



Anne Arundel County History Notes

Vol. XLIII No. 3

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Spring 2012

Quarterly Publication of
the Ann Arundell County
Historical Society

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History Notes

"History is an account of things said and done in the past. In this sense, each of us seeks to fashion and is part of a history — an account of where we come from, who we are, and how we got to be that way. Communities, likewise, have a history. So, too, do nations, families, and human groups of every sort. In this sense, there is not one history, but many.

Dennis A. O'Toole
History News, Autumn 2010

MARK N. SCHATZ, Editor

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A Journey Back in Time... Discover London Town!

by JOHN E. KILLE and DONNA M. WARE



Historic London Town, Maryland, painted by Lee Boynton, 2006.

Against an early morning sky, the shadow of a large three-masted ship can be seen slowly making its way northward along the Chesapeake Bay. An impressive sight, its sails cut a path toward an important destination on the South River. On board the ship, the captain finishes the last of several handwritten entries documenting what has been a long voyage across the Atlantic Ocean. He shakes his head as he recounts the westerly gales and squalls his crew endured over the past two months. Later the same morning, a bell rings out and a small crowd gathers near the Scott Street ferry landing in London Town to watch and wait as the ship furls its sails and drops anchor. Word spreads quickly of yet another merchant vessel that has arrived to pick up locally grown tobacco for the English market.

Imagine being able to step back in time to welcome the arrival of an enormous 18th-century transatlantic ship. Wouldn't it be thrilling to immerse yourself in a dramatic scene such as this? If the prospect of time travel is appealing, then you will want to visit a new 3,500 square foot permanent museum exhibit called *Discover London Town!* that just opened to the public at Historic London Town and Gardens, a 23-acre park owned by Anne Arundel County in Edgewater, Maryland. History literally comes alive within carefully designed educational dis-

plays that span 13,000 years of regional history. *Discover London Town!* brings you face to face with the people, buildings, and landscapes of the past through the use of archaeological artifacts, informative maps, artistic paintings and illustrations, and engaging interactive displays, including a virtual 3D colonial tavern and transatlantic ship accessible on touch screen computer monitors.

These dynamic displays showcase two decades of exciting archaeological discoveries made by Dr. Al Luckenbach and his team of *Lost Towns Project* archaeologists. The origins of this exhibit reach as far back as the late 1990s during the planning of the Visitor Center facility. In July, 2007, the center opened to the public; however, the exhibit space in the lower level was still in the planning stages. The initial exhibit design was prepared in 2006 with a generous grant from the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network. By 2009, efforts to install the exhibit were renewed. Anne Arundel County's Departments of Recreation and Parks and Public Works provided support and guidance, and Smith Architects of Perry Hall, Maryland, transformed the exhibit design drawings into construction documents. The project was awarded in January 2010 to Tuckman-Barbee Construction Company of Upper Marlboro, Maryland, which served as the general

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contractor. They in turn sub-contracted the exhibit construction work to Malone Design and Fabrication of Decatur, Georgia. London Town staff assisting with this effort included Executive Director Donna Ware, Deputy Director Rod Cofield, Education Director Lisa Robbins, and Exhibit Curator Dr. John E. Kille.

Now installed in the lower level of the Visitor Center, *Discover London Town!* is designed to introduce and orient visitors to areas of the site they will later be able to fully explore, including the reconstructed Historic Area, William Brown House, and woodland and ornamental gardens. Several interpretative areas are also to be found on the building's first floor. After entering the main entrance, visitors will pass by a showcase containing the circa 1720 Mermaid Plate, now London Town's logo, followed by several very large graphics that place the town in a broad geographic context. Among the oversize depictions are the 1751 Fry-Jefferson map, a satellite view of the Chesapeake Bay, and an expansive rendering of the town by local artist Lee Boynton. The exhibit on the lower level is laid out in sections tied to specific themes. The floor plan of this space is organized in a free flowing pattern, giving visitors the opportunity to choose among various time periods and subject matter. Plan on spending as long as you like during your visit, and, until then, the following abbreviated itinerary will help to guide your travel through time.

Native Americans in the Chesapeake

The Mastodon Hunt by Carlyle Urello. (Courtesy, Tennessee State Museum.)

and bannerstones—weights used with atlatl throwing sticks. Also showcased is one of the finest collections of locally made tools from the Archaic (9,500 to 3,000 years ago) and Woodland (3,000 to 300 years ago) periods,

including spearpoints, axes, celts, grinding stones, tobacco pipes, decorative gorgets, and a large soapstone bowl. Accentuating these priceless artifacts are beautiful prints, including scenes of Indians hunting, fishing, and camping rendered by famed 16th-century explorer John White.

Early European Settlement in the Chesapeake

Continuing on your walk, you will soon arrive in circa 1649 Providence, Anne Arundel County's first European settlement. This engaging area focuses on a lucrative tobacco trade and surprising access to international or European commercial goods. You will be introduced to Emanuel Drue, a talented 17th-century craftsman who made colorful clay tobacco pipes at Swan Cove, a site situated in present-day St. Margarets. Remnants of his cobblestone kiln excavated by the *Lost Towns Project* and many examples of his artistic and colorful creations are on display. The famous Crumhorn pipe, a profusely decorated example of early American folk art, is part of this assemblage. This section also features a 3D movie that documents the Swan Cove kiln design and how it was fired, as well as a hands-on interactive in which designs may be stamped into a bed of clay with the same type of pipe decorating tool used by Drue.



A Lady Drinking and a Gentleman by Jan Vermeer Van Delft, 1658. (Courtesy, Bildarchiv PreuBischer Kulturbesitz and Art Resource.)

During your stay in Providence, you will also encounter archaeological finds that provide tangible evidence of upscale lifestyles enjoyed by early settlers. This area features European genre paintings that depict how many of these household and architectural artifacts from

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Providence were used. Among the artifacts on display are fine Delft ceramic vessels, bone-handled utensils, iron scissors, locks and keys, colorful glass beads and buttons, and lead cloth bail seals used to secure bolts of fabric. A wide range of architectural items are also shown, including decorated fireplace tiles, Dutch green and yellow floor tiles, Dutch roofing tiles also known as pantiles, and diamond-shaped window glass held in place with lead came.

Colonial Transportation, Shipping, and Trans-Atlantic Trade

One of the more impressive interactive displays in the Providence gallery is a huge and highly detailed world map created by Herman Moll in 1719. In this area, brilliant imagery is used to document and interpret the extensive global trading network facilitated by the Chesapeake Bay. Colorful directional lights, positioned behind the map, illuminate the navigational routes of transatlantic ships. When each path lights up, corresponding boxes containing different images of commodities traded between the New and Old World are also illuminated.



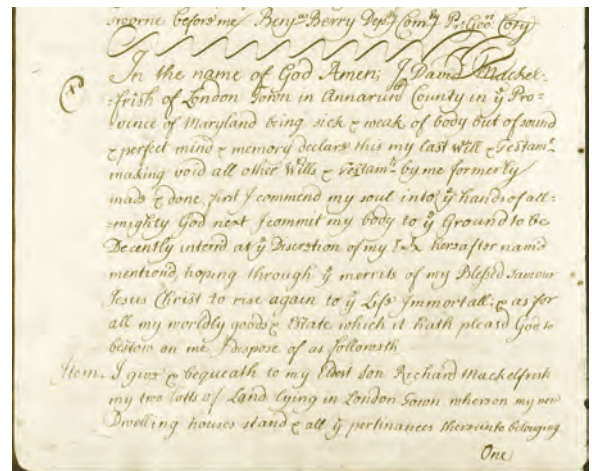
Computer reconstruction of the *Rumney and Long* (circa 1747) built at the William Roberts Shipyard in Annapolis.

You are now prepared to board a 3D transatlantic ship named the *Rumney and Long*, which was captained by London Town resident William Strachan. A large touch screen monitor enables you to interact with different areas of the ship, including the captain's quarters, crew's quarters, galley, steerage, and even the cargo hold, where

tobacco hogsheads are loaded. Feel free to fire cannons on the ship's upper deck, climb its rigging to unfurl sails, turn its rudder, play cards next to the crew's bunks, prepare and cook food, and many, many other activities. This multi-media presentation is further enhanced by a "sound dome" that plays lively period music by accomplished musicians David and Ginger Hildebrand, as well as sound effects of lapping waves, birds, and creaking wood. This ship was reconstructed by a four-person team composed of professional animator Tim Wang, naval architect and maritime historian John Wing, and archaeologists Bruce Thompson with the Maryland Historical Trust and John E. Kille with the *Lost Towns Project*.

London Town-Birth, Life, and Death of a Colonial Seaport

The stage is set for your arrival in London Town, where multi-faceted displays discuss the birth, life, and death of this once thriving tobacco port town situated on the South River. In this area you will become better acquainted with the lifestyles, buildings, and natural environment of the town's plantation owners, trades people, tavern keepers, sea captains and sailors, and enslaved African Americans workers.



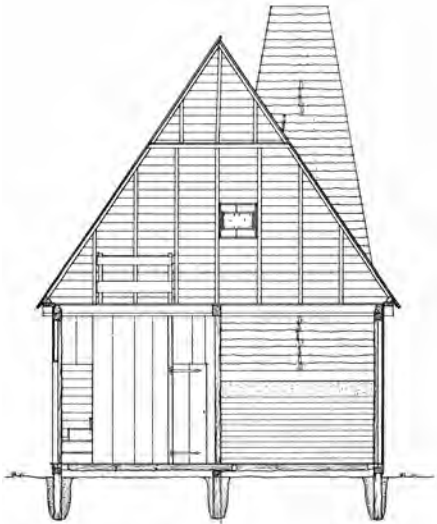
Excerpt from the will of prominent London Town resident David Mackelfish, 1711. (Courtesy, Maryland State Archives.)

Representations of original historical documents bear witness to London Town's creation. On display is the handwritten 1683 "Act for Advancing the Trade of Tobacco," which established 31 towns—including London Town. Enacted by the Maryland General Assembly, this law controlled the taxation and exportation of tobacco and other commercial goods. Other period documents include the 17th-century wills of William Burgess, who donated 100 acres of property to establish the town, and promi-

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nent property owner “Lord Mayor” David Mackelfish.

Archaeology is another compelling interpretive tool used to great effect in this area of the exhibit. The scientific methods and techniques of Anne Arundel County *Lost Towns Project* provide a context for the discovery of earthfast or post-in-ground buildings in the Historic Area, notably the Lord Mayor’s Tenement (early 1700s), Rumney/West Ordinary (1725), and Carpenter Shop (1725). This work involves almost two decades of ongoing excavations at Historic London Town and Gardens.

Lord Mayor’s Tenement

Architectural drawing of the Lord Mayor’s Tenement by Willie Graham, Architectural Historian, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

While in London Town you will share in the discovery of the Lord Mayor’s Tenement, a 20 x 20-foot earthfast or post-in-ground building once owned by David Mackelfish. This story is conveyed through photos, architectural drawings, artifacts, and distribution maps showing where artifacts were excavated. A unique interactive display challenges visitors to find evidence of the building’s “footprint” and fence lines among the many features or stains in the soil that archaeologists carefully recorded on a site map during excavations. In addition, a fascinating time-lapse movie shows the reconstruction of the tenement by restoration carpenter Russell Steele and volunteers with the Annapolis Woodworkers Guild.

Overland Travel

Circa 1840 painting of Ferry Point, showing London Town across the South River. (Courtesy, Elizabeth and Peter Edmondo.)

On this leg of your journey you will also experience aspects of overland travel, as London Town was once a key stopping point or crossroad along a major north-south transportation route. An engaging interactive display provides the opportunity to cross the South River by ferry while completing a journey on horseback from Philadelphia to Williamsburg. After answering several questions correctly, the path of your overland trip will light up on a historic map. This area also offers a fun “flip book” containing the handwritten pages of a 1778 ferry ledger that tavern owner, carpenter, and ferry keeper William Brown used to log passengers, horses, and cargo transported across the South River.

Rumney/West Ordinary

Computer reconstruction of an elegant table setting at London Town’s upscale Rumney/West Ordinary (circa 1725).

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During your stay in colonial London Town, pay a visit to the circa 1725 Rumney/West Ordinary, an establishment that catered to planters, sea captains, and merchants. This area of the exhibit features an impressive reconstruction of the tavern's interior. A gate leg table is set with the same crystal wine glasses, punch bowls, and plates that *Lost Towns Project* archaeologists excavated from a trash pit in the tavern's cellar. Two large display cases on either side of this scene contain many more examples of glass ware and decorated Delft vessels recovered from the site. Further enhancing this experience is a virtual reconstruction of the tavern in 3D, which is accessible on an interactive touch screen monitor. Adding to the realism is an audio sound dome that plays beautiful period music by the renowned Baltimore Consort, as well as the sounds of rum punch, wine, and coffee being poured into vessels and embers crackling in the tavern's fireplace. This program was created by professional animators Carl Gehrman and John Kille.

Indentured Servants and Colonial Trades—Carpentry and Cabinetmaking

The Carpenter's Yard by Jack LaGuette, circa 1725, depicts the type of carpentry that would have taken place at William Brown's shop in London Town. (Courtesy, Peregrine Sabin.)

London Town's Carpenter Shop area focuses on indentured servants and tradesmen during the colonial period. Authentic period woodworking tools are on display, including a hand brace and bit for drilling holes in wood, a cooper's howel used to plane the inside of uneven barrel staves, and hoop drivers used to hammer supportive wooden hoops around barrel staves. Also showcased is an outstanding walnut chair made to resemble an 18th-century example attributed to London Town carpenter William Brown. Restoration carpenter Russell Steele constructed it entirely by hand.

Slavery and Enduring Traditions

Re-enactors return the sacred remains of an African American slave child to the exact spot where a mother originally placed them three centuries ago. (Photo courtesy of J. Henson with the Capital.)

Another important area of the exhibit conveys the experiences, customs, and cultural traditions of African and Caribbean slaves brought to London Town in the 18th century. Here you will learn about the archaeological discovery of the remains of a young child buried beneath the floorboards of the Carpenter Shop. This type of burial is based on enduring African religious traditions that were transferred and continued to be practiced in America. Powerful photos document the reburial ceremony that took place on May 8, 2003, and several news reports from that day can be seen on a video monitor.

History of Plant Exchange and Development of London Gardens

Engraving of Tall Goldenrod (*Virga aurea altissima*) in *Historia Plantarum Rariorum* by John Martyn, 1728. (Courtesy, Library of Congress.)

The exhibit's horticulture section discusses London Town's involvement in the exchange of plants between the New and Old Worlds, and how it reshaped cuisine, commerce, and medicine. You will become acquainted with Dr. Richard Hill, a London Town resident involved in botanical exploration. His plant-based remedies are illustrated by letters he exchanged with the prestigious Royal Society of London, artistic renderings of plants, and a collection of exotic artifacts from his home site including coconut shell, coral, and cowry shells.

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This section also highlights the importance of the historic gardens, and the development of the site's woodland and ornamental gardens, including London Town's beautiful signature camellia collection.

William Brown House

View of William Brown House looking upward from historic Scott Street.

An area of the exhibit devoted to London Town's circa 1760 William Brown House discusses the grand vision of its builder, as well as the decline of the town. This impressive, yet costly, Georgian brick building once functioned as a tavern for overland travelers. Now a National Historic Landmark, it is the last building from the town period still standing within the park. It is also the only known structure in the United States that features all header bond brick work (short end of the brick exposed) on all four walls. Why did William Brown build this monumental house? To revive London Town? To show off his wealth? To cater to elite travelers such as George Washington and Thomas Jefferson?



Inhabitants of London Town's African American dormitory, circa 1909. (Courtesy, Maryland State Archives.)

By the 19th century powerful economic and political forces eventually led to the decline of the town and the Revolutionary War sealed its fate. At this point in your journey you will notice a 1795 period map showing alternate roads bypassing the town. In 1828 Anne Arundel County purchased the William Brown House and turned it into the County Almshouse for housing and feeding the poor and homeless. By the 20th century the town had largely disappeared from the landscape. Photographs and archaeological artifacts serve to document and tell the story of the Almshouse period, including its segregated African American dormitory.

London Town Today

Living history re-enactors at Historic London Town and Gardens help to recreate and interpret life and events in colonial times.

The end of the exhibit focuses on the many changes that have taken place since the closing of the Anne Arundel County Almshouse in 1965. Like the town during its heyday, Historic London Town and Gardens is a vibrant community. It is being preserved and rebuilt through a partnership between Anne Arundel County Government and the London Town Foundation. Volunteers dig alongside professional archaeologists in ongoing excavations. They also tend gardens, conduct exciting educational programs, participate in living history events, and work with restoration carpenters to reconstruct portions of the "lost town."

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Russell Steele and volunteers with the Annapolis Woodworkers Guild pose atop the Carpenter Shop during its reconstruction.

We hope you have enjoyed this brief itinerary and look forward to your visit to *Discover London Town!* at Historic London Town and Gardens. You will undoubtedly enjoy charting your own course back to the past...and future!

For more information about London Town and the new exhibit go to www.historiclondontown.org or follow Historic London Town and Gardens on facebook.

In Memoriam

We report with regret the passing of a State Senator, Alfred Lipin, a long time member of our Society and a patriarchal figure in the Glen Burnie community. Al was a civic activist and leader and an encyclopedia of local history lore. He will be missed. Our deepest sympathy to his family and friends.

Pay the Piper

If you have not paid your dues for 2012, NOW is the time! Otherwise, you will be removed from our mailing list in July. Think what you will miss: no more *History Notes!* No more fascinating flyers! How will you survive? Please pay now! Remember: we know where you live!

A Summer Preview



Two scenes decades ago on the John Smith farm in Severn. Long Johns seem to be a long time ago. Photos courtesy of Sara Anne Stinchcomb

Historical Society Operating Hours

Benson-Hammond House—Aviation Blvd. & Andover Rd., Linthicum. Telephone: 410-768-9518. Hours: Saturday 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. and Sunday noon - 3 p.m. Visitors may tour house & museum. \$3.00 donation requested from non-members. Browse & Buy Shoppe (North) also open.

Kueth Library—5 Crain Hwy., South, Glen Burnie. Telephone: 410-760-9679. The Library is open Thursday thru Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. \$5.00 per day donation requested from nonmembers.

Browse & Buy Shoppe (South)—Old Annapolis & Jones Station Rds., Severna Park. Telephone: 410-544-3370. Hours: Tuesday thru Saturday 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

2012 Calendar of Events

May 5, 2012

Book Sale, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Glen Burnie Improvement Assoc. Bldg.
Contact: Jack Wisthoff at 410-255-7777

May 19, 2012

Bus Trip (see flyer)

June 9, 2012

Rain Date: June 10, 2012

22nd Annual Strawberry Festival
Benson-Hammond House 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

August 2012

Day Lily Extravaganza
Benson-Hammond House
Contact: Stan Kennedy at 410-790-6793

September 8, 2012

Rain Date: September 9, 2012

Fall Flea Market & Craft Fair
Benson-Hammond House, 8 a.m.-2 p.m.
Contact: Jan Pumphrey 410-647-0936

September 15, 2012

Annual Crab Feast, 1 p.m.-5 p.m.
Kurtz's Beach Ltd.

October 6, 2012

Fall Book Sale, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Glen Burnie Improvement Assoc. Bldg.
Contact: Jack Wisthoff at 410-255-7777

October 20, 2012

Fall Fund-Raiser - Dinner for Eight at the
Benson-Hammond House - Raffle Winner Dinner
Contact: Meg Krantz at 410-956-4809

October 27, 2012

Rain Date: October 28, 2012

3rd Annual Children's Halloween Party
Benson-Hammond House, 11 am.-2 p.m.
Contact: Jan Pumphrey at 410-647-0936

November 3, 2012

Historical/Genealogical Seminar
Subject: TBA
Glen Burnie Improvement Assoc. Bldg.
Contact: Mark Schatz at 410-760-5206

December 1 & 2, 2012

27th Annual Holiday Open House
"Twas the Night Before Christmas"
Benson-Hammond House 3 p.m.-7 p.m.
Contact: Jan Pumphrey at 410-647-0936

Benson-Hammond House Displays - 2012

"Vintage Textiles" - Andrea Frazier
March & April 2012

"What Am I?" - Jan Pumphrey
May & June 2012

"Anne Arundel County Postcards"
July, August & September 2012

"Who Am I? And Where Am I?" - Jan Pumphrey
October, November & December 2012

"History Shared is History Preserved"



VISIT OUR WEB SITE AT <http://www.aachs.org>

"Listen to the Centuries rather than to the Hours"