

November 2021

# Harford Heritage News

250th Anniversary of Founding of Harford County—March 2023 to March 2024

200th Anniversary of Lafayette's Tour of America— 2024

## Revised Dates, a Festival, and Bells

The Steering Committee met on October 14 to review the results of the September planning workshop. In response to the recommendation of the participating organizations, the opening ceremony is scheduled for March 2023 and a festival celebration in late summer or early fall is added to the calendar for 2023-2024. Committee members are working with local venues to finalize locations for the two-day grand opening and the mid-year festival. Bells and sirens will ring out across the county at noon one day in early March 2024 marking the official end to our celebratory year.

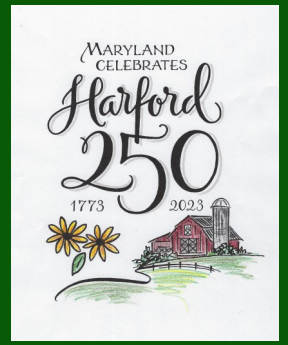
## Semiquincentennial or Sestercentennial

What do the words semiquincentennial and sestercentennial mean and why would you want to know? Both are terms for a 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary. In 2023 Harford County celebrates that impressive milestone. In 2026, the entire country celebrates the sestercentennial of the United States.

Plans are already underway for the national celebration in several states and cities along the east coast. Boston is planning commemorative events at the Society of Cincinnati and the Boston Tea Party Museum; Philadelphia is planting 76 trees at Independence National Historic Park; Charleston, S.C. has begun planning battle reenactment and anniversary festivities. Pennsylvania and New Jersey have established semiquincentennial committees who are actively planning statewide celebrations. If you would like to learn more visit The National Park Service website at [America250.org](http://America250.org).

Meanwhile, it is time for us to start planning seriously for the Harford 250 celebration. While the Steering Committee will coordinate the opening and closing ceremonies, as well as a mid-year festival, each organization, museum, community is asked to plan their 2023 annual events with the Harford 250 theme in mind. The Historical Society of Harford County is currently working on an Anthology relating the stories of county residents in the 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, planning a series of lectures, museum displays and events celebrating Harford 250 and preparing a trivia program for its Facebook page. Other groups are working on trail systems highlighting the history of the county and the country; and developing programs highlighting the stories of the county's residents through storytelling and music. Many of these projects will carry over to the 2026 America celebration.

For now, we encourage you to start planning for displays for the opening ceremony in March 2023 and to consider how you can be a part of the anniversary celebration.



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**December 31 - Memoir Deadline** Time is running short. The deadline for forwarding your story for the 2023 Anthology is December 31, 2021. Submission Requirements on [page 5](#).

## Trivia Questions

1. Who were the previous owners of the land now known as Rockfield Park?
2. Who was Harford County named for?
3. What product made in Havre de Grace was rumored to power an automobile to its Port Deposit destination in 1915?
4. How did former Senator Millard Tydings die and where?

*Answers on page 4*



Portrait of answer to Question 4

## Committee Updates

### Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is finalizing its calendar for 2023. Committee members are working with local venues to determine where the two-day grand opening event will be held, including a fundraising evening preview event featuring music, guest speakers, displays and more, and a free, full day program open to the general public with displays, entertainment, contests and more. A mid- year Festival is also planned. The location is not yet finalized, but this event will celebrate the history of the county in a very unique way with games, parades, reenactments highlighting Harford's distinctive story. A Grand Finale is scheduled for March 2024 at the Harford County Court House. Bells and sirens will ring out across the county at noon that day marking the official end to our celebratory year. A time capsule will be buried featuring items from across the county and local community activities will be encouraged during the preceding week to mark the end of this anniversary year.

We encourage all local communities, businesses, and organizations to participate in each of these events and to use the theme of Harford 250 in their own regular events during the celebratory year. Please begin developing ideas on how your business, organization or community can participate in the Harford 250 celebration.

If you have questions or are looking for advice, there is a list of Steering Committee members with their assigned networks on [page 4](#).

### Website Committee

The Website subcommittee continues to work on a timeline of Harford's history and development of a media page. The Event page, current and previous newsletters and Home page are currently available, providing background information on the mission and encouraging people to become involved in our upcoming celebrations. The site is also available for you to add your current event information. We hope to engage the public early, letting them know that this is the site to check for many upcoming events in the county so that they will be familiar with the site before the Anniversary year begins. So please take advantage of this opportunity to download the event logo, share your event information and your logos at [www.harford250.org](http://www.harford250.org).

### Finance Committee

The Finance subcommittee is searching for grant possibilities and developing a budget for 2023. Once the Budget is complete, the committee will initiate a sponsorship program.

# Sharing Your Story—A Gentle Reminder

Tell us in your own words a personal tale of your time in Harford or relate the history of your business, organization or institution (churches, fire stations, etc.). To help you get an idea of what others have written, here is an excerpt from a recent submission. Stories will be combined in a book commemorating Harford's past and present, available in a limited edition during the Harford 250 year-long celebration. It is time to start writing. Send submissions to [250celebration@harfordhistory.org](mailto:250celebration@harfordhistory.org) on or before December 31, 2021. For details on submission see [page 5](#).

## Farming: the Original Family Business

By Myrna W. Schwarz



*Grandpa and his family on his 83rd birthday, January 28, 1947*

Samuel Whiteford Wilson was my grandfather. He was a quiet man but, by his nature and example, taught his nine children and nineteen grandchildren the importance of “Wilsonian Stoicism.” We all worked together and accomplished our goals.

He was in his eighties when I knew him, and he still completed a few chores each day. He fed the small calves in the barn, and he joined us as we worked in the garden. As long as there were chickens, Grandpa daily gathered the eggs, which were packed into crates that held a total of thirty dozen eggs and sold to local stores. I was eleven years old when this dear man died in 1952.

It wasn't until several years later that I wondered about his background. I asked lots of questions of older relatives and then started my research on the Wilson family farm ancestry. The northern section of Harford County was settled by farmers who emigrated from the British Isles. We believe our progenitor may have arrived from Scotland in 1751 and settled in Pylesville, Maryland, twenty years before Harford County was official. He acquired a certificate of survey from the state of Maryland for 264.5 acres and was granted a land patent called Wilson's Chance. He cut down trees, built a log cabin with fourteen-inch logs, cleared the land, and practiced his religion. He established the family business for his descendants to follow. He was the Reverend Archibald Wilson. Eventually a large barn was constructed on the property using hand-forged nails. The barn and log house are still standing and occupied today. Archibald (1728– before 1821) and his wife, Margrett (1746–) lived in the two-story log house and were blessed with seven children.

*(Watch for the Anthology's release in January 2023 for the rest of the story)*

# Harford 250 Steering Committee

Chair: Carol Deibel    Co-Chair: Jackie Seneschal

## Arts & Entertainment Liaison –

- Chris Potts – [cpstory@aol.com](mailto:cpstory@aol.com)
- Diane Booth – [booth@ix.netcom.com](mailto:booth@ix.netcom.com)

## Memoir and Monthly Newsletter –

- Jackie Seneschal – [jackieseneschal@gmail.com](mailto:jackieseneschal@gmail.com)
- Carol Deibel – [caroldeibel@verizon.net](mailto:caroldeibel@verizon.net)

## Grants and Fundraising

- Arden McClune – [ardenbeachlvr@verizon.net](mailto:ardenbeachlvr@verizon.net)
- Bill Walden – [bill@mainstreetdesign.net](mailto:bill@mainstreetdesign.net)

## Website development –

- Bill Walden [bill@mainstdesign.net](mailto:bill@mainstdesign.net)
- Kathi Santora [ksantora@gmail.com](mailto:ksantora@gmail.com)

## County Liaison –

- Jacob Bensen – [jmbensen@harfordcountymd.gov](mailto:jmbensen@harfordcountymd.gov)
- Greg Pizzuto – [greg@visitharford.com](mailto:greg@visitharford.com)

## Municipal Liaison –

- Jenny Falcone – [jenny@downtownbelair.com](mailto:jenny@downtownbelair.com)
- Patti Parker – [pparker@belairmd.org](mailto:pparker@belairmd.org)

## Museum Liaison –

- C. John Sullivan, Jr. – [jsullivans@verizon.net](mailto:jsullivans@verizon.net)
- Iris Barnes – [iris.l.barnes@gmail.com](mailto:iris.l.barnes@gmail.com)

## Business Liaison –

- Bill Walden – [bill@mainstdesign.net](mailto:bill@mainstdesign.net)

## Trivia Answers

1. The McComas Family sold the farm to the Hoza family who eventually sold it to the Town of Bel Air.
2. Henry Harford, the illegitimate son of Lord Calvert
3. A quart of Havre de Grace Whiskey in its tank
4. In his sleep at his 550 acre farm near Havre de Grace (February 1961)



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Editors: Carol Deibel and Jackie Seneschal



# HARFORD 250

## SHORT STORIES WANTED!

Together, we're writing a book the Historical Society will publish.

**Write a true story** (in 2,000 words or less)  
**about places, events, and/or people**  
**that were part of your past here in**  
**Harford County.**

*Just a few examples:*

- *Did you have a favorite hangout that isn't around?*
- *Perhaps a business was located elsewhere in its early days*
- *A person from the county who had a profound impact.*
- *What were some things we did 50 or more years ago that we don't do or do differently now?*

**TELL US!**

**We want to make YOUR story, part of OUR story.**

Email stories to [250Celebration@HarfordHistory.org](mailto:250Celebration@HarfordHistory.org)

**DEADLINE for submission is December 31, 2021**

*All submissions will be reviewed by a committee. The society will notify those whose stories have been selected for publication.*

*All submissions will be retained in the Society's Archives. Submission constitutes the individual's agreement to allow the use of the story in the anthology and also acknowledges that extracts/pictures may be used for publicity purposes. It is also understood that no payment will be given for use of the stories and pictures.*