

Bryce Workman

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Isaac Richardson Atlee came down to Maryland some place, let's say in the 1780s. We know he was here in the 1790s because he purchased a piece of property here, a tract called, or a piece of a tract called the Five Daughters. And what attracted him to the area was that there were crossroads here. Now we're not exactly sure where those crossroads are but they were in this vicinity. And he could see the traffic that was coming. It was the Monocacy Road and the Buffalo Road, and he could see the traffic that was coming up and down those roads. And he figured this was a good place to set up a stagecoach type stop where he could serve food, drink and board people for the night, and that's what initially attracted him here. And after he started investigating his property he found that there were springs there down at the bottom of what was then Bath Street—now it's called Main Street. And he set up a boarding house of some sort. We're not sure where that was either because none of the records seem to identify it. Tradition has it was down near High and Main but I'm convinced that's not where it was at because those buildings, those lots were empty all the way—I think the first building there was in 1815 where the inn is.

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And he saw the traffic being generated on these crossroads and when he bought the property he found there were three springs down at the foot of what was then Bath Street—now it's called Main. And he started having tourists come to partake of the sulfur waters that were in those springs. They were supposed to be good for you at that time. And a lot of springs in the other states opened up at the same time and people would get their water to drink and to bathe. Mainly not their drinking water per se cause they had a well right here in town right at the crossroads at Bath and High where you could get your drinking water. But this became very famous, in fact he advertised in Baltimore and Philadelphia. And people came out to partake of the waters.

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Atlee came here...he actually bought the property in 1795. And in 1796 he had it laid out as a town, a European-style town, where you have a crossroads and four quadrants. And that was warranted to 1797 but it had been laid out earlier and he started selling lots. His selling of lots was kind of a strange setup because what he did was he would put basically a ground rent to it, actually a ground rent. And he classified it kind of like I'm renting you the property and you pay me these ground rents and you had to build a house that was 20 x 20 for two stories within...depending some said one year, some said three years. I know one was three months. And also on the very beginning he must have dug the well out here where the pump was because they were stipulating that you could not drill your own well, or dig your own well. And he started selling through here, he sold at the crossroads here, and he worked his way up to the south...he kept the first lot, lot #1 which is on the left-hand side down at the foot of the hill and four lots, bottom lots on the other side. Now they were closer to the spring, so I'm sure that was the reason for it. The rest of them he started selling off up through here all through...1796 he sold the first one

across the road to a store. That place became known as the Ark Store later. And it was so named because they supposedly had two of everything. And then he sold up through here and then they started splitting the lots and all of the buildings up through this side are actually split lots in the old part of town. Now the other side they didn't split them. For instance...this was lot nine, the lot next door was eight, and the end down was seven and six; there were two lots. And then they split eight and it was split a number of times. And then this is nine, like I said, and half of this is this building and the other half of nine is the bank next door or that part of the bank.

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The building next door to this one was the original bank. It was started in 1864. The building itself first shows up about 1835 I believe. And then in 1878 they built a duplex which is next door to us and a bank and a drugstore housed that. And in 1915 they built the present bank, and the drugstore took over the whole building there before they went out of business; actually they didn't go out of business they moved to Union Bridge. The bank took over the old bank and expanded into it.

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Most of the first settlers were of German descent. In the northwest part of town here they're was a lot of German settlers. George Franz Winter was one of the early ones here and he brought in a lot of Germans from Pennsylvania who spread out through the country.

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Well most of culture I guess was of German origin because most of them were of German descent. Like you had Roops...Schneiders. That's just two that I can think of off the top of my head, and Shmeltzer was another one. It was just good farm land, good rich farm land. And then when the railroad came in 1862 it really started booming because now they could ship their produce out and bring in supplies.

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The town has always been named New Windsor. In fact the warrant for the town, which is the deed, calls it the town of...this is to warrant the town of New Windsor. Now it got known as Sulfur Springs because of the springs and also sometimes they would call it Spring Town but the name is officially New Windsor.

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The town did grow some from the people coming. They were transients. They would come in and spend the summer and then they would go home and a lot of people kept returning year after year. But the town itself was wealthy farmers that owned a lot of land around here. In fact, there's still some sizable pieces around. Of course, there's the Smith family that owns a large chunk north of here. The Hubert family owns another large tract kind of northwest of here, who have been here since the 1700s.

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The products that they grew...they did a lot of canning. In fact there were a lot of canneries around here. They canned vegetables, tomatoes mainly, they grew corn. And of course the town had a big beef trade. They had stockyards down here at the railroad track and they would ship and receive beef through there.

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The traffic that was on the roads around here were usually going from Philadelphia or Baltimore out to the west to Monocacy. Back in the days when this was Prince George's County, the county had been broken into what they called "hundreds." And one of these hundreds was called Monocacy which was out there in Frederick now and one of the roads was called the Monocacy Road. It went from Philadelphia all the way out to Monocacy Hundred. And the other one was a road they called Buffalo Road. And tradition has it that the government was building a road from Washington to Buffalo, New York. I seriously doubt that because the road did not start until, well actually it started prior to Washington being a place.

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And I personally think it was probably a path, actually Buffalo path from eastern Buffalo migrating north and south and they just widened it and turned it into a traffic zone.

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New Windsor, originally the road...Buffalo Road went from what is now High Street but it went down to Rt. 407 which is outside of Marsden. From there it went down to Marsden and from Marsden it went down to Sam's Creek Road and then on down...we know as far as Mt. Airy. And there was no road that went directly over towards Frederick. So what they did in 1816 they built a toll road down at the foot of the hill down what was Bath Street, up over, it tied into to what was at that time Old Liberty Road. Now that's new Liberty Road that we know now as Rt. 26. This was an old road that run further north and wandered all over the country going towards Libertytown.

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Since there were no roads between here and Frederick, they decided they were going to cut a toll road through. And they started down at the bottom of the hill here and it went over across and tied in to where Oak Orchard Road is now. In fact, part of the original toll road is still there. And the bridge across Sam's Creek is still there.

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Originally there were four toll gates. But I'm not sure if there was a swing gate, there probably was, I've never seen one or heard any reference to one, but a swing gate. Number one toll gate was up here at the top of Hawktail Road; it's still there. It's been converted into a house now. In fact behind me is the toll board from that toll gate. The second one was down at Sam's Creek and it's still standing; it's a little stone building. And that toll gate, toll board rather is still existing also. And then there's of course the road went across the creek on a little twin arch road...bridge, a little stone bridge with a

brick-faced top and up over the hills and finally like I said tied in where Oak Orchard comes out. In fact still that section of thing is called Toll Road yet.

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If you went down here to Church Street, follow Church Street straight on out and at the top of the hill is a little blue building across from...actually it's a house, across from Hawks Hill Road. And that's number one. Then if you go on 31 say down...or you can go on down that road also until the end of it where it ties into 31. Go down, take Sam's Creek Road to the right and there's a, after a couple of curves, there's a little brick, I mean a little stone building, on the right sitting on a hill. In the driveway to the house on the left is the old toll road. And it goes down and crosses a little twin arch bridge there.

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Each traveler was charged on the toll road depending on what they were driving or carrying. If it was a single horse they were riding, I think it was a penny and then if it was a horse and wagon it maybe was two cents, and it went on up from there. And it depended on far you were going on the road. If you got in down here and went the whole route it would usually be maybe four cents say. If you went half way then you were charged accordingly. And they charged everything. The rate board shows that they covered all the wagons, even driving stock. If you'd drive a herd of cattle down there you got charged by the head. And if you had a herd of sheep or a flock of sheep...so the rate board told you what all your charges would be and you would pay at each toll road when you got there.

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New Windsor was affected by the Civil War on several levels. Number one was in '61 when the war started Calvert College which is up here at the upper level of Main Street Now most of the students were from down south and they all went south to join the army in their states. In fact so many of them left and then the others went to the Union army that they had to close down the college. They finally went out of business in '66 although it wasn't sold until '72 because it was used by other people after the war but it was never the same. And there's always in 1863 when the Union army came through town on its way to Gettysburg. There was a young girl down here at Mrs. Clevish's boarding school down here on High Street named Maggie Marin who kept a diary. And she records the fact that the wagons went through town, and the soldiers were marching through town all day long. In fact, she states that there were two of them that had died on the way that are buried down there at the Presbyterian church.

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And I guess the most excitement in town in '64 when General Bradley T. Johnson came through town with 500 Confederate cavalry. They were on their way to raid Westminster and in going up what was Bath Street, Johnson spied this woman that he knew from before the war. And he wanted to know if she was living here, and she said, "Yes." He said, "I want to make your house my headquarters." So the house up here was the Bale House...in fact it's just a couple of doors up and across the street from here. And while they were there talking the Confederates were going rampaging through town because

they lacked everything. They needed shoes, they needed clothes, they needed food. And her husband run a general store right across the road from the house, and the Confederates were in there ransacking it. So she asked him, "Please can you put some men on my husband's store so they don't take everything that he's got?" So Johnson did, he posted guards that stopped them from raiding the store. So they moved down the road to High Street to another store down here and they raided it. The ironic thing about it was though was the woman's husband was a Unionist and the other store was a Confederate sympathizer. So the wrong side got raided.

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Most of the time when they came into something like that they generally behaved rather civilly. But then there were times when especially if you were on the other side of the territory, I mean if they were Confederates they were in Union territory, so you know so the spoils of war. And the Union did the same thing they went south when they raided everything.

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There were a number of black people in New Windsor at the time but I haven't run across anything denoting slaves in town. I don't think that was a common thing. In fact there were a lot of free blacks in town and one of the most notable new ones was a gentleman by the name of Simon Murdoch. Now Murdoch had joined the army and he was in the Fourth U.S. Colored Troops and when he was discharged he came back to town and him and a couple others started the first school for black children.

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And they started in town somewhere—where we haven't been able to ascertain yet. But they moved into a building up on the outside of town on Rt. 31 and they had the lower story of a two-story building. The top story was a lodge hall and the kids went to school on the first floor during the day and on Sundays the Strawbridge Church Methodist Church held services up there.

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And there's a story about one Saturday night they had an exceptionally good time that some of them were still hanging around Sunday morning and it interrupted the services down below with the noise they were making.

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The name of the lodge was the Independent Order of Good Samaritans. It's associated with the Masons.

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In 1862 when the Western Maryland railroad came through town, the town had been growing at a steady pace up to that time. It actually been incorporated in 1843 but it was just a steady growth and that was accelerated when the railroad came to town. Cause now they could bring in the supplies, bring in anything that they needed, and ship out their own produce. As far as the war went there was no troops that I know of that came

through town. Now there was a place in Union Bridge, in fact they still call it the "hospital track," where troops were brought down wounded, were brought down on a train and taken through New Windsor. Nothing was actually shipped here by the army.

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Well the fact that the railroad coincided with the war, after the war it just started expanding leaps and bounds. It really did grow. But mainly it still maintained it's small town agricultural background. And in fact the town didn't start growing tremendously until probably the late 1800s. At that time they opened up what is now upper Church Street and rich farmers and merchants started building big houses big Victorian houses up there. And the story goes a gentleman was asked where he lived. They went to the post office and asked him where he lived. He said, "Well I live up on Quality Hill." And consequently that section has been known as Quality Hill ever since. But most of those houses were built very late 1880s and the early 1900s through probably about 1915, 1920.

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It wasn't so much that there were new mills as there were four mills in town, or actually no mills in town but around town. Atlee had built a mill, a saw mill, back in the early 1800s. It was somewhere on Dickinson's Run. The map seems to show it outside of town a little ways, but there was a mill right at the edge of town called Nicodemus; it was built by Andrew Nicodemus called Merchant's Mill. There's another mill that was built just north of town called E. P. Smeltzer's Mill. And of course the Hibberts had a mill just northwest of town and it was a grist mill, a saw mill and also a woolen mill. And they not only spun the wool but they also made blankets.

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And then there's Weller Mill; it originally was called Walt's Mill, just a little further out from them, and then the period of the big canneries came in. And they canned apples, they canned fruit, they canned peas, tomatoes, corn. In fact there were a lot of canneries around Carroll County, and New Windsor was no exception.

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As far as slaves go Maryland, I shouldn't say Maryland, but New Windsor was a northern type state. I'm sure there was some prejudice here and they have a tendency to stay in certain sections, the blacks did. But they were more or less accepted for what they were. There were a number of them that became businessmen, like furniture makers, things like that, and then like I mentioned before Simon Murdoch.

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The only thing about rural delivery, the town itself was never included. You always had to go to the post office to pick up your mail. So they really didn't benefit from it. Now the people in the surrounding areas did.

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The first post office, I'm not sure where it started, I do know when they built the duplex. The bank built the duplex in the drugstore; there was alcove in the back of the drugstore,

like a lot of small towns, it was just a little caged in thing that they had places for your mail, to come in and pick it up. Because there really was not that many people in town. And the town never had street names...numbers on houses until probably the 1950s and that was brought about by the fire department needed some addresses they could respond to in case of a fire.

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And prior to that the fire hall, which had been started, actually in 1908, but they built the first fire hall in 1912. And they originally used the bell out of St. Paul's Church to summon the firemen to the fire hall. Their equipment included two reel carts and a hand-made ladder all hand-drawn. And New Windsor had no mechanized equipment until 1948 and after that they needed some way to identify the houses, and they numbered everything.

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The first school of higher learning...New Windsor has always been famous for its schools. They've had a lot of finishing schools, a lot of private schools, even before the public schools came in. And originally the first school of higher learning was started by a gentleman by the name of Reverend John Ben Carter and he started a school of higher learning called the Maryland Institute, actually it was called New Windsor College. And then he applied for a permit from the state for the New Windsor Institute which he set up down here in the Hallman (?) Inn. He ran it for about five or six years and he sold it to a gentleman by the name of Andrew Hall who started a college he called Calvert College.

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And he built the old main here up on the hill and it was in business until, this was about '48 and in '66 it went under. The creditors had rented out the buildings for other schools until '72 when the Presbyterian Church bought it. And they ran it until 1913 and it was sold at that time to Blue Ridge College which was a college out of Union Bridge that had been displaced by the Lehigh Cement Company. And they ran it until the early '40s, and they ran until a problem. They combined with the college down in Virginia, the Church of the Brethren, who actually sponsored Blue Ridge, took it over and used it as a service center. And after the Second World War they furnished a lot of relief supplies to countries all over the world, in fact they still do.

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The Great Depression didn't affect New Windsor as hard as it did city dwellers because the town was kind of self-reliant. Everything that we needed was made here, I shouldn't say everything, but the majority of stuff, all the foodstuffs were here, we were shipping stuff out to other people. And I mean we weren't, shall I say eating high off the hog you know we were holding our own; we weren't in such bad straits as other people. So we kind of came through the depression pretty well.

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Speaking of the Brethren Center there was something that really put the little town of New Windsor on the map. In fact when you talk to people nowadays that have never

heard of New Windsor other than the fact that you mentioned the Brethrens, oh yea that's in New Windsor. And we had a lot of people come through and they come to visit there, walk around and see the little town.

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The Brethren Center has helped a lot of people around the war especially after the war when everybody was in need of everything, and even today in hunger, and when people are needing clothing and stuff like that; the fact that the railroad comes to town, the only time it stops in war is to drop off cars with clothing that's been donated for them to sort them here and then they ship it out from here.

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They made up brochures. In fact the Heritage Committee made up brochures and they put signs on different things around town. Like for instance there was a sign on the fountain that used to be down here that's been moved to the park and they were giving out brochures and things showing, listing different places around town that were historic.

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Civil rights...there's not a whole lot happening in town as far as the civil rights movement. It's always been more or less an integrated town so it didn't have the big reaction that most places did.

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New Windsor today...I should say...New Windsor at one time was a self-sustained community. If you wanted anything there were three meat markets, there were three grocery stores, there's a hardware store, they're two or three barber shops, and anything you needed you could just come into town. As the roads improved, and automobiles and things improved, and the other larger towns started expanding, New Windsor started kind of shrinking, not in size but actually versatility. It's expanded a couple of times. Two major expansions was Atlee Ridge, a housing development to the south and Blue Ridge which is a housing development north. The town itself is basically a bedroom community. I mean it's still a nice little quiet town, that's what everybody seems to like, but it is no longer the hustle bustle place that it once was.

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The future of New Windsor is kind of a moot point now because being a bedroom community there's very little growth in the sense that you're talking about having different businesses and things. We get a new business now and then and some of the others go and they utilize a few of the old businesses but most of them have been turned into homes. And I really think that's going to be the whole future of the town. It's going to be a quiet bedroom community.

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Robert Strawbridge came to this county around 1760 and he moved out here apparently right away and he settled out in Wakefield Valley. At that time he had been preaching

around over in Ireland where he came from and he brought his wife Elizabeth Piper Strawbridge, and it seems to be he brought a nephew and a niece.

[There was a reference and they appear anymore as far as associating with him]. And he started having Methodist...Charles Wesley had set up these class meetings in homes. And he started having class meetings to convert his neighbors and whatnot in his home. He was such a mesmerizing speaker that he started drawing a lot of the neighbors and whatnot and he started converting them.

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And the more he stayed he started expanding what he was doing, moving around the countryside preaching to everybody in other people's houses. In 1764 he was instrumental in having a log structure built that he called the log meeting house. And it is somewhat questionable how long it was in use. It was used but apparently it had been built on property that belonged to a Quaker. [They thought it was owned by a gentleman by the name of David Crawford, but it turned out to be on property that belonged to a Quaker] who had been proscribed. And they couldn't hold meetings there.

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So I don't know how long it was in service but he kept expanding his preaching. So I don't know how long it was in service but he kept expanding his preaching. Strawbridge was instrumental in establishing several churches around. He had been holding services at a gentleman by the name of Paulsen, and he himself was instrumental in starting a stone chapel. The New Windsor church here in town, the New Windsor Methodist church.

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Robert Strawbridge was an avid Methodist. He had his own way of preaching, and in fact, he was not an ordained minister, but he probably was the first; he was the first person to preach Methodism and to convert people here in the United States to Methodism. In fact when Asbury, Francis Asbury was sent over as bishop, he and Strawbridge had a few, shall we say discussions since Asbury said since he wasn't an ordained minister he shouldn't, he couldn't baptize people or convert them or actually.

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Robert Strawbridge was going around the country preaching all of the time and while he was out preaching, the neighbors were tending his farms, his crops on his farms. And of course in those days the wife of the farmer whose crops were being tended was obligated to feed the people who were working for her. And it was in this process that his wife Elizabeth would talk to the people when they sat down to eat and she would express the Methodist religion.

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And in the process she converted she converted a gentleman by the name of John Evans who had been helping out on the farm several times. And John Evans in turn became an avid Methodist and he became a class leader. And he held the class meetings in his house and that house is owned...has been moved to the Strawbridge Shrine.

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Now John Evans has always been credited with being the first convert to Methodism in Maryland, actually in America. But it's questionable because there are people who knew Strawbridge talk about other people who converted prior to that. So the only things we can say for sure is that the first person known by name to be converted. And it's kind of ironic because his wife did the conversion.

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The Strawbridge Shrine is a collection of buildings that have to do with Methodism in America. The house is there that Robert Strawbridge was supposed to have lived in when he came, the John Evans house who was actually the first class meeting leader, and there is a replica of the stone, the log meeting house is on the property. And there's a replica of the log meeting house that is on the property now because the original log meeting house was torn down back in the 1880s.

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And a lot of the logs were used to build a barn. Pilgrimages come, oh usually it's once a year, sometimes more often, sometimes less. For instance, if they have some kind of great occasion they'll have a pilgrimage set in place. And it's a very nice place to visit it really is. John's Evans' house has been refurnished to what it may have looked like. We don't know for sure. We know from wills...not wills, I'm sorry.

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In the old days when a person died you had to itemize everything they had to pay tax on. We have deeds from John Evans when he died in '27. Now they had taken the meetings away from his house back in '09 because of his wife being elderly and they could no longer sustain them. So we know what was there in '27 when he died and the odds are there were very little added after they took the meeting away because there was no point in it. He had moved into one end of the house and his son and daughter took over what was their bedroom.

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In addition to the houses at the shrine, there's two statutes, one's to Robert Strawbridge and the other one is to his wife Elizabeth Piper Strawbridge. And people come, there are people who come to experience what he might have been like to pray in a log structure after the fancy churches that most people have now, just rough wooden benches, a cold room, in winter time. And you can see the Strawbridge House...actually in construction of the Strawbridge House there's a small farm with all the buildings that you would need for a farm: a smokehouse, a springhouse, barns. They're all much later but it gives you a sense of what a small Maryland farm would look like as well as having a historic background with the rest of it.