

Mission: The mission of the City of Bowie Museums is to preserve, collect, interpret and celebrate for the public's appreciation the history, architecture, city plans, and people of Bowie, Maryland, through education and exhibition, archaeology and advocacy of this diverse heritage.

All in the Family

One of the oldest houses in Prince George's County will be getting some preservation help from the University of Maryland.

Bostwick House was built in 1746, by Christopher Lowndes, brother-in-law of Anne Tasker Ogle, mistress of Belair. As the date indicates, its construction date coincides with that of Belair. Given some interior similarities, it might even be possible that the same craftsmen could have worked on both houses.

One of four remaining structures in Bladensburg built before the Revolutionary War, Bostwick is owned by the Town of Bladensburg. It also served as the residence for the first U.S. Secretary of the Navy, Benjamin Stoddert, son-in-law of the Lowndes. The Town of Bladensburg has agreed to give the University of Maryland's Historic Preservation Program full access to the house, and the rest of the seven-acre property, which includes the main house, a laundry house, two large barns, a pump house and a garage.



University faculty and students will conduct a preservation feasibility study. Donald Linebaugh, director of the Graduate Program in Historic Preservation at UMCP, commented "because the building has not been restored before, it's a blank slate in some ways..." Projects undertaken will include an archaeological survey, damage assessment, landscape design, and will offer solutions to a number of problems the structure faces. Professional restoration crews will complete the actual "bricks and mortar repairs."

Bostwick, above, built ca 1746, making its construction contemporaneous with that of Belair Mansion. Perhaps the same craftsmen worked on both houses. Preservation assures not only a bright future, but offers a chance for historical research in an 18th century County dwelling. To the right: Elizabeth Tasker Lowndes, painted by John Wollaston. Mrs. Lowndes, sister of Anne Tasker Ogle, was Mistress of Bostwick. Later in life, Mrs. Lowndes was also painted by Charles Willson Peale.



Huntington Heritage Society Oral History Project Underway

As part of a long-planned and exciting local history project, the members of the Huntington Heritage Society recently visited Bowie State University to film several conversations with Dr. Otis Thomas.

Dr. Thomas is a professor of Broadcast Journalism and Mass Media at Bowie State, and is host of a number of local access channel productions at the University.

Fannie Basim, Ed Maenner, Frank Fladung, Gloria Brown, James Chittums, Agnes Marshall, Ann Johnson and Anna Holmes, all provided memories of the Town of Huntington, now Old Town Bowie, for a program airing very soon. Bob Rapczynski, HHS president, and Pam Williams, Historic Properties Manager, provided comments on the past few years in Old Town. This program is the beginning of a long-term oral history project planned by the Society.

Summer Programs for Kids

The Bowie Train Station Museum hosts "Kids Kaboose" on Thursday, July 17 & Thursday, August 21 from 10:30 am-Noon, for youngsters ages 1-10. Stories, tours and a take home craft make an enjoyable morning! After the program, enjoy a brown bag lunch on the grass as the trains whiz by!

Belair Mansion hosts "Pastimes from the Past" on Sunday, July 20, from Noon—4:00 p.m. Families will participate in games from long ago.

The Mansion hosts Monday Museum Morning for youngsters ages 4-10 on Aug. 18 - 10:30-Noon—stories, fun and a craft to take home! All programs are free.



Celebrating the Fourth!

Fireworks are a traditional part of our American Fourth of July celebrations. Dating back to 12th century China, the craft of making fireworks was an art and science—with a working knowledge of chemistry required!

Since then, many occasions—births, deaths, weddings, coronations, inaugurations, peace treaties—are cause for fireworks. G.F. Handel composed “Music for the Royal Fireworks” to celebrate a 1749 peace treaty. Certainly, Belair’s original owners, Samuel and Anne Ogle watched fireworks over the Thames during their stay in London in the 1740’s.

America’s earliest settlers, in keeping with European custom, used fireworks to celebrate important events. The first celebration of Independence day, in 1777, featured pyrotechnic displays—even before independence was assured.

As we watch color fill the sky over Bowie’s Allen Pond or the Washington Monument, we’re enjoying a celebratory event that has a real place in history.

Good Friends Return for Annual Homefront Program at Belair

Our favorite “domestic life from the past” group, the Atlantic Guard Soldiers Aid Society returns to Belair for their annual visit on September 7. This year’s program will feature 19th century games and “life on the homefront” activities during the Civil War. Stop by for fun and games on September 7, from 11-4.



A PERSONNEL ANNOUNCEMENT

Assistant Director Pam Williams moved to the Position of “Manager, Historic Properties & Museums” for the Museums Division. Pam came to the Museums Division in October of 1996. Long a student of history, she credits a Shirley Baltz lecture in Annapolis as the source for her historical “passion.”

The City of Bowie Museums have recently had a staff “change.” Effective April 13,

A New Acquisition for the Mansion

The City of Bowie Museums recently acquired a charming 18th century English corner chair for the Mansion. Friends member Paul Koch spotted the chair at Wilhoite Antiques in Alexandria, VA and worked closely with Museums staff and the Furnishing Committee to secure its purchase. Dated ca 1750, the chair is “interesting” in that it once functioned as a “potty” or “commode” chair. In the 18th century, it was not at all unusual for wealthier homes to include commode chairs in guest bedchambers, or even in common areas. The lightweight chair could be easily moved to corners and other more private spaces throughout the home. Considered a very practical item by polite society during the 18th century, the chair has several distinguishing features - graceful tapered supports, shell carved legs and pad feet. The City of Bowie Museums is excited to have acquired such a fascinating piece of furniture which reveals so much about our colo-

PICTURES FROM THE PAST: A WEDDING CELEBRATION IN OLD BOWIE



In honor of June brides everywhere, this issue’s Picture from the Past features the wedding party of Martin Fladung and Estella Weeks in 1915.

The group stands in front of the Straining House, which was constructed around 1870. The house, along with a large number of lots in Huntington City, was purchased in 1874 by John Straining. This unique architectural example has seen domestic use, been a Methodist meeting place, and housed one of the first Bowie telephone exchanges. Straining House continues in use today as a private residence.

Museums Curator Jason Illari (the tall one on the far right!) visited Pointer Ridge Elementary School in April as part of Careers Day. Jason described the “life and times...joys and headaches” of a career as a museum curator.



BLUE AND GRAY COME TO BELAIR

The Civil War began in Maryland on April 19, 1861, one week after the firing on Ft. Sumter. One week after President Lincoln’s call to arms, Northern volunteers poured into Washington, DC. Sent to occupy Baltimore, and protect the railroads, many roamed the local area, stationed at Fort Lincoln, Fort Washington, and Fort Foote, in the southern part of the county. Many camped along the tracks, keeping the railroad open for Union use.

Prince George’s County was a plantation community, with a population nearly half slave. This was an area nearly completely sympathetic to the Southern cause. Residents debated the cause of Secession, and voted to remain within the Union. While ideas seem to contradict each other, perhaps the promise that border states could keep slaves influenced the decision. In any event, this was a hotly debated situation.

On Saturday, August 2, 11:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m., visit the Belair Mansion for a look at “The Maryland Soldier in the Civil War.” Representatives from both Union and Confederate troops will share their thoughts, experiences and offer a glimpse of Civil War Camp history from BOTH perspectives. This event is free.

New in the House!



Funds provided by the Friends of Belair Estate recently secured the purchase of a fine 1750’s “commode” chair. Upholstery research is being conducted to re-cover the seat in a period appropriate textile—perhaps a finely woven horsehair. ∞

Atwater Kent Radio Collection at Radio and Television Museum

Arthur Atwater Kent started the Kent Electrical Manufacturing company in 1895, making motors and fans. In 1902, he branched out into automotive components, then eventually to radios. Early Atwater Kent radios were constructed on wooden planks that were known as “breadboards.” Today, these are highly prized by antique radio collectors.

Atwater Kent radios were later fabricated to fit in beautiful wooden cabinets made by the Red Lion, Kiel and Pooley Co’s. During the 1920’s, Kent’s radio company was the world’s leader. Plan a visit to the Radio and Television Museum to explore their fine collection of Atwater Kents and other beautiful radio equipment.



And They’re Off!!!! Well, Almost....

The bad news is the Triple Crown campaign goes into its 31st year without a winner. The good news from this year is Belair’s continuing connection to the Triple Crown! Seventy years later, our blood still races!

Big Brown, the “almost winner,” has an outstanding Belair connection. His 4th great grandfather is Fighting Fox, a colt of 1935, bred and raced by William Woodward, under the Belair silks.

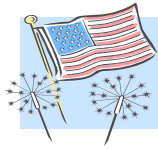
Fighting Fox, a son of Sir Galahad III and Marguerite, was a full brother to our pride and joy, Gallant Fox. Fighting Fox ran unsuccessfully in the 1938 Derby and Preakness. His lifetime winnings were \$122,000, a respectable showing for the time. Fighting Fox was trained, as were most Woodward horses, by the legendary Sunny Jim Fitzsimmons.

Fighting Fox 1938

Big Brown 2008



Summer Musings



CALENDAR



Belair Mansion
Saturday, June 30 8:00 pm

Campfire Stories at the Mansion

Join the Bowie Rangers for stories and S'mores.
Free - no reservations required



Bowie Train Station
Thursday July 17 10:30am-Noon

Kids Kaboose

Railroad fun for ages 1-10
Free—no reservations required
301-575-2488



Belair Mansion
Sunday, July 20 Noon-4:00 pm

"Pastimes from the Past"

Enjoy colonial fun and games—families and children of all ages Free—no reservations required 301-809-3089



Belair Mansion
Saturday Aug. 2 11 am-4 pm

The Maryland Soldier in the Civil War

Explore BOTH sides of the civil War. Tour camps, watch demonstrations. All ages Free—no reservations required 301-809-3089



Belair Mansion
Monday, Aug. 18 10:30 –Noon

Monday Morning at the Museum

Stories, history and a craft to take home.
Ages 4-10 301-809-3089
Free—no reservations required



Bowie Train Station
Thursday Aug. 21 10:30am-Noon

Kids Kaboose

Railroad fun for ages 1-10
Free—no reservations required 301-575-2488



Belair Mansion
Saturday, Sept. 7 11:00am-4:00 pm

The Civil War Homefront with the Atlantic Guard Soldiers' Aid Society

Explore life at home during the conflict.
Free—no reservations required
301-809-3089



Belair Mansion
Saturday, Sept. 13 4:00 pm

Grandparents' Tea

An elegant tea for ALL generations—
Ages 4-104! \$20 per person, reservations and advance payment required. 301-809-3089

Hours: All Free Admission

Belair Mansion, 301-809-3089
Tuesday - Sunday, Noon to 4 p.m.



Belair Stable, 301-809-3089
Tuesday - Sunday, Noon to 4 p.m.



Bowie Welcome Center, 301-575-2488
Tuesday - Sunday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.



Bowie Railroad Station, 301-809-3089
Tuesday - Sunday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.



Radio & Television Museum
www.radiohistory.org, 301-390-1020

Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday & Sunday, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.



Prince George's County Genealogical Society Library, 301-262-2063

www.rootsweb.com/~mdpgcgs



Wednesdays, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. (1st Wednesday of the month, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.), and last Saturday of the month, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.



The City of Bowie welcomes the participation in City sponsored activities and programs of individuals with disabilities. Please contact the City at least two weeks in advance of the date on which the activity will either begin or be held to request an accommodation.



CITY OF BOWIE MUSEUMS

Support the Museums! Become a member!

City of Bowie Museums
12207 Tulip Grove Drive
Bowie, Maryland 20715
301-809-3089 fax 301-809-2308

TTY/TDD 301-262-5013 or MD Relay System 800-735-2258

This material is available in alternate formats. Call 301-809-3089

email: museumevents@cityofbowie.org

www.cityofbowie.org/museum

City Council

G. Frederick Robinson, Mayor
Todd M. Turner, Mayor Pro Tem
Dennis Brady, Councilmember
James L. Marcos, Councilmember
Diane Polangin, Councilmember
Geraldine Valentino Smith, Councilmember
Isaac Trouth, Councilmember

Museum Committees

David Taft Terry, Chair Bowie Heritage Committee
Robert Rapczynski, President Huntington Heritage Society
Jean Lancaster, Chair Friends of Belair Estate
Karen Duffy Miles, Archivist PGC Co Genealogical Library
Ken Mellgren, President Radio History Society

Staff

Pamela L. Williams, Manager—Historic Properties/Museums
Jason D. Illari, Museums Curator
Russell E. Davies, Stable Facilities Manager
Ruth A. Murphy, Welcome Center Facilities Manager