I guess it was just one of those days when one moves more on instinct and feeling rather than conscious thought. Although actually, I’d been thinking about doing this for years. But not today. Today it was not thought but something else. Instead of returning directly home after picking up the mail at the local Highland Post office, I turned into the parking lot of the Hopkins United Methodist Church, and just sort of followed a little driveway through the parking lot, down a hill past the graveyard, proceeding slowly and beginning to wonder just how far “at the end of the drive” was going to be. That’s the term I had heard from the people who once owned our “historic” home – the Cissel Farm – when they came to visit soon after we had purchased it. They said “we were told by a lady who used to clean house for us that her grandmother had been a slave on this property and was buried here”. This lady had lived behind the Hopkins UM Church.

I was beginning to think this might not be a good idea. But I had been caring for the little family graveyard on our property for almost 20 years now, and every time I cleared away the weeds I saw stones with no inscriptions, just flat rocks really, and I couldn’t shake the feeling of sorrow for those buried there that no one would ever know about. So today I was going to try to find out something about them. Well, to get past this very long preface to what has turned out to be a most compelling quest and some wonderful new friendships, let me say that never happened. Perhaps that’s not why I found myself turning into that little lane behind the church. In the house at the end of the lane I met a lady, Carolyn Smith, whose family is ‘part and parcel’ of local Highland history, who have been “movers and shakers” of the Hopkins church. She knew nothing about our house, or the property, or the mysterious lady with a slave grandmother, but she knew someone who could possibly help me. We exchanged phone numbers; she contacted her friend. Mr. Remus Lyles called me soon after.

Mr. Lyles came to our house. He is a very refined gentleman, with a friendly smile, and an openness that just cuts down all barriers. He seems to know no strangers. He was born about a half mile away (as the crow flies) and has lived his whole life in this part of Howard County. He cared for his mother for the last seven years of her life until her death at 98, during which time she had literally inscribed her memories on his. People, places, events, details, details.
Every time I drive by the Howard County Public Library's new Charles E. Miller Branch and Historical Center, I am thrilled by the progress. Soon it will be the new home of the Society's Library and Archive. With a projected opening date of December 2011, there is no time to waste. Over the next few months, we will be undertaking some major projects in order to prepare our collection not only for the move itself, but also to ensure that we can serve you better in the new space.

In brief, some of the Library and Archive projects include cataloging our collection into our newly purchased PastPerfect Database Software, which will allow you to easily search the database online. The Society has also received a Conservation Assessment Program Grant from Heritage Preservation and the Institute for Museum and Library Services. This grant will pay for a professional conservator to assess the collection and identify materials in need of conservation. We will use that information to seek funding to carry out the necessary conservation to ensure the Society's collection is available to you for years to come.

For all these exciting new projects, your help and support is invaluable. Tell your friends, post them on your Facebook page, and help us get the word out.

These projects also require a lot of man hours. If you are willing to volunteer to help out in any way, please call me at 410-750-0370 or email at info@hchsmd.org.

Thank You!
Lauren

Fulton, Highland, Scaggsville Photos Wanted

Current and former residents of Fulton/Highland/Scaggsville are being sought to contribute historical links, photos, or other contributions to the Facebook page “I Grew Up in Fulton/Highland/Scaggsville”. The page seeks to locate old friends and neighbors of that local area, collects and publishes historical information, and informs new residents of the rich history and heritage of that local area in Howard County.

Become a fan of HCHS on Facebook

For up-to-the-minute news on happenings at the Society, become a fan on Facebook. In addition to finding out what we are up to, you can also post comments, questions and photos of Society events and Howard County history. If you aren’t on Facebook yet, sign up today at www.facebook.com.

Send Us Your Articles

Anyone interested in contributing articles or photographs or anything of interest to the Society, please call the Library at 410-750-0370 or email Shelley Wygant at wdgdirect@mac.com.
Welcome to 2011! Based on our progress of the past several months and our plans for the coming ones, this is shaping up to be one of the most exciting and productive years in the history of the Howard County Historical Society. In addition to welcoming you to the New Year, I’d also like to welcome all the new members who have joined the Society in just the past few months – especially those of you who joined via our very successful Holiday Home Tour. Thanks to you our membership has increased almost 10% – and the Society is already benefiting tremendously from your energy and willingness to volunteer.

Thanks also to all our renewing members. Your support for the Society, especially in the coming year, is absolutely critical to the success of our move to the new Miller Branch Library and Historical Center. In the months to come, you can all look forward to some great ways to participate in and support this landmark event.

I’d also like to welcome local historian, journalist, and community activist, Janet Kusterer to her new role as Editor of The Legacy. Her experience, enthusiasm and editorial skills will help us create a publication that will enrich, inform and intrigue you in every issue. If you have ideas for stories or would like to contribute one yourself, I’m sure she’d love to hear from you.

In addition to the improvements we’re making to The Legacy, you can also look forward to attending a wide variety of fascinating Society-sponsored, lectures and events – many more than we’ve ever offered before. There are lots to do and lots to get done in the coming months, and I look forward to working with you as I continue to serve as the Society’s president for a second two year term.

Message from the President
Shelley Wygant

I was delighted when our President, Shelley Wygant, asked me to become Editor of The Legacy. This is such an exciting time for The Society and I am happy to help chronicle this history in the making. Like all of you, I also love to read stories of our County’s past, and hope that many of you have some to share in the months ahead. I’ll be happy to help you put your thoughts on paper, and look forward to talking to you. Please contact us with your ideas at 410-750-0370, or email me at janetkusterer@juno.com.

HCHS Wish List

- Volunteers to research and write history-oriented articles for The Legacy
- Volunteers to serve as docents at the Museum on Tuesdays and Saturdays
- A volunteer graphics artist to lay out the newsletter
- Planned gifts that will help you create a lasting legacy for you or a loved one and help make the future of the Society more financially secure

Images Wanted!

Mr. Warren Keen is looking for a few images to complete his collection of images of hotels on Frederick Road throughout the years. If you have any images of the following, please contact Mr. Keen at PO Box 1072, Mt. Airy, MD 21771. Thank you!

- Union Hotel, aka 16-Mile House
- Warfield Hotel, once site of John and Sarah Wilson Farm
- Buckingham Hotel, once site of Tracy and Whalen Homesteads
Mr. Lyles and the Family Graveyard  

continued from page 1

We sat in our kitchen for three hours, and I listened to the history of his family, and his own life, and frankly, when he left I felt I just needed to know more. One thing he did mention was that many of his family members had been buried on land once owned by his great-great uncle, who had been manumitted in 1852, served in the Civil War with the Union Army, and purchased a large parcel of land in 1867, which had passed down through family until the mid 1950’s. He had tried earlier to get access to the burial plot, but had some “difficulties” with the current owner (somewhat undescribed). Although things seemed a bit better now, and he had plans to go there and clean it up, his most pressing concern was to have this family cemetery listed in the county records, and documented with the names of those buried there. Lifetimes being what they are, his long-lived mother’s genes notwithstanding, he felt some anxiety to get this done before he died. He has a son and daughter, nieces and nephews and he wants all of their progeny to be able to go and find their ancestors.

I found myself telling him I would help him. His life story was so interesting, but mostly, this was a compelling task and it seemed so “doable”. (I’ve learned doable does not mean quick or easy). I began immediately. First to the internet – searching land records – tax records, genealogies. My, was I surprised to discover how easy it was to look up the string of deeds beginning with Mr. Lyles’ great-great uncle Charles Roberts, up to the present owner at www.mdlandrecords.net! I went to the Howard County Historical Society to look up the graveyard in their files. When I first went looking for the Cissel family cemetery on our property this is where I went, so I figured his family cemetery would be there too. No, it wasn’t. So I went to the Office of Land Records, looked up the tax maps for Parcel 51 on Tax Map 40, which was shown in a hand drawing attached to one of those strings of deeds – obviously the odd-shaped tiny piece of property exempted from conveyance and described as a burial plot on all of those deeds. However, there was no Parcel 51 listed on Haviland Mill Road, no cemetery at all listed on Haviland Mill Road. I called the Dept. of Planning and Zoning where the Inventory of Cemeteries is kept – they said they had no listing for any cemetery on Haviland Mill Road.

I went over to the Dept of Planning and Zoning, and told my story to Ken Short and Susan Overstreet. They seemed to be as interested in the quest as I had become. Then I helped Mr. Lyles write a letter to Marsha McLaughlin at the Dept. of Planning and Zoning to formally document the existence of this cemetery, indicating that her office – which maintained the Inventory – had no record of it, according to Samantha Stoney, with whom I discussed it. We included pictures of the property, copies of all of the deeds, and the hand-drawn map, and thanks to Ken Short, a copy of a plat which showed it.

We copied the President of the Howard County Genealogical Society, Mr. Frank Herron, the new Director of the Howard County Historical Society, Ms. Lauren McCormack, and sat back and hoped for something definitive.

At the HCHS we were told that although the Cemetery Inventory was maintained by the Dept. of Planning and Zoning, it was the HCGS who actually documented the details – the names of the people buried there – and that the HCHS simply acted as a research library for the information. We were told by the genealogical society that the cemetery documentation effort was COMPLETE – last entry about 2001 – but that at some point an Addendum would be published.

After several weeks, we received a communication from Mr. Herron saying that there was a “historically black cemetery” listed as 40-6 on the Inventory at the address where we know the cemetery to be. We still don’t
Mr. Lyles has received a letter from the Planning and Zoning Office acknowledging the cemetery. Mr. Lyles and I have become good friends. I feel I have known him a very long time, and I am looking forward to helping him get his personal family history transcribed for all to read and know. He said soon after we began this effort together that he had been praying for help to get the cemetery listed and recorded accurately. He thinks perhaps I was sent down that lane behind Hopkins church for a good reason. I’m not going to argue that.

Our Archive’s New Home Takes Shape
Susan Stonesifer

Susan Stonesifer, the Manager of the Miller Branch of the Howard County Public Library, sent along an update of the work in progress at the new library as of the middle of March. If all goes well we will be moving in by winter 2011.

Starting from the top down, the HVAC (heating, ventilating, and air conditioning) machinery should be delivered to the top of the building in the middle of March. The roof has been completely finished despite strong winds and lots of rain! Electricians have been busy throughout the building and at night there is the soft glow of work lights. The fireproofing insulation is almost finished on the second floor. The aquamarine color that is on the front of the building, away from Frederick Road, is waterproofing. Now that the building is completely secure the installation of ductwork and copper piping has begun. If you drive around the back of the current building, you can see the stone bridge has begun to take shape on the front of the new building. Later this month trees will begin to be planted in the new parking lot area.

Save the Date

Call 410-750-0370 or email info@hchsmd.org for more information about these events.

Sunday, April 10 at 2 p.m.
“10,000 Years of Howard County History: Hands-On Document and Artifact Workshop” presented by M. Lee Preston, Jr., President, Upper Patuxent Archaeology Group, at the Museum.

Saturday, May 21
First Annual Antiques Appraisal and Rare Book Fair, at St. John’s Episcopal Church.

Sunday, May 22 at 3 p.m.
Concert in the Museum: The Allelujahs The choir, under the direction of Karen Canfield, will perform contemporary sacred music with Dave Larko on piano and Dean Jestes playing the c1900 Felgemacher organ at the Museum.

Sunday, June 5 at 2 p.m.
Howard County Historical Society Antiques Appraisal Fair and Book Sale

Curious about the value of that old curio cabinet? Wondering what great aunt Agatha’s wedding dress is worth? Or just want to spend a few hours shopping an intriguing collection of rare and used history books, fine antiques and wares from a variety of unique vendors? Then mark your calendar and make plans to pack up your treasures and attend The Howard County Historical Society 1st Annual Antiques Appraisal Fair and Book Sale:

Saturday May 21, 2011
All Saints Hall
St. John’s Episcopal Church, Ellicott City
9120 Frederick Road
Ellicott City, MD 21042
9 AM Early Bird Book Sale
and Fair Admission – $15*
10 AM – 4 PM General Book Sale
and Fair Admission – $10*

* Admission includes appraisal of one item. $10 for a second item. Additional items $5 each.

Purchase your tickets at the door and look forward to a day of fun and hopefully happy surprises as the experts at Peenstra Antiques Appraisals provide verbal appraisals of antique jewelry, furniture, decorative objects, tools, books, primitives and more. You can also look forward to shopping our Book Sale features hundreds of rare and used books on historical topics – plus furniture and antiques from the private collections of the Howard County Historical Society, its officers, directors and members. We’re also hoping to include food and drink vendors as well as merchant booths selling antiques, crafts and art.

All proceeds of this event will benefit the Howard County Historical Society’s move to the new Charles E. Miller Branch Library and Historical Center.

Email or call the Society if you would like to make a tax-deductible donation of an antique to the sale. You set a fixed price for the item. If the item sells, the proceeds will benefit the Society – if it doesn’t sell at the price you set, it will be returned to you.

Support the Society as a Charter Member

Join the Society today at the Charter Member level or higher – or upgrade your Single or Family Membership to Charter Member level with an additional contribution of $30 and we’ll send you a handsome Howard County Historical Society logo car magnet as a thank you for your commitment and much needed financial support. In addition to showing your pride in the Society, the magnet will help raise our public profile in the community. So if you don’t have yours yet, join or upgrade your membership today.

UPGRADE YOUR SINGLE OR FAMILY MEMBERSHIP TO CHARTER MEMBER LEVEL AND WE’LL SEND YOU A HCHS LOGO CAR MAGNET
Howard County Historical Society
Membership Application

☐ YES, I would like to join the Howard County Historical Society and enjoy membership benefits that include a subscription to The Legacy, invitations to exclusive events, a 10% discount on publications, plus a handsome HCHS car magnet emblem if I join at the Charter Member level or higher.

My check, made payable to the Howard County Historical Society, is for the following category:

MEMBERSHIPS

- Student $10
- Single $30
- Family $45
- Charter $60
- Sustaining $100

☐ Please upgrade my current membership to Charter membership level with the enclosed $30 donation and send me an HCHS car magnet.

CORPORATE MEMBERSHIPS

- Bronze $100
- Silver $250
- Gold $500

Includes all benefits plus recognition in The Legacy.

Name _________________________________________________________________

Address _______________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

Telephone: (______) ____________________________________________________

Mail completed form with check to Howard County Historical Society,
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