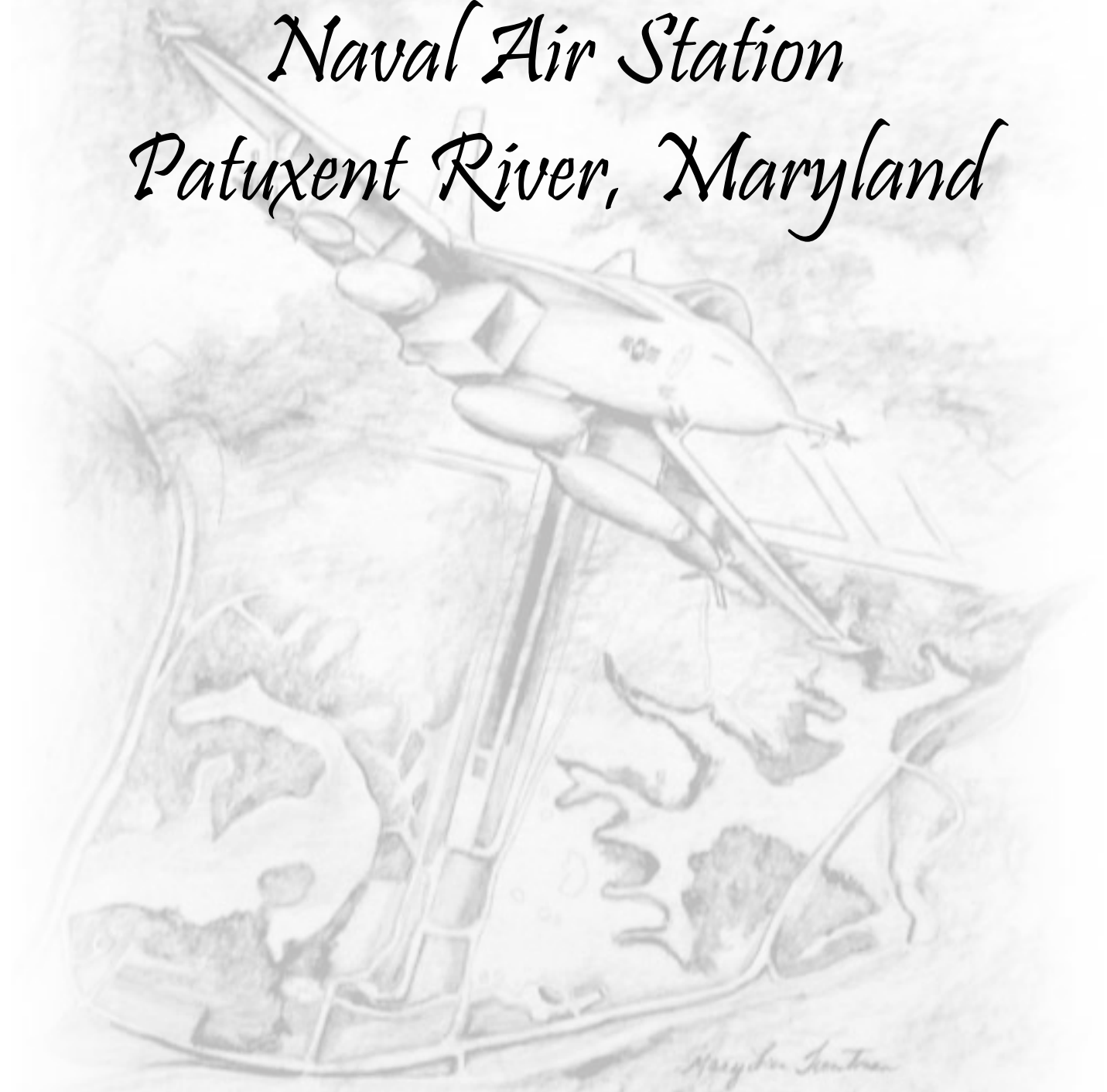
O n December 7, 1941, Japanese planes bombed the American naval base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. That single event signaled the United States' entrance into World War II. Although it took place thousands of miles away, it would change life in St. Mary's County forever.

After World War I, the United Sates government started a number of facilities where they tested navy airplanes to prepare them for war. These sites were in Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Washington, DC. As early as 1937, government officials began to discuss finding a place to combine

Mattapany Plantation . . .
learning from primary sources-archaeology

The land that would become the Patuxent River Naval Air Station has a very long history. One of the ways we can learn about the history of an area is through **archaeology**. An archaeologist's job is to rediscover the past from the clues left underground. Archaeologists dig to find **artifacts**—anything that has been made or used by humans. These artifacts provide clues about the lives of American Indians and English colonists living in Maryland. One part of the Naval Air Station where archaeologists have done a lot of work is at a site called Mattapany. This area, like many others in the county, was first the home of American Indians. The word Mattapany is Algonquian for a meeting of the waters, or a meeting of a pathway and the river. When English colonists arrived in Maryland, **Jesuit** priests sent missionaries to the Indians to try to convert them to Catholicism. The Jesuits established a mission at Mattapany called Conception Hundred. It was destroyed in a raid by the Susquehannock Indians in 1642. In the 1660s, Charles Calvert, the Lord Baltimore and proprietor of Maryland, owned the property. He built a house and a colonial armory where guns and ammunition were stored. He also had a large tobacco plantation.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, a series of families owned the plantation. One family built a large plantation house on the property sometime in the late 1700s. The house underwent many changes and additions and was still standing when the Navy bought most of the area known as Cedar Point in the 1940s. The house is now called Quarters A and is the home of the Commander, Naval Air System Command. Archaeologists from Patuxent River Naval Air Station and Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum continue to work on the property around Mattapany. They have found evidence of all the people who have lived on the site. They have also found the remains of the armory that was built at Mattapany by Charles Calvert. Mattapany is an example of now much St. Mary's County has changed in the last 300 years.

The History of Naval Air Station— Mattapany

all the different operations. They looked to an area called Cedar Point in St. Mary's County.

This area was ideal for its isolated location, its access to a long coastline, and it large size. Also,

the harbor at Cedar Point is considered one of the best deepwater harbors in the world. After

the attack on Pearl Harbor, plans were quickly put into motion. Authorization for the project

was requested on December 22, 1941. The plan was approved on January 14, 1942, and con-

struction began on April 4, 1942. The base at Cedar Point would go on to become one of the

most important sites for naval air testing in the country.

The construction of the new navy base was a huge job. Over 7,000 people were hired during

the course of the project. The workers were paid well, so people came from far and wide to find

work in St. Mary's County. Many local people also went to work for the government. The

project required great changes to Cedar Point and the surrounding area.

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First, all of the land was cleared and residents

had to move. Next, housing for all the workers

was necessary. Barracks, a type of group hous-

ing, were built for the workers. There was also a

great deal of material needed to build all of the

new buildings on the base property. Over

250,000 tons of material were brought to the site by truck and by water. The roads in St. Mary's

County were not designed for so much traffic. It was very difficult, especially for large trucks,

to get to Cedar Point along all of the old country roads. To make travel and transport easier, the

Navy decided to build a railroad to the base. There had been plans though the years to build a

railroad to the county, but it had never been done. The Navy continued a track that had already

St. Nicholas Chapel

One of the oldest buildings on the Naval Air Station at Patuxent River is its chapel, St. Nicholas. The area on which the chapel now stands was the site of a Jesuit mission going back to the 17th century. In 1796, Jesuit Superior Father James Walton built a wooden chapel near the site of the present-day church. The wooden building was in use for almost 125 years, but eventually showed signs of wear. The present day church was built in 1916, although the old wooden building was used for another 30 years.

When the land around Cedar Point was purchased by the Navy for the Naval Air Station, St. Nicholas became the base station chapel. The Navy used it for the services of many different faiths. There were also some changes made to the area. The original wood chapel was torn down and the church's graveyard was covered over. Over 300 people are buried next to the church. The graves were documented, and then the headstones were laid flat and covered with grass.

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St. Nicholas continues to serve as the base chapel today. Two of the most interesting features of the modern church are its bell and the crucifix that hangs behind its altar. The bell came from the USS *Attu*, a ship that was used by the Navy during World War II. The *Attu* was part of the attack on Iwo Jima in 1945.

The sculpted crucifix in the church is life-size and is made from 3,000 pounds of marble. A crucifix is a depiction of Jesus Christ hanging on the cross. It was made by a sculptor named Felix de Weldon who went on to sculpt over 30 monuments in the Washington, DC area. His most famous work is the Iwo Jima Memorial in Arlington National Cemetery. De Weldon was a sailor stationed at Patuxent River when he sculpted the crucifix in the 1940s.

In 2001, St. Nicholas Chapel was designated a Maryland State Historical Landmark for its significance in the history of the state.

been built as far south as Brandywine in Prince George's County. The line from there to the base was called the United States Government Railroad. It was strictly for use by the Navy. The railroad began running in 1944. The last run by the Navy was just ten years later. The railroad was then sold to the Penn Central Railroad for use in hauling freight. The line was completely abandoned in the 1970s.

With so many new people coming to St. Mary's County for work, the area around the base changed, as well. Some towns that were located on Cedar Point disappeared forever. The small town just outside the Navy's land, called Jarboesville, was renamed Lexington Park. It was named after an aircraft carrier called the USS *Lexington* that was lost in a battle during World War II. Lexington Park grew at a great rate. There were new businesses, restaurants, and bars to serve all the new customers. It had the atmosphere of something called a "boomtown," a place where many people come all at once because there is a lot of quick money to be made. Lexington Park has been compared to California during the gold rush years. Larry Millison is quoted in *SlackWater* remembering the Lexington Park of his youth, ". . . this was truly, in 1942, a boomtown atmosphere here. In other words, men who were making 50 cents a day started making 150 dollars a week." Some even compare it to the Old West. J. Frank Raley said in *SlackWater*, "Lexington Park was a boomtown, mostly bars with slot machines. The bars looked similar to the saloons in the western movies." The town grew so fast that not much planning went into it. One resident of the county, Robert Pogue, later described Lexington Park in his book *Southern Maryland Yesterday and Today*, "The topsy-like growth of Lexington Park is probably the cause of the almost complete disregard for beauty, especially in the business section." He described banners, signs, blinking lights, and all other kinds of advertising along Great Mills Road. The beginning of the growth of Lexington Park can be traced directly back to the construction of the Navy base.

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After a year of construction, the base was completed. The opening ceremony took place on April 1, 1943. The base was officially named "United States Naval Air Station, Patuxent River, Mary-

land." The main purpose of the base was to test new aircraft, equipment, and materials. The base was also made the east coast's Naval Air Transport Service (NATS) base. NATS was responsible for the movement of all the Navy planes, people, and supplies in the area around the Atlantic Ocean.

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In 1943, several test pilot operations from Virginia and Washington, DC were moved to Patuxent River. Together with the existing base activities, they formed the Naval Air Test Center which was officially established on June 16, 1945. The Test Center made many advances

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during World War II. The first American all-jet powered aircraft, the XP59-A was tested there. Also tested were the FR-1 *Fireball* and FH-1 *Phantom*. The British brought some of their planes to be tested at Patuxent River, as well. Even captured enemy planes were evaluated at the base.

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In fact, through the years, pilots and engineers at Patuxent River have had a hand in much of the most important work done in naval aviation. Many records in speed and altitude were set at the base. The AV-8A *Harrier*, F-14

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Tomcat, F/A-18 *Hornet*, SH-60 *Seahawk,* and V-22 *Osprey* were all tested at Patuxent River. The early use of helicopters in battle was also tested at the base. In addition to aircraft, there has been work on communication systems, weapons, and other advances in technology. In 1997, Patuxent River opened

the country's newest High Performance Computing

Distributed Center. This center works with others like

it to develop the most modern computer equipment for

aircraft and testing.
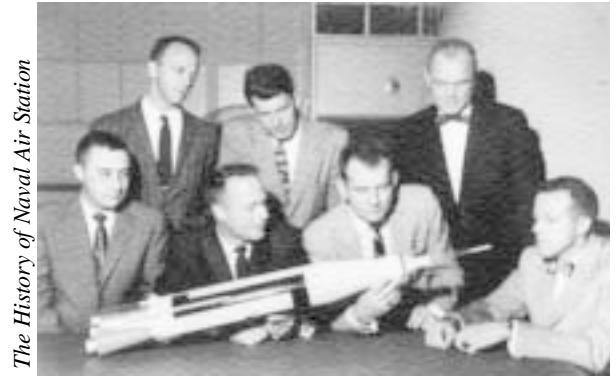
Early in the history of the base, officials realized that it was important to train the pilots who

would be testing airplanes. There was a lot to learn about all the new airplanes that were

quickly being developed. Engineers and pilots designed a program and on March 4, 1948, it

was formally recognized as the Test Pilot Division. On June 12, 1958, it became the United

States Naval Test Pilot School. The school trained not only pilots, but many of the first men to

be chosen to be astronauts in the new American space program. In April 1959, seven men were

chosen to be trained as the first American astronauts. Four of them—Lieutenant Colonel John

H. Glenn, and Lieutenant Commanders Walter M. Schirra, Jr., Alan B. Shepard, Jr., and

Patuxent River Naval Air Museum

The Patuxent River Naval Air Museum is the only museum dedicated to the history of research, development, testing, and evaluation of naval aircraft. The museum has a collection of training equipment, models, materials, and seventeen aircraft. Many of the planes on display like the F/A-18 *Hornet*, AV-8A *Harrier*, and F-14 *Tomcat*, were tested at Patuxent River. The mission of the Naval Air Test Museum is to preserve all of these artifacts and share with the public the history of naval aviation testing. The museum is also the home of the *cupola*, or top piece, of the old Cedar Point Lighthouse. The cupola was removed in 1981 for preservation after the lighthouse was badly damaged in a storm.
The lighthouse has since been taken down.

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The Naval Air Museum began in the early 1970s when two navy pilots started collecting material from their time at Patuxent River. Soon, materials were coming from contractors, the military, and even from the Air and Space Museum in Washington, DC. In 1975, a building was set aside for the museum. It opened to the public in July of 1978. The Naval Air Museum presently has a temporary home while a brand new building is being built.

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Malcolm Scott Carpenter—had graduated from the Test Pilot School at Patuxent River. In 1961, Alan Shepard became the first American in space with NASA's Mercury space program. In 1983, the first female test pilot, Lieutenant Colleen Nevius, graduated from the school. People continue to come from all over the country to attend the Test Pilot School at Patuxent River. Many of these pilots still go on to the American space program.

The History of Naval Air Station

Today, the Naval Air Station at Patuxent River is the largest it has ever been. In October 1997, the Naval Air Warfare Center moved its operation to the base. This brought even more new people to St. Mary's County. To meet the needs of all of these new residents, new schools and businesses are being built and there are improvements being made to the roads. Today there are over 14,000 military, civilian, and contractor workers at Patuxent River. That is roughly the number of people that lived in St. Mary's County when the base was built in the 1940s. The base covers 6,700 acres. Nothing had changed the history of the county more since the founding of the naval base, it will continue to affect the lives of everyone in the county for years to come.

What is a community?

Together we have learned about the history of St. Mary's County and how events in the world have affected it, but what makes this community special? St. Mary's County has many different kinds of people to make up its community and many interesting traditions. What is a community? How would you define the kind of community where you live? Are there lots of different kinds of people who live there?

In St. Mary's County, there are people with many different backgrounds. Some people who live here have families that have been in the county for many generations. Others may have just arrived in the past few years. Some people make their living by farming the land. Others catch fish, oysters, and crabs in the waters all around the county. Still others work with computers and airplanes on the Navy's base, the Patuxent River Naval Air Station. How do all these people come together to make our community?

We will now look at the history of people from many different walks of life in the county. Think about what challenges face each group of people. What has their past in the county been like? What do you think might happen to them in the future? Do you or members of your family come from any of these groups?
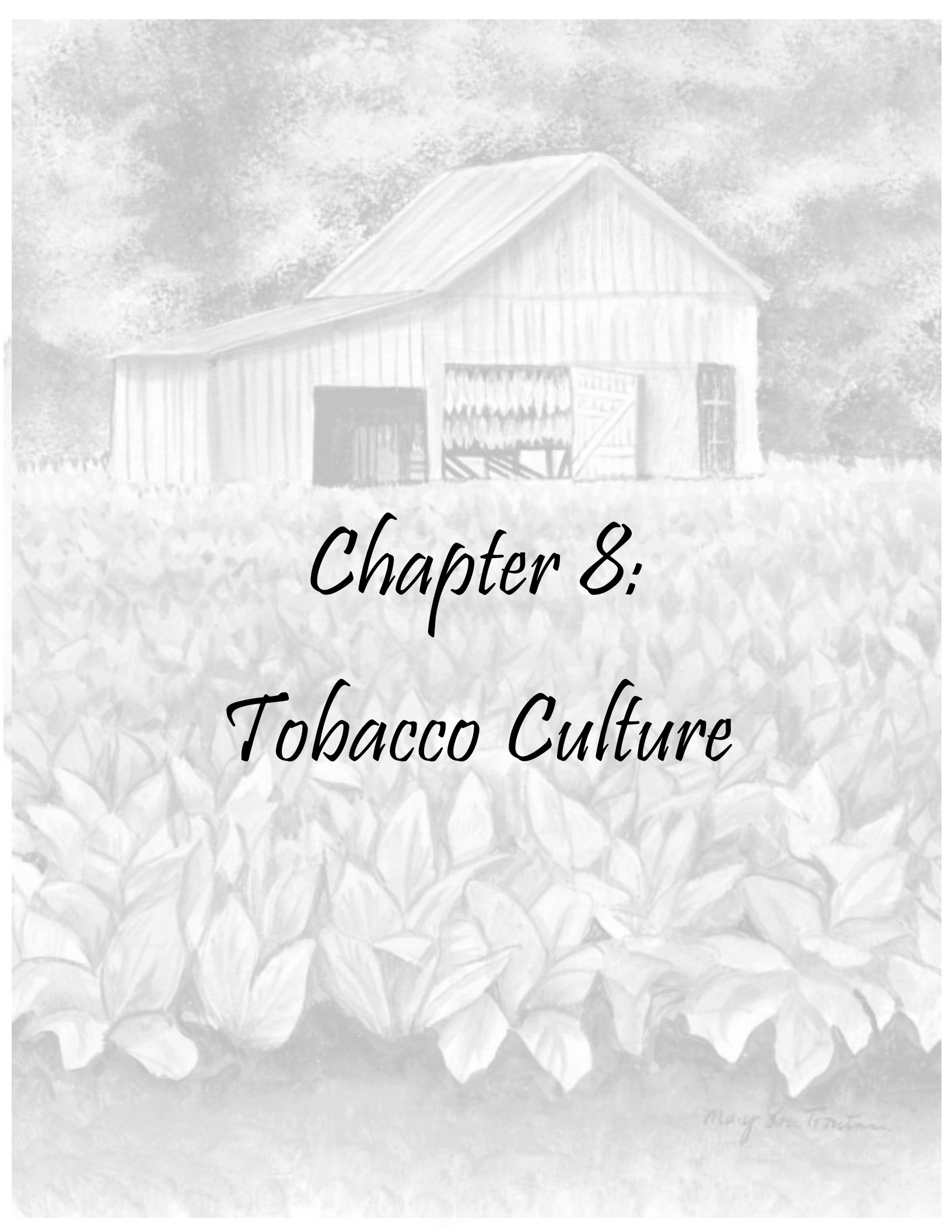
Chapter 8:
Tobacco Culture

When Lord Baltimore first sent colonists to Mary land in 1634, he thought that they might make their livings trapping New World animals like beaver and selling the furs back to England. However, there were not enough animals to support the new colony. The colonists needed a new way to make money. They found it growing tobacco.

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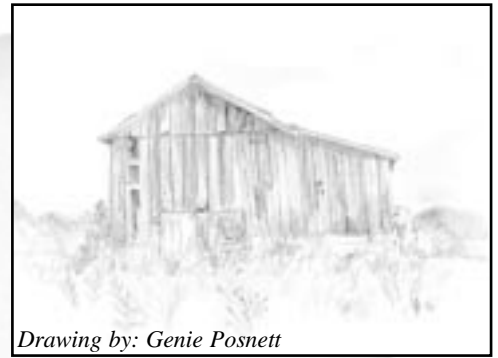
American Indians in North and South America had been growing tobacco for many years before the English colonists arrived. The tribes of South America grew a variety of tobacco called orinoco that was very popular with the English colonists. It had a more pleasing taste than the variety grown in North America, called nicotina rustica. Spanish colonists had explored throughout South America and were the first to find the orinoco variety. An Englishman named John Rolfe took seeds from the Spanish and began to grow the South American variety in Jamestown, Virginia. From there, it spread to other English colonies, including Maryland.

Drawing by: Genie Posnett

Drawing by: Genie Posnett
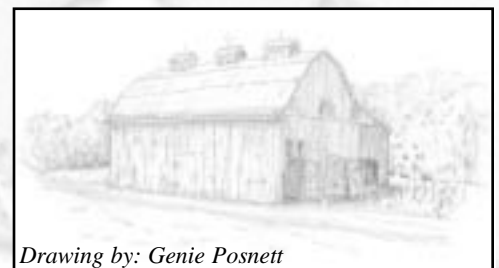
The Yaocomaco Indians, the tribe that the first English colonists met in Maryland, taught them how to grow this new crop. As soon as tobacco was sent back to England and Europe, it was very popular. Tobacco did not grow well in Europe, so Old World countries counted on the tobacco that they could get from places like Maryland. Tobacco was so common that it was used as money in the colony.

Tobacco was a very difficult crop to grow in the 17th century. The season started in February

Drawing by: Genie Posnett

Drawing by: Genie Posnett

Drawing by: Genie Posnett

when the tiny seeds were planted in seed beds. These seeds needed to be carefully watched to make sure they did not get too hot or too cold. As the seeds grew, fields had to be cleared. There were many large trees in Maryland that had never been cut. To clear these trees, the colonists would **girdle** them, that is, they would peel a piece of bark from around the trunk of the tree. The sap of the tree could not rise and the tree would die. Fields would be planted around the stumps that were left. The colonists used hand tools to hoe up the loose dirt into hills. Once the seeds grew into seedlings that were about three to four inches high, they would be transplanted into these hills. This was just the start of the season.

The colonists spent the rest of the summer carefully watching the plants. They would pull weeds from around the bottoms and cut flowers from the tops. The colonists would also have to remove worms that lived on the plants. These worms would eat the leaves if they were allowed to remain on the tobacco. When it was time to harvest the tobacco in September, they cut down the tobacco and then hung it in barns to dry. The final step was to strip the dry tobacco leaves from the stalks and pack them in barrels, called **hogsheads**, for shipment back to England. All of this work had to be done by hand. It was very difficult and took a great deal of time. People worked very hard, but if they did, they could be successful.

Over 350 years later, tobacco is still grown on land all around St. Mary's County. In fact, some

SlackWater–

Learning from the past-Oral history

One of the ways that we can learn about the interesting history of our county is through **oral history**. Sometimes, oral history is stories or legends that have been handed down from generation to generation. Another kind of oral history is people recalling stories from their lifetime. For instance, some tobacco farmers remember what growing up on a farm was like. They can tell stories about their childhood. This can be a valuable source of information, especially when a way of life like tobacco farming is threatened.

Students and teachers at St. Mary's College of Maryland are trying to preserve this important oral history through the Southern Maryland Documentation Project. They have interviewed people from different walks of life and created a series of journals called *SlackWater*. These journals tell the story of tobacco farming, watermen on St. George Island, and the Cedar Point area of the county. In some cases, information that might never have been known has been captured by the *SlackWater* books. Some of the people interviewed for the books have passed away. Their stories have been told and captured for future generations.

Oral history can be fun and very interesting even in your own family. As a project, interview an elderly member of your family or a neighbor or friend. Ask them to tell you about the most interesting time in their life or about a family member that you never got to meet. Or, you might want to prepare some questions to interview them. Here are some to get you started:

—Where were you born and what was your childhood like?

—What was your first job? How did you get it?

—Where did your family come from?

—What one day or event do you remember most from your childhood?

—What were your parents and grandparents like when you were growing up?

This is just the beginning. Your elders can share wonderful stories and experiences with you-all you have to do is listen!

land where farmers grow tobacco has been farmed for almost all of that time with the same crop. Modern tobacco farmers use the same steps as 17th-century farmers did. Many of these steps still have to be done by hand. Other types of farming have been changed a great deal by the invention of machines to make the work easier. Tobacco farmers have not been able to use many machines to help them to grow their crop.

In *SlackWater*, an oral history of tobacco farming in St. Mary's County, Elsie Bean talked about

what it was like to work on a tobacco plantation when she was a girl in the early 20th century. There were very few machines that could be used to help plant the tobacco. Her life was probably similar in many ways to the lives of tobacco farmers over 200 years before. She describes putting the seeds in seed beds and watching them closely, then weeding out the beds. "To get that grass out of that little tobacco plant, where both looks exactly alike, you've got to be on your Ps and Qs." After the tobacco got to be "about four inches is a good size—then you got to plant them."

All the planting had to be done by hand, as well. Mrs. Bean said, "we never heard of a tobacco planter." All the plants were taken to the field in large baskets and planted one at a time. Between 1,500 and 2,000 plants could be planted in one day, working all day long. During the growing season, the tobacco had to be carefully tended. First "you had to weed it—that's your first working. You take the weeding hoe and you go over all that crop and weed them rows out." As the tobacco plants grew, small leaves would sprout next to the stalks. These leaves were called suckers. The suckers would take energy away from the large leaves if they were not removed. The plants would also bloom and flower. The flowers, like the suckers, would take energy away from the large leaves. Both the suckers and the flowers would have to be removed by hand. All this careful attention would take most of the growing season. Then, it was harvest time.

"It takes so many weeks for it to grow and ripen a little, around in August and September, and then you cut it . . . then we

speared it with tobacco sticks," Mrs. Bean remembered. The entire stalk of tobacco was cut down and a long stake of wood was pushed through the stalk. "Then you stood it up in the field, and you come out with your wagon, or your ox cart and steers, and hauled it to the barn." The tobacco was hung in barns to dry, or cure. "A many a time I've been up in the tip-top of that barn hanging it on tier poles, and it's ninety and a hundred degrees. You have no idea."

The tobacco would hang in the barns until it was cured enough to start stripping the leaves off the stalks. Then you would "start bulking your tobacco—putting it down in a bulk, one by one on top of the other." The tobacco would cure in the bulks until after the "May sweat." "Then you go and hogshead it up-you prize it and put it in a

St. Mary's County Historical Society

hogshead." A **hogshead** was a large wooden barrel-shaped container. A **prize** was a large screw that was used to press tobacco into the hogshead so that it would be packed very tightly. The tobacco was then taken to market. Many farmers do not use hogsheads for their tobacco anymore, but put it in baskets, instead. The crop would take most of the year to grow. For Mrs. Bean, "farming was an all-day job, and it was a year-round job, and that's the way it went." The same is true for tobacco farmers in the 21st century.

Tobacco farming requires skill and experience. If any of the steps in the growing process are done badly, or done at the wrong time, the whole crop can be ruined. For instance, if harvested tobacco is handled when it is too dry, it can crumble. If it is packed when it is too wet, it might mold. An experienced tobacco farmer knows just when all the steps should be done. On a tobacco farm, it would have been the job of children like Mrs. Bean to learn everything they

could from their elders about growing tobacco. Tobacco farming is truly passed down from one generation to the next. In fact, in Mrs. Bean's day, children rarely went to school. Her father needed her help on the farm. Many people did not get an education in a school, but instead learned everything they needed to know about running a farm from their parents.

Today, there are still people who farm tobacco in the area. They work in much the same way that Mrs. Bean did when she was a girl, but it is getting harder and harder to be a farmer in St. Mary's County. The biggest problem for all farmers is that they are just not paid enough for the crops that they grow. All four of the county's main crops—tobacco, soybeans, corn, and hay—have lost money in recent years. Some estimate losses for local farmers to be as much as $3.5 to $4.2 million. According to Bubby Norris, an agricultural consultant who was quoted in *The Enterprise* newspaper, "the cost of running a farm is going up, but prices of the crops are going down. A farmer just can't survive like that. Not for very long." Chaptico farmer George Reeves described the problem when he was interviewed for *SlackWater* in the mid-1990s. He said, "When I started farming, I sold wheat for $3.00 a bushel. You could buy a postage stamp for 3 cents. You could buy a loaf of bread for 13 cents. Today, I am still selling wheat for $3.00 a bushel, and you know the cost of a postage stamp and a loaf of bread."

Tobacco farmers face still more challenges. Tobacco is no easier to grow now than it ever was and farmers are getting less money for their work. The **demand** for tobacco is not as high as it used to be. Part of the problem is that companies can buy tobacco from other countries more cheaply than they can buy it from American farmers. The main problem, though, is that there is less demand for cigarettes. Fewer people are smoking because people have realized that smoking tobacco is very bad for your health.

The first colonists to grow tobacco not only thought that tobacco was good for you—they actually used it as a medicine. People with colds were told to smoke tobacco to clear their lungs. People with toothaches would put a fresh leaf on the tooth to kill the pain. Tobacco was very popular and used by almost everyone, but there were some people who argued against tobacco. Even King James I of England said that smoking tobacco was not good for you. He said that it would make your lungs black and your breath foul. Very few people listened to him, mostly because tobacco was making a lot of people a lot of money in the New World. It would be years before people realized just how bad tobacco could be. It was not until the 20th century that people were warned of the dangers of smoking.

Scientific studies have shown that cigarette smoking can cause heart disease, many types of cancer, birth defects, and emphysema, a lung disease. Even so, as late as the 1940s, some tobacco companies advertised cigarettes as healthy. They claimed that cigarettes could calm nerves and relieve tension. Many people began smoking and became addicted. The tobacco companies claimed that the nicotine in cigarettes was not addictive. After years of smoking, many people got very sick and some died of their illnesses. Some people blamed the tobacco companies and took them to court to hold them responsible. They argued that tobacco companies knew how dangerous smoking could be, but sold cigarettes anyway, without warning consumers. People began to win their court cases.

The Maryland government, also, wanted to hold the tobacco companies responsible for tobacco-related illnesses. When some people became sick, the government had to help pay for their medical bills. It cost the state millions of dollars. In May of 1996, the Attorney General of Maryland, J. Joseph Curran, filed a lawsuit against the tobacco companies. Other states sued

the tobacco companies, too. Soon, many states joined forces and came to an agreement with the tobacco companies. The agreement was called the Master Settlement Agreement.

The Master Settlement Agreement was signed on November 20, 1998. It was an agreement between 46 states and territories and six tobacco companies-(Philip Morris Incorporated, RJ Reynolds Tobacco Company, Brown and Williamson Tobacco Corporation, Commonwealth Tobacco, Lorillard Tobacco Company, and Liggett and Myers). Stating that the tobacco companies have to pay money to the states every year until 2024. The money will be divided up between the states. It could cost the tobacco companies as much as $206 billion. The state of Maryland could get more than $4.4 billion dollars by 2024.

The agreement is also designed to try and keep young people from smoking. Tobacco companies are not allowed to advertise in any way that might attract young people. For instance, they can not use cartoon characters in advertising and are not allowed to sponsor sports teams or stadiums. Lawmakers were particularly concerned about stopping children from smoking because of the 47 million Americans who smoke, 90% started before they turned 21. Some of the money being paid to Maryland is being used for programs to teach children the dangers of cigarette smoking.
The rest of the money from the settlement is going to help Maryland tobacco farmers. Although tobacco smoking is unhealthy, there are people in St. Mary's County who rely on tobacco farming to make their living. If these farmers were suddenly told that they were not allowed to grow tobacco, they would lose their jobs, their farms, and would not be able to take care of their families. To help farmers, a group called the Tri-County Council, with representation from St. Mary's, Charles, and Calvert Counties, designed the Southern Maryland Strategic Plan for Agriculture. The plan is designed to help farmers and to try to preserve the tradition of agricul-

ture in southern Maryland. The most important parts of the plan are the buyout and transition programs. In these programs, farmers who wish to participate are paid to stop growing tobacco. In the buyout program, farmers are paid $1 per pound of tobacco based on their average crop if they stop growing tobacco right away. They get these payments for 10 years. In the transition program, farmers have to reduce their tobacco crop each year for 10 years until they stop growing it altogether. Farmers in these programs are also given help in trying to develop new crops to grow instead of tobacco.

Many people have taken advantage of the buyout and transition programs. In many cases, though, farmers have not found a crop to replace tobacco. Some farmers grow soybeans, corn, or hay, but many insist that they can not make as much money as they can growing tobacco. Some farmers have refused to stop growing their tobacco crops. They say that they can not survive as well growing any other crop. Some farmers wish to uphold the tradition of tobacco farming which, in some cases, has been their family occupation for many generations.

With so many difficulties facing St. Mary's County farmers, it is no small wonder that there are fewer farmers now than ever. Many people are choosing to sell their farms under the pressure. In 1901, there were 46,000 farmers in Maryland. In 2001, there were only 12,000 left. St. Mary's County has lost half of its farmland. Since 1980, the state of Maryland has lost 144 acres of farmland every 33 hours. Some counties around the state have lost as much as 85% of their farms. The worst losses in St. Mary's County have come since the Naval Air Station was built at Patuxent River in the 1940s. In 1940, agriculture made up 98% of the economy of St. Mary's County. Now, it has fallen to only 2-3%. Much of the land that used to be farmed has been sold to developers. The land now has houses, gas stations, or strip shopping malls. There is a risk that the entire way of life and tradition of the tobacco farmer will disappear. Only time will tell.

Chapter 9:
Life of the Waterman

One of St. Mary's County's most important natural resources is the water that surrounds it. The Chesapeake Bay, Potomac and Patuxent Rivers, and their tributaries form a boundary almost the entire way around the county. At one time, there were many people in St. Mary's County called **watermen** who made their living on the water. Today there are fewer than ever.

According to The Mariner's Museum, the term waterman dates back to the 11th century in England. Originally, it referred to people who used boats to smuggle things. Once Englishmen came to the New World, it came to mean anyone who worked on the water. In St. Mary's County, people make a living catching oysters, crabs, fish, and clams. Watermen spend their time looking for different catches depending on the season.

The resources of the water have been used back to the time that this area was first inhabited. American Indians used canoes to fish the rivers and collect oysters and crabs. The first Englishmen to the area immediately noticed the abundance of the rivers. They, too, sent boats to the water to take advantage of the bounty. Still, most people in colonial times made their living from the land—growing tobacco—and just used what they could catch from the water as extra food for the family. It was not until the 1860s that people officially listed their profession as watermen. Today, as in the past, the life of the watermen is largely dependant on what he is trying to catch.

Mary Lou Troutman

Oysters
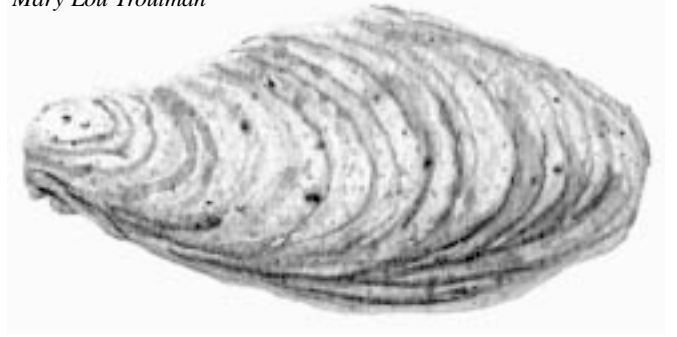
The most popular catch for St. Mary's County watermen is oysters. Oysters have lived in the Chesapeake Bay for over 15 million years. Englishmen were familiar with oysters before they came to the New World, but found the American Indians eating a different variety than they had in Europe. The Chesapeake Bay oyster is called *crassostrea virginica* and can grow to be four times the size of English oysters. Oysters soon became a very popular dish for the English colonists. The shells proved useful, as well. Oyster shell was ground up and combined with clay and mud to make **daub**. Daub was put on the outside of colonial chimneys instead of brick. Brick was very expensive and had to be made by skilled brick makers. Most colonists had enough know-how to make their own daub out of the supplies that they could get for free on their plantations.

The oyster season in Maryland consists of roughly all months with an "r" in them—September to April. That is when watermen can gather oysters. The oysters are at their best in the cooler months. Several ways to harvest large quantities of oysters have been developed through the years. The first method is **hand tonging**. The use of hand tongs dates back to the 18th century. Hand tongs are a set of metal rake-like claws attached to long wooden handles. The handles are used like a pair of scissors—when they are squeezed, the claws come together and pick things up. To use hand tongs, a waterman stands on

the side of his boat and reaches down to the bottom with the claws. Just by the feel of the bottom, a waterman can tell if there are oysters in a particular location. When he thinks that he has oysters, the waterman squeezes the claws together. He then has to pull the tongs onto the boat and dump out the contents onto something called a culling board. From there, the oysters are **culled**, or sorted. Clumps are broken up and all extra rocks or shells are thrown back into the water. Also, oysters are sorted for size. Only those that are large enough can be kept. Hand tonging is very heavy and difficult work. Watermen need strong arms and a good back. Some watermen in the county continue to harvest oysters by hand tonging in exactly the same way people did two hundred years ago. It is one of the oldest traditions of the watermen. Other watermen use tongs very similar to hand tongs, but have an electric motor that helps them to lift the tongs out of the water.

Marie Lynch

A somewhat similar method for harvesting oysters is with a machine called **patent tongs**. Patent tongs were designed for use in water too deep for hand tonging, but have largely fallen out of use. Patent tongs use claws like the hand tongs, but they are attached to a steel cable. A machine lowers the claws to the bottom and raises them up once they are closed. The oysterman empties the catch onto the boat and they are culled, or sorted, just as in hand tonging.

In the 19th century, a new way of harvesting oysters was introduced by watermen from New England. It is called **dredging**. In this method, a large metal basket is lowered into the water and dragged along the bottom by the boat. The basket picks up everything along the river bottom. The contents are brought up to the surface by machine and emptied on the deck. Again,

the contents must be culled to remove extra material and check for oyster size.

Dredging can be very destructive to oyster beds. Oysters can only grow if they have a clean, hard surface to attach themselves to when they are young. Often, young oysters, called **spats**, will attach themselves to old shells on the bottom of the Bay or river. Dredging can easily pull up an entire area of shell thereby clearing the area of places for spats to plant themselves. Also, if an oyster bed becomes covered over with silt, like sand, the spats can not use it. Again, they have nowhere to attach themselves and will die. When dredging was first used in the Chesapeake, it depleted, or destroyed, much of the oyster population. In fact, dredging was outlawed in Maryland and Virginia in the 1820s. During the Civil War, the oyster population grew back because few people were harvesting them, so dredging was allowed to return.

The highest peak of the oyster population was in the 1880s. There were plenty of oysters for everyone. Soon, the population of oysters started to decrease again. Some oystermen, particularly from Virginia's eastern shore, began to dredge the oyster beds closer and closer to Maryland. Maryland's watermen, many of who were still hand tonging for their oysters, saw this as a threat and an invasion of their waterways. Some St. Mary's county watermen started to dredge the waters, as well—trying to beat the Virginians to the oysters. This caused a great deal of tension at the time and the problems continued for almost a decade. As Regina Coombs Hammett in *History of St. Mary's County* puts it, "The battles continued—between Eastern

Shore dredgers and St. Mary's County tongers, between Marine police and Eastern Shore dredgers, between St. Mary's County tongers and St. Mary's County dredgers, and between St. Mary's County dredgers who dredged illegally at night and Marine police." The conflict came to be known as the "Oyster Wars." The conflict turned violent at times, with several reports of gun battles between boats on the river. In the late 19th century, six different laws were passed to try to end the oyster wars. Many of these laws did not work because there were not enough policemen on the water to enforce them. Things were not completely settled between Maryland and Virginia until the Potomac River Fisheries Commission was created in 1962. The Commission has representatives from both states. Their job is to cooperate to protect the waterways for all watermen.

In the 1980s, oystermen had an even bigger challenge to overcome. The oyster population was attacked by two different diseases. The diseases, called MSX and Dermo, are caused by parasites that get into the oyster and eventually kill it. According to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the oyster population decreased by as much as 90% in some areas. The harvest of oysters was drastically affected. To quote the DNR, "Harvests which exceeded 15 million bushels in the late 1800's and sustained an average of 2 to 3 million bushels through much of the mid 20th century, dropped to 79,000 bushels in 1994."

Because of the drastic decline in the oyster population, government agencies and non-profit groups are working together on restoration projects. Oysters are very important to the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. They eat **plankton** and algae in the water. As they eat, they act as filters for the water. If there were no oysters, it would affect the entire **ecosystem** of the Bay. Part of the restoration effort has been to limit the number of oysters people are allowed to catch

and the areas where they can be harvested. Oyster beds need time to rebuild, so areas are made off-limits to watermen for a period of five years. After that, the area is reopened until a certain amount of oysters have been harvested from the site. Then, it is closed and allowed to rebuild again.

The other parts of the restoration project involve seeding, or planting, oysters and improving the **habitats** in which they live. Oysters are seeded in two ways. In the first, young oysters are taken from areas in the Bay where they are not likely to survive. There are some places where disease is killing almost all the oysters that live there. Before the oyster seeds are exposed to disease, they are moved to a healthier part of the Bay. The other way to seed oysters is to grow young oysters in a hatchery. Hatcheries are places designed to let oysters grow in the best possible conditions. Once the oysters are old enough, they are taken out to the Bay. Both of these types of planting have been successful.

If oysters are to grow well in the wild, they have to be given a suitable environment. As mentioned before, dredging and other human activities have destroyed many oyster beds in the Bay. Restoration projects are rebuilding those beds. This can be done in a variety of ways. Sometimes, oyster shells are moved from one part of the Bay to another. Also, shells from oysters that have been harvested can be used to create new oyster beds. Oyster shell is becoming more difficult to find so experts are looking at different ways to rebuild oyster beds. There have been experiments using different kinds of material like brick, concrete, and stone for oyster beds. There have also been experiments to clean or uncover oyster shells that have been covered over by silt and sediment. Experts hope that with new efforts, the oyster population will continue to increase.

Lighthouses

St. Mary's County is almost completely surrounded by water. A feature of many waterfront communities is the lighthouse. Lighthouses were placed on points of land and were designed to help ships navigate around difficult waters. There are many areas of shallow water and sandbars that can be dangerous for passing ships. Lighthouses were designed to help ships' captains avoid these dangers. When they were first built, lighthouses were tended by lighthouse keepers. These men often lived at the lighthouse, sometimes with their families. It was a 24 hour a day job and could be very lonely. Nevertheless, many men ably manned St. Mary's County's lighthouses for several years. Almost all lighthouses became automated in the 20th century so they no longer need keepers and many have fallen out of use completely. There are only a few lighthouses still left in St. Mary's County.

Cedar Point Lighthouse was located on Cedar Point on the land that is now the Naval Air Station at Patuxent River. It was built in 1896. There was a great deal of erosion around the site of the lighthouse and by the 1920s, it was completely cut off from the land. The lighthouse was replaced with an automatic light and then with a buoy. Cedar Point Lighthouse went untended for many years. It deteriorated beyond the point of repair, but the **cupola**, or top light tower, was saved. It was removed in December of 1981 and is now in the possession of the Patuxent River Naval Air Museum.

Mary Lou Troutman

Mary Lou Troutman

The Point Lookout Lighthouse rests at the southern most tip of Maryland. It was built in 1830 by a man named John Donahoo who built many lighthouses around the Bay. In 1883, the lighthouse was renovated and expanded. It was operated by the Coast Guard until an automatic light was installed off the point in 1965. The following year, the Coast Guard turned the lighthouse over to the Navy. During the 1970s and 80s, the lighthouse was used as a residence. It was during this time that it was investigated for ghosts and other unexplained phenomenon. Some people consider the Point Lookout Lighthouse to be one of the most haunted buildings in the area. The lighthouse is open to the public just one day each year.

Mary Lou Troutman

The Piney Point Lighthouse is the only lighthouse in the county that is regularly open to the public. Like Point Lookout, it was built by John Donahoo and was completed in 1836. The tower is 35 feet tall and the light can be seen for 11 miles on the Potomac River. There is also a caretaker's house on the Point that is still occupied by someone who looks after the property. At one time, Piney Point was a very popular spot for visiting dignitaries from Washington, DC. According to Gwynth Schultz in an article in the *Washington Post* newspaper, it was known as the "summer White House" "because of frequent visits by James Madison, Franklin Pierce, and Theodore Roosevelt, among others." The lighthouse was operated by the Coast Guard until 1964. In 1990, the Coast Guard turned it over to St. Mary's County. It is now a part of the St. Clements Island-Potomac River Museum. The tower has recently undergone extensive repairs and restoration work. Now, one day each year, members of the public can climb the old light tower. As part of the museum there are exhibits about the history of the lighthouse and the area. The museum also contains an exhibit on Maryland's first historic shipwreck dive preserve. It is a German submarine called the U-105 *Black Panther* and it was sunk about $1^{1}/_{2}$ miles off the point.

Perhaps the most interesting county lighthouse is the Point No Point Lighthouse. It is not on land at all, but is located two miles off shore. The site was suggested for a lighthouse as early as 1891, but was not begun until 1901. There were great difficulties in construction, so it was not completed until 1905. The light stands 52 feet above the water. In 1938, an automatic light was installed, but there was still Coast Guard staff working there until 1962. According to the United States Lighthouse Society, there have been some long-needed renovations recently made on the structure. The biggest difficulty was getting the workers to the lighthouse through choppy waters. It could sometimes take as much as two hours each way to get all the necessary people there.

Mary Lou Troutman

Crabs

Another very popular catch for St. Mary's County watermen is the blue crab. In fact, they are probably the animal most closely identified with southern Maryland watermen. Like oysters, crabs have been enjoyed throughout the history of the region. According to Regina Coombs Hammett, crabbing as an industry started in 1873. Captain John Landon on the Eastern Shore of Maryland was the first to pack and ship crabs. One hundred years later there were 29,900,000 pounds of crabs shipped from Maryland.

Mary Lou Troutman

Crabs are harvested in two different ways. The first is through the use of a trot line. A trot line is a long piece of rope with bait tied onto it. The line is put on the bottom of the river until crabs begin to feed on the bait. It is then run through a roller on the side of the boat. As the crabs come up with the rope, they either fall into a basket or are snatched up in a net. The other, more popular way to catch crabs is with a crab pot. According to Regina Coombs Hammett, the crab pot was invented in 1938 by B. F. Lewis of Harryhogan, Virginia. A crab pot is made of chicken wire and has small, funnel-shaped openings on the sides. A piece of bait is put on the inside of the pot. Crabs swim in for the bait and are unable to get back out again. A waterman could have hundreds of pots to tend. Each day, the pots must be pulled up and emptied of their crabs. Then, the bait is replaced and they are lowered back down again. Crab pots need to be constantly tended, repaired, and cleaned. Most watermen also make their own crab pots. It can be a great deal of work.

No matter how the crabs are caught, they must then be culled, or sorted. Blue crabs have a hard outer shell that is outgrown many times during their lives. Once a shell gets too small, the crab

molts, or sheds its old shell and grows a new one. Depending on which stage the harvested crabs are in, they are used for different things. Crabs with a fully hard shell are called hard crabs. Hard crabs are steamed and then the meat is picked from the shell and eaten. Crabs that are just starting to grow a new shell are called "peelers." Peelers are used by some people as bait. Once the crab totally sheds its old shell, it is called a soft crab. Soft crabs are a very popular food, as well. They are often fried and sometimes eaten on sandwiches. The waterman will sell the hard and soft crabs that are large enough to keep. He will often take the peelers and leave them in a float, or shallow tank. He can then watch them carefully until they completely loose their shell and can be sold as soft crabs. Floats must be watched constantly because a crab will grow a new paper shell in as little as twelve hours. Once it has a paper shell, it can no longer be eaten as a soft crab, but it is too soft to be sold as a hard crab.   Some watermen fish exclusively for soft crabs by dredging through grassy areas where they are usually found.

The crab population in the Bay, like that of the oyster, has fallen in recent years. There have been more and more restrictions put on crabbing to ensure that the population has a chance to recover. There are also restoration projects in place to try to help the crab population. The 2000 harvest of 50 million pounds was the lowest in over 20 years.

Fish

There are over 200 species of fish in the waters around St. Mary's County. Many of them such as rockfish, croaker, spot, perch, trout, bluefish, flounder, and herring are harvested by watermen and sold.   Most commercial

Mary Lou Troutman
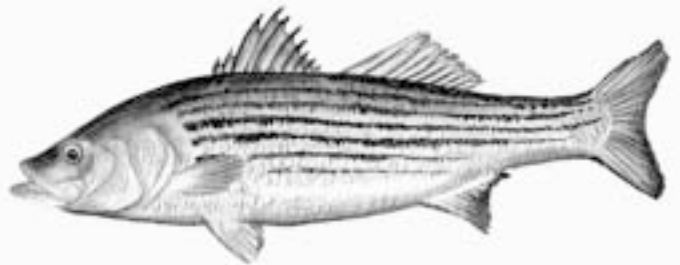
fishermen use one of several kinds of nets to catch their fish. One kind of net is called a pound net. Pound nets were being used as early as the 1870's and were the most popular way to trap fish until the early 20th century. In this kind of net, small trees are stripped of their bark and then pounded as stakes into the bottom of the river in a straight line. A rope net that has been treated with tar is strung between the stakes. Fish are led along the length of the netting into an enclosure called a pound and brought up into the boat from there. Another type of net called a hand seine is pulled behind ships. It is a long circular net that is dragged through the water to catch schools of fish swimming together. Fishermen also use a type of net called a drift or gill net that is designed to trap fish by their gills until they can be raised up into the ship. More recently, fishermen have begun to use eel pots, fykes, and catfish pots. All of these are similar to crab pots where the catch is lured into the pot, and then is unable to find their way out. Most fish caught in the county are sold for food, but some of the catfish are also sold live to the Midwest where they are used to stock fishing ponds.

Today, there are fewer watermen who make their living net fishing. The most popular business for fishermen now is the fishing party business. These boats are rented by people who spend the day fishing on the Bay. It has become a very popular pastime, particularly for visitors to the area.

Clams

One other catch for some St. Mary's County watermen is soft-shell clams, or **manoes**. Clamming is less popular in general because it is a very competitive business and the necessary equipment is very expensive. To clam, a boat needs to be outfitted with a clam rig. The clam rig is a large conveyor belt that can be lowered to the bottom. When the belt is started, it brings up materials from the bottom. The clams are picked off the belt as they go by. Everything else

is allowed to fall back into the water. Clamming is a difficult and time-consuming business.

Watermen today

Today, there are fewer watermen working in St. Mary's County than ever. Like farming, working the water is a dying art. Bruce Lumpkins was quoted in *SlackWater*, an oral history of St. George Island, as saying "There's not many true watermen left—I mean, when they can say they work fulltime on the water. There's maybe a handful left." Many watermen are getting too old to go out and their children are not following in their footsteps. Seventy-one year old waterman Vernon Thompson was quoted in the *Enterprise* in an article by Angela Knode called "Generations on the Waters of St. Mary's County." He said, "There's certainly not much future in it these days. I don't know how the young guys do it anymore. Every year more young men go off to look for other work."

Some watermen are encouraging their children to find work elsewhere because they know how hard it is to work the water. They know that the culture of the waterman is dying, but they would rather spare their children from the difficult life they have led. Bruce Lumpkins has been a waterman all his life. His oldest son, Keith, is also a waterman, but he is trying to keep his younger son, Kyle, out of the family business. He said, "I really don't want him [Kyle] to get into it anyway because it's a hard life. It's not getting any easier. I'd rather him get a job sitting behind a computer or something. I hope he does."

Despite all the challenges and hard work, there are many people who say they can not imagine work, except that which takes them on the water. To hear Neal Robrecht, a long-time waterman

quoted in *SlackWater*, tell it, "It's hard work, but you get used to it. It gets in your blood and you can't get it out."

Chapter 10:

St. Mary's County African-American Community

Mary Lou Troutman

The African-American community in St. Mary's County has a long and rich history. The first men of African descent to come to St. Mary's County arrived in 1634 with the first European colonists. There were at least two men of color on that voyage. All we know of one of these men is that his name was Francisco. The other was a man named Mathias de Sousa. Both of these men arrived as most of the first colonists did—as indentured servants. They had agreed to work for a master for a number of years to pay off their passage to Maryland. Unfortunately, historians have not been able to uncover much about either of these men.

Mathias de Sousa is a particularly interesting person in St. Mary's County history. There are only six mentions of him in the records. Historians do not know anything for certain about his life before he came to Maryland. Some experts think that he was picked up in the Caribbean; others think he came from an island off the coast of Africa. The only thing that is known for certain is that he worked as an indentured servant for Jesuit priest Father Andrew White. After he finished his indenture, he worked as the captain of a small ship and was a trader. Today, he is best remembered as the first man of African descent to vote in a colonial legislature. In 1642, his name was listed as voting in the session of the Assembly. After that, he disappears from the records.

Other men of color came to the New World as indentured servants and freemen throughout the 17th century. By the beginning of the 18th century, there were fewer Englishmen who were willing to come to Maryland as indentured servants. At this time, plantation owners began to turn to enslaved people brought from Africa and the Caribbean. Unlike indentured servants, slaves had no choice of whether to come to America or not. They were stolen from their homes and transported against their will to a land that they knew nothing about. Slaves were consid-

ered property and unlike indentured servants, were forced to work for life without wages. Life was very difficult for African slaves working on Maryland plantations.

Africans coming to Maryland often came from different tribes and did not speak the same language. They may have had different traditions and ways of life in Africa. Once they reached Maryland, groups of slaves were often sold to many different owners. Some small planters could not afford many laborers, so sometimes there were only a few slaves on each plantation. A new slave could easily find himself on a plantation where he could not understand or speak to anyone else. Even on larger farms, groups of slaves were often divided up and sent to work in different fields.

Family was very important to Africans coming to the New World. It was difficult for enslaved people to keep family ties. In the beginning, there were very few women being brought from Africa to America. Even after more women did arrive, masters did not encourage slave marriages. Families were often split up and sometimes sold and separated for life. Eventually, masters allowed slaves to marry and sometimes even to have their own family houses, but some members of families were still sold to other owners. It was particularly difficult if a master died and he owed other people money. Slaves might be sent to many different plantations to settle his debts.

Slaves were not allowed to travel without a pass, or written permission from their master. Sometimes, slaves would risk punishment to see members of their family on other plantations. Those who left the plantation without permission were called runaways. Historians now believe that almost half the runaways in Maryland were people trying to visit family on other plantations.

Some enslaved people were horribly mistreated by their masters. It was legal for masters to correct, or punish, slaves who did not do what they were told, but there was a limit on what masters were allowed to do. Some went far beyond that limit. Perhaps the most difficult part of slavery for families was the fact that it was passed from parent to child. Any child of an enslaved woman legally was also a slave for life. It was almost impossible for slaves to change their situation. There are a few cases of slaves working for their freedom. Some slaves were freed, or **manumitted**, by their masters. Others ran away and started lives in other areas. These cases were rare. Most enslaved people had to live everyday knowing that their lives and the lives of their children probably would not change.

Generations of enslaved people worked on St. Mary's County plantations until the Civil War changed everything. In January of 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued the **Emancipation Proclamation**. This document said that all people who were enslaved in states that seceded from the Union were free. Slaves who escaped from a Confederate state like Virginia and fled to a Union state like Maryland were free. Many runaways escaped to Point Lookout, just across the Potomac River from Virginia. Once they reached Maryland, these slaves were free. In fact, a federal law passed in 1861 called the Confiscation Act said that Union military officers were not allowed to return slaves to masters who were in seceding states. Once passed, even more runaways came to Point Lookout. This put people enslaved in St. Mary's County in a very difficult position. Maryland had voted not to secede from the Union. This meant that the Emancipation Proclamation did not apply to enslaved people living in St. Mary's County.

Slaves held by masters in Maryland tried to escape, but had nowhere to go for protection. They were not protected by the Confiscation Act because Maryland was not a Confederate state. In

1862, the Second Confiscation Act was passed which said that any slave owned by a person who was not loyal to the Union was free. This law could apply to slave owners in Maryland who supported the south. However, all slave owners had to do to recover their runaway slaves was sign a loyalty oath to the Union. If they swore that they supported the Union, their captured runaways were returned to them. This was a tragedy for slaves, particularly those who were mistreated by their masters. An article by Andrea Hammer quotes the letters of a nurse named Abby Hopper Gibbons who worked at the Point Lookout hospital during the Civil War. She saw, first-hand, what was happening to slaves owned by masters in Maryland. In one case, she wrote about a young enslaved man who had been whipped repeatedly by his master. She tried to convince her superiors to let him stay at the hospital, but "in the evening his master appeared, took the oath of allegiance, and the poor mutilated boy was given up." Despite her pleas, the captain at the hospital said that "if his master took the oath, he was bound to believe him, and that his duty was to deliver the slave to his owner. . ." All slaves that escaped to Point Lookout began to claim that they had come from Virginia to attempt to avoid being sent back to their Maryland masters.

It was not until after the Civil War that all enslaved people were set free. In 1865, the 13th Amendment to the Constitution made slavery illegal in the United States. The period following the Civil War is known as **Reconstruction**. It was a very difficult time for freed slaves. They now had their freedom, but no real way to support themselves and their families. It had been illegal to teach slaves to read or write. In fact, most freed slaves had very few skills, except what they had learned from generations of tobacco farming. Some freed slaves were able to support themselves by starting their own farms, but most could not afford to buy their own land. Many former slaves ended up working for their former masters, doing the same work and

sometimes even living in the same place. Many were powerless to make any real changes in their lives.

Conditions were made even worse by the attitudes of many white people. Many considered African Americans inferior, or less capable and less smart than white people. This attitude is called **racism**. These whites thought that African Americans should not be allowed to work in the same jobs, shop in the same businesses, eat in the same restaurants, or go to the same schools as whites. African Americans were **segregated**, or made to live apart from white society. This meant that there were separate institutions for the two races. For many years after the Civil War, almost every public institution was segregated. The policy was made legal by the federal government in a Supreme Court decision called *Plessy vs. Ferguson*. This decision said that "separate but equal" facilities for the two races were legal.

The attitudes of most individuals reinforced the same feelings toward African Americans. James Forrest, long-time resident of St. Mary's County, remembered working on a white family farm when he was a teenager. He was interviewed for an article called "Growing up Black in St. Mary's County" by Sunny Mays Schust. In the interview, he told of his experience. He said, "There was the farmer, the elder son, and me. We plowed the fields together, but when it came time to eat, we all ate in the same kitchen. But they sat over here, and I sat over there. You wonder to yourself what difference does it make if I sit at the same table? At the time you didn't question too much, it was the times." Mr. Forrest's experience was not uncommon.

According to the 14th amendment, civil rights were not to be denied to anyone on the basis of race. This meant that African Americans should be allowed to do the same things as everyone

else. Unfortunately, this was not the reality. There was a series of laws called **Jim Crow laws** that **discriminated** against African Americans and kept society segregated. Many people living in St. Mary's County remember times when they were treated unfairly. James Forrest recalled the Leonardtown of his youth in "Growing up Black in St. Mary's County." He said, "In modern times—I'm not talking when I was a boy, but when I was a grown man—I was not permitted to eat or drink a cup of coffee in restaurants in Leonardtown. I could go in, buy the coffee in a paper cup, stand outside and drink it." Fred Talbert, when interviewed for *SlackWater*, also remembered the segregation in Leonardtown. Many businesses refused to serve African Americans. In others, like the movie theater in Leonardtown, African Americans had to enter though a back alley and sit in a separate area. He recalled how far-reaching discrimination was. "If we went to Washington, wasn't nowhere that we could go unless we went around the back to get something to eat." African Americans were forced to establish their own community, separate from that of whites. Fortunately, there were many strong institutions in the African-American community in St. Mary's County. These institutions allowed the African Americans to help themselves and each other. With neighbor helping neighbor, the members of the African-American community were able to not only survive, but thrive. Here are just a few examples of the African-American institutions that became a vital part of the county's history.

St. Peter Claver's Church

Traditionally, one of the strongest institutions in the African-American community is the church. For much of Maryland's history, segregation in churches was the rule. African-American parishioners were not allowed to sit with everyone else. James Forrest remembers, "Most churches in the area were segregated. You could not go and sit anywhere you wanted in the

church, you sat in the back. And to let you know where the back was, there was a board across the end of the pew." Rather than deal with these conditions, some African Americans began to form their own churches. In some cases, there were new religions formed. For instance, the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church was created in Philadelphia by Richard Allen in 1816. Reportedly, the oldest AME congregation in St. Mary's County was formed about 1861 in Charlotte Hall. As of 1990, the old log cabin meeting house of the Ebenezer African Methodist Episcopal Church was still standing. In other cases, African Americans simply formed independent **congregations** of existing churches. Such is the case with one of the largest and most influential African-American churches in the county, St. Peter Claver's Catholic Church in Ridge.

For many years, the **Jesuits** ran several Catholic churches in the southern part of St. Mary's County. Their mission was based at St. Ignatius Church in St. Inigoes. Before the end of slavery, white masters and their African-American slaves attended the same churches, but sat in different areas of the church. Father Francis Michael Walsh describes the situation in his history of the Jesuit mission, *Resurrection.* "At St. Ignatius Church, the whites sat downstairs and the blacks sat in the gallery. But separate churches, masses, or festivals were unheard of." After emancipation, African Americans looked to have more influence and power within the church. They wanted leadership roles, but were still attending church with their former masters. This caused some tensions.

Around 1900, a Jesuit priest, Father William J. Tynan, wished to organize a **sodality**, or society dedicated to charitable work within the church community. Two sodalities were actually formed, one for African Americans, and one for whites. The African-American society took the name of its patron saint, St. Peter Claver. Meetings began to take place in the home of the

prominent Biscoe family, founding members of the society. Soon, the meetings were too large to be held in a home. The St. Peter Claver's Sodality Hall was built on land donated by the Biscoes in 1901. The sodality had its own choir and organized activities within the African-American Catholic community.

At about the same time, the focus of the Jesuit mission was moving from St. Ignatius Church to St. Michael's Church in Ridge. Most Catholics in the area were attending services there. On one occasion, Father Tynan asked the choir from St. Peter Claver's to sing for mass at St. Michael's. Reportedly, the white organist at St. Michael's refused to play the organ after an African American had played it first. It is said that she wore gloves and was seen disinfecting the keys. The St. Peter's choir and other African Americans in the congregation were greatly offended. Then, white church members refused to receive communion with African Americans. The pews at St. Michael's were segregated—this further insulted and angered the African-American members of the congregation. Soon, relations completely fell apart. On January 18, 1903, Father Tynan held a service for African-American parishioners in the St. Peter Claver's Sodality Hall. They were thrilled. To quote Father Walsh, "For the first time in their lives the black parishioners experienced the liturgy without the hassle of pew segregation and other forms of humiliation." Once this began, no one was willing to go back to the ways things were. Since there was only one priest in Ridge, Father Tynan held mass at St. Peter Claver's Hall one week for African-American parishioners and at St. Michael's Church the next week for white parishioners. By the end of the year, masses were held in both places each week. There were also separate Sunday school classes in each place. Soon, it was clear that the situation would remain permanent.

St. Peter Claver's had become its own separate church. The parish bought land for a new

church building in 1913. The first St. Peter Claver's Church was started on May 7, 1914. It was finally completed and dedicated on December 1, 1918. In 1916, a Catholic elementary school for African-American children opened in St. Peter Claver's Hall. A new building built for the school was opened the following year. In 1934, the original St. Peter Claver's Church was destroyed by fire. A new church was dedicated on May 25, 1938. The new church was designed by Philip Frohman, who also designed the National Cathedral in Washington, DC. Today, St. Peter Claver's Church continues to serve the Catholic community of southern St. Mary's County and is one of the oldest African-American Catholic congregations in the country.

The Knights of St. Jerome

Within the African-American community, charitable organizations were also formed to allow the community to help itself. They were often formed in connection with church congregations. Many were formed after the Civil War to help former slaves adjust to their new found freedom. At least six of these organizations were founded in St. Mary's County after the war. One organization was called the St. Inigoes Beneficial Society. It was formed by a group of former slaves in the St. Inigoes area of the county in 1874. In 1880, the St. Inigoes Society was combined with several other groups and reformed into the Knights of St. Jerome. According to a history of the St. Inigoes Mission by Father Francis Michael Walsh, "the purposes of the society were listed as fostering a feeling of love and respect for our fellowman and promoting friend-

ship and true charity in all laudable undertakings at all times, but particularly in times of sickness and distress." The Knights built a membership hall in Dameron in 1885. The members did all the work themselves including drawing the plans and cutting the trees for wood. The hall was formally dedicated on September 30, 1885. The Knights hosted many activities including political meetings and the annual "15 of August Fair." The hall was also used for the first Catholic school for African-American students in the county.

The school was founded in 1887 by Father John B. Gaftney who was then the priest at St. Ignatius Church. The school's first teacher was a member of the Knights of St. Jerome, Mr. Daniel O. Barnes. He had about seventy students enrolled. The school did not operate there for long, perhaps only ten years, but it was the first step towards private education for African Americans in the county. The Knights organization continued to grow. Around the turn of the century, they doubled the size of their meeting hall.

Cardinal Gibbons Institute

The establishment of education facilities was very important to the African-American community. It was illegal to educate enslaved people, so before the end of the Civil War, most African Americans had very little education. As public schools were formed by the county, African-American children were largely ignored. Finally, in 1872, the first public schools for African-American students were opened. They were supposed to be "separate but equal" to the schools for white students, but though they were seperate, they were not equal. For many years—until 1968—the money to pay for African-American schools came from the property taxes paid by African-American families. Many of these families did not own land. Those that did still did

not have the resources of the better-established white community. As a result, African-American schools suffered. During most of the history of segregated schools in St. Mary's County, there were fewer African-American children than white children attending school—even when African Americans made up a majority of the population.

To try and help the situation, there were several private schools established for African-American students in the county. The earliest was established at the Knights of St. Jerome Hall in Dameron in 1887. Others followed—St. Peter Claver's School in Ridge was established in 1916. St. Alphonsus School at the St. James Chapel opened on January 2, 1917. Even as elementary schools for African-American students increased, there was nowhere that African-American students could get a high school education. That changed with the establishment of the Cardinal Gibbons Institute in Ridge.

The Cardinal Gibbons Institute was originally conceived as a reform school for troubled students. A priest at the Jesuit mission in St. Inigoes, Father John LaFarge, came up with the idea and asked an order of priests called the Xaverian Brothers to run the school. They already ran a similar school called the St. Mary's Industrial School in Baltimore. The Brothers agreed, but plans were delayed for the school because of World War I. By the time Father LaFarge was moving forward again, the Brothers had to back out.

Father LaFarge began to talk with other church leaders and soon another very different idea for the school came about. Arthur Monahan of the National Catholic Welfare Conference convinced Father LaFarge that the school should not be for reform students, but should, instead, focus on "promising and fairly talented youth." He suggested a school for girls and boys that

could get popular support from the community. The school would be based on the very suc-cessful Tuskegee Institute and would teach classes in academics, industry, and agriculture. The new school would be run by the Jesuits and a Board of Directors, but would be staffed by an African-American principal and teachers. Although it would be identified as a Catholic school, it would be open to students of all religions.

Father LaFarge took his new plan to the bishop and it was approved enthusiastically. A board of directors was organized with representatives from many different parts of the community. The board formally incorporated itself as the Cardinal Gibbons Institute, Incorporated on July 13, 1922. The first order of business was to purchase the land for the school and organize the staff. A piece of land was purchased in Ridge and Victor Hugo Daniel was hired to be the principal. His wife, Constance, was hired as his assistant and plans began for the curriculum. Problems arose when the board had no money to build school buildings. They went to charity organiza-tions for help. The Knights of Columbus, a Catholic charity society, agreed to help raise the necessary money. They asked every member to pay an assessment of five cents on their mem-bership. With this, the Knights raised $35,000—enough to build the first building. Gibbons Hall was completed in 1924 and the institute opened with 28 students. That October, a group in Leonardtown organized to raise more funds for the Institute. Soon, there were similar groups all over Maryland and then all over the country. An organization called the Federated Colored Catholics helped to organize these groups. Soon, people in Pennsylvania, Delaware, New York, New Jersey, and beyond were sending money to Cardinal Gibbons. Father Walsh says, ". . . soon affairs for the Cardinal Gibbons Institute became a recognized part of Negro life. This first national project undertaken by Catholics on behalf of the Negro gave people a cause."

The official dedication of the Cardinal Gibbons Institute came on October 26, 1924. People tra

traveled from all over the area to join in the celebration. By the following year, the Institute

Board decided to build a dormitory for the boys staying at the school. The girls continued to

use the upper floors of Gibbons Hall as their dorm space. The school continued with its aca-

demic success and continued to grow. Soon buses were purchased to bring African-American

students from other parts of the county to attend Cardinal Gibbons. Dr. George Washington

Carver even spoke at the school on one occasion when he was invited by Principal Daniel, but

as the years went along, the school was in financial trouble. A great deal of money was needed

to run the school and soon, that money ran out. Classes were halted at the school on December

31, 1933. With the help of Archbishop Curley, the Institute reopened in September of 1938

with a staff of three teachers. The school continued until the last class graduated in 1967. In

the summer of 1972, Gibbons Hall was torn down.

One of the successes of the Institute was its outreach classes for adults in the area. Institute

staff sponsored conferences for farmers to teach them how to be more successful. They taught

people how to improve their homes. They also provided classes and demonstrations in house-

hold tasks like cooking and food preservation. When cooperative agreements and credit unions

began to be developed in the community, they, too, found a home at the Institute. These classes

continued even when the school was closed.

A whole generation of African Americans in St. Mary's County was shaped by their experience

at the Cardinal Gibbons Institute. It instilled in them a sense of pride in their community and a

determination to succeed. When interviewed in 1984 about her experience at the Institute,

Evelyn Clark said, "Today when I see a child struggling to get an education I have a special

feeling for them because I know what they're going through." Another graduate, James Forrest, remembers Principal Victor Daniel as having a strong affect on his life. He said, "He instilled in me that just because you were poor didn't mean you have to stay that way. He constantly encouraged the students to be proud of their blackness, which is something that wasn't normally taught to black youngsters at that time. He was definitely a man ahead of his time."

Rural Cooperatives

One of the biggest challenges to the independence of the African-American community was that it was economicly disadvantaged. For many years, most African-American families did not own land or property. Even when they did, they often did not have enough money to make any improvements to it. They did not have extra money to invest in things that would make their work more successful. For instance, an African-American farmer might be able to save enough money to buy land for a farm, but perhaps not enough to buy the tractor or other equipment to make that farm a success. One solution to that problem is the idea of cooperatives. A **cooperative**, or co-op, is when a group of people make an investment together and share whatever is purchased. According to Father Walsh's history, the first men to introduce the idea of the cooperative to the African-American community in St. Mary's County were Father Horace B. McKenna and Father Edward Kerr. Father McKenna was the superior of the St. Inigoes mission and Father Kerr was the new priest at St. Michael's Church in Ridge.

Chornicles of St. Mary's

The first cooperative started in 1938. According to Father Walsh, a group of watermen were being taken advantage of by the buyers who were purchasing their catch. The white boat owners were supposed to be bidding on the watermen's catch. Instead, they were making a deal among themselves before hand. One person would "win" the bid at a pre-arranged price and then all the buyers would share the profits. The watermen knew what was happening, but could do little to stop it. Father McKenna convinced them to work together to protect themselves. They formed St. Mary's Sea Food Incorporated. At first, the seafood co-op was fairly successful. After their first season, they had enough money saved to buy an oyster shucking house. Later, the seafood co-op ran into problems and then disbanded, but there was enough interest that the idea of co-ops got off the ground. The movement found a home at the Cardinal Gibbons Institute.

The Cardinal Gibbons Institute had always been active in adult education and improvement in the community. In 1938, the Institute began to organize study groups that were interested in starting a credit union in the community. A credit union would give the African-American community a resource for people trying to buy land or houses and a place from which they could borrow money. At first, they were unable to get permission from the government for the credit union, but with persistence they were finally successful. On February 10, 1940, the charter was granted for the Martin de Porres Federal Credit Union. The credit union was immediately a success. The first loan was given to a man named James Bush who borrowed ten dollars to get a doctor for his dying mother. By its second year, the membership had climbed to 129 people. It had a savings of almost $500 and had given $1,390 in loans. Another credit union opened soon in Bushwood, called the St. Francis Xavier Credit Union. At the time, they were the only two credit unions operated by African Americans in the state. Soon, a third credit

union, Leonard Calvert Federal Credit Union, was opened by the parishioners at St. Michael's, again with Father Kerr's assistance.

Another cooperative was founded in 1942 with the help of the federal Farm Security Administration (FSA). The FSA was designed to help farmers recover after the Depression. They designated St. Mary's County a "Special Area for Negroes," the only such area in the northeast. The FSA helped to organize the Ridge Purchasing and Marketing Cooperative in 1942. This was a co-op of farmers who pooled their resources to help one another to have successful farms. The co-op's first major purchase was a tractor. It was kept in a central location and could be used by any member of the co-op. This was an important step forward because none of the co-op members would have been able to purchase a tractor by themselves. To quote Father Walsh's history, "The coming of the tractor gave the black community a new feeling of being able to do a large scale operation as a group unit, a new feeling of ownership, and a new feeling of knowing how money is made and accounted for and returned to its source, themselves the investors."

All of these institutions, and many others, helped to sustain and strengthen the African-American community through the very difficult times of segregation. Finally, real progress toward equality and integration began to be made. Even as early as the 1930s and 1940s, there were African Americans pressing for equality. The construction of the Naval Air Station at Patuxent River in 1942 gave African Americans in St. Mary's County new opportunities. There were thousands of people hired to build the base and many of the jobs paid more than anything else in the county. Also, many of the jobs required skilled laborers. People got the chance for training in job skills that they never would have gotten otherwise. African Americans took the skills

that they acquired back to their community. This was the basis for many businesses within the African-American community. In 1955, the military was **integrated**. This, too, allowed African Americans new avenues for advancement and success.

As opportunities for individuals increased, social institutions began to be integrated, as well. The first main institutions to be integrated were schools. In 1954, a case called *Brown vs. The Board of Education* came before the Supreme Court. Students in Topeka, Kansas were challenging the law that kept African-American students out of white schools. At the same time, similar laws were being challenged in Delaware, Virginia, South Carolina, and Washington, DC. All of the cases were combined under the name *Brown vs. the Board of Education.* The decision of the Supreme Court was that separate school facilities were inherently unequal and so they violated the fourteenth amendment to the Constitution which provides for equal protection under the law regardless of race. This decision eventually brought about the desegregation of all schools in the country. St. Mary's County slowly started integration in 1957.

In 1956, a commission was appointed to determine how school integration would be accomplished in St. Mary's County. The commission concluded that "integration now is likely to result in a complete breakdown of the county's educational system." They recommended starting very slowly and integrating just the second and third grades the following year. All other transfers of African-American students would be voluntary and at the request of the parents. At the same time, some parents were becoming impatient. William and Ann Rebecca Groves of California had two high school-age children at the time. If St. Mary's County had stuck with its original plan their children, Joan and Conrad, would have been long graduated before they had a chance to attend an integrated school. Mr. Groves and about 60 other parents requested that

their children be transferred to white schools. Most of the people were intimidated into dropping their requests. Only Mr. Groves held out. Finally, the school board granted permission to Conrad, but not to Joan. Mr. Groves went to court to allow his daughter to go to school with her brother. He won his case. On September 4, 1958, Joan and Conrad Groves walked to their school bus and then into Great Mills High School as its first African-American students. A crowd of reporters watched them go. The following year, there were three requests to allow African-American students into Great Mills. All of those requests were denied. It was not until the 1967-68 school year that the Board of Education established school attendance regardless of race for all students in all grades. The teachers and other employees were also fully integrated in the same year. The first African-American student at St. Mary's College of Maryland, Elizabeth Barber, did not graduate until 1964.

Slowly through the years, progress has been made. The African-American community in the county is still strong and proud of its roots, but its members now enjoy full protection under the law. There are still issues that plague the community and racism is not completely dead, but community leaders will continue to work as everyone tries to learn from our shared past.

Chapter 11:

The Amish Community
of St. Mary's County

P erhaps the most distinct members of the St. Mary's County community are the Amish and Mennonite people who live in the New Market and Loveville areas of the county. Mennonites hold some of the same beliefs as their Amish neighbors, but are not as stringent in the interpretation of those beliefs. The Amish, in particular, lead a very traditional life. They are, in many ways, removed from their non-Amish neighbors, and have very strong traditions within their community.

The Amish religion originated during a time of great reform in religion. Originally, there was only one Christian church, the Catholic Church. In the 16th century, some people began to develop different ways of looking at religion. They wanted to change, or **reform**, the Catholic Church. Instead, the **Reformation** brought about the creation of many new churches. A former Catholic priest named Menno Simmons formed a church that came to be known as the Mennonite Church. From that group, a man named Jakob Ammann split off to form his own group, the Amish. Both of these groups **immigrated** to America starting in the 1700s. For the most part, they settled in Pennsylvania because different religions were allowed there. The Amish formed tight-knit communities that were able to survive by keeping very strict traditions. Today, there are many settlements of Amish people all over North and South America, but no surviving Amish in Europe.

Mary Lou Troutman

The Amish arrived in St. Mary's County in about 1940. Seven families led by Bishop Stephen F. Stoltzfus **migrated** from Lancaster, Pennsylvania. The settlement in St. Mary's County was the first Amish settlement outside Pennsylvania in 100 years. These families moved to St. Mary's County because land was fairly inexpensive and because they had some experience growing tobacco. They were also moving because it was becoming more difficult to educate their children according to their tradition in Pennsylvania. Life in St. Mary's County was difficult for the Amish, at first. They moved from well-cultivated land in Pennsylvania to farms that were considered worn down, with poor land and few usable buildings. Within just a few years, the Amish farms were among the most productive in the county. Today, the Amish community has grown to more than 100 families and their farms continue to be very successful.

The Amish lifestyle is very distinctive and is based on the idea that everything should be very practical and that suffering is part of one's duty as a devout member of the community. The

Mary Lou Troutman

Amish reject most aspects of modern life and technology. Amish farms use no electricity. They have no electric lights, television, modern appliances, or other things that most people consider essential. They do not drive cars—only horse-drawn buggies-and use mostly horse—drawn power for their farming. Many businesses in St. Mary's County have hitching posts outside for the Amish to tie up their horses when they visit.

Amish homes are generally made of wood and are built by members of the community working together. Many large

projects like building homes or barns are undertaken this way—everyone in the community helps. The homes are heated by wood stoves and are lit by kerosene lamps. All the furniture in the house is very practical. There are few decorations or fancy, padded furniture. Only those things that are needed are found there.

The Amish produce most of their own food. They grow vegetable gardens and have fruit trees. This food is preserved by canning or pickling. Animals are butchered for meat which is also preserved. Some Amish have refrigerators that are powered by kerosene or gasoline, but much of the food is preserved without refrigeration and stored in a cellar. Amish meals are usually very large and heavy, but the Amish lifestyle of hard labor works off the calories.

It is very easy to spot a member of the Amish community because they have a very distinctive way of dressing. The most important rule is that clothing is plain and very utilitarian, or practical. Clothes are made in plain colors, often black with no patterns or stripes. Men wear plain black pants and black vests. Their shirts are often bright, but always just one color. They wear their hair long and often wear either a black felt or straw hat. Married men wear beards, but unmarried men do not and no one wears a mustache. Sometimes they leave off their leather shoes if they are working outside. Amish women also wear very distinctive, but plain clothes. They wear ankle length skirts with aprons of bright colors. They also wear long black stockings with leather shoes and a black bonnet. They wear their hair long, but tied in braids. The cut of all the clothing is very simple and is not tailored for the individual. Very young children, boys and girls, dress in long gowns until they are old enough to wear more adult clothes. This was a very common custom in Europe and America in the 17th and 18th centuries. When older, they wear virtually the same thing as their parents.

The Amish people usually get up very early to begin their day. There are some chores that are done before breakfast, like milking cows. Many Amish farms are dairy farms, as well as crop-raising farms. Amish farmers are successful because they are good farmers and because they, and their families, work very hard. They also keep up with new ideas in farming despite their traditional lifestyle. For instance, Amish farmers were among the first to become very good at crop rotation. Some crops, like tobacco, are very hard on the land, because they take the nutrients out of the soil and make it difficult for anything to grow. Other crops put these nutrients back into the soil. If you grow different types of crops in a rotation, you can use the land much more successfully and for much longer. The Amish are very good at that.

Mary Lou Troutman

Amish children learn farming and other important household chores from a very young age. They are expected to work on the farm to help the family. Children to the age of 14 attend Amish schools. The Amish believe that education beyond age 14 is not necessary and breeds laziness. They feel strongly that they need to educate their children in their own schools according to Amish traditions. In fact, that is what brought the Amish families to St. Mary's County in 1940. In Pennsylvania, Amish children had been attending their own one-room schoolhouses and attending only until the end of the 7th grade. The state passed a new law that said that all children had to stay in school until age 16. They also tried to combine all the small one-room schoolhouses into larger schools. Amish parents did not want their children attending school with non-Amish children. They were afraid that it would be difficult to teach their chil-

dren traditional Amish ways with too many outside influences.

When the Amish moved to Maryland, state law allowed children to leave school at age 14. The families also had a promise from Maryland's Governor Herbert R. O'Conor that their children would not have to comply with state education laws. In 1947 the General Assembly changed the education law. The new law said that all children had to stay in school until age 16. The Amish felt that the promise they had from the Governor should stand before the new law. There was conflict over the issue for many years—in Maryland and other states around the country. It was finally settled in Maryland in 1967 when State Senator Paul J. Bailey introduced a law that recognized Amish schools as parochial, or religious schools, that were not subject to the same laws as public schools.

After the 1967 law, an Amish school board developed the Minimum Standards for the Amish Parochial Schools of the State of Maryland. This made rules for Amish classrooms and set the curriculum, or subjects that would be studied. Amish students, called scholars, learn language arts, math, geography, history, health and safety, music, and German. In fact, most Amish children speak German first and do not learn English until they go to school. Scholars mostly walk to school and bring their own lunches. The schools are built by the community and school is paid for by the parents of the scholars. The school schedule is set to allow the children to help at home at the most important times of the year, like harvest time. Most importantly, children are taught, at home and at school, discipline and the strict ways of Amish life. This ensures that the Amish community will continue unchanged into the future.

Chapter 12
Education

In the early history of St. Mary's County, very few people had the opportunity to go to school. Very wealthy people could send their children—usually boys—to Europe for an education or to one of the few private schools there were in Maryland. The most important education that most children received was what they could learn on the family farm. Boys learned to grow tobacco and other corps. Girls learned to cook, sew, preserve food, and otherwise take care of the house. On the farm, children could learn most of what they would need for a successful life.

In the 18th century, more private schools were established by wealthy plantation owners in Maryland. Still, only rich men could afford to pay for their children's education. Also, a child who was at school could not help on the family farm. Every hand was needed to take care of all the work necessary on a busy farm. According to local historian Regina Coombs Hammett, in a few cases there were also "neighborhood" schools where several families combined their resources to educate their children.

In her *History of St. Mary's County*, Regina Coombs Hammett has written a very complete history of education in St. Mary's County. She says that in 1723, the Maryland state government first attempted to establish schools in all counties in the state. The Assembly passed an act called "The Encouragement of Learning, the erecting of schools in the several counties." It said that there should be at least one school in each county. The schools were to be located on farms so that the sale of livestock could help to fund them. Later, an extra tax was passed on slave owners to raise more funds for the schools. At least one school operated in St. Mary's County during this time. By 1774, the state decided to sell all of the individual schools in southern Maryland and combine them into one large school. The school was located in St. Mary's

County at Charlotte Hall, but apparently it was not large enough to serve all the counties. In 1813, another law was passed that required banks to pay for schools. All the collected money was paid into a central account that was divided among the counties. In 1816, the Assembly passed another law that created a school commission for each county. This nine-man group was responsible for dividing up the money received from the state school fund within the county. St. Mary's County received funds that ranged from as much as $5,206.84 in 1840 to as little as $668.54 in 1833.

A law was passed in 1825, then revised and readopted in 1838, which divided the county into school districts. It also appointed men who were responsible for dividing up money, choosing the site of schoolhouses, inspecting the schools, and keeping track of the number of students and the amount of money being spent. These men were also supposed to hire teachers. Hammett quotes the law that says qualified teachers were people "of correct moral deportment and well qualified and competent to teach the elementary branches of an English education, such as spelling, reading, writing, arithmetic, English grammar, and geography." The law also said that all schools should be open at least six months per year.

By 1840, Hammett reports that there were twelve "primary and common schools" in the county. A total of 351 students attended the schools. The families of the students helped to pay for their education unless they proved they could not afford it. In that case, the state would pay for those students "at public charge." A total of 191 students were paid for by the state. By 1852, the number of schools had increased to 25. The county was given a total of $2,225.00 that year from the education fund. When the money was divided up between all 25 schools, it meant that each school received $89.

At this point, none of the schools in the county were open to African-American children. Slavery was still the law of the land and no enslaved children were allowed a formal education. In 1840, the population of St. Mary's County was about 13,000 people. Over 7,000 of that number—over 50%—were "non-white" and, therefore not entitled to a public education of any kind.

One of the early one-room schoolhouses in St. Mary's County was described in a letter written by C.J. Russell of Morganza to the local newspaper, the *St. Mary's Beacon*, in 1904. Part of his letter was quoted by Regina Coombs Hammett, in *History of St. Mary's County.*

> *The old schoolhouse at Maryland Springs, in Leonardtown district,*
>
> *the first public schoolhouse built in that part of the county, was built*
>
> *in about 1842. It was a frame house, weatherboarded with undressed*
>
> *pine and sealed inside with half-inch plank. There were two doors-*
>
> *one on each side, one window on each side and two windows in the*
>
> *West end. The writing desk was a sloping plank across the West end.*
>
> *The Teacher's chair was an old fashioned common stool chair and set*
>
> *in the North-East corner of the house. The seats for the girls were two*
>
> *plank benches without backs. The boys' benches were made of oak*
>
> *logs with one side hewed square, the bark left on the other side, two*
>
> *auger holes bored in each end and sticks driven in for legs. An old*
>
> *fashioned wood stove set up in the middle of the room completed the*
>
> *furniture.*

There were several laws through the years that made minor changes to the school board or the way that money was collected for the schools, but the education system remained basically the same until 1865. In that year, a new law established the first totally free school system in Maryland. It is the basis of the current school system. The law established schools that were free to all students. For the first time, African-American students were able to attend school. The schools were **segregated**—that is, different buildings for white and black students. Schools would remain segregated in St. Mary's County for almost another 100 years.

The 1865 law also established a state superintendent of schools to regulate schools across all of Maryland. A county board of school commissioners, which was to become the County Board of Education, was established to assist in regulation. The first Board of Commissioners included Dr. James Bunting, Dr. Alex Bean, and William L. Thomas. These members were appointed by the state Board of Education. In 1868, a new state law was passed that said that the commissioners would be elected by the people from each of six election districts. In 1872, the board was changed again to three members that were appointed by the judges of the circuit courts. Through the years, the number of board members and their manner of selection has changed a great deal. In 1996, for the first time in almost one hundred years, the members of the Board of Education were again elected by the people. There are five members of the current board.

When the new school board took over in 1865, many of the old schoolhouses in the county were in poor condition. The Civil War had taken its toll on the county even though no actual battles were fought here. In 1866, the President of the School Board, Dr. James Bunting, sent a report to the state superintendent of schools about the county. He is quoted by Hammett as saying:

. . . The Board, thus composed, began its work by inspecting the field

of operations which was found as follows: Thirty schoolhouses, a few

of which were tolerably comfortable, but the majority unfit to be

occupied, especially in inclement weather. Not one has suitable seats

or desks, and as to appliances indispensable to the work of teaching,

there were none, save here and there a solitary blackboard—a sable

witness to the exit of chaos-but sure harbinger of approaching order.

The board had to suspend school for one term so they would have a chance to raise money for

repairs and then complete them. The following year, Dr. Bunting reported that most repairs had

been made and that supplies like a blackboard and stove for heat had been provided to every

schoolhouse. He also reported that more schoolhouses were needed, and that about $^3/_4$ of white

children were attending school, making a total enrollment of about 800. By the time of Dr.

Bunting's next report in the following year, four new schoolhouses had been built in the county.

These schools were constructed using plans sent by the state Board of Education. They thought

that it was important that all schools were built in the same way. The following, quoted in

Hammett, were the specifications for a one-room schoolhouse:

The building is a frame house, 24 x 24 feet from outside to outside,

and 12 feet high, with an arched ceiling. It has a vestibule 15 x 8 $^1/_2$

feet from outside to outside. The windows are hung on sash cords and

axle pulleys, for convenience in ventilating the room. There is a floor

register placed under the stove for the admission of fresh air. The

main room will take in the platform for the teacher's desk and four

rows of double desks, which will accommodate fifty pupils. A book-

case must be fixed between the doors at the lower end of the room,

with lock and key for safe keeping of books, stationary, etc. The vesti-

bule is supplied with shelves and hat-pins or hooks, water-bench, and

wash-stand.

The 1865 law required schools be built for African-American students as well, but this did not happen in St. Mary's County until 1872. In that year another law was passed that specifically required there be at least one school in each election district for African-American children between ages six and twenty. These schools were to be paid for by the taxes paid by African-American families. By 1874, there were 51 schools in the county—39 for white students and 12 for African-American students. The following year, there were still 51 schools with an enrollment of 1,111 white students and 681 African-American pupils. By 1900, there were 45 white schools and 28 schools for African Americans.

The next major change in education occurred in St. Mary's County in the 1920s. All of the one-room schoolhouses around the county began to be consolidated into larger schools. This occurred mainly because students could ride on school buses. Buses could take larger numbers of students greater distances to school. Most students before that time walked to their schoolhouses. One of the first consolidated schools was Great Mills Elementary School which opened in 1928. The building on Great Mills Road is still used by the Board of Education on occasion. Students from other schools have been housed there in the past several years while their schools were being renovated.

As schools were consolidated, the number of students increased. The Naval Air Station at Patuxent River was built in 1942. The population of the county increased rapidly in the years that followed. According to Hammett, "Enrollment in the county's public elementary schools had increased from 1,637 in 1946 to 2,613 in 1953." Also the curriculum in the county changed. In 1946, an eighth grade was added. Before that time, students only went to school through the seventh grade. The class of 1950 was the first in the county to graduate from a public school with full twelve years of schooling. By the mid-1950s, almost all of the one-room schoolhouses had fallen out of use. A few of the original schoolhouse buildings still exist. There is one at the St. Clement's Island-Potomac River Museum that has been preserved as it would have been in the early 20th century. It was moved to the site from Charlotte Hall. There is also a schoolhouse for African-American students in Drayden that had been abandoned. Community members hope to restore the building and turn it into a museum of early African-American education in the county.

The biggest challenge for county schools after the consolidation in the 1920s was **integration** in the 1950s and 60s. From the founding of the new school system in 1865, schools were **segregated**. An 1896 Supreme Court decision called *Plessy vs. Ferguson* found that "separate but equal" public facilities for the two races was legal. Many people argued that African-American schools were not equal to those of whites. Even so, *Plessy vs. Ferguson* stood as the law for more than fifty years. Then, in 1954, a case called *Brown vs. The Board of Education* came before the Supreme Court. Students in Topeka, Kansas challenged the law that kept African-American students out of white schools. At the same time, similar laws were being challenged in Delaware, Virginia, South Carolina, and Washington, DC. All of the cases were combined under the name *Brown vs. the Board of Education*. The Supreme Court decided that separate

school facilities were inherently unequal and violated the fourteenth amendment to the Constitution which protects civil rights. This decision eventually brought about the desegregation of all schools in the country. St. Mary's County slowly started integrating schools in 1957. At first, integration was voluntary—only those African-American students that wanted to attend desegregated schools could request to be transferred. These requests were not always granted. It was not until the 1967-68 school year that the Board of Education established school attendance districts regardless of race for all students in all grades. The school system also fully integrated the teachers and other employees the same year.

As the population of the county has continued to grow, so have the number of schools. In the year 2000, there were 15,047 students enrolled in St. Mary's County public schools.

Higher Education in St. Mary's County

In addition to elementary, middle, and high schools, there are several institutions of higher learning in St. Mary's County. The oldest is now known as St. Mary's College of Maryland. It was originally founded in St. Mary's City by the state of Maryland as St. Mary's Female Seminary in 1839. The founders chose that spot because they intended the seminary to be a monument to the founding of Maryland. The school was to "cherish the remembrance of great events and sacred places . . . connected with the history of our ancestors." The school got off to a slow start. In 1846, there were less than ten students enrolled. For most of the period until the end of the century, between twenty and forty students attended the school. The seminary continued to grow in the early years of the 20th century. Most students at the school lived there, but the seminary began to accept "day students" from the area, as well. In 1908, a large hall was built.

That building, now called St. Mary's Hall, is the oldest on campus. By 1914, 54 students had enrolled in the school and were studying a high school curriculum.

In January of 1924, the seminary was almost destroyed by fire. A fire started in the basement of the main building and spread quickly because of strong storm winds. The fire department in Leonardtown was called, but it never came because of mechanical trouble with the fire truck. According to Shanah McClure from the *Enterprise*, "There are reports of local citizens who worked for more than seven hours in subfreezing temperatures to save the monument school, but to no avail." However, "Several items were saved due to the efforts of both students and community members who formed a kind of brigade—carrying out school records, furniture, library books, and bags of mail from the St. Mary's City Post Office." Some were certain that the fire would mean the end of the school. Instead, a temporary place for classes was found in the town of Scotland to the south and the school was rebuilt. In fact, this led to the school's new role as a junior college.

The school year 1926-27 was the first year that St. Mary's Female Seminary operated also as a junior college. The idea of two-year colleges was very popular at the time. Increasing numbers of students were graduating from high school and looking for more education. In the 1930s, 40s, and 50s, the seminary offered courses to cover the last two years of high school and the first two years of college. In 1931, the high school received accreditation, which means it was recognized as meeting certain requirements. The junior college received a similar accreditation in 1940. The school was growing every year.

In 1947, a new president was appointed at the seminary. Her name was Dr. May Russell and she had many ideas as to what kind of school the seminary could become. Under her leadership, the name of the school was changed in 1949 to St. Mary's Seminary Junior College. She also began to expand the school by buying up land around the original buildings and constructing new ones. In 1949, Margaret Brent Hall was built. In 1954, Anne Arundel Hall was constructed, as well, but Dr. Russell had not completed her plans. Her ultimate goal was to establish a four-year coeducational college.

In 1964, St. Mary's Seminary Junior College was transformed into St. Mary's College of Maryland. The new college would be a four-year school that would admit both men and women. Many improvements occured on the campus over the next ten years as new buildings were built for dormitory and classroom space. Queen Anne Hall, a dormitory, was built in 1965. Another new dorm, Dorchester Hall, and the new Student Union building were built in 1966. A new gym, Somerset Hall, was started in 1966 and the new library was completed in 1969. Two more dormitory buildings, Prince George and Caroline Halls, were completed in 1970. The college graduated its first four-year class in 1971.

Today, St. Mary's College of Maryland has become one of the most respected institutions of higher learning in the area. It has been ranked among the best schools in the Northeast by *USA Today* and *US News and World Report*. The college has continued to grow through the years. In 2000, there were about 1,600 students enrolled at the college.

In addition to St. Mary's College of Maryland, students can earn degrees at two other institutions in the county. The College of Southern Maryland grew out of the community colleges of St. Mary's, Charles, and Calvert Counties. It offers several two-year college programs. As the

St. Mary's branch of the Charles County Community College, it began offering night classes at Great Mills High School in 1978. Then, the school began using the old Great Mills Elementary School annex building for classes. It was so successful that a new space was needed. New campus buildings were built for the school in Leonardtown in the 1990s. The Community College was renamed the College of Southern Maryland in 2000.

The other higher learning institution was also founded in the 1990s. It is called the Southern Maryland Higher Education Center and is located in Hollywood. The Center is a central place for other colleges to offer classes in St. Mary's County. Currently, The College of Notre Dame of Maryland, Bowie State University, Johns Hopkins University, the University of Maryland, and Towson University offer classes at the center. The Higher Education Center was founded to meet the demands of the growing number of people working on the Naval Air Station at Patuxent River. The most popular courses offered are in the areas of science and technology.

Chapter 13
St. Mary's Historic Churches
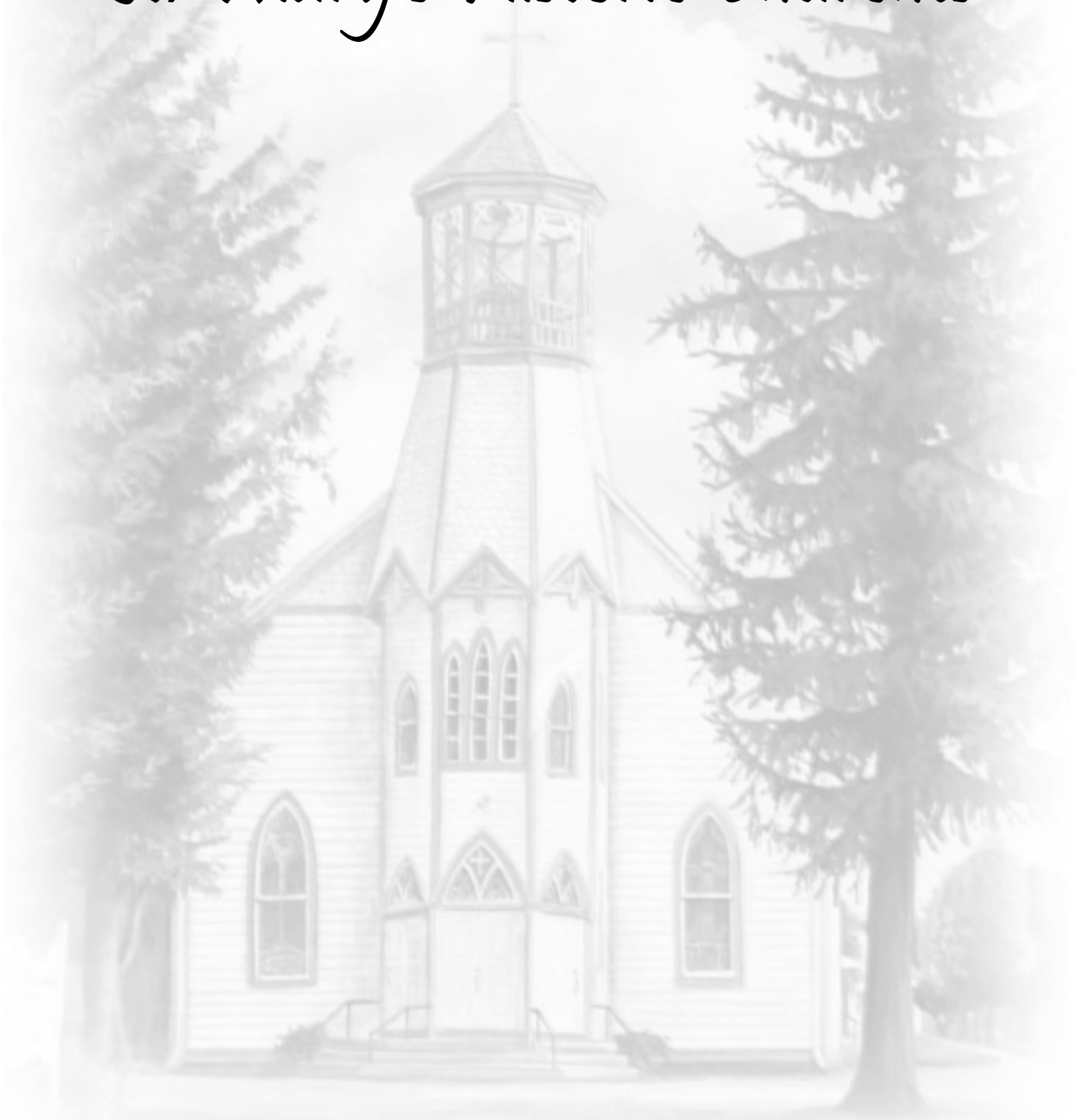
S ince its founding, the history of Maryland has been connected with religion. The founder of the colony, George Calvert, and his family were Catholics. In the 17th century, people who belonged to the Catholic Church in England were not treated fairly. They had to pay fines for not attending the King's Church of England. They also could not vote or hold any positions in the government. It was against the law to be a Catholic in England. After George Calvert announced that he was becoming a Catholic, he decided to start a colony where Catholics would have the same rights as Protestants. He knew that he would not be able to convince the King to give him a colony where only Catholics would be allowed to live. Also it would have been difficult to find enough people to settle a colony like that. Calvert needed to think of a way to protect Catholics in a place where people of different religions could live. He decided to build his new colony on the idea of **religious toleration**.

Religious toleration is an idea that we still live by today in the United States. It means that people of different religions are allowed to live in this country and worship in whatever way they choose. No one can be punished for what they believe. Also, all people, no matter what their religion, can vote or run for public office. Another important idea that is related to religious toleration is the separation of the church and the government. In England in the 17th century, the King said that he was the head of the government and of the church. People who were Catholic believed that the Pope was the head of their church. The King called this idea treason because he was afraid that it might take away from his power.

People in Maryland lived by the policy of religious toleration from the time the first voyage left port in England. It was put into law in 1649 in *An Act concerning Religion*. The law did not last. After sixty years, the Calvert family lost control of the colony. Maryland became a royal

colony, governed by the King of England. The laws of religion were changed to be the same as they were in England. Once again, Catholic colonists were not permitted to practice their religion. They lost their right to hold office and eventually, their right to vote. The large Catholic Church that was built in the capital city of St. Mary's was locked and then taken down. The new laws would stand until after the American Revolution. When the Constitution was written, religious toleration was one of its laws. It is not known for certain whether the experiment in Maryland influenced the writers of the Constitution, but they may have been aware of it.

The religion most often identified with Maryland is that of Catholicism. Maryland is often called a "Catholic colony." Catholics actually never made up a majority of the population of the colony, but the leaders of the colony did belong to the Catholic Church. The identification is also due to the influence of the Jesuit missionaries to Maryland. **Jesuits** are Catholic priests from an order called the Society of Jesus. The history of Jesuits in Maryland begins with the first voyage to the New World. Several members of the original voyage in 1634 were Jesuits, including the leader of the mission, Father Andrew White. The Jesuits in Maryland wanted to convert the local American Indian tribes to Catholicism. Father White is mostly remembered today for the journal that he kept of the voyage and the first years of the Maryland colony. It is one of the few **primary sources** with information about the early history of the colony and Maryland's native peoples.

The Jesuits, like many other colonists, brought over indentured servants to work for them and were granted land where they established large plantations. The Jesuits claimed land in St. Inigoes, just south of the capital city of St. Mary's in 1649. They also owned land in St. Mary's City where they built a large brick chapel in about 1667. After religious policy in Maryland

changed in 1692, the Jesuits were forced to take down the chapel at St. Mary's City. At the time, the Jesuit chapels at St. Inigoes and at Mattapany also fell out of use, and the mission was forced to carry on their work secretly. It is likely that the Jesuits disassembled the chapel at St. Mary's City and used the bricks to build a new house on their land at St. Inigoes. Catholics were not allowed to hold church services in public, but were permitted to say mass in private homes. They probably used their home in St. Inigoes and traveled to other Catholic families' homes for mass. Life became very difficult for Catholics in Maryland as anti-Catholic sentiment and laws prevailed. Rumors circulated during the French and Indian War that Catholics were going to band together with the French to fight against the British and their colonists. The Jesuits faced even more difficulties when Pope Clement XIV disbanded the Society of Jesus on July 21, 1773. The American Jesuit Society would not be restored until 1805.

After the American Revolution, religious toleration became the law in the new United States. Jesuits who had lived in secret for many years were now permitted to worship again in public. The mission restarted when they rebuilt their chapel at St. Inigoes. Father James Walton began construction on the chapel, called St. Ignatius Church, on July 13, 1785. Thomas Thompson and two apprentices, Joseph Abell and William Rhodes, did much of the work on the building. Slaves owned by the Jesuits made the bricks. The church was completed about 1788. There was also a large manor house at St. Inigoes that had been built by Father Ashby around 1750.

In 1879, the Jesuits built a new church further north on the peninsula. This church, called St. Michael's, proved to be more convenient for most parishioners. The church was moved in 1888 to a more suitable location, because the original site had a high water table. As graves were dug in the churchyard, they immediately filled with water. By the turn of the century, the priests

moved to St. Michael's Church because it became obvious that it was the focus of the Jesuit mission. Soon St. Ignatius became obsolete and it completely fell out of use by 1946. In 1950, a group of community volunteers restored the old chapel to its former glory. The cemetery next to the chapel is one of the oldest in the country. The church is on the National Register of Historic Places.

From the original church at St. Inigoes, the Jesuit mission expanded by building more churches as the population grew. The priests at St. Inigoes, then St. Michael's, were responsible for several other churches in the county. St. Nicholas Church served the town of Pearson on Cedar Point until the founding of the Naval Air Station at Patuxent River. It is now the base chapel for the Navy. Holy Face Church, originally built on land donated by the Cecil family, served the area known as Clifton Factory, now called Great Mills. The first church was dedicated on July 3, 1887. The new Holy Face Church and Little Flower Catholic School now stand less than a mile from the original site. St. Francis Xavier Church was built on St. George Island in 1893. St. Anne's Church was briefly organized in the Lexington Park area, but a building was never constructed.

Another very old Catholic church in the county is St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church in Compton. Reportedly the oldest Catholic Church in continuous use in English-speaking America, it was built in 1731. Also on the site of St. Francis Xavier is the Compton Manor House, which was built about 1789. Both buildings are on the National Register of Historic Places.

St. Francis Xavier Church
Newtowne, Maryland

J. Allen McFadden

In Maryland, the Calvert's religious policy caused an interesting problem. The separation of the church from the government meant that taxes paid by the people were not given to support any church. In England, the government built churches and paid priests with the money that was paid in taxes. Protestants living in England were accustomed to the government taking care of all of their religious needs. In Maryland, they never got used to the idea that they would have to pay for their own churches. As a result, there were very few Protestant churches built in the 17th century. Once Maryland became a royal colony in 1692, government taxes once again went to pay for the building of churches. Many of the oldest standing churches in the county can trace their roots to that time.

The Church of England in America came to be known as the Episcopal Church. Thirty original Episcopal parishes were set up by law in Maryland in 1692. St. Mary's County was divided into three **parishes**—All Faith Parish, William and Mary Parish, and King and Queen Parish. Later, in 1744, St. Andrew's Parish was created from parts of William and Mary and King and Queen Parishes. All Saints Parish was added in 1893. Each parish had a central parish church where services were held. There were also several "chapels of ease" built for groups of parishioners who had to travel far to the parish church. Many of the oldest churches in the county were either parish churches of the original parishes or chapels of ease.

St. George's Episcopal Church

St. George's is one of the oldest Episcopal parishes in Maryland. Reportedly services have been held on the site in Valley Lee continually since 1638, though the present building dates to about 1750. The original church was built at the site called "Poplar Hill" about 1640. The first reverend, Reverend William Wilkinson, arrived in 1650. A second church was built at Poplar Hill in 1692 and became the parish church of William and Mary Parish. The third, and present, church was built between 1750 and 1760. It was badly damaged by a fire in 1798, but was rebuilt and renovated the following year. Other renovations took place in 1884 and 1958. The church is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Christ Church

Christ Church is located in Chaptico. It was originally built in 1736 and was called Chaptico Church. It was consecrated in 1840 as Christ Church of King and Queen Parish. A bell tower was added in 1913. According to historian Robert Pogue, legend has it that famed architect Christopher Wren designed the church. Wren is best well known for designing St. Paul's Cathedral in London. Christ Church was damaged during the War of 1812 when the British invaded Chaptico. Reportedly, British soldiers damaged the church's organ and allowed their horses to stable inside the church. It was also reported they dug up graves in the churchyard looking for things to steal. Despite that, the church still stands in good condition today. The graveyard contains the graves of some of Maryland's earliest colonists including members of the Key family, relatives of Francis Scott Key who wrote the *Star Spangled Banner*. Christ Church is also listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

All Faith Episcopal Church

The original church at the site of All Faith Episcopal Church in Charlotte Hall was built of wood as early as 1675. Another church was built in 1693 to be the parish church of All Faith Parish, but the present brick church was completed in 1767. The building underwent renovations in the 1800s and again after hurricane damage in 1954. At that time, a stained glass rose window was added above the altar. The window represents the different crops grown to support the community. The old church has a large barrel-shaped ceiling and a slave gallery where African Americans sat when the church was still segregated.

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

St. Andrew's Church was created when parts of two neighboring parishes were combined to form St. Andrew's Parish in 1744. Services were held in the courthouse in Leonardtown until the church could be completed in 1767. The brick church was designed by an indentured servant named Richard Boulton who lived on Sotterley Plantation. The church has a very interesting design with columns in the front and a large window over the front door. Inside, there are two balconies including one that can be reached by an outside stairway. The original pews are still being used. The most interesting part of the church is the altar piece, or **reredos**. It hangs behind the altar and has the words of the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments. The reredos was hand-lettered in 1771 by John Friech. It is surrounded by hand carvings and is one of only three that survive in the country. The church underwent renovations in 1871 and 1942 and had minor improvements in the late 20th century, but still looks very much like it did when it was originally built. This church is also on the National Register of Historic Places.

All Saints Episcopal Church

All Saints Church in Avenue was originally built as a chapel of ease by Thomas Gerard. Gerard was a Catholic, but his wife, Susanna Snow Gerard, was Anglican. He built a small chapel on his plantation where his wife and other Anglicans in the area could worship. Later, there were at least two other churches built on the site. These are sometimes referred to as St. Clement's Chapel or Tomakoken Chapel, for the creek the runs behind the property. The current church was built in 1846. It was part of King and Queen Parish until the new All Saints Parish was established in 1893.

Trinity Church

The parish of Trinity Church traces its roots to 1638. Reportedly an early church was built just south of St. Mary's City in the early 17th century. In 1695, the capital of the colony moved from St. Mary's City to Annapolis. St. Mary's City then became the county seat of St. Mary's County. The large brick State House built in St. Mary's City in 1676 was used as the county courthouse until the county seat moved to Leonardtown in 1708. At that time, the building was given to Trinity Church. Services were held in the building for over one hundred years. *A Guide to Episcopal Churches of Southern Maryland* quotes a letter that describes the church in 1812. Reverend Joseph Jackson writes, "Service was at the Ancient City of St. Mary's, in the house where the provincial assembly of this state used to meet—which is now an Episcopal Church." By 1829, the old brick State House was in need of extensive re-

pairs. The building was torn down and the bricks were used to build a new Trinity Church. The church was renovated in 1889 and 1937 and is still used for weekly services today. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Dent Chapel

Another interesting old church in the county is not connected to any religion at all. The Dent Chapel is a memorial chapel in Charlotte Hall. It was built on the grounds of the Charlotte Hall School in 1883 in memory of Reverend Henry Hatch Dent. Reverend Dent was the first headmaster, or principal, of the school. The Charlotte Hall School was founded in 1774. It went through many changes through the years and its last class graduated in 1976. Most of the buildings of the old school were torn down. The only one that still stands, besides the Chapel, is the "White House," built in 1803. The site is currently home to the Charlotte Hall Veterans Home. Dent Chapel is presently used by an Anglican congregation for weekly services.

Chapter 14
Transportation

Transportation in St. Mary's County evolved slowly. The first people who lived in the area, the American Indians, used the water for most of their travel. Some foot paths led from village to village, but most of the time, the waterways were much easier to use. There are two main rivers—the Patuxent and the Potomac—and countless smaller rivers and creeks that practically surround the area. They were the perfect "highways" for getting from place to place, in addition to being sources of food and other supplies. American Indian villages were almost always located along the water. To travel, the Indians built dugout canoes.

S. Shoemaker

Dugout canoes were constructed by first taking down a large, straight tree using the Indian's power tool—fire. After burning down the tree, the men set small fires down the length of the log and began carving out the inside of the boat. The fire burned away the wood leaving only coals and ash, which could easily be scraped out using a sharpened stick. The Indians would continue to work along the entire length of the tree, burning one end while they scraped the other. To keep the fire from burning too far down the sides of the canoe, they placed wet clay along the edges. The clay allowed the men to burn only the parts of the canoe that they wanted. This method was much easier than carving out the wood of the canoe with stone tools.

The first Europeans to come to the New World also arrived on boats—two ships, the *Ark* and the *Dove*, brought the first colonists to Maryland in 1634. These Englishmen learned a great deal about life in Maryland from the American Indians they met on their arrival. The English

quickly realized how important the waterways would be for travel and began to build their plantations along the creeks and rivers. Some English built dugout canoes similar to those used by the American Indians. Other boats were constructed in England by shipwrights—people trained as boat builders. Either way, the colonists relied heavily on the waterways. Almost all supplies that the colonists needed came from England. Pots, cloth, tools, and other manufactured goods arrived by ship. The same ships would then take the colonists' cash crop, tobacco, back to England be sold. Many plantation owners had a dock right on their plantation where ships' masters could come and trade with them.

Despite the importance of the water, there were some land routes even as early as the 17th century. These were generally just footpaths—very different from the modern roads of today. The paths were big enough for a person to walk, but many were not well suited for horses or carts. There were few horses in colonial Maryland because most people could not afford to keep them. Horses were not used in farming, and since the waterways were such good highways, they were not needed for travel, either. Still, one of the oldest roads in the state can be found in St. Mary's County.

Mattapany Road was originally an Indian footpath that led from the St. Mary's River to the Patuxent River. The road is still used today. It runs from St. Mary's City to Lexington Park.

Mary Lou Troutman

As transportation in the county contin-

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ued to evolve, it did not move away from the water. Instead, new ships were designed to use the waterways most effectively. These new ships were called steamboats. They could carry both passengers and supplies and quickly became the most popular and convenient way to

travel to and from the county. These ships brought people from the Baltimore-Washington area to vacation in the county and allowed county residents to travel north for shopping and entertainment. They were also the easiest way to move cargo and supplies back and forth.

The first regular route in the Potomac River was run by the Washington-Alexandria-Georgetown Steam Packet Line. One of the first steamboats, the *Fredericksburg*, began a route from Baltimore to the Potomac River in 1828. Soon, there were two more ships, the *Columbia* and *Franklin*, on the same line. Through the mid-19th century, the company added even more ships to the line. In 1865, another company, the Potomac Transportation Company, began operation. By 1874, they had run the Washington-Alexandria-Georgetown Steam Packet Line out of business. In 1888, the Maryland and Virginia Steamboat Company was started by the

Lewis brothers of St. Mary's County. This small operation was quickly bought up by the Weems Steamboat Line, the largest company of the day.

The Weems Steamboat Line was founded by Captain George Weems in 1817. The line first ran routes on the Patuxent and Rappahannock

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Rivers. Its first ship, the *Surprise*, had a route from Baltimore to wharfs on the Patuxent River and the western shore of the Chesapeake Bay. By mid-century, a typical trip from Baltimore to the Patuxent River might cost a passenger about $2. By the 1880s, the Weems Line had five steamboats working on the Patuxent River to Baltimore route. In 1895, the Weems operation expanded into the Potomac River with the purchase of the Maryland and Virginia Steamboat Company. By then, the Weems Line was the biggest company on three of the largest rivers in the area—the Potomac, the Patuxent, and the Rappahannock. In 1905, the entire company was purchased by the Pennsylvania Railroad Company.

By 1900, there were thirty steamboat landings on the Patuxent River and twenty five on the Potomac. Regina Coombs Hammett writes, "Ironically, the steamboats even delivered the instruments of their own demise. The August 7, 1919 *Beacon* reported that "Sunday's steamer had unloaded a consignment of Ford cars for the Leonardtown Implement Company." Cars would soon become more and more common and the roads would improve, but railroad companies were the real enemies of the steamboat. In 1905, the Pennsylvania Railroad bought the Weems Steamboat Line and two other large companies. They ran the steamboat lines for a short time under the name the Maryland, Delaware, and Virginia Railway Company, but it could never again compete with the new railway systems. The final blow to the steamboat era came in August of 1933 when a hurricane destroyed almost every wharf in the county. Only the Brome's wharf at St. Mary's City survived the storm, but it never saw passenger steamboats again.

The history of the railroad in St. Mary's County is a difficult one. For almost one hundred years there were various plans to build a railroad system in St. Mary's County. Regina Coombs

Hammett reports that on March 20, 1868, the Southern Maryland Railroad was incorporated "for the purpose of constructing, maintaining, and working a railroad from some point in Prince George's County to Point Lookout." A commission was appointed, money was raised, and an engineer was hired. Construction on the tracks began until a rival company called the Washington City and Point Lookout Railroad began their own project to bring the railroad to St. Mary's County. The two companies argued over rights and a compromise was not reached until 1873. It took almost another ten years of disputes and construction, but in 1881, finally trains were running to St. Mary's County. Unfortunately, the line only served Charlotte Hall and Mechanicsville.

For the next several decades, residents still hoped that the railroad line might be completed throughout the county, as originally planned. In 1902, a great deal of work was done to prepare beds for the tracks. According to Hammett, "the July 24, 1902 *Beacon* reported that 125 Italian railroad laborers from Philadelphia and other points northward had arrived at Forrest's Wharf on the Patuxent." These workers worked all year leveling the ground to prepare it for railroad tracks and by November had reached as far south as Ridge. Unfortunately, all the work was for nothing. The tracks were never fully completed and the company was dissolved in 1918.

When local farmers learned that the company had gone bankrupt, they did not want to lose all the work that had been done for the tracks. They thought that they still might be able to get a railroad in the county. They got together and raised the money to purchase the railroad.

It was incorporated in 1918 as the Washington, Brandywine, and Point Lookout Railroad. The line has since come to be known as the "Farmer's Railroad." It ran only two days each week and the people who worked on it were farmers from the local community. In 1928, the railroad was forced to stop their passenger service, but still ran cargo trains for the next several years.

The Farmer's Railroad was taken over by the Navy in 1942. Construction of the Naval Air Station at Patuxent River had begun and the Navy needed a way to move all the necessary material to Cedar Point. The tracks were extended to Millstone Landing on Cedar Point for a total of about 55 miles. Once the base was completed, the Navy no longer needed the railroad. The last run was in July of 1954 when about 200 passengers climbed aboard and rode as far north as Hollywood. The line was purchased by the Pennsylvania Railroad. Trains ran weekly until 1965 when the line was completely abandoned. The land

Rural Electrification

Along with the improvements to roads in St. Mary's County came an important advancement for county families, electricity. Most houses in the area, even into the 1930s, did not have electricity. Even though many other areas of the country had electric lights in their homes, they did not reach St. Mary's County. The population was so spread out that power companies thought they could not make a profit. They would have to spend so much money laying power lines that they could not make their money back. Instead, residents took matters into their own hands.

In May of 1935, President Franklin Roosevelt issued an executive order establishing the Rural Electrification Administration (REA). The REA was designed to offer low-cost loans to build power plants and put up power lines in rural areas. In 1937, residents of Charles, Prince George's, and St. Mary's Counties formed the Southern Maryland Tri-County Cooperative Association. With the help of the REA, the new association built a power plant in Charles County to serve their customers and built lines to the first 600 houses by the fall of 1937.

In 1942, the association changed to a non-profit membership cooperative called the Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative (SMECO). According to SMECO, in 1942 there were more than 1,400 members and 438 miles of line. The typical family paid an electric bill of approximately five dollars each month. By 1976, SMECO had over 50,000 customers and was the second largest cooperative in the United States. Today, membership numbers more than 115,000 and SMECO provides power to all of St. Mary's and Charles Counties, and portions of Calvert and Prince George's.

is now jointly owned by the St. Mary's County Commissioners and the Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative.

Currently, automobile travel is the easiest and most popular way to travel around St. Mary's County, but it was not always so easy. The first roads in the county were just footpaths—not even enough for horses to pass. Even so, there was a road that ran the length of the county before the end of the 17th century. The "Patuxent main road" ran from Point Lookout to the northern sections of the county by 1692. In 1704, the assembly passed a law that indicated how roads should be marked according to where they led. Notches were to be placed in trees along the road. By 1794, the Patuxent main road had come to be known as Three Notch Road because of these notches. Route 235 is still called that today.

Roads grew slowly in the county, but by the mid-19th century, there were fourteen public roads. They were each built to a standard of 20 feet wide. There were work crews to tend to repairs. Ironically, one of the biggest challenges facing the builders of these early roads was the bridges that were needed to cross waterways—the very waterways that had been used for transportation in the past. One example is a bridge crossing a stream outside of Leonardtown. The history of the bridge appeared in the *Beacon* in 1905. It was originally built between 1840 and 1846 as a covered bridge. According to a recent article in the *Enterprise* by Viki Volk, "it was repaired in 1858, rebuilt in 1867 then rebuilt twice more in 1884 and 1894 before the 1905 announcement that it was to be repaired again."

It was not until the first car came to St. Mary's County in 1909 that roads began to improve. The county got some money from the state to help maintain roads and new hard surfaces were put on the largest roads. Businesses, like car dealers, emerged and St. Mary's County became

better connected with the surrounding area. Even so, many of the smaller roads in the county, even into the 1930 and 40s, were still "gravel-surfaced, wash-board-rough, and dusty." The county has continued to improve and expand roads throughout the 20th century. In 1978, the Governor Thomas Johnson Bridge was built to cross the Patuxent River into Calvert County further adding to St. Mary's County's connection to the rest of the area.

Even as roads have improved, automobile travelers continue to face challenges in the county. The population has continued to grow and the roads simply can not keep up. The number of people working on the Navy base at Patuxent River has increased substantially in the last decade, but there is not enough room for all those people on the roads. More and more people are living in the county, but commuting to Washington, DC everyday and traffic continues to get worse. Also, people argue that county roads should keep their rural appearance, while still accommodating the necessary traffic. How to fix these problems will continue to be debated. There never seems to be enough money or enough time to get all the work done.

Some people think that the solution will not come with more roads. There have been proposals to build a new kind of railroad, called a light rail system, to take commuters into Washington, DC. Some think that it should be built in the abandoned railroad track beds. Still others think the answer lies in going back where we started. They have suggested having commuter ferry boats move people along the waterways. Whatever the solution, the problem of transportation in St. Mary's County is one that will continue to challenge the county's leaders.

Chapter 15
Folklore and Traditions
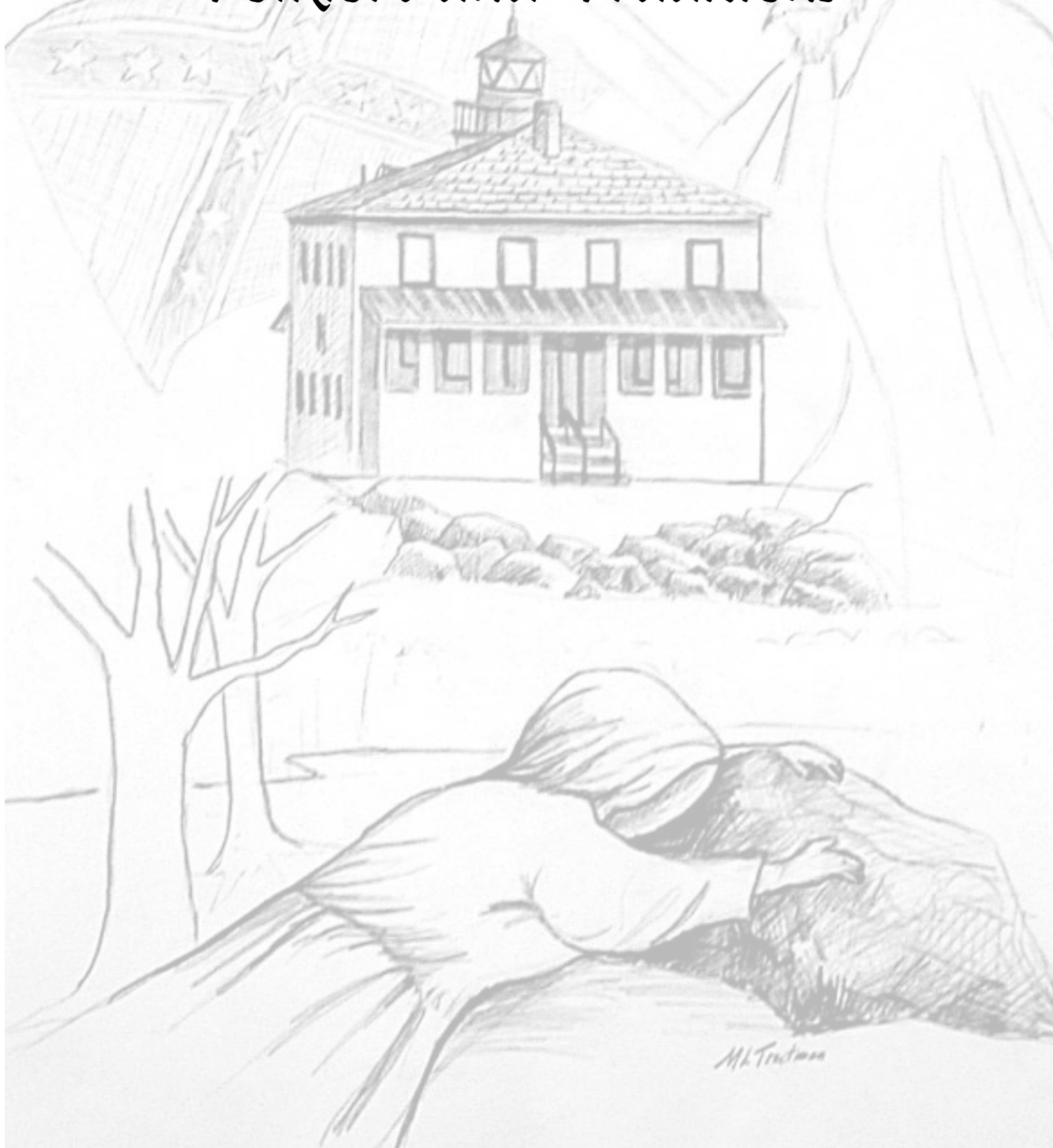
O ften, what really makes a community unique are its traditions and the legends that have grown out of its past. Here are just a few examples of what makes St. Mary's County so distinct.

St. Mary's County Fair

The county fair is a long standing tradition in St. Mary's County, as it is in many other rural areas throughout the country. According to a *History of the St. Mary's County Fair*, by the Leonardtown High School Publications staff, the first St. Mary's County fair grew out of the studies at the Leonard Hall School, which was founded in 1909 by the Xavarian order of Catholic priests. The curriculum, or course of study, at Leonard Hall emphasized agriculture. The *Prospectus* of the school quoted in the *History* said, "Besides a thorough high school education, our principal aim is to induce young boys in the county to foster a love for rural life; to remain at home and thrive by industrious and scientific farming."

In 1911, Father Laurence J. Kelly and Father John La Farge came to Leonard Hall. They saw that the best way to get their students to do well in school was to give them a chance to show off their accomplishments. The *Prospectus* again said that the idea was "to encourage young men to take pride in agriculture and strive to improve farming practices. Community involvement was seen as a vital element and by fostering these ideals through a county fair, the fruits of agricultural labor could be displayed, enjoyed and continued." The brothers sponsored the first fall festival in October 1911 on the grounds of the school.

The following year, the school invited people from the community to send examples of field and garden crops. The festival was used as a fundraiser for the school. The 1913 festival grew even bigger. People were invited to bring not only crops, but livestock, sewing, food, and art-

work. Representatives of companies advertised the latest farm machinery. Soon, the fair got too large for the staff of the school to handle. They invited the county to take over, but the county did not and soon the fair was suspended all together.

It was not until the 1940s that the idea of a county fair was revived again. Community leaders organized themselves to sponsor the fair. The Farm Bureau, Maryland Tobacco Association, Lions Club, Women's Club, Garden Club, Leonardtown Fire Company, and American Legion joined forces to organize the event. The fair was finally held again in 1947 on the grounds of Camp Calvert, which is now St. Mary's Ryken High School. It was held at that location only twice. After that, the fair moved to the county fairgrounds where it is still held every year. The St. Mary's County Fair has offered lots to do and see through the years. There are still competitions in agriculture and livestock, artwork and cooking. There are also rides and food, performers and demonstrations.   Each year since 1947, a queen of the fair, called the Queen of Tolerance, has been crowned. The tradition goes on!

The Heritage - History of the St. Mary's County Fair — White Fair Covers
Henry Fowler, Jr.

Black Fair

Most people know that there is a fair in St. Mary's County every fall. What many people may not realize is that for many years there were two fairs in the county—one for whites and one for African Americans. The fairs were **segregated**, as was much of the county, from 1949 until the early 1960s.

In the book **History of the St. Mary's County Fair**, members of the publications staff at Leonardtown High School interviewed James and Harriet Forrest and John Lancaster who were all very involved in running the black fair in St. Mary's County. This important piece of **oral history** is recorded in the book. Many stories like this would be lost if it were not for oral history accounts.

The first black fair was held in 1949 on the grounds of the Cardinal Gibbons Institute, an African-American high school in Ridge. The fair grew out of the Farmers and Homemakers Association in the county. The Association helped people in the community to farm better and taught new skills to improve their way of life. People learned new farming techniques, information about raising healthier animals, and learned to sew and preserve food. Like the white fair, the black fair grew out of a desire to give people a chance to display their accomplishments. There were also a number of 4-H Clubs for African-American youngsters in the county that got them involved in the fair. Children from these 4-H Clubs would display their projects and then be judged on the quality of their work. Each year a queen of the fair—Miss 4-H of St. Mary's County—was chosen from all the 4-H groups and crowned at the fair.

The black fair was held in Ridge and Loveville before it moved to the county fairgrounds in Leonardtown. The white fair was held one week and the black fair the next. This continued until the two fairs were **integrated** into one in the early 1960s.

Stuffed Ham

One tradition unique to St. Mary's County is the making and eating of stuffed ham. It is a treat known mostly to county residents. No one knows for certain where stuffed ham originated, but one story says that a slave working as a cook for the Jesuit priests in St. Inigoes created it in the early 1700s. The story says that she wanted to create something special for the priests after a long fast. She only had a few ingredients on hand, but combined them to make the first stuffed ham. Another story from Harriet Forrest agrees that the tradition started with slaves but says that slaves would stuff pig heads and jowls with cabbage and kale for themselves. Their masters tried the stuffing and like it so much that they asked the slaves to stuff their hams, as well.

There are a wide variety of recipes for stuffed ham—each just a little bit different from the last—but the basic ingredients are usually the same. Large slits are cut in a corned ham. The slits are stuffed with a mix of cabbage, kale, onions, pepper, and other spices. It is cooked, then cooled and served cold, often as a sandwich. Some say there is an art to making the perfect stuffed ham and everyone seems to have an opinion about who makes the best. The one thing everyone can agree on—stuffed ham is St. Mary's County's own treasure.

Historical Society of St. Mary's

The Legend of Moll Dyer

One often told story in St. Mary's County is about a resident witch by the name of Moll Dyer. During the late 19th century, an old woman named Moll Dyer lived in a small cabin in the woods all by herself. Most people thought she was a little strange and soon she gained the reputation of being a witch. Anything that went wrong in town could be blamed on Moll Dyer. If the crops failed, it was Moll Dyer's fault. If a drought came, it

The Legend of Moll Dyer by Janeen Grohsmer
Courtesy of artist Norma Durkin

was Moll Dyer's curse that was keeping away the rain. Soon, the townspeople decided that they had to do something to relieve themselves of the curse of the witch. In the middle of the coldest night of winter, a group of angry

Clifton Factory and Cecil's Old Mill

In the history of the county, there have been a variety of mills built. Most of these were either grist mills, for turning wheat and other grains into flour, or saw mills, for cutting wood. There is evidence of a mill near St. Mary's City as early as the mid-17th century. The only mill structure still standing in the county is Cecil's Old Mill in Great Mills. Interestingly, the first business on the site of Cecil's Mill was a factory— the only manufacturing industry in St. Mary's County in the 1900s.

In 1810, a cotton factory called Clifton Factory was built on the St. Mary's River. The business operated successfully for a number of years under different owners, but eventually fell on hard times. In 1860, businessmen attempted to start the business again calling it The Clifton Manufacturing Company, Inc. This business failed, as well.

In 1868, the property was purchased by Thomas Spencer who operated a successful grist mill and store. In 1882, the property was purchased by William W. Cecil. According to John Allen Cecil, his father, John T. Cecil, built the current mill building around 1900 on the foundation of the old textile building. The Cecils ran a successful business there for many years. Originally, the mill was run by a large waterwheel. The power of running water turned the wheel, which, in turn, powered the machines. By the 1920s, the Cecils also had a steam engine to run the machines.

In 1927, John T. Cecil got a diesel engine from his brother, William, to help run the mill. William ran an ice house in Leonardtown. He had a large diesel engine that ran his business. The same engine powered the first electric lights in Leonardtown. That engine soon was not large enough, so he replaced it and gave the old engine to John for the mill.

John T. ran the mill until he died in 1927. After that, his brother, H. Robb took over the business and ran the grist mill until it went out of business in 1940. People could buy bread from the store, so they no longer needed to mill their own grains. H. Robb ran the saw mill until he died in 1959. In 1975, John Allen Cecil and his brother William donated the mill and Cecil's Store across the road to the St. Mary's County Historical Society for preservation. The mill is now the home of the St. Mary's County Arts Association and is used to sell arts and crafts made by its members. Once each year the waterwheel is started up again at a special event called Waterwheel Days.

townsfolk went into the woods where Moll Dyer lived and burned her cabin to the ground. She managed to escape, but spent the rest of the night wandering through the cold. Eventually, she froze to death, but before finally succumbing to the weather, she stopped to rest on a large stone. With her last breath, she cursed all those who destroyed her home and sent her to her death. Legend says that the stone was forever marked with indentations where she rested that night. In 1972, a stone was found in the woods outside of Leonardtown that was supposed to be

Our Towns

Did you ever wonder why the towns in St. Mary's County are named what they are? The town names come from a wide variety of sources. Here are a few:

Chaptico: Chaptico is an Indian word. The American Indians living in the area when English colonists first arrived were part of the language group called Algonquian. There are many Algonquian words that are part of the English language today, but no one knows how to speak the language anymore. That makes it difficult to know for certain what these Indian words meant. Chaptico may mean "big (or deep) river." Chaptico is also the name of a creek in the area.

St. Mary's City: St. Mary's City was the first city in Maryland. It was founded in 1634 by English colonists arriving with Maryland's first governor, Leonard Calvert. St. Mary's City is named for the Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus Christ. It was the capital of Maryland until the government moved to Annapolis in 1695.

St. Inigoes: St. Inigoes is also a very old town name. The town is located just south of St. Mary's City and is where Jesuit priests settled in the 17th century. The Jesuits, or Society of Jesus, were a group of priests who came with the first voyage to Maryland. They wished to convert local Indians to Catholicism. The Society of Jesus was founded by St. Ignatius. St. Inigoes was named for him.

Ridge: Still further south in the county is Ridge. The land there has a large ridge running down the center of the peninsula of land. The area was first called "The Ridge" in the early 1800s. It was later shortened to simply Ridge.

the Moll Dyer stone. It was moved to the grounds of the old courthouse where it can still be seen today.

Ghost Stories

Do you believe in ghosts? Whether you do or not, it is hard to resist listening to fascinating tales of spirits and other mysteries and St. Mary's County has its share. Here are just a few from *Tales of St. Mary's*, a collection of stories from the St. Mary's County Historical Society:

The first story is of George Beckwith and his wife, Frances. The Beckwiths lived on St. Joseph's Manor in the 17th century. They had four children—a son and three daughters. In 1675, George was called back to England on business. Before he left, he vowed to his wife that he would return to her "living or dead." Mrs. Beckwith waited for her husband to return for many years, but he never appeared. Grief-stricken, Mrs. Beckwith died and was buried in a cemetery nearby. Soon, people began to see a ghostly figure looking toward the dock as if she was waiting for someone. One day, a

ship did appear in the harbor—sailing in, though there was no wind to push it. Everyone saw one man get off the boat by himself and come toward shore. They recognized him immediately as George Beckwith. No one wanted to tell him that his wife had died while he was away. Before anyone had the chance, a ghostly figure of Frances Beckwith came up and joined hands with George. Suddenly, George, Frances, and the ship disappeared. The people soon learned that George had died in England the year before. Even so, he had come back to his wife just as he promised. Some say that you can still see the ghosts of George and Frances together at their old plantation.

The second story appeared in the newspaper the *St. Mary's Beacon* on December 21, 1893. The writer is unknown. It involves an old man named Tom White. Tom was a slave who worked for Dr. John Brome on his plantation at St. Mary's City. One of Tom's jobs was to ring the church bell at Trinity Church near his home. He showed up to ring the bell every Sunday. People said that Tom never missed a church service. The story goes that there were days when even the

Point Lookout: The southern most point of the county is called Point Lookout. The point was a perfect spot to watch for British raiders during the American Revolution and the War of 1812. In fact, during the War of 1812, there was lookout stationed at the point who sent information north everyday about enemy ships in the river. That is how the point got its name.

St. George Island: St. George Island is located in the Potomac River. It was named for the patron saint of England, St. George. Though it has been inhabited by Englishmen since the colony's founding in 1634, the island was not connected to the mainland by a bridge until 1923.

California: It is not certain how California got its name, but one story says that a family who had lived in the state of California settled in the area. They used materials from their home state to build their new house. It was called the "California Farmstead." Eventually, the name stuck.

Hollywood: Though it is right next to California, the name Hollywood has nothing to do with the famous town in that state. According to resident Father Joseph Johnson, quoted by Regina Coombs Hammett, Hollywood was apparently named for a large holly tree which grew near the first post office there.

Great Mills: According to county historian Regina Coombs Hammett, there was a large mill built in the area in the 1600s by Thomas Waughop. It was called the "Great Mill." The mill went though a succession of owners, but was in operation until it was destroyed by flood in 1817. Eventually, the whole community came to be known as Great Mills.

parson could not get to the church because of the weather, but Tom was there to ring the bell. In 1870, Tom became ill and died. No one knows exactly how old he was. On his deathbed, the one thing that he was concerned about was who would ring the bell when he was gone. Some say that on cold winter nights, Tom still comes back to Trinity Church to ring the church bell one more time.

Reportedly, one of the most haunted buildings in the county is Tudor Hall in Leonardtown. There are a number of stories that go with the old mansion home. One story says that there was an old grandfather clock that stood in the front hallway. The clock only rang when there was a death in the family.

Historical Society of St. Mary's

When one mistress of the house, Mrs. Maria Key, was on her deathbed, she sent for an old faithful slave woman to be at her side. On her way up the road, the slave heard the clock ring and knew her mistress was dead. Some say that you can still hear the clock and the slave's crying. Another story about Tudor Hall tells of a ghost who likes to sit on a rocking chair on the porch. If anyone moves the rocker, they will soon find it back out on the porch where the ghost thinks it belongs. Still other people report actually seeing a ghost at Tudor Hall. She is dressed all in white and wanders the house at night. No one knows who she is.

By far the area with the most ghostly stories is Point Lookout, at the southernmost point of the county. The area has been the site of a Civil War prisoner of war camp and hospital, a state park, and a lighthouse. Each one has its stories.

One story is told by a ranger who was working at Point Lookout. He was driving his truck

Dashiell Hammett

Dashiell Hammett is one of the most famous American novelists of the 20th century. He was born near Great Mills on a farm called "Hopewell and Aim" on May 27, 1894. His family soon moved to Philadelphia and then to Baltimore. At age 14, Hammett was forced to leave school to take a job and help support his family. He worked odd jobs until 1915 when he went to work for the Pinkerton Detective Agency. As a detective, he traveled around the country working on cases. This experience would influence his later writing. In 1918, Hammett joined the Army to fight in World War I. He came down with a very serious case of tuberculosis. He was discharged from the Army for health reasons and would battle poor health the rest of his life.

Hammett began writing detective stories in the 1920s. His first stories were short stories published in a magazine called *Black Mask*. They were based around a character called the Continental Op—a detective working for the Continental Detective Agency. He used his experience as a detective to make this character very realistic. His stories became the basis for a realistic style of writing that is still influential today.

His first novel, *Red Harvest*, was published in 1929. It and his next novel, *The Dain Curse*, featured the character the Continental Op. His next novel, *The Maltese Falcon*, has become his most famous and one of the most recognized detective stories of all time. It and several of his other works were made into movies. These movies reached a whole new audience. There were several versions of *The Maltese Falcon*. The most famous starred Humphrey Bogart as detective Sam Spade.

Dashiell Hammett has remained one of the most famous modern American writers. His style set the standard of the detective novel. Critic Anthony Boucher said in the *New York Times* on June 26, 1966, "It is impossible to overstate the importance of Dashiell Hammett to the American detective story (or, I believe, to American literature)."

Dashiell Hammett died on January 19, 1961 in New York and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

when he saw someone run across the road in his rearview mirror. The man was wearing a Civil War uniform. The ranger went back to find the man, but never saw a hint that anyone had been there. As the story goes, some men in the prisoner of war camp were desperate to escape. They would get themselves transferred to the smallpox hospital on the point. Smallpox was a very contagious and deadly disease, but it was easier to escape from the hospital than it was from the camp. Some prisoners were able to escape from the hospital, but often later died of the disease that they got while they were there. Some say that these men are still running today.

Another story related to the smallpox hospital is told by guests at the Point Lookout campground. In the smallpox hospital, there was little that anyone could do for the patients. Most people who got smallpox would die within two weeks of contracting the disease. To tell if patients were still alive, hospital workers would kick their feet. If they did not move, it was time to take them to the smallpox cemetery for burial. Some campers say that one of the campsites is very near to the old hospital. In the middle of the night, they report feeling someone kicking their feet, but wake to find no one there.

Still other stories involve the water surrounding the point. People report seeing boats on the water that mysteriously disappear. Others hear calls for help or see distress lanterns, but never find the source. Many men attempted to escape the prisoner of war camp by water. Virginia was just across the Potomac and was a Confederate state. Most of these men never made it-either because they were captured, or because they died trying to cross the river to Virginia. Some people think that the ghost boats are escape attempts that failed. Others blame the water, itself, for the ghosts. The waters around the point can be very rough, particularly in a storm. Many ships have wrecked on the rocks around the point. Perhaps that can account for the ghost ships?

The place on the point which seems to have the most ghost stories to tell is the Point Lookout Lighthouse. Many of these stories were told by Gerald Sword in *Tales of St. Mary's*. Mr. Sword worked at Point Lookout and lived in the lighthouse. He reported many odd occurrences including voices, lights, and sounds he could not explain. One night, he told of a violent storm coming across the water. In the worst of it, he noticed his dog behaving strangely. Then, he, himself, had a peculiar feeling that he was being watched. He looked to the door and saw a
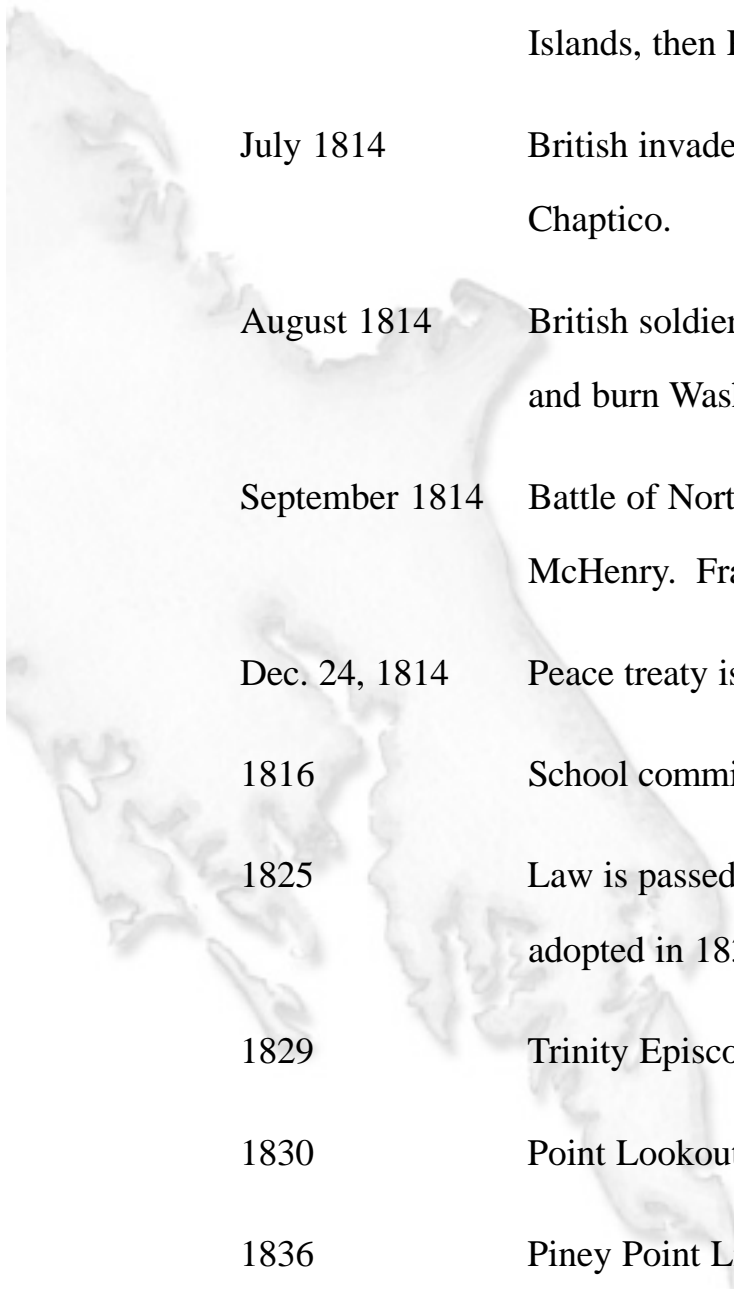
young man on the other side. When he opened the door, the man walked right through his front porch door and disappeared. The man was wearing 19th-century clothing. Once the storm passed, he heard the back door slam. When he went to investigate, the door was locked just as it had been before the storm. He never saw the man again, nor could he explain where he had come from.

In the 1980s, a group of investigators came to explore some of the strange things happening at the Point Lookout Lighthouse. The group included Dr. Hans Holzer, a professor of parapsychology. Parapsychology is the study of unexplained phenomenon like ESP and telepathy. While in the lighthouse, the investigators tried to record the voices of ghosts in the building. They reported recording many voices perhaps belonging to people who had lived in the lighthouse or men on the point during the Civil War. The group also took many pictures of the lighthouse during their time there. One picture was particularly interesting. On February 16, 1980, a photograph captured the image of what appeared to be a man in a Civil War uniform leaning against the wall. Although there were many pictures taken of the room, the man appears in only one. Through the years, Point Lookout has been investigated by many people trying to prove, or to disprove, the existence of ghosts. Every fall, the park at Point Lookout holds ghost walks where the rangers share many of the stories of the point. Perhaps you will visit and decide for yourself.
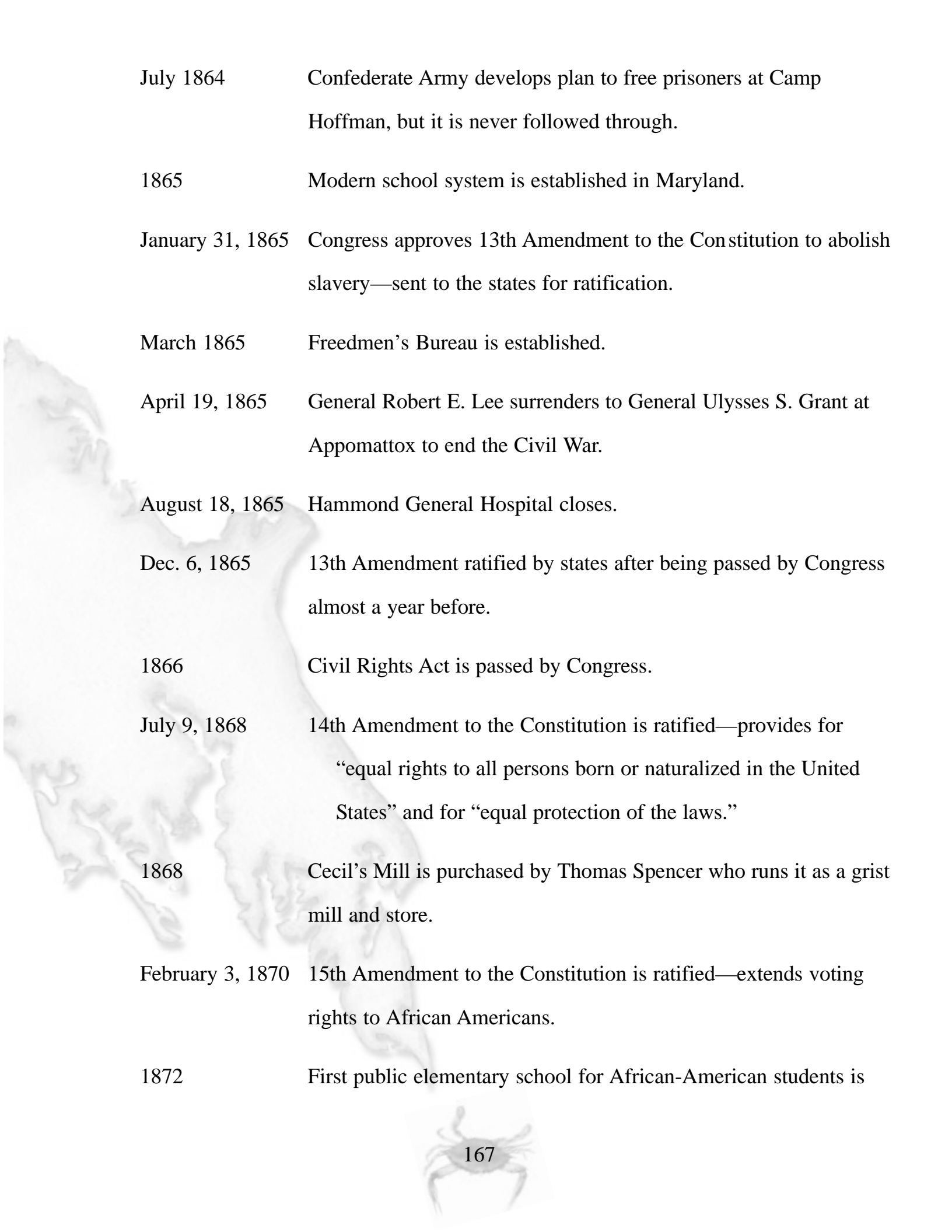
Timeline of St. Mary's County History

March 25, 1634   First settlers arrive in Maryland, land on St. Clement's Island

1642   Mathias de Sousa votes in the Maryland Assembly

April 21, 1649   *An act Concerning Religion* is passed in the Maryland Assembly

1692   Maryland is made a royal colony. First royal governor is appointed. Church of England is established as the official religion of the colony. Maryland is divided into thirty original parishes.

1695   Capital is moved from St. Mary's City to Annapolis

1708   Request is made to move county seat from St. Mary's City to Leonardtown.

1723   Maryland first attempts to establish public schools in all counties.

1731   St. Francis Xavier Church in Compton is built.

1736   Christ Church in Chaptico is built.

1750   St. George's Episcopal Church is built.

1767   All Faith Episcopal and St. Andrew's Episcopal Churches are built.

July 21, 1773   Society of Jesus is disbanded by Pope Clement XIV.

1774   County schools in Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's Counties are combined to form Charlotte Hall School.

1785   St. Ignatius Catholic Church is built.

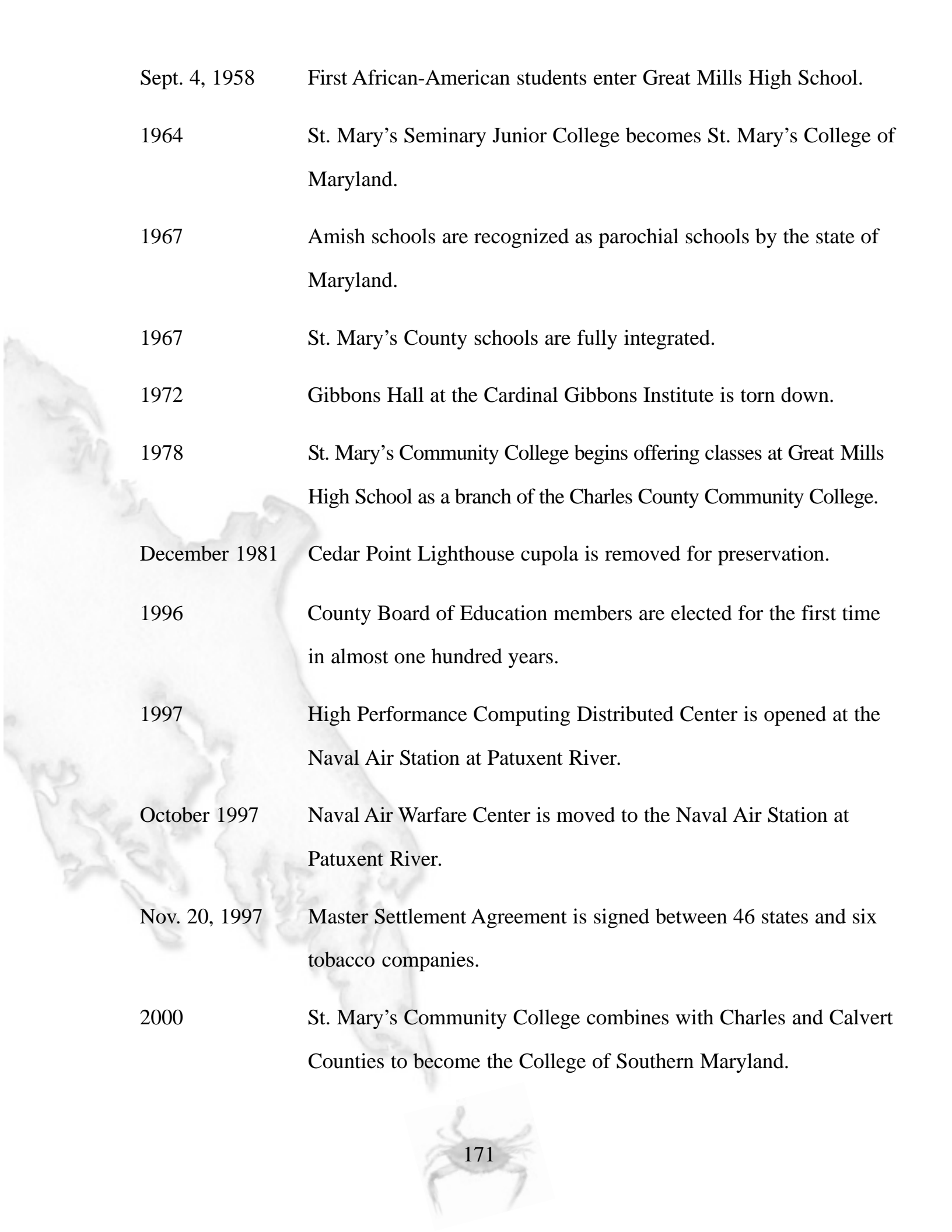|	
1789	Compton Manor House is built.
1810	Clifton Factory is established on the St. Mary's River.
June 1812	United States declares war on Great Britain beginning the War of 1812.
December 1812	British Navy sails into Chesapeake Bay and sets a blockade of the area.
July 1813	British troops land on St. Clement's, St. Catherine's, and St George Islands, then Point Lookout.
July 1814	British invade and take control of Leonardtown, then move on to Chaptico.
August 1814	British soldiers land at Benedict in Calvert County then march on and burn Washington, DC.
September 1814	Battle of North Point in Baltimore harbor. British bombard Fort McHenry. Francis Scott Key writes the *Star Spangled Banner*.
Dec. 24, 1814	Peace treaty is signed with England to end the War of 1812.
1816	School commissions are created in each county by act of Assembly.
1825	Law is passed to divide counties into school districts. It is re-adopted in 1838.
1829	Trinity Episcopal Church is built.
1830	Point Lookout Lighthouse is built.
1836	Piney Point Lighthouse is built.

1839	St. Mary's Female Seminary is founded.
1846	All Saints Episcopal Church is built.
December 1860	South Carolina secedes from the United States of America.
February 1861	Confederate States of America founded. Jefferson Davis elected as first president.
April 12, 1861	Fort Sumter is fired upon to start the Civil War.
April 17, 1861	Virginia secedes from the Union.
April 19, 1861	Riot in Baltimore erupts while Sixth Massachusetts Regime is marching through city—fifteen killed, many more wounded.
August 6, 1861	First Confiscation Act is passed.
July 17, 1862	Second Confiscation Act is passed.
July 1862	Union Army begins arrangements for military hospital on Point Lookout.
January 1, 1863	Emancipation Proclamation goes into effect after being preliminarily issued by President Lincoln on September 22, 1862.
March 1863	Draft is enacted by United States Congress for men aged 20 to 45, but those who pay or send a substitute are exempted.
July 1-3, 1863	Battle of Gettysburg is fought.
July 20, 1863	Camp Hoffman is established on Point Lookout for Confederate prisoners of war.

July 1864	Confederate Army develops plan to free prisoners at Camp Hoffman, but it is never followed through.
1865	Modern school system is established in Maryland.
January 31, 1865	Congress approves 13th Amendment to the Constitution to abolish slavery—sent to the states for ratification.
March 1865	Freedmen's Bureau is established.
April 19, 1865	General Robert E. Lee surrenders to General Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox to end the Civil War.
August 18, 1865	Hammond General Hospital closes.
Dec. 6, 1865	13th Amendment ratified by states after being passed by Congress almost a year before.
1866	Civil Rights Act is passed by Congress.
July 9, 1868	14th Amendment to the Constitution is ratified—provides for "equal rights to all persons born or naturalized in the United States" and for "equal protection of the laws."
1868	Cecil's Mill is purchased by Thomas Spencer who runs it as a grist mill and store.
February 3, 1870	15th Amendment to the Constitution is ratified—extends voting rights to African Americans.
1872	First public elementary school for African-American students is

opened in St. Mary's County.

1880	Knights of St. Jerome society is formed in St. Inigoes.
1882	Cecil's Mill is purchased by William Cecil.
1883	Dent Memorial Chapel is built.
Sept. 30, 1885	Knights of St. Jerome Hall in Dameron is dedicated.
1887	First Catholic elementary school for African-American students is established in Knights of St. Jerome Hall.
July 3, 1887	First Holy Face Church is dedicated.
1893	St. Francis Xavier Church on St. George Island is built.
1896	*Plessy v. Ferguson* decision from the Supreme Court is handed down—establishes the legality of "separate, but equal" facilities for African Americans.
1896	Cedar Point Lighthouse is built.
May 27, 1896	Dashiel Hammett is born in Great Mills.
1901	St. Peter Claver's Sodality Hall is built in Ridge.
January 18, 1903	First church service held at St. Peter Claver's Hall for African-American parishioners.
1905	Point No Point Lighthouse is completed.
1909	Leonard Hall School is founded in Leonardtown by Xaverian Brothers.

October 1911	First fall festival is held at Leonard Hall School.
1916	St. Peter Claver's School is established in Ridge.
January 1917	St. Alphonsus School is opened.
Dec. 1, 1918	First St. Peter Claver's Church is dedicated.
July 1922	Cardinal Gibbons Institute, Incorporated, is founded to act as the Board of Directors for the Institute.
October 26, 1924	Cardinal Gibbons Institute is dedicated as the first African-American high school in the county.
1926	St. Mary's Female Seminary operates as a junior college.
1928	Great Mills Elementary School opens as one of the first consolidated county schools.
March 3, 1931	*Star Spangled Banner* is adopted as the national anthem.
December 1933	Cardinal Gibbons Institute is temporarily closed due to financial concerns.
1938	St. Mary's Sea Food Incorporated is founded in Ridge.
May 25, 1938	Second St. Peter Claver's Church is dedicated.
September 1938	Cardinal Gibbons Institute reopens.
1940	Amish families move from Pennsylvania to St. Mary's County.
Feb. 10, 1940	Charter for the Martin de Porres Federal Credit Union is granted.

Dec. 7, 1941	The U.S. Naval Base at Pearl Harbor is bombed.
1942	Ridge Purchasing and Marketing Cooperative is formed.
January 14, 1942	Plans are approved for the construction of the Naval Air Station at Patuxent River.
April 4, 1942	Construction begins on the Naval Air Station at Patuxent River.
April 1, 1943	Opening ceremony for the Naval Air Station at Patuxent River is held.
1944	United States Government Railroad to the Naval Air Station at Patuxent River is completed.
June 16, 1945	Naval Air Test Center is established at the Naval Air Station at Patuxent River.
1947	First St. Mary's County Fair of the modern era is held.
March 4, 1948	Test Pilot Division is established at the Naval Air Station at Patuxent River.
1949	First black fair is held at the Cardinal Gibbons Institute.
1954	*Brown v The Board of Education* decision is handed down by the Supreme Court—requires school integration.
1957	St. Mary's County schools begin slow integration.
June 12, 1958	United States Naval Test Pilot School is established at the Naval Air Station at Patuxent River.

Sept. 4, 1958   First African-American students enter Great Mills High School.

1964   St. Mary's Seminary Junior College becomes St. Mary's College of Maryland.

1967   Amish schools are recognized as parochial schools by the state of Maryland.

1967   St. Mary's County schools are fully integrated.

1972   Gibbons Hall at the Cardinal Gibbons Institute is torn down.

1978   St. Mary's Community College begins offering classes at Great Mills High School as a branch of the Charles County Community College.

December 1981   Cedar Point Lighthouse cupola is removed for preservation.

1996   County Board of Education members are elected for the first time in almost one hundred years.

1997   High Performance Computing Distributed Center is opened at the Naval Air Station at Patuxent River.

October 1997   Naval Air Warfare Center is moved to the Naval Air Station at Patuxent River.

Nov. 20, 1997   Master Settlement Agreement is signed between 46 states and six tobacco companies.

2000   St. Mary's Community College combines with Charles and Calvert Counties to become the College of Southern Maryland.

Glossary

apprenticeship: time spent working for a master craftsman in order to learn a trade.

archaeologists: scientists who dig for clues about how people lived in the past.

artifacts: pieces of material that are evidence of life in Maryland in the past.

blockade: the shutting off of ports by an enemy during war.

civil war: a war fought between people of the same country.

Confederate States of America: the country formed by seceding states during the American Civil War.

congregation: a group of church members.

contraband: illegal trade items.

cooperative: an agreement among a group of people to work together to invest in a common goal and share the rewards.

cull: to sort.

cupola: a dome-shaped structure on the top of a roof.

daub: a mixture of oyster shell, clay, and other natural materials used on the outside of colonial chimneys.

demand: the desire for a certain product or kind of product.

discrimination: the unequal treatment of a minority group of people.

dredge: a way to harvest oysters that involves dragging a metal basket along the bottom of a river.

ecosystem: an environment of animals and plants dependent upon one another.

emancipate: to set free.

Emancipation Proclamation: document approved by President Abraham Lincoln that freed all slaves in Confederate states.

eminent domain: the right of the government to take land for public use.

eviction: the act of removing a person from home or property.

Federalist Party: the political party opposed to the War of 1812.

Freedman's Bureau: a government agency set up after the Civil War to assist newly freed slaves.

girdling: the act of removing a strip of bark to kill the leaves of a tree.

grievance: a complaint.

habitat: an environment where a plant or animal normally lives.

hand tonging: the oldest way to harvest oysters using hand tongs—large rake-like claws on long wooden handles.

handbill: a small printed notice or advertisement.

hogshead: a type of cask, like a barrel, that was used to transport tobacco.

impressment: the act of pressing a person into service, as in the armed forces.

integration: the bringing of different races into the same institutions.

Jesuit: a member of the Society of Jesus, a group of priests in the Catholic Church.

Jim Crow laws: the general term for any law that discriminated against African Americans or kept the races segregated.

manoe: a soft-shell clam.

manumit: to set free from slavery.

militia: volunteers used as soldiers either instead of, or in addition to, a regular army.

migrate: to move from one place to another.

molt: to shed parts and replace with new growth.

oral history: stories or legends passed down through generations that can teach about the past.

parish: a division of people in a church.

patent tongs: a way to harvest oysters using a set of metal claws attached by steel cable to a motor.

plankton: microscopic plants or animals that live in water and are eaten by other larger animals.

primary source: a document, or other piece of evidence, that was created during a time in the past.

privateer: a person hired for profit to be a pirate.

racism: a thought or attitude that one race is more capable, smarter, or more deserving than another.

Reconstruction: a name for the time in American history following the Civil War.

reform: to make better by removing faults.

Reformation: a time in history when people attempted to reform the Catholic Church and instead created new Protestant churches.

refugee: a person who flees from their home for safety elsewhere.

regiment: a group of soldiers.

religious toleration: the policy of allowing people to worship any religion of their choice.

reredos: a decoration behind the altar of a church.

resolution: a formal statement of opinion.

secede: to withdraw from a political group.

segregation: the policy of forcing racial groups to live apart from one another.

sodality: a society for charity work.

southern sympathizer: a person in a Union state who supported the Confederate cause during the Civil War. Also called a Confederate sympathizer.

spat: a young oyster.

treason: betrayal of one's country.

waterman: a person who makes their living working on the water.

Westward Expansion: the thought in the 19th century that the United States should lay claim to and colonize the American West.

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www.tqci.net/~standrews/ the website of St. Andrew's Church.

About the Author

Sandy Shoemaker was born in the Midwest and raised in Charles County, Maryland. She attended Goucher College in Towson where she graduated with honors in history in 1992. In 1993, she began working at Historic St. Mary's City, a living history museum at the site of Maryland's first capital. She worked as a costumed interpreter for six years and in the education department for four years. She has written lesson plans and activities for students, particularly at the upper elementary school level. Sandy is the author of the companion book to this volume, *Where Maryland Began . . . the Colonial History of St. Mary's County*, published in 2000. Currently, Sandy is thrilled to be at home working on her latest project, her first child, Jacob, who was born during her work on this project.

About the Illustrator

Mary Lou Troutman was born in 1957 and grew up in the countryside of Southern Maryland. From an early age she began expressing her talents and upon graduation from St. Mary's Academy (where she won the senior art achievement award) she attended Maryland College of Art in Baltimore, Maryland and then on to St. Mary's College.

Between high school and her first year of college she met a man that would change her life and art career for the better. In the fall of 1977 she married Jeff Troutman, who immediately recognized her talent for art and took her work to a local art league where she has been exhibiting ever since.

Mary Lou and Jeff returned to her home town of Dameron, a small country town located along the Chesapeake Bay on the southern tip of St. Mary's County. From her woodland studio she kept close company with the abundance of nature which surrounded her. St. Marys' County with it's creeks, marshes, rivers, and Chesapeake Bay, provided a never ending and unique mix of subject matter. Mary Lou has developed a personal feeling of nostalgia for the "way it was" way of life along the Chesapeake. Her detailed acrylic paintings reflect a strong sense of light with a realistic touch.

Mary Lou's career couldn't exist without the constant help of her family. Jeff, who does most of the shows, Andy, her son, and Shannon, her daughter, who does most of the matting and framing.

Through the years of recognition numerous awards and artistic achievements her work have become a part of both private and corporate collections that span from coast to coast. Mary Lou was chosen for Maryland's 1994 Ducks Unlimited sponsor Artist.