



# Huntley Headlines

Friends of Historic Huntley

Fall 2016

## Historic Discussions at Huntley: Historic Homes of the Mount Vernon Area

Saturday, October 1, 1 p.m.

Norma Hoffman Visitor Center  
Huntley Meadows Park, \$5

Discover old buildings in our midst with fascinating stories to tell. Join author **Michael K. Bohn** for a photographic tour of the history-rich Mount Vernon community. His 2014 book, *Mount Vernon Revisited*, shows the community to be much more than George Washington and his fabled home. From Woodlawn and Quakers, to Woodhouse and the George Washington Air Junction, Mr. Bohn reveals the area's intriguing history through photographs, maps, and other images. After a 20-year career as a naval intelligence officer, Mr. Bohn served as director of the White House Situation Room during the Reagan administration.

A guided tour of Historic Huntley follows. Register at the event, at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/huntley-meadows-park/calendar.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/huntley-meadows-park/calendar.htm), or by calling 703.768.2525. Sponsored by FOHH. ❖

## A Salute to Ed Batten!

For more than 13 years, **Edward R. Batten, Sr.**, has served as the Lee District representative on the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) Board. As he relocates and begins a new chapter in his life, FOHH extends to Mr. Batten a warm and hearty thank you for the ongoing support he has steadfastly provided to Historic Huntley. ❖



*Otis Mason House, c. 1900, a National Trust for Historic Preservation property, located at former Woodlawn Stables, was moved recently for Route 1 widening work.*

## Harrison Lane Clean Up Saturday, October 15, 9 a.m.

Huntley Meadows Park parking lot  
Join fellow Huntley fans in beautifying the road to Huntley. Gloves and boots are recommended wear. Trash bags will be provided. ❖

## FOHH Annual Meeting: Woodlawn Agricultural and Housekeeping Societies

Sunday, November 6, 2 p.m.

Sherwood Hall Regional Library, free  
Not that long ago, chickens, cows, and hogs were at home where most of our suburban houses now stand. Families lived with very different challenges from those we face today, yet also met to socialize and help one another.

Explore the worlds of the **Woodlawn Agricultural and Housekeeping Societies** with **Susan Hellman**,

director, Carlyle House, and **Carolyn Gamble**, former assistant manager, Huntley Meadows Park, as your guides. These were gatherings where southern Fairfax farming folk traded work tips, advanced their political interests, exchanged good-natured barbs, and cemented neighborly bonds.

Join us at our Annual Meeting for this special presentation and the annual election of FOHH Board members. If you haven't already, please renew your FOHH membership—only members in good standing may vote. For your convenience, a membership renewal form can be found on page 4. ❖

## Update on Tenant House

It is anticipated that the **rehabilitation of the Tenant House will begin this September**. Tours of Historic Huntley are expected to continue through the end of the normal tour season and programming will take place during the construction process. (See page 3 for more information on both.) An October 2015 FOHH program presented by Debbie Robison revealed new information about the Tenant House that is helping in planning the rehabilitation. ❖

*“A few days ago a large quantity of cord wood, at Huntley, near town, the farm now occupied and cultivated by Dr. King, was burned, by the carelessness of those engaged in burning brush near to the wood pile.”*

*Alexandria Gazette*, page 3, April 9, 1866  
Researched by Jon Vrana

## *President's Column:* **On the Verge of a Vanishing View**

*by Todi Carnes*

As part of its design, Historic Huntley was sited with great care. Specifically, the architecture of Huntley's small villa was intended to incorporate expansiveness by looking out—through main hall doors thrown open wide—toward the Potomac River, taking in the sweeping Hybla Valley vista below. In May 2012, with the restoration and opening of the villa to the public, it seemed that Huntley's preservation had at long last been assured. This rosy perspective took for granted that Huntley's viewshed of virtually uninterrupted tree cover would remain undisturbed.

As we came to recently discover, even the protective presence of Huntley Meadows Park (HMP) is no guarantee of the intact survival of the Huntley viewshed. A utility easement runs along the park's southern boundary, through which Virginia Dominion Power runs power lines. Late last year, Dominion announced upgrade plans, which included replacing 60-foot poles below tree level with 21 towers 125 feet or more in height and well above the tree cover.

Following intense negotiations between Dominion, FOHH, the Friends of Huntley Meadows Park (FOHMP), and Fairfax County, Dominion agreed, with one exception, to lower the new towers to 100 feet in height. FOHH members and supporters have made a difference! The agreement is now before the Virginia State Corporation Commission (SCC) for approval.

While it appears that the Huntley viewshed has been safeguarded from the immediate threat of above-treetop transmission towers, the FOHH Board will be looking at other potential threats to the viewshed as the pace of Route 1 development increases.

The **Embark Richmond Highway Advisory Group** is strongly seeking community input in its ongoing revision of the comprehensive plan. Find out

more about these future changes at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/embarkrichmondhwy](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/embarkrichmondhwy). The FOHH mission to protect our beloved “small house with a big view” includes the preservation of the viewshed, an integral part of Huntley's historic integrity. ❖

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### **Meet a Community Hero:**

#### **Diane Donley**

*by Carolyn Gamble*

Thanks to the expertise and generosity of **Diane Donley**, lawyer and community leader, FOHH and FOHMP were participants in the SCC case regarding **Dominion's Transmission Rebuild Project along HMP's southern boundary**. Her pro bono legal representation was essential for the two groups to submit testimony, exhibits, and rebuttal. While we are still waiting for the official SCC ruling and issuance of certification for the project, **significant concessions were made as a result of our participation**. These include 100-foot-tall transmission poles (instead of 125-foot poles), detailed alignment sheets of wetlands, rare plants, and the George Washington boundary ditches with “no go” zones clearly marked, installation of bird diverters if two or more birds are killed by the transmission line, and a detailed archaeological study of approximately 2,500 feet of the boundary ditches, including document research and historic plat analysis.

Diane retired in 2012 from federal government service, during which she litigated many cases under the federal Clean Water Act and Clean Air Act, including those involving wetland

issues. Her litigation experience and familiarity with environmental law was extremely helpful with this case. Diane is currently co-chair of the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations and has a broad understanding of local government and land-use issues.

Had she known how much work this case would demand of her, she might have thought twice before taking it on. I counted 130 emails from her in my inbox. She had one harrowing afternoon driving to Richmond in rush-hour traffic during a heavy rainstorm to submit our testimony and exhibits to the SCC by the deadline, making it with minutes to spare. Her attitude throughout the entire arduous process leading up to the June 15 hearing remained upbeat and encouraging.

Diane speaks high praise for her clients, FOHH and FOHMP. She says the 300-page testimony and exhibits document was impressive, as well as instrumental in affecting the outcome.

*Thank you Diane!* ❖

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### **Summer Intern:**

#### **Greg Campbell-Cohen**

**Greg Campbell-Cohen** is a graduate student at the University of Edinburgh, majoring in history and politics. During his **summer FCPA historic interpretation internship at Historic Huntley**, his work focused on the Amlong residency, as well as Henry Woodhouse and the George Washington Air Junction. His research took him to Baltimore, the Smithsonian Institution's Air and Space Museum archives, and the vaults of the Fairfax County Circuit Court. Greg designed an oral history database infrastructure, conducted and transcribed interviews, assisted with camp activities, and engaged in webpage re-design. He reports that his experience at Huntley has been extremely fulfilling. *Many thanks to Greg for his work and to generous FOHH contributors who sponsored his internship!* ❖



*The team at the June 15, 2016, SCC hearing: Cathy Ledec, FOHMP president; Diane Donley; George Ledec, ecologist; and Carolyn Gamble, FOHH.*

## *Original Resident Returns to Huntley:*

### **Mary Jane Alcorn Hillman**

by Charlotte Brown,  
author of Groveton

Spring's Huntley Farm Day served as the backdrop for **Mary Jane Alcorn Hillman's** reunion with her Huntley home. Mary Jane came to the event with her daughter Dee Downey, her nephew Gene Butts, and his wife Terry. Mary Jane's mother was **Gladys Wease**, daughter of Fairfax County Constable Frederick Jasper Wease. The Wease family were neighbors of the Harrison family, long-time owners of Huntley.

**Albert "Bert" Harrison** (son of Albert W. Harrison) asked Gladys to help him at Huntley by caring for his sister, Mary Curtis Harrison, who suffered from arteriosclerosis. Gladys married **Earl Augustus Alcorn** and they raised their family at Huntley. Mr. Harrison, who had the same affliction as his sister, asked that the couple remain at Huntley to care for him. Mary Jane spent nine years living at Huntley. Her parents, twin sister Dorothy, and brothers Earl Jr. "Sonny" and Everett lived there with Mr. Harrison until his death in 1946.

Mary Jane and her family were thrilled with the Farm Day event and seeing the restoration of the house to its original Mason-era appearance. Huntley had undergone "remodeling" since it was built c. 1825 to meet the changing times and needs of the Harrison and Amlong families.

Mary Jane's visit to Huntley brought back many memories of her and her siblings, cousins, and friends playing in the hay, running through the fields, and sleighing down the hill. She remembered the **Tavener family** that lived in the caretaker's house and my father "**Brownie**" (Alvin Brown, a cousin of the Tavener family), who worked on the dairy farm. She talked about her mother, Gladys, cooking over the hot stove, and the kindness of Bert Harrison. It was truly a delight to share a "moment in history" with Mary Jane Alcorn Hillman. ❖



*Mary Jane Alcorn Hillman, here with Carolyn Gamble, graciously donated the Huntley house key, a family memento of their time at Huntley, to FCPA through FOHH.*

## **FCPA Programs at Historic Huntley**

### *For homeschoolers:*

#### **Taux Trail**

September 8, 10 a.m. or  
October 3, 1:30 p.m.; ages 5-13  
\$12 (residents)/\$14 (non-residents)  
Immerse yourself in the life of Virginia Indians 400 years ago by taking part in corn grinding, pot making, and corn darts activities.

#### **National History Day**

September 22, 1:30 p.m., ages 11-18  
\$108 (residents)/\$123 (non-residents)  
Students learn about the use of primary and secondary sources, create individual or group projects that may be submitted to the National History Day competition, and take a field trip to the Virginia Room, Library of Congress, or National Archives.

### *For kids:*

#### **Toys at Historic Huntley**

September 10, 11 a.m., ages 3 and up  
\$7 (residents)/\$9 (non-residents)  
Enjoy toys and games from the past as children who lived at Huntley may have, take a special house tour, and participate in a scavenger hunt.

### *For all ages:*

#### **Ice Cream at Historic Huntley**

September 24, 11 a.m.  
\$8 (residents)/\$10 (non-residents)  
Make and enjoy hand-cranked ice cream just as Huntley's Harrison family would have.

#### **Hitching a Ride Through Huntley**

September 24, 2 p.m.  
\$7 (residents)/\$9 (non-residents)  
Enjoy a wagon ride through Huntley Meadows Park to discover its World War II and Cold War secrets.

#### **Delicious Dairy at Historic Huntley**

October 7, 1 p.m.  
\$7 (residents)/\$9 (non-residents)  
Churn butter, taste fresh cheese you can make at home, and tour the house.

**For Scouts:** Young scout programs are available on both weekdays and weekends for 1.5 hours to 2 hours, depending on the badge requirements.

*For more information and to register: Huntley Meadows Park, 703.768.2525, [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/huntley-meadows-park/calendar.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/huntley-meadows-park/calendar.htm). ❖*

## **Tours of Historic Huntley**

Enjoy southern Fairfax County's most scenic view at **Historic Huntley, the small house with a big view.** Tours on Saturdays, April 30 through October, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and by appointment. \$5 adults; \$3 children and seniors; under 5, free. The grounds are open from dawn to dusk from March to November.

*For more information, call Huntley Meadows Park, 703.768.2525. Historic Huntley is a Fairfax County Park Authority historic site. ❖*

# FRIENDS OF HISTORIC HUNTLEY

P.O. Box 7241

Alexandria, VA 22307-0241

Address correction requested

## Save the Dates:

*Historic Homes program - October 1*

*Harrison Lane Clean Up - October 15*

*Annual Meeting - November 6*

*Educational programs for all ages*

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## Huntley-Related Web Sites

www.historichuntley.org

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/histhunt/

www.friendsofhuntleymeadows.org

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## Record-Setting Attendance at Farm Day

With more than 250 attendees, spring's **Huntley Farm Day** enjoyed perfect weather and was one of Historic Huntley's most successful events ever, surpassing the prior event attendance record of 207 set at the 2012 opening of a restored Huntley.

Events on this special day included playing with the farm animals (goats,

bunnies, and chickens), making and eating ice cream and butter, taking in the beautiful view from the hilltop after touring the house, finding out "how the Groveton streets got their names" from the students of Groveton Elementary, viewing Civil War displays by John and Nancy Berfield, learning about Green Spring Gardens and Frying Pan Farm Park, and seeing historic photos from Charlotte Brown's *Groveton* and dairy farm artifacts.

Participants also could relive "The Way it Was" through items from FCPA collections once belonging to Margaret "Maggie" Harrison (daughter of Albert W. and Angeline Crane Harrison), who married Norman Gibbs on May 27, 1886, at Huntley. Adding to the atmosphere was Jon Vrana in period attire portraying Albert W. Harrison, a New Jersey farmer and owner of Huntley from 1868-1911. ❖

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## Join Friends of Historic Huntley today!

Support Historic Huntley by joining this group of history- and historic preservation-minded people. Members receive the newsletter, an invitation to a members-only event, and a 10% discount on FOHH merchandise. FOHH is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. Membership dues and contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. With your volunteer efforts and financial support, we can make a difference.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Tel \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ May we email *Huntley Headlines*? \_\_\_\_\_

- \$15 Individual    \$20 Family    \$10 Student/Senior  
 \$150 Lifetime Membership    Additional donation \_\_\_\_\_

New Member    Renewing Member   Total enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

### I'm interested in volunteering in the following area(s):

HH (work with staff at HMP):  Docent  Greeter  Research

FOHH:  Fundraising  Program Planning  Public Relations  Special Events

Send completed form with check payable to *Friends of Historic Huntley* to:  
FOHH, P.O. Box 7241, Alexandria, VA 22307-0241

*Huntley Headlines* is produced by Friends of Historic Huntley, a local citizens group formed to preserve Historic Huntley and related cultural resources through advocacy and education.

**Board of Directors:** Todi Carnes, President • Charles O. Davis, Vice President • Carolyn Gamble, Secretary • Jere Gibber, Treasurer • Erica Hershler, Publicity • Charlotte Brown • Peter Christensen • Harry Glasgow • Stephen F. Kimbel • Patty Young • Susan Escherich and Norma Hoffman, Emeritus • Todi Carnes, HMHOA Representative • Connie Carpender, FOHMP Representative • Bruce Dilks, Woodlawn Faith United Methodist Church Representative

**Advisors:** Barbara Ballentine • C. Richard Bierce, AIA • Susan Hellman • Robbie McNeil

### *Address changes:*

Please send your mailing label with corrections to the address above or to FOHHuntley@aol.com.