



Photos of Barns & Stable at Cremona Farms, Delebrooke and Greenwell State Park by Grace Mary Brady

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
ANNUAL REPORT
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Glossary

AICUZ	Air Installation Compatible Use Zone
BCC	Board of County Commissioners
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CLG	Certified Local Government
FY	Fiscal Year
HPC	Historic Preservation Commission
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
HTE	St. Mary's County Government Database
MAHDC	Maryland Association of Historic District Commissions
MDP	Maryland Department of Planning
MHT	Maryland Historical Trust
PAX	Patuxent River Naval Air Station
PM	Preservation Maryland
RCL	Rural Limited Commercial District
RPD	Rural Preservation Districts
RSC	Rural Service Center District
SAT	Save America's Treasures
SMC	St. Mary's County
TDR	Transferable Development Rights

Executive Summary

In 2008 the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) made further strides toward implementing the goals of the adopted Historic Preservation Plan for St. Mary's County.

The programming goal was met by a joint sponsorship with the public library featuring a talk by Psyche Williams-Forson, speaker from the Maryland Council for the Humanities, entitled "Building Houses out of Chicken Legs". Her talk examined the role of this food in African American life. Dr. Williams-Forson is an assistant professor of American Studies at the University of Maryland. Her talk tied in with the library's Big Read program for the book *A Lesson Before Dying* by African American author Ernest Gaines held on April 1, 2008 at the Lexington Park Library.

County staff and HPC members worked on determining the locations of family cemeteries and having the information entered into the County's HTE database, so that activity on parcels containing cemeteries will be flagged and passed on to the preservation planner who will remind developers about the State laws governing treatment of cemeteries during new construction.

Last year, the Historic Preservation Commission recognized Carol L. Moody, who had been the volunteer archivist at the St. Mary's County Historical Society for nine years. Carol devoted two weeks each month to identifying archival material that had not been cataloged, cataloging material, preserving material according to archival standards, identifying possible acquisitions, scanning records into digital format and providing reference services on the Historical Society's archival treasures. Ms. Moody also worked as a part-time archivist for Historic St. Mary's City and the staff at St. Mary's College Library.

Historic preservation goals are very much dependent on what occurs in the area of land planning and land preservation, therefore the Historic Preservation Commission will dedicate its efforts in the coming year to working with the Department of Land Use and Growth Management to monitor the impact of development on historic resources. The HPC will also continue to advocate for the preservation of the rural fabric of the county, a goal of both the St. Mary's County Comprehensive Plan and of the Historic Preservation Plan for St. Mary's County.

2008 Annual Report of the Historic Preservation Commission

Background

St. Mary's County is fortunate to have so many citizens who give their time and talents. In the area of historic preservation, dedicated local preservationists have always been willing to serve. The Board of St. Mary's County Commissioners appoints seven county residents to serve on the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). Their role is crucial in protecting and enhancing the county's historic resources and cultural heritage. Their advocacy helps to develop and implement effective preservation programs relying on the strength of the St. Mary's County Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance, Comprehensive Plan, federal, state and regional protective regulations.

Information resources used by the St. Mary's Historic Preservation Commission are the Comprehensive Plan *Quality of Life in St. Mary's County—Strategy for the 21st Century* adopted on April 6, 1999 in accordance with Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland; the supplement to the Comprehensive Plan *Painting a Self Portrait: A Historic Preservation Plan for St. Mary's County* approved on March 7, 2000; the *St. Mary's County Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance* adopted on May 13, 2002; and the *Maryland Historic Preservation Commissions Handbook* prepared by the Maryland Association of Historic District Commissions (MAHDC), a basic resource widely used in the State of Maryland.

Chapter II of the MAHDC handbook provides detailed information on the qualifications and responsibilities of Historic Preservation Commission members, and outlines the procedures necessary to conduct the business of historic preservation in an efficient and legal manner. The remaining chapters provide information on a range of topics including historic preservation, planning, designation, and project review to name a few. Other references are the legal handbook, and standards and guidelines from the Maryland Historical Trust and the Department of the Interior.

1.00 The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC): Brief History

1.01 The St. Mary's County Historic District Commission was created on June 4, 1975 and was granted the authority to create historic districts in order to preserve historic resources and increase public awareness through education. The commission succeeded in establishing St. Joseph's Manor, SM-129 and New Towne Manor House, SM-058 as local historic districts. A proposal by the commission for the St. Mary's City area met with public disagreement and discouraged the creation of additional local historic districts. The commission was disbanded in 1986.

As part of a requirement for a matching grant to St. Mary's County by the Maryland Historical Trust, the commission was reestablished in 1993. The grant was the first multi-phased program designed to develop an active historic preservation program and to add to the number of documented historic properties in St. Mary's County. The first phase of this project began in 1994 eventually resulting in the documentation of sites and

structures in all election districts. Phases one through four covered the Chaptico, Mechanicsville, Valley Lee, St. George Island, Bay, Patuxent, Leonardtown, St. Inigoes and Milestown districts.

Phase 5 works in 1999, by historic sites surveyor Kirk Ranzetta, focused on organizing all data from the previous survey work and developing *Painting a Self Portrait: A Historic Preservation Plan for St. Mary's County*, which was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners on March 7, 2000.

Phase 5 works also resulted in the preparation of a multiple property documentation form for a group of thematically related properties. Phases 1 through 5 resulted in the addition of 250 buildings, structures, districts, objects and sites to the Maryland Inventory. In addition to this effort, information in 65 previously documented resources was updated.

Though these were significant additions to state and county inventories, the project designers realized they had underestimated the number of resources that needed to be documented. To address this need, Phase 6 of the grant was initiated on October 4, 1999 and concluded on October 3, 2000. During this phase 182 buildings were added to the Inventory. Today there are 890 documented sites in St. Mary's County.

Another component of this phase involved obtaining up-to-date photographs of standing structures previously listed in the Maryland Inventory. The historic sites surveyor also prepared an outline for a book to be published about the county's historic resources in an upcoming phase. Also during Phase 6, initial steps were taken to link historic data to maps of historic resources using the capacity of geographic information system (GIS). This technology has proven very effective in other jurisdictions and is expected to save time and greatly enhance protection of the county's historical and archaeological resources. The term historic site refers to standing structures, and does not include other resources such as archaeological sites which are documented separately by the Maryland Historical Trust.

1.02 Work on Phase 7 involved building upon previous efforts by implementing components of the historic preservation plan as well as organizing a manuscript about the county's historic resources for publication.

In Phase 8, architectural historian Kirk Ranzetta, who surveyed many of St. Mary's historic properties, assembled a manuscript titled *I'm Goin' Down County: An Architectural Journey through Saint Mary's County*. An architectural draftsman was hired to complete some of the illustrations. Phase 8 will conclude when work for the publication of the manuscript is completed in December 2009. The publication date will be determined by the Maryland Historical Trust.

1.03 Recent grant projects overseen by the HPC produced the *St. Mary's County Historic Roads Survey* in 2006 and the Religious Freedom Byway Management Plan.

2.0 Meetings and Memberships

2.01 As required by the Maryland Code, enabling legislation for historic preservation commissions [Section 8.03 (a)], the St. Mary's County Board of County Commissioners appoints seven volunteers to the Historic Preservation Commission for three-year terms, renewable for another three years. Those interested in serving for additional term(s) thereafter must wait a full year before they may re-apply. To qualify a candidate must (a) have special interest and knowledge or training in such fields as history, architecture, law, preservation, education, or urban design; (b) be a county resident; (c) fulfill the statutory rules and educational functions in a responsible and sensitive manner; and (d) have the ability to continue to provide leadership for the historic preservation movement.

2.02 The St. Mary's County Historic Preservation Commission members select their respective Chairperson and Vice Chairperson annually. They meet regularly on the fourth Thursday of every month, except in November and December when the meetings are advanced to the second or third Thursday. The Chairperson may call other meetings as deemed necessary. In compliance with the Open Meetings Act of 1985 (Article 24, Section 4-201), these meetings are conducted following Roberts' Rules of Order, as amended. They are usually held at 4:00 p.m. at the Department of Land Use and Growth Management and are open to the public. On occasion the HPC can meet in the Potomac Building of the Governmental Center, Room 14.

2.03 Commission Membership in 2008 was as follows:

* Chairman

** Vice-Chairman

<u>Name</u>	<u>Expiration Date</u>
Susan Erichsen	6-30-2009
William Farrar	Resigned October, 2008
Robert Gibbs	6-30-2010
James Grusholt**	12-31-2008
Mary Hayden	6-30-2009
Ruth Mitchell	6-30-2009
Harold Willard*	6-30-2011

2.04 Teri Wilson, served as historic preservation planner with the Department of Land Use and Growth Management, and staffed the Historic Preservation Commission until July 2008. The historic preservation planner II position remained vacant the remainder of 2008.

3.0 Significant Activities in 2008

3.1 Grant from Maryland Highway Administration

In January Lardner/ Klein, Landscape Architects, PC of Alexandria, Virginia was selected as the contractor for a Maryland State Highway Administration/ grant to develop a Corridor Management Plan for the Religious Freedom Scenic Byway, which runs

through Charles and St. Mary's Counties. The County Commissioners of both counties appointed a Byway Advisory Committee, which began meeting in February 2007. Since then the Committee has met as follows:

1. Meeting One: Defined the vision of the corridor and set goals for future meetings.
2. Meeting Two: Refined vision for Byway based on comments received in meeting one.
3. Meeting Three: Established conservation and preservation strategies.
4. Meeting Four: Discussed methods of marketing the story of the Byway to heritage tourists, eco-tourists, etc.
5. Meeting Five: Worked on linking sites along the Byway by theme and further refined the focus of the Byway "message."
6. Meeting Six: Marketing and Interpretation Issues.
7. Meeting Seven: Transportation and Safety Issues.
8. Public hearing with board of County Commissioners on August 19, 2008, for Draft Religious Freedom Byway Corridor Management Plan. County staff and HPC members attended.

The contractor has placed meeting notes and other grant products on its web page which can be accessed at www.lardnerklein.com.

3.2 Cemetery Database Project Continues

The HPC continued its work on the cemetery database and submitted the list compiled so far by county staff. Thanks to Kathryn Chaney, GIS specialist, for entry in the HTE database, which will allow the historic preservation planner to be informed when activity on a parcel containing a cemetery occurs. In that way, property owners can be made aware of the State laws governing the treatment of cemeteries and, if possible, avoid having to move cemeteries during the development of the parcels. Further, the HPC hopes to submit for consideration by the Board of County Commissioners a proposed "stand alone" ordinance or zoning text amendments to provide local protection for cemeteries.

The HPC also recommended a *Journey Through Hallowed Ground* initiative be created in Southern Maryland. This initiative has worked in areas like Gettysburg, Pennsylvania and Charlottesville, Virginia. A *Journey Through Hallowed Ground* in St. Mary's County would offer numerous ways to discover the historic properties that played important roles in Maryland's past. Each property would feature a brief description of the place's significance, historic photographs, and public access information.

3.3 Save America's Treasures (SAT) for Tobacco Barns

Preservation Maryland administers the funding for the preservation of barns in a 5 county geographic area. Representatives from Preservation Maryland and the Maryland Historical Trust are members of a selection committee that also includes the preservation planners from the five Southern Maryland counties.

The original award of \$200,000 has been awarded to tobacco barn owners in all five counties for restoration of their barns.

Additionally, the Maryland Historical Trust funded a \$30,000 survey and documentation of previously documented historic tobacco barns in Southern Maryland. The Historic Preservation Planners were asked to provide a St. Mary's most historic and representative barns to architectural historians from the University of Delaware who are conducting the survey. The main product of the survey will be a more detailed examination of selected barns and the preparation of a multiple property nomination of selected barns to the National Register of Historic Places. This will protect a few barns from adverse effects of all projects funded with federal money by triggering a Section 106 impact assessment. Local protection for historic barns should be a priority; either by encouraging owners to have them designated as local landmarks or by crafting an agreement when land is placed in a MALP area that would require preservation of barns.

3.4 Annual Historic Preservation Awards

The Board of County Commissioners and the HPC honored the following individual in May, 2008.

Last year, the Historic Preservation Commission recognized Carol L. Moody, who had been the volunteer archivist at the St. Mary's county Historical society for nine years. Carol devoted two weeks each month to identifying archival material that had not been cataloged, cataloging material, preserving material according to archival standards, identifying possible acquisitions, scanning records into digital format and providing reference services on the Historical Society's archival treasures. Ms. Moody also worked as a part-time archivist for Historic St. Mary's City and the staff at St. Mary's College Library.

3.5 Annual Preservation and Revitalization Conference May 29-30

HPC members Hal Willard, Robert Gibbs and staff member Teresa Wilson attended the annual conference held in Hagerstown, Maryland.

3.6 Certified Local Government Grant for Phase III Historic Roads

The Maryland Historical Trust awarded St. Mary's County a grant to continue the survey of its historic rural roads. Four of the roads to be surveyed in Phase III included All Faith Church Road, Bushwood Wharf Road, Millstone Landing Road and White's Neck Road.

Phase III of the Historic Road Survey was scheduled before the Board of County Commissioners on July 29, 2008. The matching grant funds requested from the County were not approved by the Board of County Commissioners at that time.

3.7 Public Outreach

In 2009 the Historic Preservation Commission and staff increased its public outreach by:

- 1) The Historic Preservation Commission co-sponsored with the public library a talk by Psyche Williams-Forson, speaker from the Maryland council for the Humanities, entitled “Building Houses out of Chicken Legs”. Her talk examined the role of this food in African American life. Dr. Williams-Forson is an assistant professor of American Studies at the University of Maryland. Her talk tied in with the library’s Big Read program for the book *A Lesson Before Dying* by African American author Ernest Gaines held on April 1, 2008 at the Lexington Park Library.

4.0 Future Plans

4.1 Advocacy for Historic Roads

The Historic Preservation Commission and staff worked with the planning staff to draft text amendments for the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance to protect designated historic roads. Even though this proposal was not supported in 2008 by the Board of County Commissioners, it is hoped that future negotiations can be entered into to garnish support for this important project.

4.2 Advocacy for Family Cemeteries

The HPC plans to document local family owned cemeteries to enhance the Counties data base of cemeteries in St. Mary’s County.

4.3 Public Outreach

In 2008 the Historic Preservation Commission will continue to conduct public outreach by bringing in expert speakers from the preservation community. Some possible plans under discussion are presenting another Renovators Roundtable for community members who are owners of older homes; inviting a speaker from the Maryland Humanities Council’s Speaker Bureau to lecture on a history-related subject; inviting a speaker to lecture on cemetery preservation; working with Southern Maryland Heritage Area Consortium on a workshop to include the development community on rehabilitation tax credit incentives.

4.4 Grant Possibilities

Matching grant funds for Phase III of the Historic Roads survey were not supported by the Board of County Commissioners. Phase III, involving the drafting of a multiple property nomination of selected roads for the National Register of Historic Places, is on hold pending the securing of matching grant funds and support for the project from local officials.

The Corridor Management Plan (CMP) for the Religious Freedom Scenic Byway was completed in October 2008. The Maryland Highway Administration is accepting grants to fund a part-time manager to implement the CMP. The physical location of this part time manager is yet to be determined.

5.0 Accomplishments/Issues and Challenges

The following are benchmarks of the Historic Preservation Plan that have been met since the adoption of the plan in 2000:

- 1) Hiring of a full time professional historic preservation planner who is qualified according to CFR 36;
- 2) Continuing public education programs to raise awareness of historic preservation issues;
- 3) Updating of the Historic Preservation Ordinance through the adoption of the new Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance in 2009;
- 4) Reviewing of items on the Technical Committee (TEC) Agenda by the historic planner to determine if proposed projects will have an adverse affect on historic resources so that suggestions may be made to avoid these affects;
- 5) Establishing a Local Historic Landmarks and Districts Program, and offering restoration tax credits to those who join the program;
- 6) Obtaining Certified Local Government status from the Maryland Historical Trust by maintaining a continually improving the level of historic preservation initiatives, thereby qualifying for grants from MHT;
- 7) Formally adopting voluntary design guidelines for properties that seek the voluntary local landmark designation;
- 8) Working with the Department of Economic and Community Development, Tourism Manager Carolyn Laray on promoting scenic roadways. Ms Wilson managed the SHA Corridor Management Grant until July, 2008. Ms. Larary served with her on the Byway Management Committee;
- 9) Obtaining the support of the Department of Public Works (DPWT) for the Historic Roads Survey Phase III, and consulting with DPWT about proposed changes to documented local historic roads;
- 10) Developing a closer working relationship with the Maryland Historical Trust, Preservation Maryland, and other state-wide advocacy groups;
The HPC and Ms. Wilson have worked with Preservation Maryland, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and preservation planners in neighboring counties to craft a more regional approach to preservation planning.

The following are goals and strategies to be implemented in the future:

- 1) Add more historic sites or structures to the Maryland Inventory of Historic properties.
- 2) Publish *Goin' Down the County: An Architectural History of St. Mary's County* in December 2009.
- 3) Set up a working relationship with the Board of Education to develop a curriculum using the historic sites survey as a teaching tool.
- 4) Publicize the Local Historic Landmarks and Districts program and encourage new applicants to come forward.
- 5) Protect small family cemeteries by creating a database and entering the locations into HTE so they can be identified when proposed projects are submitted on lands containing cemeteries. Continue work to find the locations of all small cemeteries listed in Janet Tice's 1991 book *Burials from Tombstones, Grave Markers and Church Registers of St. Mary's County, Maryland (1634-1994)* and other sources, so they too may be protected.
- 6) Integrate historic preservation considerations into the Capital Improvements Program. Example: the preservation planner and HPC should comment on projects involving county-owned buildings that are fifty years and older. For example, plans for the future use of the former National Guard Armory in which the Leonardtown Library is currently located.
- 7) Advocate for the use of density bonuses as an incentive to developers to encourage them to retain/and rehab historic structures on land slated for development.
- 8) Create a ten year property tax freeze on rehabilitated historic properties. This would not have a serious negative impact on the tax base, which is infused with tax revenues from new construction, but may actually function to encourage homeowners to "rehab" older historic housing stock.
- 9) Advocate for a local easement fund, local grant programming, and for the establishment of a county funded revolving fund for historic preservation.
- 10) Increase coordination with Southern Maryland Heritage Area.
- 11) Work with developers in early application stages to craft preservation-friendly development plans.

Conclusion

It is clear that there is still much work to be done to give St. Mary's County the historic preservation program it deserves as one of the four sites of the original English Colonies in the New World. Now that some of the ground work has been laid, it is time to move on to goals that will require vision on the part of elected officials, planners, and volunteers. A larger financial commitment will also be required.

As has been noted in reports from previous years, land preservation and retention of rural character is fundamental to retaining a high quality of life here in St. Mary's County and ensuring a successful historic preservation program. The Historic Preservation Commission fully supports the county's efforts to increase funding for agricultural land preservation. Without a strong land preservation program there cannot be a strong historic preservation program. The newly revised TDR program should help to increase the land in agricultural preservation, but no one approach will save enough of the rural fabric of the county.

Pursuing federal funding for purchase of easements along the Religious Freedom Scenic Byway would be another way of retaining rural and historic landscape along heavily traveled tourist routes.

The Historic Preservation Commission looks forward to strengthening relationships with the Board of County Commissioners, county departments of Economic Development, Land Use and Growth Management, and Public Works and Transportation, Preservation Maryland and the Maryland Historical Trust in an effort to create a comprehensive and successful program for historic preservation in St. Mary's County.