

[Back](#)



ABERDEEN MUSEUM REVIEW

Volume II, No. 1, February 1, 2003

OUR NEWSLETTER ~ A link to the past and present. ~

"MYSTERY IN THE HISTORY"

ABERDEEN NAMED BY

EDMUND LAW ROGERS?

"Aberdeen: The Mystery in its History" was examined when Charlotte Garretson Cronin, Aberdeen Museum Curator (whose ancestors in the area date from 1661), gave evidence that Rogers named Aberdeen in his 1852 Village development plat.

Edmund Law Rogers, a Baltimore developer, purchased some 600 acres of Hall's Park from the Hall family after they had failed in their own dream of a development of the area that is now the City of Aberdeen.

Rogers, member of the family who had close relations with Scotland and with Aberdeen, Scotland, selected the name of The Village of Aberdeen for his development of the real estate. He saw an opportunity to make money from the railroad due to their need for water for the steam engines that made 3 stops in the route from Baltimore to Philadelphia.

To this day, Aberdeen has always been a refueling stop, not only for water, but gasoline, lodging and food. The Maryland House at Aberdeen on Interstate 95 continues to be a leading stop from New York to Miami.

When George Harold Baker, Sr. found a plat of the Village of Aberdeen in the attic of his home, (the James B. Baker home at 452 West Bel Air Avenue), he suspected that the tale of a Mr. Winston naming Aberdeen was not correct.

Baker had in his hands a plat dated 1852, drawn by Edmund Law Rogers, that named the complete development of Aberdeen that used Rogers family names for the established streets on the plat and as laid out today.

Who were Mr. Winston and Edmund Law Rogers? Who named Aberdeen?

- 1). Baker, through Clinton Garretson, contacted the Pennsylvania Railroad to research the history of Mr. Winston, who was supposed to be the first railroad station master who named the station beside the first tracks of the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad which ran through the area.**
- 2). The railroad reported no existence of a Mr. Winston. Further, they said, the station stop in their records was known as Halls Cross Roads.**
- 3). Researchers of the Aberdeen Room Museum drew a blank as to the tale of Mr. Winston's naming Aberdeen as well as to any such person.**
- 4). Baker then turned to research the Rogers family. He found a connection in his college fraternity (Kappa Sigma) that there was a Rogers who was a founder of the fraternity, and there was a prominent Rogers family in Baltimore, Maryland. The fraternity supplied him with data on Edmund, Jr. and his father Edmund, Sr.**
- 5). The founder was Edmund Law Rogers, Jr., the father of Edmund, was the developer of the Village of Aberdeen.**
- 6). Mr. Baker had a dream of writing a history of Aberdeen. His death came too soon, however, his papers are in the archives of the Aberdeen Room Archives and Museum, donated by his son, George Harold Baker, Jr.**
- 7). Since the tale of Mr. Winston didn't solve the mystery in the history, the Aberdeen Room Archives took up the "mystery solving" endeavor.**
- 8). Research of the Post Office Department showed that Halls Cross Roads was the name until 1862 when the name of the post office was Aberdeen. The railroad research showed that the letter to Mr. Baker stated that the railroad wasn't known as Aberdeen until the 1850's. "The PW & B Railroad Guide" shows a sketch of a station at Aberdeen in 1856.**
- 9). Herman's map of 1790 shows only Halls Cross Roads. Herrick's map of 1858 shows Aberdeen and Hall's Cross Roads.**
- 10). The Hall family, in an effort to develop their land drew a plat of this area in 1850 to be known as Hall's Park and recorded same.**
- 11). Harford County Land Records indicate in the 1852-53 years that the Halls sold some 600 acres to Edmund Law Rogers and associates. Rogers drew the 1852 plat, discovered by Mr. Baker, restored by the Aberdeen Room Archives, a copy of which hangs on the wall of the Aberdeen Room Museum at 18 North Howard Street.**

Who was Rogers, and why would he use the name "Aberdeen" on his plat? The question, we think, is intermingled by family and Scottish connections.

- 1). Grandfather Nicholas Rogers had school and Scottish ties. May have known Buchanan also from Scotland.**
- 2). The Rogers family had Canada and United States border dealings and also with the arbitrator who later became the Earl of Aberdeen.**
- 3). The Rogers family inherited the property of Dr. George Buchanan known as Druid Hill Park today.**

Continued on page 2

FEBRUARY IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Check out our windows and displays featured this month.

page2 Continued from page 1

"MYSTERY IN THE HISTORY"

Buchanan was born and educated in Scotland. Buchanan moved to Baltimore and married Eleanor Rogers. They had no children and the property passed into the hands of the Rogers family.

4). Edmund Law Rogers, Sr. was born at Druid Hill property, educated at Harvard, had a hobby of architectural design, designed and helped develop Pimlico Race Track where his favorite horse, Preakness, is known today by the race of that name in May of every year. The longest street in Baltimore is known as Rogers Avenue running past the track.

5). Rogers, was in our area of Harford County seeking a water stop for the railroad. He anticipated the potential of the area for development. He took advantage of the misfortunes of the Hall family to purchase the Halls Park which he then changed the name of his development to "Aberdeen."

6). The dates, the records, all the sources at our disposal at this time, would indicate that Rogers named Aberdeen.

On Thursday evening, January 23, 2003, at City of Aberdeen Council Chambers, Charlotte Garretson Cronin as she followed her Heritage lecture, and visuals, she asked the question of the assembled overflowed audience to vote as a jury as to "Who named Aberdeen?"

Having heard the evidence, the jury voted "Edmund Law Rogers."

WE HAD AN EXCITING

CHRISTMAS SEASON

What an exciting holiday season it was. The City streets were enchanting with their greens, bows and lights. Passers-by seemed to acknowledge that their community was in its best party dress.

Local organizations had their own lunches and dinners, schools had their concerts, churches held their beautiful services for one and all.

We want to take this opportunity to thank all those who are responsible for making all our efforts, and those at the Aberdeen Room Archives and Museum, so gratifying.

The Open House on the day of Christmas Street December 7, so many pitched in to help with the many duties and shared their time and resources to make the 15th annual party an outstanding success.

Thanks to Aberdeen Room members: Ann Kelly, Mary-Lynne Livezey, Romaine Morris, Mary Lee Plummer, Genevieve Brubaker, James Lindsey, Lilma Huntley, Anna and Ruth Duguid, George Baker and Chuck Baker, and the entire staff for their help. Special thanks to Klein's, Mars and Aberdeen's Route 40 McDonald's for generous donations of goodies and punch it was the biggest variety of refreshments ever!

For the outstanding music throughout the day, we want to thank Martha Baker McElvoy and guitarist for the Celtic and holiday themes that kept the large attendance to the gathering tapping their feet.

For the large number of guests, we are thankful. Some even brought memorabilia donations! Jon and Mary-Lynne Livezey have contributed a menu from the old Colonel's Choice Restaurant that has now joined the pump room mugs in the display. From the estate of Jane Semone, Jane Curry Hodges brought two fans that were souvenirs from the store of Henry Tarring (one is displayed in the Christmas windows). Dennis Ridell brought to the party a 100-year-old J. M. Michael "My Oakington" can, full of corn! (No, we didn't open the can for the party.)

Although unable to come to Aberdeen, Jack and Gwen Beachboard sent an old postcard of West Bel Air Avenue that shows the Sisk Building and Tarring houses. Jack has since past away.

Thanks go to the Aberdeen City Public Works for decorating the outside of the museum building for the holidays and getting the sidewalks cleared in time for the big day!

On a personal note, Mike Danish added color to our Christmas by adjusting the color on our "antique" TV - we now see green again! He knows so much about television sets and has written another helpful book on TV repair.

Happy New Year!

MUSEUM RECEIVES REMINDERS

OF PAST BUSINESSES

Gone are the days when grocery stores, bakeries and movie theaters adorned the downtown streets of Aberdeen.

It's the way of the times in the nation's towns and cities today to go to shopping centers for these services.

James Lindsey found old invoices that remind us of some old businesses or those that have changed their names over the years - and brought them in for files of Aberdeen businesses at the Aberdeen Room Archives and Museum. Included are the Lumber Yard on South Philadelphia Boulevard and the Colonel's Choice Restaurant, also on South Route 40.

There are remembrances from the Harford National Bank. No, it's still on West Bel Air Avenue, but the "National" has been omitted in the name, now. (Remember when it was Aberdeen National?)

Howard King brought in an Opening Notice of the Pennsylvania Dutch Farmers' Market at the Aberdeen Plaza. He also brought a photo and sales slip from the Opening of the Mars grocery store.

King also brought the program from the Veterans Day Service on November 11, 2002.

From June 17, 1927, William Cronin contributed a booklet about the "Conowingo Hydro Electric Project."

Jim Eustace brought in some photos of the past warm summertime, when he took them of the IronBirds from the sky-box in August of 2002. Oh, those warm warm memories!

Talking about baseball, Mr. And Mrs. Abraham Baker brought in a newspaper clipping from the "Sun" of October 10, 1983 titled "Love Those Birds." what an exciting season for baseball that was! From California, Dean Levitan sent a page from the December 29, 2002 "New York Times" that showed photos of Cal Ripken and his latest endeavors in the game of baseball for youngsters, and how he grew up in Aberdeen. Nick Roumeliotis, for many years, entertained groups of senior citizens, school children, and numerous others with his music. He brought excellent photos of himself

Continued on page 3

page 3 Continued from page 2

REMINDERS OF PAST

as an entertainer to add to other photos of entertainers, pageants and variety shows that were shown in Aberdeen and Harford County.

From Mary Cronin Wolfe are obituaries of John (Jack) Beachboard from the "Washington Post" that she had clipped to be included in obituary files at the Aberdeen Room. He grew up in Aberdeen, graduated from Aberdeen High in 1942, served in the Navy during World War II and later graduated from the University of Maryland. He was employed by NASA until his retirement as an engineer.

A very nostalgic item (when a very young Pat Wilkinson as a student in the Aberdeen Schools wore it during gym classes) amused us. It is a royal blue suit with bloomer elastic legs.

When Brian Simmonds visited we discussed the early computers at the Aberdeen Proving Ground. We remember well when the ENIAC was brought to the Ballistic Laboratory in the 1940's. He later brought the book "50 Years of Army Computing" from the ENIAC to the MSRC that tells the story.

MUSEUM DONATIONS HONOR

AN EARLY COMMUNITY

Bill Boyer, who grew up on his family's farm in Perryman, went to school in Aberdeen and now lives in Street, has remained loyal to Perryman, Aberdeen and the Aberdeen Room. He has given the beautifully framed paintings of "Old Gravelly" farm house, and another one of a more recent Gravelly farm house to the museum.

The notations made on the Old Gravelly log house painting are that it was at Michaelsville, dated 1792, and was owned by Colonel Jacob Jackson Michael, father of Henry Everist Michael. Notations on the newer structure also state the location as Gravelly Farm at Michaelsville which is now Aberdeen Proving Ground. It was owned by Henry Everist Michael who died in 1858. His son, George Washington Michael lived in the house until his death in 1912.

This information may be very familiar to those who have families with roots in the area, but it probably would help us to go back to what the historians have had to say about Gravelly.

C. Milton Wright, in his "Our Harford Heritage," states that, "Gravelly in St. Georges Parish is thought to be in existence as early as 1671 (page 57). The first church organized on Harford County soil was located in what was later the 2nd District at a place called Gravelly. It was near the old town of Michaelsville, a few miles south of Perryman, and now a part of APG. The definite spot of the first church with the old graveyard is now completely obliterated, but Gravelly inhabitants have definitely fixed the site as near the "Church Bridge" named from the church there. No record of the structure of this edifice has been recorded, but it is presumed to have been built of wood and continued for 40 years."

"There is no doubt that it was at Gravelly in 1681, as in that year the church registry shows the "Children of John Cooke were baptized in Bush River Neck."

Spesutia Episcopal Church was organized at Gravelly, near Michaelsville in 1671. It was moved to Perryman in 1718. The third building (third on the site), was erected in 1851.

In many interesting conversations with friend and a 1938 Aberdeen High School graduate, Bill Boyer, he likes to relate that his grandparents were married in Garrettson's Chapel in Michaelsville. From our own family records, we know that the land was deeded for the first of two Garrettson's Chapels in 1790 to the "people called Methodists," on the east side of the great road from Bush River to Swan Creek near Red Lion Bridge, by Freeborn Garrettson.

Going to Catherine Taylor's history of Perryman, we read, "To the southeast of Perryman was Michaelsville - a little self-contained community in that it had a general store, an undertaker, a post-office at one time, a colored church - which was the forerunner of Union Church at Swan Creek, Garrettson's Church, and a farm called Gravelly which was the site of the First Episcopal Church leading to establishment of Spesutia Church."

Joseph Lee Hughes, who lived on the road to Perryman, wrote a "History of Drew's Enlargement, Bush River Neck in Harford County" in 1942. We can remember his conferences with our father while he was writing the history.

All of these histories are in the vertical files at the Aberdeen Room for the Perryman and Michaelsville area. Also are copies of early Perryman newspapers called the "Perryman Herald"

published by Michael, Keen & Co. in the spring of 1888 - a "Bright, new paper." It seems the publisher had a dry goods and notions store with "groceries almost given away." Also in the files are pictures of Perryman School in 1905 that included names like Mitchell, McGuigan, Stier, Porter, Cole and Tredick. A more recent newspaper of May 15, 1988 of "Enterprise" related the account of "Restoration of the St. George's Vestry House," spearheaded by Mary-Lynne Livezey.

It seems that we have gotten a bit caught up in the early history of the area that Bill Boyer's donations invoked. As we said before, he was raised on the family farm in the Perryman area, but no longer lives there. In the Boyer family file, we have family history with pictures of the home on Bush River where William, Henry and Oliver, Jr. were born.

The land's current owner, Baltimore Gas and Electric Co., purchased the Boyer Farm and several other tracts in 1966 with plans to build a nuclear power plant there - plans that fell through.

BOY SCOUT TROOP 200 VISITED

Eddie Klein, Matthew Schachte, Jimmy Pritts, Daniel Oldland, Brandon Collier, Ryan Groleau and Mrs. Cathy Pritts Committee Member for Troop 200 at St. Joan of Arc toured the Aberdeen Room on January 27, as part of a scout citizenship project. They also visited Mayor Douglas Wilson at his office and took in a City Council meeting as part of their busy day.

"See You On The Boulevard In Aberdeen"

Articles Written by Charlotte and William Cronin

Newsletter Edited by Jim Lindsey

Copyright © 2003 Aberdeen Room Archives & Museum

[Back](#)