

# the Preservationist

Spring 2006

## Comprehensive Strategic Plan Approved for Cultural Resources on Parkland



M-NCPPC-owned cultural resources include the Riley House, recognized by historians as the real "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

### Parkland

Imagine going back in time, learning how family, friends, and neighbors lived, experiencing the textures, spaces, and objects that they and their ancestors knew. Discover that you haven't traveled far. You're in your own backyard, in your local park system. This

is the vision that has just been outlined in a new plan called *From Artifact to Attraction: A Strategic Plan for Cultural Resources in Parks*. Approved by the Planning Board on December 15, 2005, the plan can be read on-line at: [www.mc-mncppc.org/historic/strategic\\_plan/cultural\\_resources\\_toc.shtm](http://www.mc-mncppc.org/historic/strategic_plan/cultural_resources_toc.shtm)

The purpose of the Strategic Plan is to create a blueprint for the future use and priority of M-NCPPC-owned cultural resources. The Plan lays out a vision for improving the stewardship of park-based cultural resources. It also recommends a new way of thinking about and prioritizing cultural resources in parks based on their potential for long-term reuse and heritage tourism, plus their current condition. It includes a "Top 20" priority projects list containing sites to be opened to the public by M-NCPPC or put into use by means of a public/private partnership.

M-NCPPC has been in the business of acquiring buildings with its land since 1927, when it purchased its very first park properties. Over time, M-NCPPC has become the owner of 32,000 acres of parkland, 395 parks, and 663 buildings and objects, approximately 150 of which are currently considered "historic." The Department's cultural resources in parks include:

107 roofed structures (buildings and structures); 45 sites (archaeological, cemetery, or building ruins); and 5 objects (boundary stones or other markers).

Paying attention to cultural resources is important because historic buildings, landscapes, archaeological sites, and cultural artifacts have the power to engage the mind as well as the senses. Some historic structures tell us about park development (Meadowbrook/Rock Creek Stables and Kensington Cabin), while others remind us of the County's roots in agriculture (Needwood Manor and the Bussard Farm). Fresh air, green space, exercise, and historical attractions combine to nourish the mind, body and spirit.

While some of these properties are listed on the *Locational Atlas of Historic Sites* or the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*, others are not. But they all have been deemed to contribute to the unique telling of Montgomery County's history. While rehabilitation of a few, key historic properties in Montgomery County has turned them into destinations, many more properties on the inventory are worthy of similar treatment. A signature purpose of this document is to demonstrate that momentum is building around the rehabilitation of historic resources. Of the 157 resources in the Cultural Resources in Parks database, 20 properties represent the "jewels," the most important projects to be undertaken over the next ten years, the lifespan of this Plan.

The Cultural Resources in Parks inventory is meant to be a living, changing, repository wherein new acquisitions of a cultural or historical nature can be added to the inventory. These additions will occur as new parkland is acquired or as buildings come of age.

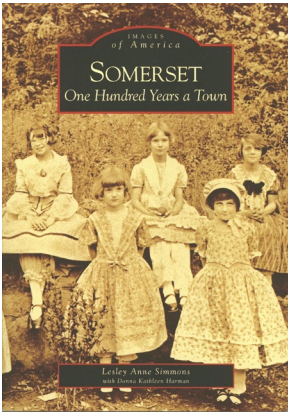
### In This Issue:

- COMSAT building designation goes to Council.  
Page 2
- Somerset celebrates centennial.  
Page 2
- New map/brochure identifies Underground Railroad sites and programs.  
Page 2
- M-NCPPC acquires historic properties.  
Page 3

# Historic Preservation News and Notes



COMSAT Laboratories Building in Clarksburg.



SOMERSET: ONE HUNDRED YEARS A TOWN by Lesley Anne Simmons and Donna Kathleen Harman, is published by Arcadia Publishing and available at local book stores.

## Planning Board Forwards COMSAT Building Nomination to Council

The Montgomery County Planning Board voted on February 16 to forward an amendment to the County Council recommending that the COMSAT Laboratories Building not be designated on the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. Earlier, the HPC had voted unanimously in favor of the historic nomination because of the COMSAT building's historical significance in representing the advance of the commercial artificial satellite industry throughout the world and its architectural significance as an early design by world-acclaimed architect, Cesar Pelli. After a 60-day period for comment by the County Executive, the County Council will be taking up this nomination and making a final determination on the historic status of the COMSAT building.

## Montgomery Preservation, Inc. 2006 Preservation Awards

The Montgomery County Preservation Awards honor individuals and groups that have made significant contributions to the preservation or restoration of historic resources in the county during the past year. Anyone can nominate an individual or group for an award. Selection of the winners is made by a panel of expert judges. All efforts to preserve our historic buildings and to educate the general public on the value of our local heritage are worthwhile, but sometimes a group or individual deserves special recognition for extraordinary efforts. Deadline for nominations is April 30. For a nomination form call 240-314-8232.

The 2006 Historic Preservation Awards are supported by a grant from the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission, however, program operation, judges, and selection of the recipients are entirely the responsibility of Montgomery Preservation, Inc. The awards will be presented at a reception in the first week of June. Call 240-314-8232 for more information.

## Somerset Celebrates Centennial Year

Somerset residents will be celebrating the 100th anniversary of the founding of their community this spring with a street party and a book on the Town's history: *Somerset: One Hundred Years a Town* by Lesley Anne Simmons and Donna Kathleen Harman, published by Arcadia Publishing. Somerset was developed as a trolley suburb of Washington D.C. by a group of five Department of Agriculture scientists in the 1890s. It was incorporated as a town in 1906. Today the town retains much of its original appearance with narrow tree-lined streets, Town Hall and 54 houses protected as a Historic District in the Montgomery County *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. You can purchase a copy of the book at local stores or at [www.arcadiapublishing.com](http://www.arcadiapublishing.com).

## Underground Railroad Sites and Programs on New Maryland Map/Brochure

On March 14 the State of Maryland came out with a map/brochure: "The Underground Railroad: Maryland's Network to Freedom." The brochure lists 21 sites, 4 programs and five facilities in Maryland currently open to the public that were involved in some way with the Underground Railroad and have been official approved by the National Network to Freedom, an oversight branch of the National Park Service. In Montgomery County there is one site: "Arrest Site of William Chaplin" at Jesup Blair Park in Silver Spring (M-NCPPC, 301-563-3400); and two programs: "In Their Steps: A Guided Walking Tour of Rockville" (Peerless Rockville, 301-762-0096), and "The Underground Railroad Experience on the Rural Legacy Trail" in Sandy Spring (M-NCPPC, 301-563-3400). The last is a self-guided hike of about 3 miles that begins at Woodlawn Manor, 16501 Norwood Road, Sandy Spring. Maps are available at the kiosk at the trailhead, or can be downloaded from [www.montgomerytrails.org](http://www.montgomerytrails.org). Guided hikes for groups are available by calling the number provided. Free guided hikes will be given every Saturday at 10 am from May 6 through the end of September.

## the Preservationist

The Preservationist is the official publication of the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission, 8787 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Phone: 301-563-3400. Statements herein do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the Commission. Created by the Historic Resources Preservation Ordinance (Chapter 24A, Montgomery County Code) the Commission is responsible for identification, designation, and regulation for purposes of protection, preservation, continued use, and enhancement of sites and structures of historical, archeological, architectural, or cultural value. Commission members are appointed by the Montgomery County Executive and confirmed by the Montgomery County Council.

### Commission

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Requests to be on the mailing list and content information should be directed to the Commission.



# M-NCPPC Purchases Historic Buildings

The Montgomery County Planning Board recently approved the purchase of two very significant historic sites.

## **Riley House/Uncle Tom's Cabin in Bethesda**

The house known for years as "Uncle Tom's Cabin" has finally come into public ownership. Originally a large tobacco plantation, the one-acre property, including the 18th century house with a log kitchen wing, is located on Old Georgetown Road in Bethesda. The heirs of Marcel and Hildegarde Mallet-Prevost, owners of the property since the 1960s, decided to sell after Hildegarde passed away last fall at the age of 100.

The small two-story house was built in the 1780s by James Collyer. It was acquired by George Riley in 1797, then passed to his son Isaac Riley. Josiah Henson, a slave who lived and worked on the property for more than 30 years, escaped to freedom in Canada where he wrote an autobiography "The Life of Josiah Henson" in 1849. According to Harriet Beecher Stowe's book, *A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*, she based the character of "Uncle Tom" in her 1852 novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* on his writings. Reverend Josiah Henson became prominent in the Abolitionist movement and founded a community near Dresden, Ontario. He traveled to England three times to give talks. Henson's home in Ontario has been preserved as a Canadian historic site.

The property has been on the Montgomery County *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* since 1979, but has been in private ownership and not open to the public. Park and Planning will now explore options for restoring the building and making it accessible to the public.

## **Brainard Warner Property (Circle Manor) in Kensington**

The elaborate Victorian house at the center of a large green oval in the heart of Kensington was built by the founder of Kensington, Brainard H. Warner, in the early 1890s as the centerpiece for his planned community south of the railroad tracks at Knowles Station. Warner had come to Washington as a lad to work in a Civil War hospital and rose to become a very wealthy and powerful man, president of the D.C. Board of Trade and founder of the Washington



Loan and Trust Company. He built the house in Kensington as a summer residence and the Queen Anne style home was the scene of much social and political activity.

*Brainard Warner Property (Circle Manor) in Kensington.*

A circular road encompasses the property and the streets of the historic town radiate off this circle. The grounds, dotted with trees, some of which are now more than 100 years old, has served as the "town green" where community gatherings and festivals are held even to this day. The 4.5 acre property includes the historic manor house and carriage house, and a later addition that served as a nursing home that until recently housed nearly 80 residents. Plans for the use of the property are under discussion with the Town of Kensington.

# Calendar

## April

**Exhibit through July 30 HANDWORK.**  
Examples of needlework, lace, knitting, crocheting, mending and other handcrafts on display. The exhibit will also explore the importance of handwork as part of women's daily chores. Beall-Dawson House, 111 West Montgomery Ave., Rockville. Tuesdays through Sundays, 12:30-4:30 PM. Call 301-762-1492. [www.montgomeryhistory.org](http://www.montgomeryhistory.org)

**11 & 26** HPC Meeting, 7:30 PM., MRO Auditorium, 8787 Georgia Ave., Silver Spring. Call 301-563-3400. [www.mc-mncppc.org](http://www.mc-mncppc.org)

## May

**8** Rockville Awards for Preservation Excellence. Rockville City Hall, 6-8 PM. Peerless Rockville, 301-762-0096. [www.peerlessrockville.org](http://www.peerlessrockville.org).

**10** HPC Meeting, 7:30 PM., MRO Auditorium, 8787 Georgia Ave., Silver Spring. Call 301-563-3400. [www.mc-mncppc.org](http://www.mc-mncppc.org)

**13** Peerless Rockville Homes and Hospitality Tour. 4 – 8 PM. Rockville's West End. Call Peerless Rockville, 301-762-0096 for reservations. [www.peerlessrockville.org](http://www.peerlessrockville.org).

**18 & 19** 2006 Annual Preservation & Revitalization Conference, Annapolis. [www.preservationmaryland.org](http://www.preservationmaryland.org). 410-685-2886, ext. 302.

**21** Homes and Hospitality Tour, Rockville, 4-8pm. "A Progression Through Time" tour of historic homes with gourmet hors d'oeuvres from Rockville's finest restaurants. For ticket information contact Peerless Rockville, 301-762-0096, [manager@peerlessrockville.org](mailto:manager@peerlessrockville.org).

**24** HPC Meeting, 7:30 PM, MRO Auditorium, 8787 Georgia Ave., Silver Spring. Call 301-563-3400. [www.mc-mncppc.org](http://www.mc-mncppc.org)

## June

**7** HPC Meeting, 7:30 PM., MRO Auditorium, 8787 Georgia Ave., Silver Spring. Call 301-563-3400. [www.mc-mncppc.org](http://www.mc-mncppc.org)

**21** HPC Meeting, 7:30 PM., MRO Auditorium, 8787 Georgia Ave., Silver Spring. Call 301-563-3400. [www.mc-mncppc.org](http://www.mc-mncppc.org).

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