



Handy's Memo From the Friends of Poplar Hill Mansion

117 Elizabeth Street
Salisbury, Maryland 21801
410-749-1776

www.poplarhillmansion.org
curator@poplarhillmansion.org

Newsletter No. VIII, Summer 2008

Upcoming Events at Poplar Hill Mansion...

The Friends of Poplar Hill Mansion is pleased to announce the second in the series of *Music at the Mansion*. The concert will be held on **Saturday, July 26th** at 7:00 p.m. This is a free concert, (donation suggested), featuring the songs of Cole Porter and George Gershwin as performed by Ms. Susan Zimmer on keyboard and Mezzo-Soprano Ms. Aleta Davis. Come dressed in period costume to make the evening even more enjoyable. There will be a raffle with a lot of goodies from your favorite local merchants and businesses. Light refreshments will be served.

Last month's concert with the Salisbury Chamber Singers was outstanding. A huge thank you goes to Mr. Doug Smith,

Director, and the performers who donated their time. How great are the acoustics in this beautiful old home?

The funds raised from these events help to continue the interior paint restoration project. We are a 501 (c) (3) corporation and will be happy to write a letter for tax purposes for your donation.

Keep watching for the continuation of *Music at the Mansion* in the coming months. Do you have a suggestion for the genre of music you would like to hear next? Why not consider sponsoring/underwriting *Music at the Mansion*. It is not as costly as you might think. Call us...410-749-1776

Save The Dates...

Heritage Fest

Saturday, September 13th

President's Tea and Fashion Show

Wednesday, November 5th

Poplar Hill Mansion Holiday Open House

Sunday, December 7th

Tea with Santa

Saturday, December 13th

Newtown Holiday House Tour

Sunday, December 14th

Book your special holiday event now while there is still availability.

Stop by on the first and third Sundays of the month between 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. for a free tour, or call for an appointment for your family or group to visit at a nominal charge. The Mansion is closed on Tuesdays and Holidays.

**Friends of Poplar Hill Mansion
Board of Directors...**

Marshall Zugehar, Chair
Bill Gore, Vice Chair
Steve Bassford, Treasurer
Anne Lampert, Corresponding Secretary
Gina Boobar, Recording Secretary
Aleta Davis
Marge Duer
Anita (Tutie) Foskey
Kathryn (Taffee) Hajko
Charlotte Langrall
Louise Nock
Carol Smith
Ann Suthowski
Rita Tiso
Jane Youngk
Mary Zugehar

How You Can Help...

Friends of Poplar Hill Mansion is earning a penny every time you search the Internet. GoodSearch.com is a new Yahoo-powered search engine that donates half its advertising revenue, about a penny per search, to the charities its users designate. Use it just as you would any search engine, get quality search results from Yahoo, and watch the donations add up!

Please help us by adding this site to your tool bar and letting your friends and family know how easy, and painless, it is to support **Friends of Poplar Hill Mansion**.

****The last newsletter included the above information and was well received, HOWEVER, we want more of you to sign up so, we are offering a new incentive. If you live within 50 miles of*

*the Mansion I will personally come to your computer and add this search engine to your tool bar****

Call me:

Nancy Marasco, Curator 410-749-1776



This is a hard economy for a small non-profit. Consider alternative ways to lend a hand, to help us continue to restore this beautiful home to its Federal style beauty.

How would you like to adopt a specific project? You could sponsor a Clara Gunby painting restoration, or have one of the Eli Terry mantel clocks brought back to working condition.

The following is my wish list of items we really need. Hopefully you can help.

We need several dozen linen napkins and a few tablecloths, especially round and larger sizes. These would preferably be white or off white. Glass pitchers and a few ice buckets would be helpful to add to our kitchen inventory.

In September, PHM will play an active role in Urban Salisbury's Heritage Fest. We are looking for federal period costumes for children to wear for photographs. We are particularly in need of outfits for boys.

Maybe you have a special talent to share. Do you like to do electrical, plumbing, scrapbooking, light painting, carpentry, silver/brass polishing, or furniture restoration work? Again, call us.

A Little History...

One of the most frequently asked question is about closet taxation.

Here at the Historical Society of Frederick County, Md, we have a very active docent training program and part of that is to investigate museum myths so that we do not pass on erroneous information. The closet tax myth was one of the first ones we attacked. It is indeed a myth, which like most myths, when you apply some common sense to the tale, it does not prove out. Also, historical research, when done correctly, is done with the premise of interpreting the presence of information - not the absence of information. So, when you do research you are looking to find information about taxes on closets - people now, and in the past will record the presence of things more often than the absence of them. For instance, you wouldn't write in your diary that you didn't fly on a plane today, instead you would write when you did indeed fly on a plane.

Whenever taxes are mentioned in relation as to why someone did or didn't do something, it should raise a red flag of skepticism. How many of us do, or don't do something because we have to pay a tax? When reading diaries or letters of people from the past how often do you find them writing about taxes? Also remember, up until the federal income tax laws in the early 20th century, there were no, truly nationwide taxes in the US. States, counties and municipalities were able to tax their citizens as they saw fit. So, it would be highly unusual that every place in the US would tax the number of rooms in homes. To check if your locale did, just go to your county courthouse, or city hall, or state hall of records, or even

your public library and look at the tax laws for the time period you need.

In addition to taxes, you also need to look at how people stored clothing in the past. The first hangers were invented by the Shakers and were wood with a leather thong to be hung on a peg, flat against the wall. Commercially-made hangers were not widely available until the turn of the century or later, depending on your locale. Reading women's proscriptive literature, like household management books (Catherine Beecher comes to mind), and magazines (Godey's, Peterson's, Leslie's, Arthur's) will help you find out how the "experts" suggested clothes be treated. Reading these books you'll find that most clothing was folded carefully and put into case furniture (blanket chests, chests of drawers, wardrobes, etc). Clothing that was worn daily was often hung on hook or pegs inside or outside of a closet.

You also have to look at building practices. Closets are easiest built where there is a naturally occurring "dead space" in a room, such as next to a chimney or under stairs. Also remember, closets did not have to be a certain size or depth unlike modern closets that are built to accommodate the width of a hanger. Historically, the term "closet" could refer to something different than what we know it as, a closet could be a small room where someone works or lives. In addition, what we would today call a closet, people in the past also called a cupboard. We have found that doing careful, scholarly research into what people did do- usually dispels the myth in question.

Reprinted with permission of Heidi Shoaf, Historical Society of Frederick County, Maryland.

The View From the Second Floor...

Each month I indulge myself with my own version of an editorial. So here I go, on the one year anniversary of my employ.

I am your Curator, the resident history geek. However, the past several weeks have shown a side of me not seen since my days in summer stock in the late 1960's. I have somehow become the star (?) of stage, screen, print and the radio waves. I have had great fun, and it was certainly my privilege to represent Poplar Hill Mansion, the Board of Directors, the Friends, and the past residents of this home. Thank you to my interviewers who made me feel quite welcomed.

Recently I attended a training session at the Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore and was told by a guest panelist that we all have goals but if they weren't written they were merely a wish list. I wrote that down thinking it was a clever thought and later found those words to be profoundly genuine.

While I have several goals, some self imposed and some directed by my board of fifteen, the ultimate objective is to share this house and its history with more than a hundred plus friends and family who receive this newsletter.

My intent is always to dismiss the idea that we are one of Delmarva's hidden treasures. While that title gives us some notoriety, I don't necessarily view it as a flattering remark.

So here is the top goal for my next year. Each one of you reading this newsletter will bring one person to the Mansion for

a tour and that one person will join as a Friend because we have taught them something they didn't know an hour ago. Then they will do the same in kind. And as the shampoo commercial of decades past exemplified viral marketing techniques..."They'll tell two friends... and they'll tell two friends... and so on, and so on...".

Taking no offense, there are members of the board who have called me shameless in hawking the Mansion. Not only do I take no offense, I take this as a compliment.

Come see me, and bring a friend or two.

Nancy Marasco, Curator

In Memoriam...

Margaret Vander Bogart Stone passed away on Sunday, July 6, 2008, in Severna Park, Md. Mrs. Stone was a lifetime resident of Salisbury. She was an active Friend of Poplar Hill Mansion where she was responsible for several successful fundraising activities.