



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.



Levittown....South of the Border?

William Levitt, developer of Belair At Bowie, was indeed a well travelled individual. In the middle of 1963, with his Belair development underway, Mr. Levitt decided to look south...way south! To Puerto Rico!

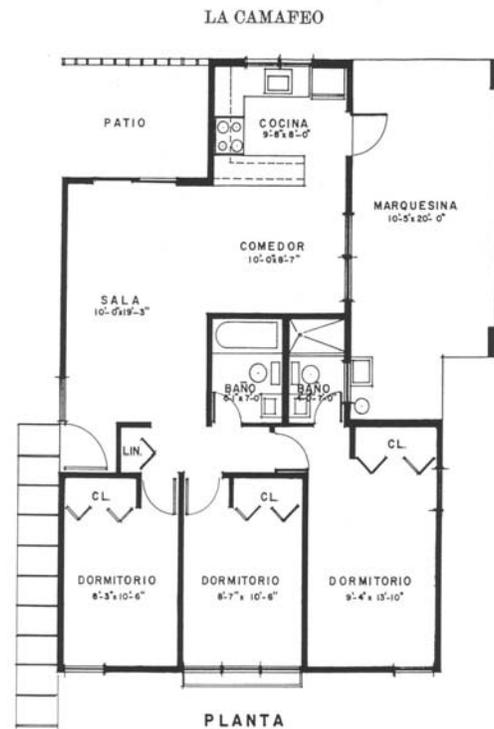
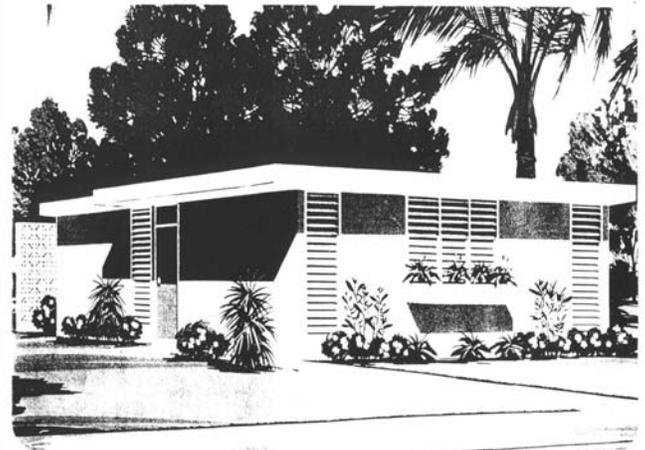
Levittown, Puerto Rico (yes, that's its name!) is a suburb of San Juan, and is one of the largest planned communities in the country. The community is divided into eight sections (sounding familiar?) which are called *secciones*. Information on the development doesn't allude to an alphabetized street naming scheme, but...who knows?

Levittown PR is known for a large, bright blue painted water tower which has been converted to a public library. It was one of the first water towers in Puerto Rico used to provide potable water to homes. The community's main avenue is "Bulevar de Levittown," or Levittown Blvd., which contains, following Levitt's ideas, a collection of shops and stores—the largest collection in the area.

The community featured four models: Broche de Oro, La Camafeo (to the right), Diadema, and Esmeralda. Models were 3 and 4 bedroom, and had, depending on the model, 1- 2 1/2 baths. All were on one level...no Colonials or Cape Cods! And, true to Levitt sales, buyers were given a list of upgrades to make their house their home—or casa.

To the west of the community is Los Lagos de Levittown, or Levittown Lakes, a small man-made lake formed by draining the marshland over which Levittown was constructed. While seemingly two separate communities during construction, they are merged today into one acknowledge "Levittown."

Not a small village, Levittown, Puerto Rico boasts 27,000 residents. For those planning an excursion...it boasts a tropical climate all year round. If you're thinking about Puerto Rico for a winter vacation, don't just go for the rum and the sunshine...check our "sister" to the south!



SIN COSTO ADICIONAL: Estufa y horno eléctrico, Nevera de 12 pc., todo de la marca GENERAL ELECTRIC. Tiene también modernos gabinetes de cocina por ORBIT y calentador de 30 galones.
Otras ventajas sin cargo adicional son construcción de hormigón armado, los pisos de terrazo monolítico, puertas revestidas en caoba, conductos telefónicos, ventanas de aluminio y plomería de cobre. Grama, árboles, arbustos.



Belair Mansion Museum Shop Declares “Curl Up With a Book” Month in February

Cold days...early dark....even snow. What better time of year to curl up with a really good book and a cup of something warm? Celebrate “Curl Up With a Book” month at the Mansion Shop. All books will be 10% off. If you’re a member of the FOBE, that means 20% off!

Some reading suggestions...We’ve restocked on “Mistress of Riversdale,” a special favorite about Rosalie Stier Calvert—a must read for locals. We have a number of new publications—for grownups and kids—on the War of 1812. If you like 17th century history, the brand new publication “Planting an Empire: The Early Chesapeake in British North America” is on our shelves. It is co-authored by Dr. Jean Russo, who’s been a frequent speaker at Belair. We’ve got books about antique playing cards, costume and cooking.

The Shop is open Tuesday through Sunday from Noon-4. Come make a purchase, go home and curl up under a quilt with a cup of warmth, and enjoy.



Friends on the Road for Holiday Cheer

November saw the Friends of Belair—and friends of the Friends— get some holiday inspiration at Winterthur and Nemours, the home of Alfred Dupont.

Both museums were most festively decorated, guaranteed to create holiday spirit. The lovely scene above on the left is a holiday tea interpreted on Winterthur’s Yuletide tour. The magnificent doors on the right welcomed us to Nemours. A good time had by all! Look for information about our Spring trip. Plans being made now for an enjoyable historical excursion.

Mansion HVAC Update

We’re almost there! Installation of some remaining equipment, balancing, and some other technical work remains. The really good news is that there is an immediate result. We’ve been able to track, for the first time in the Mansion’s museum life, not only heat, but relative humidity. Keeping track of these two things offers more than creature comfort for staff and visitors. It offers the ability to create the best environment for our collection. It also creates a better environment for the most important object in our collection—the house itself.

A second energy/objects care project is now beginning. This Spring, the City will install storm windows and their accompanying accessories (ie., flashing and weather stripping) throughout the building. The windows will be visually unobtrusive and will add another protective layer to objects and people. They are a component in the City’s energy conservation program, and surely demonstrate a commitment to the care of the building and its contents.

Save the Date!

The War of 1812 comes to Prince George’s County in 1814, and we’ll have a number of commemorative programs and events. As a sort of “prelude,” on February 9, the Belair Mansion, in cooperation with the Prince George’s Genealogical Society, will host “Searching For Your War of 1812 Ancestors.”



Professional genealogist Marie Melchiori will guide ancestor seekers through the vast number of resources available here in our own back yard at the National Archives. Army, Navy, Pension, Civilian and a host of other records are available for researchers. Ms. Melchiori will share them all.

The lecture will begin at 3:00 p.m. No reservations are required. Come find your 1812 past.



What's In a Name?

Belair Plantation/Farm/Stud has long been associated with Thoroughbred horses. In the 1750's, Samuel Ogle and Benjamin Tasker, Jr., imported several superior Thoroughbred horses to Belair, including the incomparable mare Selima, for the purpose of bettering the American Thoroughbred racer.

One of the most frequently asked questions at Belair Stable involves the Thoroughbred...and Thoroughbred is ALWAYS spelled with a capital T. How can it be that all Thoroughbreds are purebreds, but not all purebreds are Thoroughbreds?

The answer is simple: A purebred is a horse that is derived from a single breed line. Thoroughbreds are a specific pure breed of horse registered with a recognized breed registry. Just as a collie is a breed of dog, and a Siamese is a breed of cat, Thoroughbreds are a breed of horses. They are, like Arabians, Morgans, Standardbreds and any number of other breeds...purebreds.

Horse bloodlines (their "genealogy")- are meticulously documented. In order for any horse to be a purebred Thoroughbred, bloodlines must be traceable to three late 17th/early 18th century stallions—The Byerly Turk, The Godolphin Arabian and the Darley Arabian. In days gone by, bloodline records were, of course, copied down by hand, and kept by Jockey Clubs and registries. In today's computer environment, they're out there for all to read. It's great fun to look at the racers of today, and see Belair's bloodlines, Nashua's in particular, still competing.

A Railroad Birthday

In the early 1850's, the Bowie family helped begin a movement to bring the railroad to what is Bowie today. On January 1, 1873, that railroad, the Baltimore and Potomac began service between Bowie and Pope's Creek. It's still running 140 years later!



Historic American Buildings Survey—1936. The arrow reveals Belair's greenhouse/bowling alley structure to the left of the image. Today, a depression remains where this structure stood. A treasure trove, hopefully, for a future archaeology project.

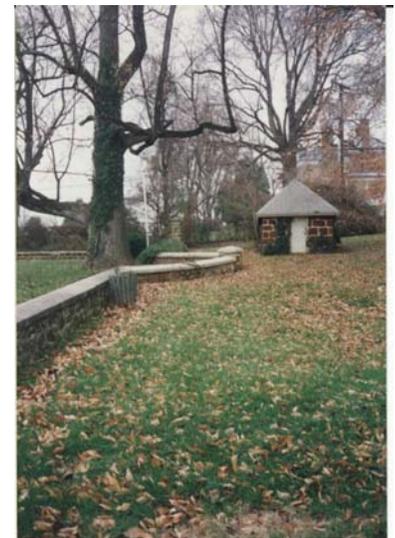
Tale of Two Buildings..Or...We've Been Thinking WRONG...Maybe?!?!

Over the past several months, archaeologists from MNCPPC have been excavating a county site—a plantation known as "Salubria." Investigation revealed what is believed to be the foundation of an ice house. Archaeologist Jennifer Stabler was aware that a structure, formerly part of the Mansion grounds, now on Belair Bath and Tennis Club property, was long acknowledged to be an ice house. The structure obviously was 19th century, built at the same time as the stable, walls and Foxhill Bridge, and comprised of the same brown type stone.

The structure has been available to us, thanks to BB&T board, to view during the past several years Heritage Days. A number of questions arose...ice houses are generally deeper in the ground, with little exposed wall; doors are on the north side of the structure. The majority of the walls of our structure are exposed, and the door faces easterly. What were the curious "troughs" inside? Ice houses don't have those...

Our "ice house" may have been used in the early 20th century, at some point, to store ice...but it's not an ice house on its own "merits." Just below the present structure is a depression in the dirt where a structure obviously stood. That structure WAS the ice house. Compare the images below. The left image was taken as part of the Historic American Buildings Survey in 1936, and completely fits ice house descriptions. Is it 18th or 19th century? No written record remains to tell us. The right image is the existing structure.

Ms. Stabler's speculation is that our present stone structure was probably originally constructed as a milk house or dairy to keep products cool prior to electricity/refrigeration. Recollections of farm workers from the Woodward era called one of these structures "the tool house," where landscape tools, etc., were stored. Was it the now-gone sunken structure...or the stone house pictured? For certain...research will continue and perhaps we'll someday have an answer. A wonderful mystery!



Winter
Musings



CALENDAR



Belair Mansion

Saturday, Feb. 9; 3:00 p.m.

Genealogy Lecture

"Searching For Your War of 1812 Ancestors"

Free, No Reservations

301-809-3089



Belair Mansion

Tuesday, Feb. 12 7:30 pm

Second Tuesday Lecture

"Annabelle Sneed: Indentured

Servant" with Carolyn Murphy

301-809-3089 Free No Reservations



Bowie Railroad Museum

Kids Kaboose

Tuesday, February 19

10:30-Noon

Railroad Fun for ages 1-10

301-575-2488 Free No Reservations



Belair Mansion

Second Tuesday Lecture

Tuesday, March 17; 7:30 p.m.

"Foodways in the Early 19th Century" with author Katie Moose

301-809-3089 Free No Reservations



Bowie Railroad Museum

Kids Kaboose

Tuesday, February 19

10:30-Noon

Railroad Fun for ages 1-10

301-575-2488 Free No Reservations



Belair Mansion

Monday, March 25 Noon

Brown Bag Lunch Lecture

"Maryland Moments"

Celebrate Maryland Day with some "bytes" from Maryland's past as you munch your lunch..

301-809-3089 Free No reservations

March is Women's History Month!

We're reprising our popular "Ladies' Day" at Belair on **Sat., March 23 at 9:30 am.** Topics discussed: Women in

Taverns, 18th Century Mourning and more...plus a hands on project. Bring a brown bag lunch; fee is \$25 for the day, including coffee, snacks and lunch beverages. Reservations a must! 301-809-3089 or museums@cityofbowie.org.



Hours: All Free Admission

Belair Mansion, 301-809-3089

12207 Tulip Grove Drive

Tuesday - Sunday, Noon to 4 p.m.

Belair Stable, 301-809-3089

2835 Belair Drive

Tuesday - Sunday, Noon to 4 p.m.

Bowie Welcome Center, 301-575-2488

8606 Chestnut Avenue

Tuesday - Sunday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Bowie RR Station, 301-809-3089

8614 Chestnut Avenue

Tuesday - Sunday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Nat'l. Capital Radio & TV Museum

www.radiohistory.org 301-390-1020

2608 Mitchellville Road

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

Sunday, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Prince George's Co. Genealogical

Society Library, 301-262-2063

www.rootsweb.com/~mdpgcgs

12219 Tulip Grove Drive

Please call 301-262-2063 for open hours or

appointments for research.



CITY OF BOWIE MUSEUMS

City of Bowie Museums

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email: museumevents@cityofbowie.org

www.cityofbowie.org/museum

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

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



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.

Bowie City Council

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Dennis Brady, Councilmember

Henri Gardner, Councilmember

James L. Marcos, Councilmember

Isaac Trouth, Councilmember

Todd M. Turner, Councilmember

Staff

Pamela L. Williams, Manager—Historic Properties/Museums

Samantha H. Dorsey, Museums Curator

Ruth A. Murphy, Welcome Center /RR Facilities Manager

Museum Offices are staffed Mon.-Fri., 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.