

# MUSEUM MEMOS

Mt. Airy Museum Newsletter



VOLUME 8 NUMBER 2

May 2008

## The President's Pen

*Mike Eacho*

Once again the Mount Airy Museum is open for visitors. Thanks to several of our Historical Society members it has new displays of items and photographs that remind us of our town's past. We encourage you all to come visit the museum and reminisce and to share your memories with other people in town. We also encourage you to spread the word of our museum to other people in town. Bring your guests down to take a look.

This year, so far, we have had two dens from the Cub Scout pack and a group from the Girl Scout troop visit the museum. The young folks asked terrific questions and showed a lot of enthusiasm. They were very much interested in the history of the town and the people who lived and live here.

As always, thanks to all the volunteers who have helped keep the Historical Society of Mount Airy running. Without your help, we could not open the museum and display the items that so many people have donated.

## Welcome New Members

The Historical Society would like to extend a welcome to the following new members:

Ruth Ann Browning Benson	Ken & Pat Hood
Faith & Bob Arrington	Kaye Kolb
Dr. & Mrs. Dean Griffin	Lewis Lubick

We would also like to welcome back all of our renewed and life members whose support the Historical Society is so dependent upon.

E-mail us at: [mountairyhistoricalsociety@earthlink.net](mailto:mountairyhistoricalsociety@earthlink.net)

## Maryland Senior Citizens Hall of Fame

This year the Historical Society of Mount Airy, MD has nominated three very deserving Mount Airy residents for the Maryland Senior Citizens Hall of Fame. Our three nominees are: Joan Collins, Arlene Runkles, and Helen Simpson.

Nominees who are selected for induction will be presented at the annual awards luncheon on Oct. 23 at Michaels Eighth Avenue in Glen Burnie.

Hopefully, these three very special ladies will join Oscar Baker who was inducted into the Maryland Senior Citizens Hall of Fame last year on October 25, and Lee Fogle who received this honor in 1994.

The Maryland Senior Citizens Hall of Fame (MSCHF) was organized in 1987 to honor residents of Maryland, age 60 or over, who have made an outstanding contribution to improve the lives of others in their community. Up to 50 nominees are honored every year.

Read the nomination endorsements for our nominees on page 3.

## Historical Society Meetings

As we do every year, the Historical Society will take the summer off. There will be no meetings in June, July, and August. The next scheduled meeting of the Historical Society of Mount Airy will be September 2 at 7pm in the lower level of the Mount Airy Fire Company. We hope everyone has a very pleasant and safe summer.

**The Mount Airy Museum is open every Friday and Saturday from 12 noon until 4pm. Come visit and enjoy photographs and memorabilia from Mount Airy's past. The Museum is located in the Flat Iron Building at the corner of Main Street and Park Avenue.**

## **The History of the Ridgeville Nurseries, Inc.**

In 1903 Mr. Jesse P. King founded the business, growing plants in a lean-to greenhouse attached to his home. Mr. King's small business started as a hobby. In 1904 Mr. King built his first greenhouse with the help of Mr. Asa H. Watkins. As cut flower and plant sales increased, more greenhouses were built on the north side of Frederick Pike.

In 1916 because of the increasing demand for cut flowers and plant sales, two greenhouses were built on the north side of Frederick Pike. In 1917 more greenhouses were built to accommodate the demand for cut flowers and plants sold to florists in Western Maryland, Southern Pa., Northern Virginia, and West Virginia.

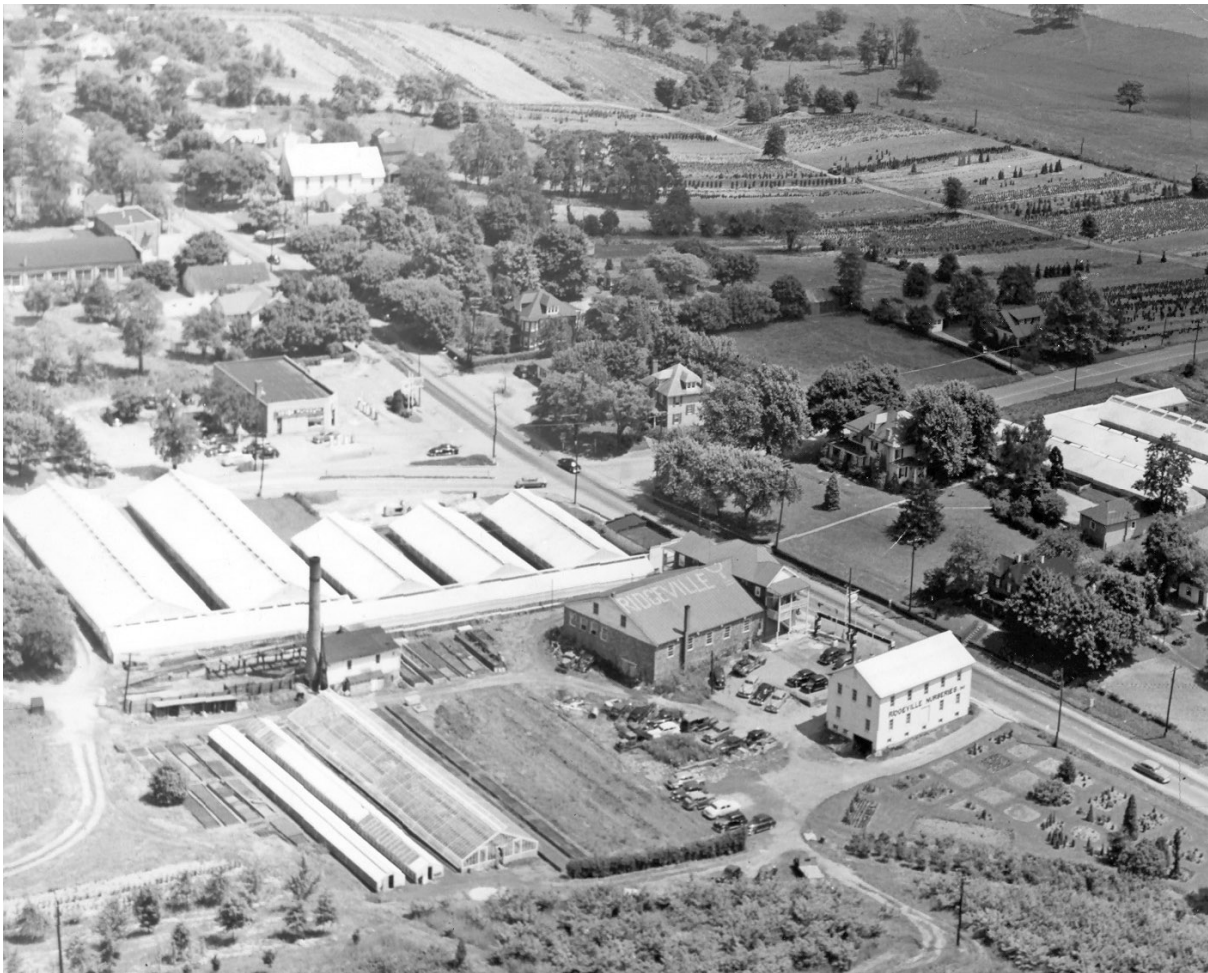
During the year 1922 a nursery department was added to Ridgeville Nurseries and this branch of the business likewise doubled itself many times. At this time greenhouse space had increased to 73,000 sq. feet of space and 32 men were employed.

During the spring of 1930 Mr. King was hospitalized. At this time, having no children, he felt that provisions should be made to enable the business to carry on successfully after his demise. With this thought in mind the incorporation was carried out.

The new corporation, known as Ridgeville Nurseries, Inc., was formed September 6, 1930 by Jesse P. King, Hubert P. Burdette, Jerry L. Burdette, Ira D. Watkins, and Asa H. Watkins. The new corporation elected Jesse P. King, President and Manager, Ira D. Watkins, Vice President, Hubert P. Burdette, Secretary, Jerry L. Burdette, Treasurer, and Asa H. Watkins, Director. After the death of Mr. Jerry L. Burdette in January of 1933, Asa H. Watkins succeeded Mr. Jerry L. Burdette as Treasurer.

By the end of World War II, Mr. King's health grew worse, so several changes in the operations and personnel in the corporation were made to lessen the burden for Mr. King. Then, in Sept. 1947 Mr. King sold his interest in the corporation.

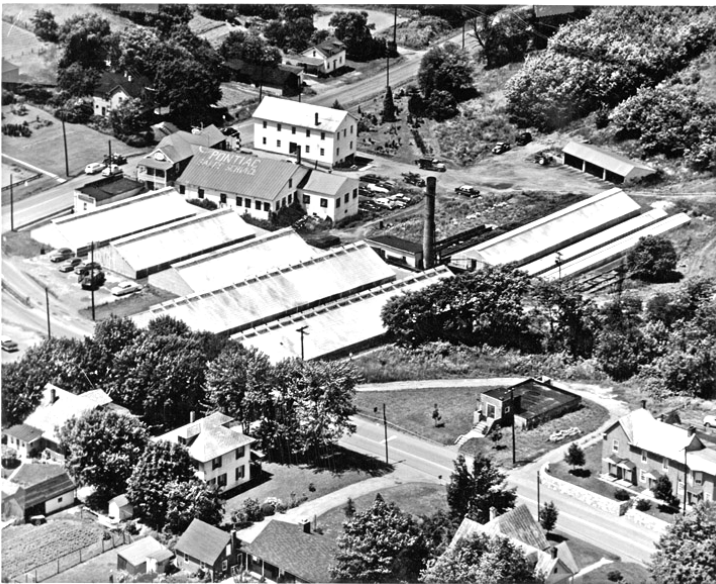
Continued on next page



**Ridgeville Nurseries, Inc.**

## The History of the Ridgeville Nurseries, Inc. (Continued)

On September 23, 1947 a special stockholders meeting was called with Vice President, Ira D. Watkins presiding. Mr. Watkins presented Mr. King, who made the following statement: "Having sold my entire interest in the Ridgeville Nurseries, Inc. to Mr. Hubert P. Burdette, I would like to remise for a moment, if I may. I started this business back in 1903. Through the years I've seen this business grow to what it is today. Due to failing health, I could no longer execute the duties as your President and Manager. I had to do one of two things to relieve myself of worries that I have experienced lately; die, or sell. I sold. I want to see this business continue to grow, and I know it will. With Hubert P. Burdette at the wheel, it will prosper."



Mr. Hubert P. Burdette made the following statement, in part, having assumed the responsibility, of managing the affairs of this corporation: "It is my intentions to see that this business continues to operate successfully and profitably. I would like for the present members of the board Messrs. Ira D. Watkins, Asa H. Watkins, and Mrs. Vivia C. Burdette to continue to serve with me on the board. I want you to elect me president and general manager to succeed Mr. King. I desire that Mr. Ira D. Watkins continue as vice president, and Mr. Asa H. Watkins as treasurer. I also desire you elect Samuel R. Steel secretary to succeed me. Also name him assistant manager. At a later date, I may ask you to elect Mr. Steel a director. I will see that he gets some stock."

The board of directors elected Mr. Burdette president and general manager to succeed Mr. King and Samuel R. Steel secretary to succeed Mr. Burdette and appointed him as assistant manager.

It was on April 8, 1949 that the board of directors authorized the sale of some stock to employees wanting stock. On July 1, 1949 stock was issued to Kenneth E. Burdette, Samuel R. Steel, Gaver Fleming, Pearl C. Dwyer, and Frank P. Fritz. At the annual meeting held July 8, 1949, Kenneth E. Burdette and Samuel R. Steel were elected directors.

Mr. Gaver Fleming was elected director July 1951. In 1951 the corporation bought the land in Howard County known as "the farm". With the coming of the new U.S. 40 right-of-way, this land was acquired by the State Road Commission in 1952. Sale of the old soil field property was made in 1954. The Dorsey property on the Watersville Road was purchased in 1953. The filling station property was acquired in 1955 and the building was finished in 1956.

At the annual meeting July 9, 1954 Kenneth E. Burdette, first Vice President, reported the stealing of nursery stock in Howard County. It was suggested that a house be built and rent it to some person to look after our interest. This house was completed in 1955.

In October 1957 due to the failing health of Mr. Hubert P. Burdette, Kenneth E. Burdette assumed the general managership of the company. Then, on August 14, 1958, Mr. Hubert P. Burdette resigned as President due to his disability, and recommended the following changes in the officers in the Corporation:

- Chairman of the Board - Hubert P. Burdette
- President - Kenneth E. Burdette
- First Vice President - Mrs. Louise H. Burdette
- Second Vice President - Ira D. Watkins
- Secretary and Manager - Samuel R. Steel
- Treasurer - Asa H. Watkins.

Also, Mr. Burdette recommended that Mrs. Burdette be elected to the Board of Directors. These officers served the corporation until the death of Mr. Hubert, P. Burdette in April 1962 and the death of Mrs. Louise H. Burdette in October 1964. In November 1964 Mr. Roger Burdette was elected to the Board and later to Executive Vice President and General Manager.

## Maryland Senior Citizen Hall of Fame Nominees

This year the Historical Society of Mount Airy, MD with the help of Mason Wilburn and Sandy Dutterer has nominated three very deserving Mount Airy residents for the Maryland Senior Citizens Hall of Fame. Our three nominees are: Joan Collins, Arlene Runkles, and Helen Simpson. For those of you who may not be familiar with the good works of our nominees, excerpts of their nomination endorsement letters are included below.

### Joan Collins

The Historical Society of Mount Airy is proud to endorse the nomination of Josephine "Joan" Collins for the Maryland Senior Citizen Hall of Fame. She has been an active member of the American Legion Auxiliary Unit for over 15 years and served as the Unit Chaplain for 10 of those years. She is known for going



above and beyond her duties as Chaplain with follow-up contacts to ill members and families of deceased members. Joan is also an active member of the Mount Airy Kiwanis Club and served on their history committee.

She closes each of their meetings with an inspirational message. She has served on the administrative board of the Calvary United Methodist Church, here in Mount Airy, and was involved with its expansion program. She is a member of the O.W.L.S., the older adult ministry group at Calvary United Methodist Church. Joan has done so much to make the Town of Mount Airy a nicer place for people to live that she was nominated and inducted into the Mount Airy Hall of Fame in 2004.

### Arlene Runkles

The Historical Society of Mount Airy is proud to endorse the nomination of Arlene Runkles for the Maryland Senior Citizen Hall of Fame. Arlene is well known in this town having taught music at Mount Airy High School, Mount Airy Middle School and Mount Airy Elementary School. Arlene was choir director at Calvary Methodist Church for nearly 20 years. She played for the Cherub Choir and the Prayer and Healing Service. Other church involvement included being a

Sunday School member, pianist for Sunday School, and a member of the Older Adult Ministry.

For many, many years she traveled weekly to the Pleasant View Nursing Home, first visiting guests on a one-to-one basis and then providing music for the residents. She also gave her time taking others to the doctors and hospitals for treatments. Arlene has been a member of the Mount Airy Garden Club, the Mount Airy Ki-Wives, and member and secretary of the WSCS (Women's Society for Christian Service). She is a great promoter and role model of physical fitness to people of all ages. Arlene has done so much to make the Town of Mount Airy a nicer place for people to live that she was named Mount Airy's Outstanding Person of the Year in 1998. She was also nominated and inducted into the Mount Airy Hall of Fame in 2003.



### Helen Simpson

The Historical Society of Mount Airy is proud to endorse the nomination of Helen Simpson for the Maryland Senior Citizen Hall of Fame. She formed the Mount Airy Players in 1964. In the beginning a play group was formed to raise funds for the PTA in the early 1960's. Over the years she acted, directed and prepared costumes for the group. The latter she did for almost 40 years. She remains on the Player's board of directors. She penned the play which was performed at the Mount Airy Centennial Banquet. She directed numerous plays including children's Christmas plays and adult Easter dramas for Calvary United Methodist Church. She has also served Calvary as lay leader, Sunday school teacher, youth counselor, historian, communion steward and president of the United Methodist Women.



#### OFFICERS

Mike Eacho, President  
Pete Bowlus, Vice-President  
B. J. Dixon, Secretary

Pat Norwood, Treasurer

### Volunteers Needed

The Historical Society of Mount Airy, Maryland is making an effort to open the Mount Airy Museum every Friday and Saturday from 12pm until 4pm. This is only possible thanks to the efforts of our members who have volunteered their time to open the museum and attend to our visitors while it is open. To continue opening the museum at these times we need your help.

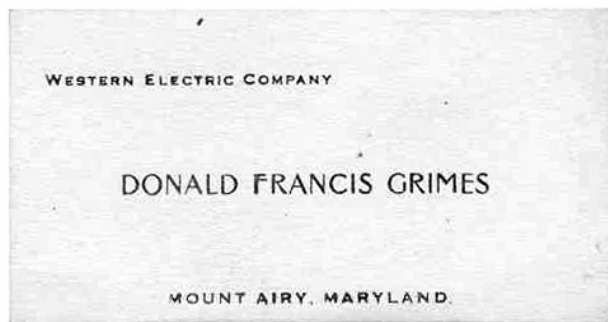
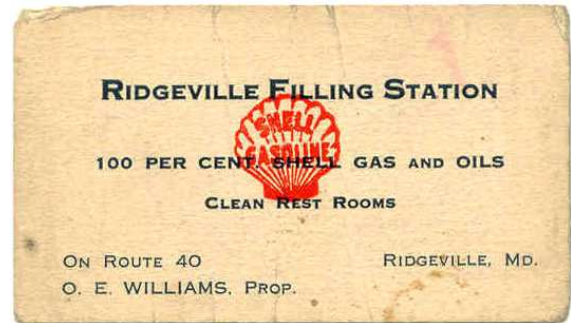
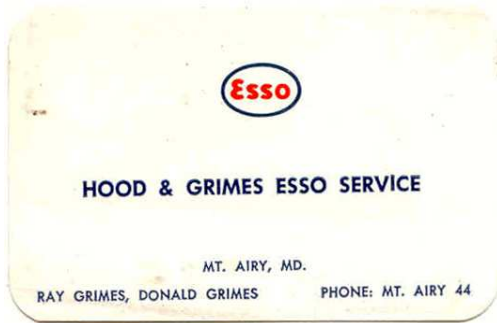
If you have some time to spare or can make some time on Friday or Saturday afternoons, please contact Ruth Ann Lowman or one of the officers of the Historical Society and let us know.

### May Meeting

At the monthly meeting of the Historical Society, elections for the board of directors for the Historical Society were held. Oscar Baker made a motion that the existing officers be reinstated for another year and the motion was unanimously approved by those members in attendance.

Following the elections, Nancy Norwood gave an interesting presentation about the Rimbey family.

Remember these businesses:



### Thanks

The Historical Society of Mount Airy, Maryland wishes to thank the individuals and businesses who have made donations since the mailing of our last newsletter. These donations will be used to pay for normal expenses such as, newsletter printing and mailing, and printing of brochures and cards that describe historical buildings in Mount Airy. These donations will also help us to fund the purchase of archival preservation materials such as photograph storage sleeves, folders and storage boxes. The individuals and businesses that have made donations to the Historical Society since February are:

- |                           |                    |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Arthur J. Brett           | Carole Lee Garrett |
| Margaret Ann Fritz        | Andrew Mason       |
| Ruth Ann Lowman           | Audrey Wolfe       |
| Arnie & Sis Ogren         | Edward Schaible    |
| Frank & Denise Dertzbaugh | Dane Runkles       |
| Clarice Runkles           | Virginia Linton    |
| SK Printing, Inc.         | Evelyn Burdette    |
| Ridgeville Service Center |                    |

## Historical Memories from Fifty Years Ago

*Compiled by Althea Miller*

The information for these Historical Memories was compiled from articles in the April, May and June 1958 "Community Reporter" Newspaper. The late L. Pearce Bowlus was the Editor for over 35 years. The newspaper was the main source of information for Mount Airy residents and surrounding areas from November 29, 1929 until the last issue on July 1, 1983.

- ❖ Starritt Holmes, operator of Holmes Tire Service, Ridgeville, was awarded a \$500 vacation by the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co. for having sold over the quota for 1957. (4/4/58)
- ❖ School notes: Mrs. Evaleen Moxley began her duties as secretary in the elementary-junior high building replacing Mrs. Barbara Hansberger.
- ❖ Third (in a series) polio shots were given on Monday afternoon to pupils in both buildings. Approximately 200 pupils received the injections in a two hour period. (4/4/58)
- ❖ Received into membership at Calvary Methodist Church on Palm Sunday were: Barbara Browning, Carol Colburn, Sandra Cullison, Diane Day, Terri Sheets, Ricky Clower, Ronnie Clower and Ronnie Windsor. (4/4/58)
- ❖ Good Friday service was held at Calvary Methodist Church from 12:00-3:00. Local ministers spoke on the seven last words. Soloists were: Brenda Hahn, Mrs. Marian Runkles and Delaine Hobbs. (4/4/58)
- ❖ Hood's General Store (one of the oldest in Mount Airy) has been sold to Mr. and Mrs. Latimer Watkins. The Watkins will move their Five and Ten Cent Store to this location in May. (This building now houses Ben Gue's). (4/4/58)
- ❖ Lindsay L. Browning celebrated his 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in the grocery business in Mount Airy. During this time Browning took 2 trips to Baltimore each week to purchase fresh groceries. Carlos Warfield worked with Browning since 1933 and Chloe Warfield since 1937. Many young people worked in the store after school and on Saturdays, including Robert Browning, Harry Bushey, Ralph Yingling, Allie Browning, Lindsay Browning, Brian Wedler, William Merrick, Buddy Yingling, Meredith Moxley, Norman Murray, Rudell Watkins, John Hershey, Elliott Clary, Larry Norris, Ghaile Kline, William Day, Stanley Lare, Earl Kline, Leroy Hansberger, Archie Haansburger, Wayne Norwood, Winfred Winkler, Mark Coale, Albert Harrison, Shirley Harrison and Eddie Browning. (4/11/58)
- ❖ Births included: Robin Gosnell daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Gosnell on April 7, Terri Crout to State Trooper and Mrs. John Crout on April 7 and Judy Gosnell to Mr. and Mrs. Webster Gosnell on April 8. (4/11/58)
- ❖ Robert E. Biddinger was awarded a \$1200 Engineering Scholarship to the University of Virginia. (4/18/58)
- ❖ C. Rodgers Topper, owner of Tops Market began collecting Indian Head pennies in 1930. Having collected 2000, in 1932 he used them to pay a hospital bill. Born and reared in Emmitsburg, he came to Mound Airy in 1935 as manager of the A & P Store. He resumed his active interest in his hobby after opening his own business in 1950. (4/18/58)
- ❖ The Rev. Victor Ross, rector of St. James' Episcopal Church, resigned in order to accept a call to be rector of Emmanuel Church and chaplain of Stuart Hall Episcopal School for Girls in Staunton, Virginia. (4/18/58)
- ❖ Virginia Condon has been chosen as the Mount Airy delegate to Girls State, a citizenship Training project of the American Legion. (4/18/58)
- ❖ The ballot for officers for the PTA is: President—Oscar Baker; Vice President—Dorothy Day and Doris Rust; Secretary—Frances Cullison and Audrey Ogle and Treasurer—Harry Clower and Chester Elder. Ballots will be mailed to members. Results will be announced at the next business meeting. (4/18/58)

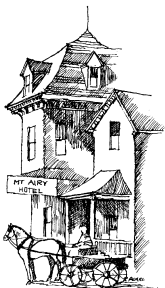
## Historical Memories from Fifty Years Ago (Continued)

- ❖ Mr. and Mrs. William Wagner, son, Tommy, and Everett Runkles motored to Nashville, Tennessee to visit Capt. and Mrs. Sam Jewell and family last week. While there the boys went to the Grand Ole Opry.
- ❖ Pearl Gendell, engraver, advertised “Mother’s Day bracelets” in silver or gold. A wide variety of charms are suitable for engraving. Call 301 evenings from 7 to 9 and Saturdays from 9 to 6. (5/2/58)
- ❖ H.P. Burdette and Son, Realtors, advertised several houses for sale in and around Mount Airy, i.e., 7 rm. House w/ ½ acre, bath and furnace--\$8500; 6 rm. house w/ large lot, heat and bath--\$12,500; new 3 bedroom ranch house, heat and bath--\$19,950. Call 42-M (5/2/58)
- ❖ Ridgeville Nurseries advertises rose bushes for \$2.00, 6 for \$11.00 and \$21.00 per dozen. Phone 40 (5/2/58)
- ❖ Frank Horpel, with 94 votes, defeated Dr. Carl VanPoole who received 88 votes, for mayor. Councilmen elected were: Paul Beall (122) for a 4 year term, Leonard Sherman (145) for a 4 year term and Carl Smith (121) for a 2 year term. (5/9/58)
- ❖ A certificate of appreciation was awarded to Kaye Kolb of Mount Airy and Charles Clarke of Westminster, radio announcers of Radio Station WTTR, in recognition for outstanding service to the US Navy Recruiting Service. (5/9/58)
- ❖ Marie Norwood and Ronnie Yeager reigned as Queen and King in the annual Student Council sponsored May Court. Charlotte Mays and Winfred Winkler were Princess and Prince. Other members of the court were: Bettie Moore, Robert Dunn, Faith Walton, George Warfield, Carolyn Kirn and James Bowlus. Crown bearers were first graders: Donna Norwood, Clarice Runkles, Douglas Alexander and Jeffrey King. (5/23/58)
- ❖ Earl Kline was recognized for completing 12 years of school (2,177 days) with perfect attendance. This was the first time in the history of Mount Airy High School that a 12 year perfect attendance record has been recorded. (6/6/58)
- ❖ Local Kiwanians observed Charter Night at Peter Pan Inn with 150 in attendance. Ivan Colburn, president, welcomed the guests. (6/6/58)
- ❖ Mr. and Mrs. Robert Molesworth announced the birth of a daughter, Kimberly Ann, on May 1<sup>st</sup>. Mr. and Mrs. James Taylor announced their second child, a son, James David on May 26. (6/6/58)
- ❖ Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Burdette are the parents of their 5<sup>th</sup> child, third son, Steven Andrew on June 7. (6/13/58)
- ❖ The Jones Motor, Inc. announced the distribution of Top Value Stamps for valuable merchandise prizes. Stamps were given on gas, lubrications, oil, tires, batteries and accessories. (6/12/58)
- ❖ B.S. Dorsey Co. advertised a mattress and box springs for \$34.50 each and 9 X 12 linoleum rugs for \$11.95. (6/13/58)
- ❖ Mary Jane Twenty and John Edgar Fleming were married on June 6 at Prospect Methodist Church. (6/20/58)
- ❖ Andrew W. Mason replaced Jesse L. Starkey as principal of Mount Airy High School. Starkey has accepted a position in Calvert County. (6/27/58)
- ❖ The July meeting of AFB Class of Calvary Methodist Church will be a picnic supper at the Roy Knill farm. Mrs. Robert Strine is the class president. (6/27/58)

***Join the Historical Society of Mount Airy, Maryland***

Name: _____ Address: _____ _____ City, State, Zip: _____ Telephone: _____ Email Address: _____	<b>Membership Type</b>				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Student \$5.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$15.00			
<input type="checkbox"/> Family \$25.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Life/Individual \$250.00				
<input type="checkbox"/> New	<input type="checkbox"/> Renewal				
	<b>I would like to help</b>				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Museum Host(ess)	Museum Exhibits	Fund Raising	Data Entry	Other	

Please make checks payable to: The Historical Society of Mount Airy, MD, Inc. P.O. Box 244 Mount Airy, MD 21771



The Historical Society of Mount Airy, Maryland  
 P.O. Box 244  
 Mount Airy, Maryland 21771