

Brief History

1725- Settlers were moving through the area on the "Conestoga Path" on their way to Virginia in an effort to get families to settle Western Maryland. Lord Baltimore began offering grants to settlers. In 1738 Captain George Beale patterned 100 acres which includes present day Boonsboro.

1755- General Braddock and his army, accompanied by George Washington, passed through this area on their way to battle the French and Indians at Fort Duquesne. After their defeat most of the population was forced to leave the area because of Indian attacks.

1792- William Boone, with help from his brother George, established the town and sold the first of forty-four lots. A post office was opened in 1801, and by 1803 there were twenty-four houses. The 1820 census shows a population of 395 whites, 7 free blacks, and 26 slaves.

1810- An all-weather road was completed from Baltimore to Boonsboro, bringing rapid growth and prosperity to the area. The National Pike passed down Main Street. Many businesses were established to service the flourishing traffic. By 1830 the population had grown to 707.

1823- The first macadam road in the United States stretched from Boonsboro to Hagerstown.

1827- On July 4th, the citizens of Boonsboro erected and dedicated the first monument in the nation to George Washington.

1831- Boonsboro became incorporated and held the first town election. Jonathan Shafer was elected as the first burgess (mayor).

1902- The Hagerstown-Frederick Electric Railroad Company began trolley service through Boonsboro. The station closed in 1938.

1939- Shafer Park was dedicated after being built during the Depression by the Work Progress Administration.

Also of Interest

Old South Mountain Inn: The date when this colonial inn at Turner's Gap at the top of South Mountain was built has not been determined, although it did exist during the Revolutionary War. Since it is located at the intersection of the Appalachian Trail and the Old Monocacy Road, it probably began as an Indian trading post. It became a popular wagon stop on the Old National Pike. In 1862 it was the center of the Confederate line holding the gap during the Battle of South Mountain. The property was sold to Madeleine Dahlgren in 1876 as a private residence. The house became a tavern again in 1925, and now operates as a fine dining establishment.

Dahlgren Chapel: This Gothic revival stone chapel was built in 1881 for Madeleine V. Dahlgren, daughter of Congressman Samuel F. Vinton and wife of Admiral John A. Dahlgren. Most of the building materials came from the immediate area, but the marble altar was imported from Italy. Mrs. Dahlgren purchased the former tavern at Turner's Gap as a summer retreat, naming it Dahlgren Manor. The chapel was built across the National Road from the house. When Mrs. Dahlgren died in 1898, she was interred in the chapel's family crypt.

Crystal Grotto: Crystal Grottoes Caverns were founded in 1920 when the State Road Commission was quarrying limestone to build up and pave State Route 34. The caverns opened to the public in 1922 and has more formations per square foot than any cave known to man. It is also the most naturally kept cave in the world. The caves maintain a constant yearly temperature of 54 degrees.

Washington Monument: On July 4, 1827, the citizens of Boonsboro gathered to erect the first monument in the nation to George Washington. By the end of the day the structure had a circular base of 54 feet and a height of 15 feet. The earthen crock shape structure was completed to a height of 30 feet in September of that year. The monument fell into disrepair several times and has been rebuilt at least twice- most recently in 1936 by the Civilian Conservation Corps. The monument is currently maintained by the Maryland Park Service.

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Boonsboro Historical Society



2016

Historic BOONSBORO Walking Tour



Boonsboro, Maryland

1 1 North Main St.- Eagle Hotel: The front part of this building was probably erected about 1796. It was the first stone building in Boonsboro, and one of the first five established sites. Built by Peter Conn and operated by him as the Eagle Hotel, it became a popular hostelry during the boom years of the National Pike. This structure is an example of the French Second Empire style.



2 7 North Main St.- one of first original sites:

This is possibly the site of the first house in Boonsboro. An earlier structure was recorded as one of five houses existing when Christian Dagenhart arrived in 1796. The present building was built in 1828 as a store. In 1847, the Masonic Lodge began using the large hall on the second floor.



3 19 North Main St.- Bank: This buff brick Colonial Revival style structure was erected in 1905 or 1906 as the Boonsboro Bank. The Boonsboro Library was housed here from 1975-2008. It currently serves as the Town Hall Annex.



4 33 North Main St.- Dr. Edgar T. Smith: In the late 1880's, this Queen

Anne Victorian Era style home was built with beautiful detail by Dr. Edgar T. Smith, a Boonsboro physician. The Smith family was Irish Catholic and provided most of the funds to build a Catholic church in Boonsboro. After St. James Catholic Church closed in 1898, Mass was occasionally celebrated here. Twelve stylized crosses decorate the fascia of the uppermost gable.



See map with corresponding numbers on inside of brochure

5 103 North Main St.- Hamilton/Brining House: This log house was built circa 1794 and is situated over a spring. William Hamilton, Governor of Maryland from 1880-1884, spent his early years here. At a later date, John C. Brining purchased the house for his residence.



6 109 North Main St.- Bast Furniture: Until 2011, Bast of Boonsboro was the oldest continually operating retail furniture store in Maryland. It began as Brining's Cabinet Shop in 1837. The original log structure was replaced by the present building in 1926. In the early 1900's the town stable was torn down and materials from it were used to construct the warehouse in the rear. A reconstruction of the Brining cabinet maker's shop can be seen in the Boonsborough Museum of History.



7 113 North Main St.- Boonsborough Museum of History: In 1809, the original house on this site was used as the second post office in Boonsboro. The present Victorian structure was built about 1882. It houses the Boonsborough Museum of History, a non-profit museum containing an extensive collection of historical objects, as well as many items of interest from around the world. Behind this structure stands the gravestone of Abraham Lemaster, owner of an earlier log house on this property. He is the first and only occupant buried in this lot which was intended to be the site of the Episcopal Church.



8 121 North Main St.- Welty House: This is one of the earlier houses in Boonsboro. It was the home of John B. Welty who made coverlets which are much in demand today.



9 St. James Catholic Church: The founding of St. James is unique in that it was sponsored by the Smith family- Dr. Otho J. Smith, his brother Dr. Josiah Smith, and his son Dr. Otho B. Smith who bought land on the National Pike and erected a small brick church which was completed in September 1868. When the church closed in 1898, the Catholic community attended mass at the Dahlgren Chapel and occasionally at the home of Dr. Edgar T. Smith. In 1938, when closing again became imminent, Monsignor Francis J. Leary was empowered to reopen St. James to serve over 200 young men of the Civilian Conservation Corps who were encamped outside of Boonsboro. The church had to be torn down in 1968 because of structural issues caused by a fire, but through bequests from relatives of Dr. Otho B. Smith, the first Mass in the newly built church was offered June 22, 1969.



10 323 North Main St.- Bowman House: The Bowman House was built in 1826. It is typical of the log houses built in Western Maryland during the first half of the nineteenth century. It was purchased by John Bowman after he was mustered out of the Union Army in 1865, and was his home until he died in 1906. He operated his pottery business on this site. The property was given to the Boonsboro Historical Society in 1971 by Charles Smith, a grandson of John Bowman. The house has been restored and now serves as headquarters for the Society. A carriage house and potter's shed has also been erected on this site.



11 5 Stouffer Avenue- Lakin Farmhouse: Constructed in 1769, the Lakin Farmhouse is the oldest extant structure in Boonsboro. The original builder of the stone and log structure is believed to have been Robert Turner (Turner's Gap). By 1877 the property was owned by John Nicodemus, a prominent citizen and businessman. In 1915, the 500- acre farm deeded as Nelson's Folly, was purchased by Susan and David Lakin, then passed on to John W. Lakin in 1958. This house is an excellent example of early architecture in Boonsboro and has been associated for many years with the town's prominent families.



Historic Boonsboro, Maryland

12 220 North Main St.- Trolley Station: The Hagerstown-Frederick Electric Railway Company operated a trolley station through Boonsboro from 1902 until 1938. The site included a lumber shed, a freight house, a coal shed, and an office. Over 500 tickets were sold for the first excursion of the trolley in August 1902. A round trip ticket cost fifty cents. By late October of that year, the United States mail was being carried on the Hagerstown to Boonsboro line. The Boonsboro Trolley Museum, which is the last trolley station remaining in Washington County, is full of interesting stories, artifacts, and displays.



13 214 North Main St.- National Road Museum: The National Road Museum honors the nation's first federal highway system, which was built with the intention to expand and populate America's untamed west. Winding its way directly through Boonsboro, the National Road paved the way for thousands of immigrants, whose search for a better life spurred economic growth and helped unify our nation. The museum is a place for discovery, sparking a passion for American history.



14 114/116 North Main St.- Bast Homestead: As was typical of the time, the buyer would divide his lot into two properties, building his house on one and selling the other. The original cabins were 1-1/2 stories but later raised to two stories with an attic. The back of the property still shows signs of early ways of living as the smoke house and summer kitchen are still intact. The brick spring house at the rear of the site was built over one of the town's main springs. At one time the hearses for Bast Funeral Home were stored here.



15 102 North Main St.- Shafer Tannery: In the early part of the nineteenth century, Jonathan Shafer had a large tannery at this location. The left side of the building was used as an office and the land behind was the site of the tannery. Mary Shafer, a descendant of the family, donated this site for a park to the town of Boonsboro. The park, built during the depression years by the Work Project Administration, was dedicated in 1939.



16 44 North Main St.: This was one of the buildings present in 1796. This site may have been the Boone store. It began as a one story structure and remained in the Boone family until 1812. It was raised to two stories when converted to a residential structure circa 1897.



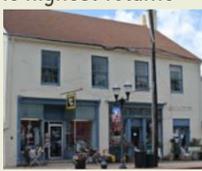
17 42 North Main St.: When the Boone's laid out the town in 1792, they retained ownership of a spring located under this present structure, which for many years served as the town's primary water source. Originally this house set further out on the street, but was moved back when the National Road was widened.



18 32 North Main St.- Otho J. Smith/Dr. John Gaines: This fine stone house was built circa 1810. After the Battle of Antietam, Dr. John Gaines, a Confederate surgeon, was left in charge of the wounded Confederates. While performing his assignment, he met the daughter of Dr. Otho Smith, who lived here. The couple fell in love and when he returned after the War, they were married and resided in this house. Dr. Gaines practiced medicine in Boonsboro for twenty-eight years.



19 4 North Main St.- Stonebraker Building: It was built in 1821, and at one time housed the highest volume stores in Western Maryland. Scharf, in his History of Western Maryland, reports by 1831 Boonsboro had grown to be an important trade center for the surrounding area, and this house sold \$90,000 worth of merchandise annually. In 1924 a store, a bank, and a dwelling occupied this space. In 1940 the bank was replaced with a post office.



20 27 Potomac St.- Bomberger House: This brick structure built in the Greek Revival style in the mid-nineteenth century served as the parsonage for the Reformed Church next door. The house later became the private residence of Richard Bomberger, dean of Franklin and Marshall College and a prominent citizen of Boonsboro.



21 33 Potomac St.- Trinity Reformed Church (Salem): The congregation of Salem Church was established many years before the founding of the town. It met as early as 1750 in a log schoolhouse located one half mile from town off the present Route 66, where there remains a graveyard. The first church building on this site was completed in 1806 and was dedicated as the Salem Church. It was jointly owned and served both Reformed and Lutheran congregations until 1859. After the Civil War the two congregations were able to provide separate buildings- the Lutherans building on South Main Street and the Reform members tearing down the old church and rebuilding the present structure in the Gothic Romanesque style by 1870.



22 Old Salem Graveyard/Boone Gravesite: Located behind the Old Salem Church, this cemetery dates to 1802 when the church was planned. Many of the early citizens of the town are buried here. Most notable are town founders William and Susanne Boone. Their prominently marked graves are located in the northwest corner of the cemetery. Prior to 1780, the Boone family lived in a farm house on a knoll behind the graveyard.



23 Potomac Street: (formerly known as Church Street) Midway down the first block on the left (exact house unknown) lived two brothers who fought on opposite sides during the Battle of Antietam- Jacob Heck (Confederate) and John Heck (Union). It is recorded they visited with their family, ate together, and then joined their respective armies. Both survived the war.

24 24 Potomac St.- Dr. Wheeler House: This Victorian style house was built in 1880 and was the residence of Dr. W.C. Wheeler. The house to the right was where Dr. Wheeler's driver lived. This structure was used until 1860 by John Stonesifer III to make and test his famous Kentucky long rifles.



25 2 South Main St.- U.S. Hotel: The U.S. Hotel was built in 1811 on the site of Mrs. Short's earlier log store. Dr. Slifer used it originally as a residence and later as a female seminary. During the Civil War, it operated as the U.S. Hotel. A Confederate officer, Col. Bassett French, was forced to hide in the coal bin in the basement when he was surprised by a contingent of Union troops. The original bar from the hotel is in the Boonsborough Museum of History. For most of the first half of the twentieth century, this was the residence and offices of Dr. Hubert Wade.



26 14 South Main St.- old grocery: One of the oldest log buildings in town was operated as a grocery in 1802. In 1910, it was owned by Dr. S.S. Davis, who had a drug store in the small addition. The original logs are exposed. It was operated as a grocery store until 1983.



27 64 South Main St.- Trinity Lutheran Church: German Lutherans were the first settlers in Boonsboro. In 1870, Lutherans purchased the property on South Main Street for \$1,000. On July 16, 1870, the cornerstone was laid. The church was dedicated in January 1871.



28 134 South Main St.- Mt. Nebo Methodist Church: Mt. Nebo can trace its history back to a log building outside the town limits where worship was held as early as 1750. However, 1832 is the date of organization generally given. In 1832, the old church was abandoned and in the same year the United Brethren erected a new church at its present day site. It was built of logs, roughcast on the outside and situated to the rear of the present building. A shrill blast from a shepherd's horn called the congregation to services. The present brick building was erected in 1868.



29 141 South Main St.- Lilacs of Rose Hill: The southern-most of these two similar buildings was built circa 1809 as a private residence by Dr. Ezra Slifer, which he named "Lilacs". Since the hill was covered at that time with wild roses and was known as "Rose Hill", the home became known as "The Lilacs of Rose Hill". This became the setting for David R. Belasco's Civil War play, *Heart of Maryland*. In 1915 the play was made into a successful silent motion picture. In the mid-1940's it was converted to Reeder's Memorial Nursing Home.



30 27 South Main St.- Odd Fellows Hall: This large brick building was erected by the International Order of Odd Fellows in 1852. Meetings were held on the second floor. The main floor housed several businesses- at one time a meat market was in the basement because it was cooler there. It also served as a hospital during the Battle of South Mountain and Antietam. This structure is now Boonsboro's Clock Tower.



31 5-7 South Main St.- Cast Iron Building: In the first decade of the 1900's, an ornamental cast iron façade was attached to this building, a representation of a fashion of the late Victorian period. This building has housed an emporium, a tailor shop, a post office, and a meat market.



32 14 Saint Paul St.- First Christian Church: (Disciples Church) Constructed in 1860, the principal exterior architectural feature is a deep two-story Colonial Revival portico. It was available for use as a hospital during the Battles of South Mountain and Antietam. Several soldiers were buried behind the church. The large porch columns were added in 1928.



33 40 Saint Paul St.- Weldon: This home is called Weldon after the original land grant "Well Done". It was probably built by the Weast family who acquired the property in 1806. In 1876 it became the home of the Bomberger family. Harvey Bomberger, a Maryland state senator and co-founder and first chairman of the Washington County Historical Society lived here as a youth. In 1907, Maude Bomberger, the daughter of Weldon's owner, published *Colonial Recipes from Old Virginia and Maryland Manors*, which included recipes from famous area families, Mount Vernon, and the White House.



34 9 Saint Paul St.- Red Men's Hall: This structure was built in 1828 as a Methodist church and served as a hospital during the Civil War. It was purchased by the Red Men's Lodge in 1909, and another floor was added for meetings. The first floor was later rented out as a movie theater. The adjoining building, built in the Colonial Revival style, was originally the fire hall. Later it housed the town library on the first floor and the Boonsboro Town Hall on the second floor.

