Field Guide to . . .

Galesville

Maryland
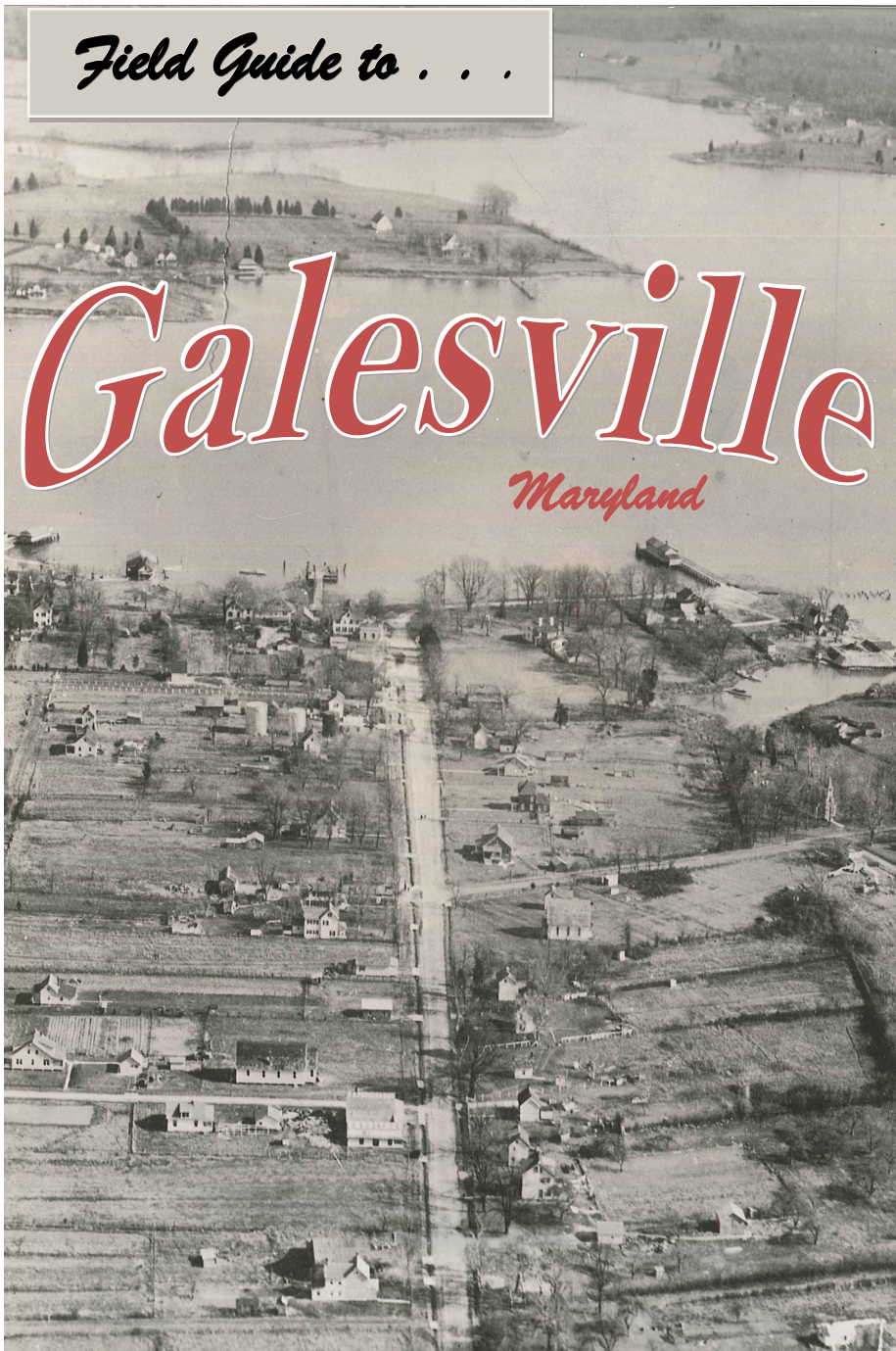
"Where the past meets the present with a promise"

IS POINT

B R O W N S

SCHOOL HOUSE

Water

HOTEL

CHURCH

Central

SITE

SITE

Maryland

STORE

B.S.S.

GALESV

A special thank you to the following organizations that provided their support in the research, development, and production of this Field Guide:

Anne Arundel County, Planning and Zoning, Cultural Resources Division

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Anne Arundel County Trust for Preservation, Inc,

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Galesville Community Center, Inc.

The Four Rivers Heritage Area

The Lost Towns Project, Inc.

West-Rhode River Keepers

and

West River Improvement Association

Throughout this Field Guide, you will find QR codes that provide links to additional information. Download a QR Code reader on your smartphone and scan the square barcode to learn even more fun facts about Galesville history.

Galesville is a special place for all who live there and all who visit. This historic community celebrates its rich maritime and agricultural roots and a diverse history that spans centuries. Galesville embraces its past.

Its heritage resonates today along its streets, creeks and shorelines, in its businesses, marinas, restaurants, and community spaces, on nearby farms that have seen history unfold along winding country roads, and throughout the village, in its charming historic structures and authentic vistas.

We invite you to use this Field Guide to explore Galesville by land or by water, and to learn about the heritage and sites that make this such a special place.
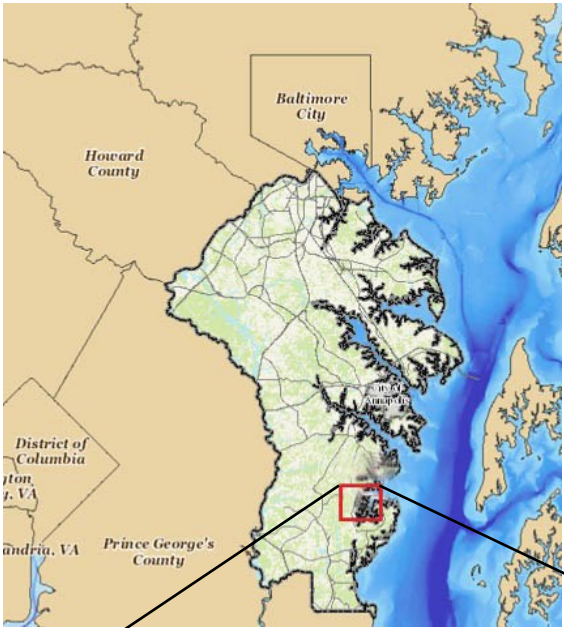
Located in southern Anne Arundel County, 14 miles south of Annapolis and 34 miles northeast of Washington, DC, the village of Galesville is nestled between the forested and rich agricultural uplands of Harwood and Owensville and the maritime bounty of the West and Rhode Rivers (tributaries to the Chesapeake Bay.) Today, Galesville, with its one Main Street that runs to the water's edge, is a tightly-knit community that values and celebrates its rich heritage.
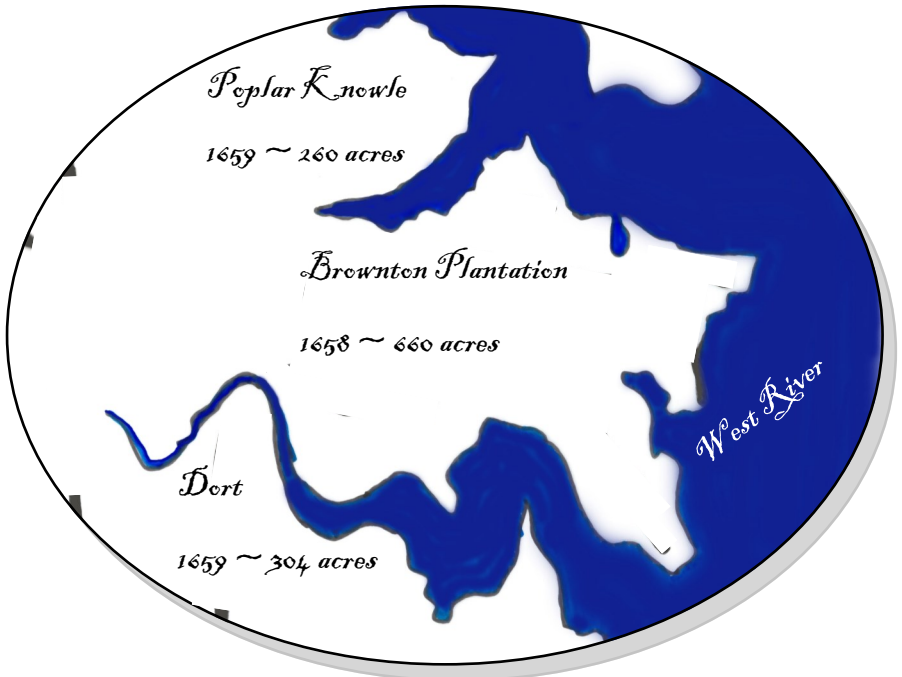

Native Americans came to this area in search of fish, oysters, and waterfowl, which they found in abundance. Dozens of archaeological sites in the area demonstrate that these Algonquin speakers hunted and fished along the shores of the West and Rhode Rivers for thousands of years before Europeans arrived. They left behind evidence of their daily lives, such as oyster shell middens, arrowheads, ceramic sherds, and small stone tools.

European settlers arrived in the Galesville area by the mid-17th century, laying claim to large swaths of land. Many grew extremely wealthy growing and exporting tobacco on plantations established near the easily accessible West and Rhode Rivers. Tobacco was central to the development of the Colonies and was an accepted form of currency.

Poplar Knowle

1659 ~ 260 acres

Brownton Plantation

1658 ~ 660 acres

West River

Dort

1659 ~ 304 acres

In 1672, George Fox, founder of Quakerism or the **Society of Friends,** visited the area and a four-day meeting was held to celebrate his visit.

A frame Meeting House was erected in Galesville by the Friends in the later 17th century. To accommodate overflow crowds at their Yearly Meetings, the Quakers built tent house shelters nearby– giving "**Tenthouse Creek**" its name.
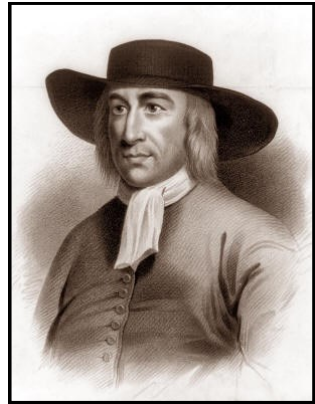
Brownton Plantation, as Galesville was originally called, was patented by Quaker planters John Brown and John Clark on the banks of the West River in **1652**. Galesville became a stronghold for the new religion of **Quakerism** in the Colonies.

The **Quaker Burying Ground [Site 1]** was set aside "for ye people called Quakers for to meet on and to bury their dead." Friends were warned to avoid the 'vain & empty' custom of using grave furniture until the 1850s, thus there are few if any markers for individual gravesites. Its unknown exactly how many Quakers are actually buried in the cemetery.

The parcel formerly known as Brownton was renamed **West River Landing** by **1682**. Plantation wharves were key commercial spaces in the 17th and 18th centuries and served as important shipping centers, connecting the Galesville area with the transatlantic world. By the turn of the 18th century, West River Landing became an official **"Port of Call"** with the authority to import and export goods.

The British Burn Steward's Shipyard [Site 3]

A massive shipyard once thrived on the West River, just south of Galesville, from the 1750s until the Revolutionary War West River was the location of Anne Arundel County's only shore engagement of the War. In March of 1781, the British knocked out a cannon emplacement on Chalk Point **[Site 3a]** and proceeded upstream to Stephen Steward's 42-acre shipyard. The Redcoats then burned the shipyard to the ground.
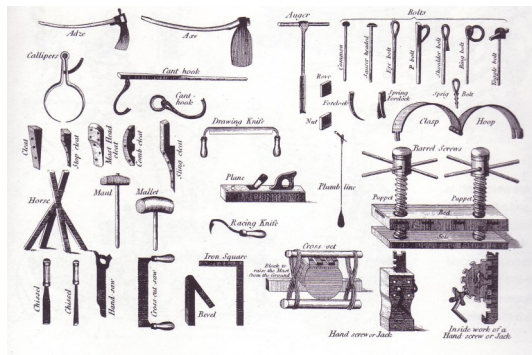
Archaeologists discovered a cannonball during excavations at the Shipyard in 1996.

Tulip Hill: A National Historic Landmark [Site 2]

Samuel Galloway built Tulip Hill in 1755-1765 in the Georgian Style. A Quaker merchant and planter, Galloway made his fortune shipping tobacco and wheat to the British Isles in exchange for manufactured goods. Located just north of Galesville, off Muddy Creek Road, this five-part Georgian Mansion stands today as a physical reminder of the vibrant and lucrative mercantile trade conducted in this area during the colonial era. The house and grounds are privately-owned.

Georgian Architecture

Elite families gained political and economic prominence in the 18th century in large part because of their reliance upon slave labor. Substantial plantations in the area and grand houses with elaborate gardens and grounds were built by enslaved labor, including Tulip Hill, Sudley, Holly Hill, Ivy Neck and Sparrows Rest. Plantations required a variety of skilled workers. Slaves filled the roles of blacksmiths, carpenters, ship builders, coopers, seamstresses, and house builders.

Galesville acquired its present-day name when George Gale acquired Brownton (aka West River Landing) in the early 1800s. The village remained central to servicing the surrounding plantations. The Civil War and the Emancipation Proclamation however brought about a significant shift in the settlement and economic patterns of the area.

Excerpt from Henry Wilson's Manumission Papers:

"Henry Wilson aged twenty three years about five feet Eight and one half Inches high dark complexion has a scar on the right cheek is identical person manumitted by Thomas Wilson by deed dated the tenth day of July in the year of our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and twenty eight "

Henry Wilson was the first black landowner in the town of Galesville. He was freed from slavery in 1828, worked as a farmhand for the next 40 years, and by the 1870s, had purchased 27 1/2 acres of land from George and Anne Hughes, the owners of Tulip Hill.

Henry and his wife, Katherine Neal, called Kitty, built a well-appointed vernacular, cross-gabled **I-House** with a rear ell on Galesville's main street. Wilson set the precedent for other free blacks to acquire their own land, which helped establish a community that would become known as "West Benning Road."

April 2015

The Wilson House holds an important place in the Galesville story. In 2011, as a result of decades of state, local, community, and private partnerships, Anne Arundel County acquired the Henry Wilson House located at **862 Galesville Road [Site 4].** The dilapidated building was recently stabilized by the West River Improvement Association with grant funds from the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture. Plans for the future use of the site are under development, so stay tuned!


June 2015

The **I-House** was a common 19th-century building style throughout Anne Arundel County**.** An I-House is a two-story dwelling, two rooms wide and one room deep.

Galesville emerged from the Civil War with the foundations for the village you see today. Agriculture was still economically important, but without slave labor, the economic engine of Galesville and the local area shifted, with an increased reliance upon the seafood industry and maritime pursuits. Transportation modes evolved, and the population grew in both numbers and diversity. A growing African-American community and an influx of German immigrants changed the face of Galesville.
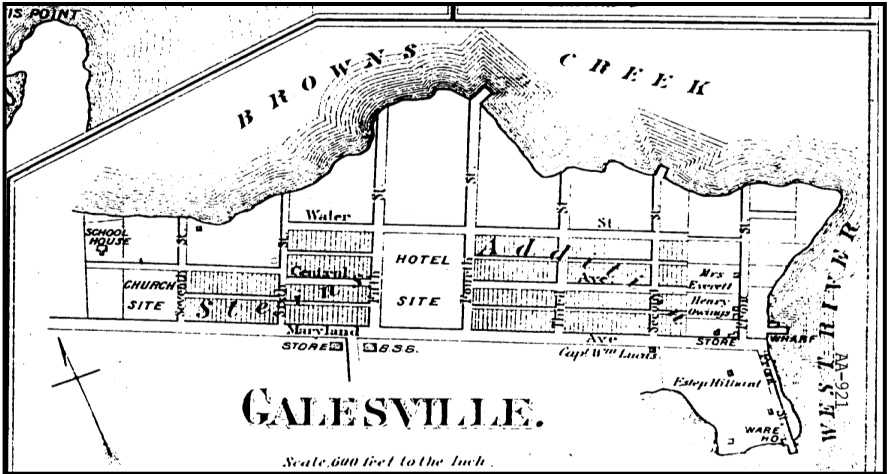
Detail: Excerpt from 1878 Hopkins Atlas, Anne Arundel County First District.

In 1869, Samuel Stein of Baltimore purchased the "Property of George Gale" (which included much of modern day Galesville) at a public auction. Stein envisioned building a recreational beach community, but the summer retreat never materialized. Lots were sold not to summer vacationers, but to local year-round working class residents, both black and white.

951 W. Benning Rd; Weston Crowner House, c. 1928

One of two houses known to be constructed by Woodfield Fish & Oyster Co. as worker housing.


954 W. Benning Rd; The Cookhouse c. 1941

This simple vernacular structure, now demolished, was a popular eatery and gathering place for the black community on West Benning Rd. Many of its customers were employees of the nearby Woodfield Fish & Oyster Company.

Many African-American families purchased lots and built their homes on West Benning Road. This became the heart of an historically Black neighborhood, where many of its residents were either waterman, farm hands, or they worked for the Woodfield Fish & Oyster Company, located on nearby Tenthouse Creek.

Neighborhood institutions, like the Galesville Rosenwald School, the Hot Sox Field, and the Church anchored this community. Historic structures in this area display stylistic and visual continuity typical of the early 20th century and make up the **West Benning Road Historic District [Site 5],** which is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.
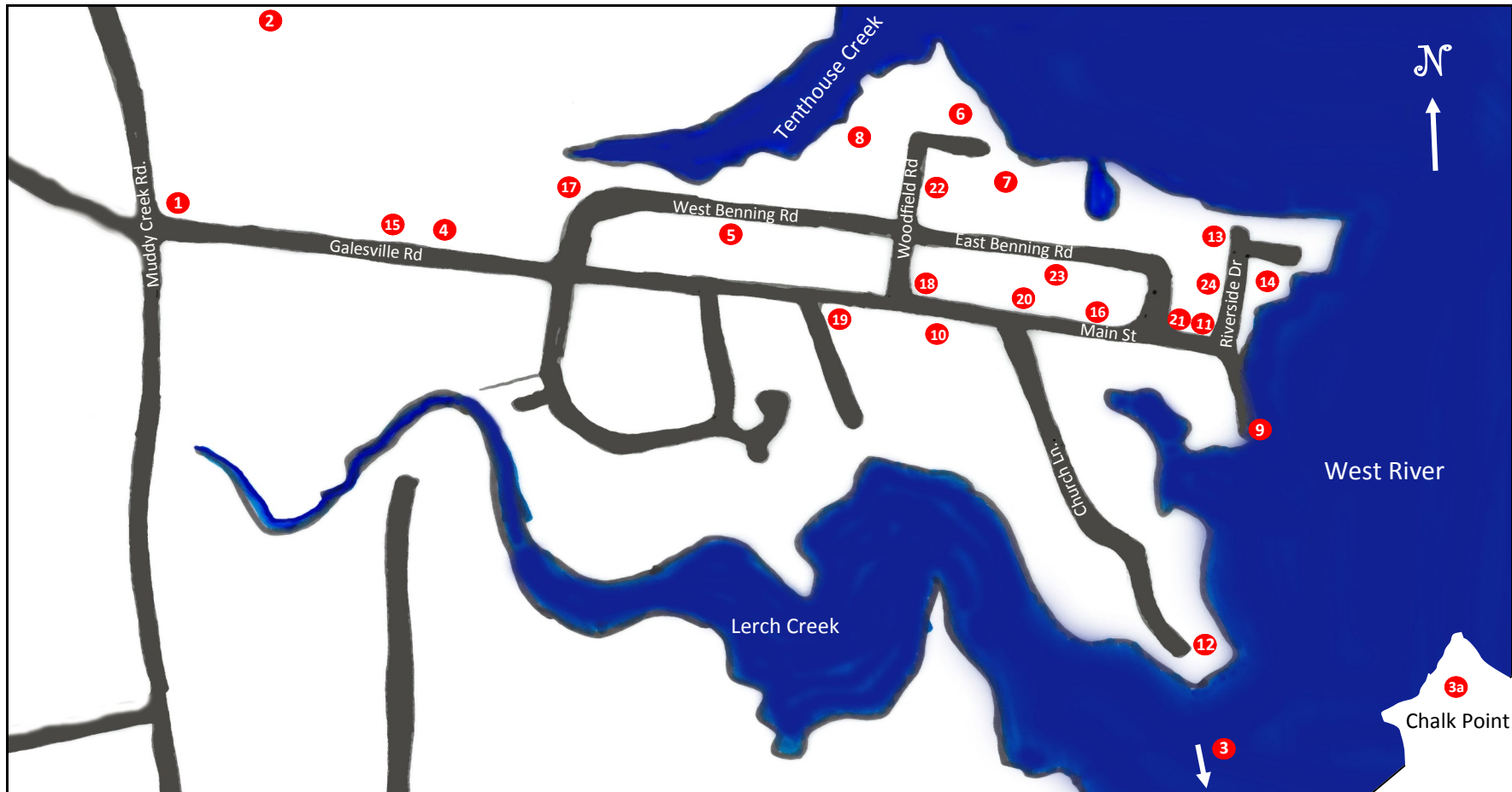
Site 1: Quaker Burying Ground

Site 2: Tulip Hill (private)

Site 3: Location of Steward's Shipyard

Site 3a: Chalk Point

Site 4: Henry Wilson House

Site 5: West Benning Historic District

Site 6: Woodfield Fish & Oyster Company (formerly located here)

Site 7: F & H Benning Company (formerly located here)

Site 8: Smith Brothers Inc.

Site 9: Steamboat Landing/ Thursdays

Site 10: William Smith House

Site 11: 1004 Main Street

Site 12: Hartge House

Site 13: West River Sailing Club

Site 14: formerly Zang's Pier/ now Pirate's Cove

Site 15: Hot Sox Field

Site 16: Carrie Weedon House/ Galesville Heritage Museum

Site 17: Galesville Rosenwald School

Site 18: Galesville Memorial Hall

Site 19: Agnes Dixon House

Site 20: 970 Main St. / former H.E. Leatherbury grocery story

Site 21: 1000 Main St. / former Kolb General Store

Site 22: Craftsman Bungalow

Site 23: Dutch Revival

Site 24: Tudor Revival

Industry

Galesville was one of many waterfront communities that thrived on harvesting, processing and selling the natural bounty of oysters, fish, and crabs from the Chesapeake Bay. Many local industries were established in the early 20th century that capitalized on the maritime bounty of the Bay and the West River. The seafood industry sustained Galesville's watermen well into the 20th century.

Joseph Smith established one of the first oyster houses in Galesville. He sold the property to Herman Woodfield, Sr., founder of the **Woodfield Fish and Oyster Company,** with
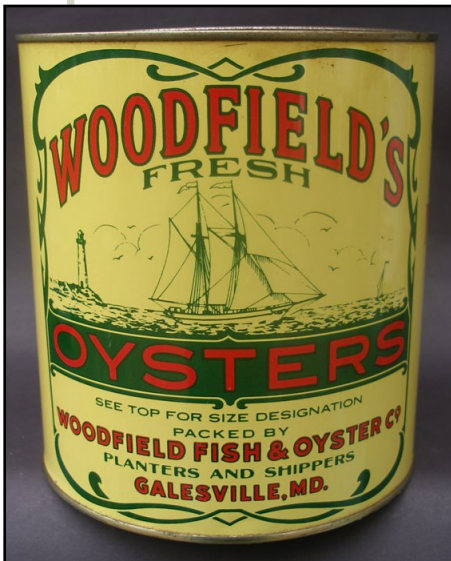

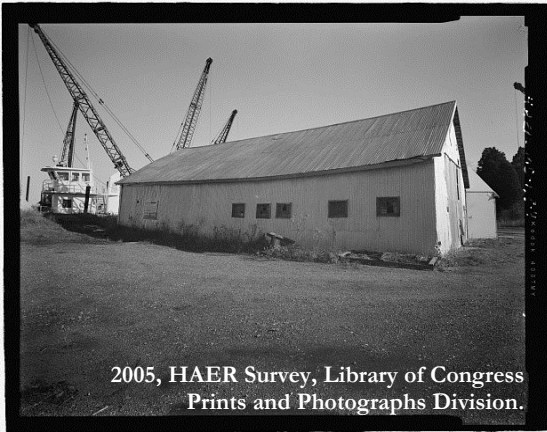William F. Woodfield in 1917. In its heyday in the 1940s, the company employed over one hundred people. Many workers lived on nearby West Benning Road. Woodfield Road is named after the same, and is located at **4701 Woodfield Rd [Site 6].**

Woodfield's Oyster Tins have become highly collectible and are a valuable antique!

2005, HAER Survey, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division.

Established in 1913, the F. & H. Benning Company was located in two buildings on the banks of Tenthouse Creek. "Dealers in Oysters, Lime, Soft Crabs, and Fish," they were the competition with nearby Woodfield Fish and Oyster Company. Benning Road is named for F& H Benning Company which operated at **1024 E. Benning Rd [Site 6].** The photograph above is of 1014 Benning Road, an oyster shucking house built c. 1930s.

Oyster shuckers at Woodfield's would often shuck and clean some 800 bushels of oysters each day.

Smith Brothers, Inc. had its beginnings as an oyster and lime company, diversifying its maritime work into pile driving, and building piers and bulkheads on the local waterways. Today, it is still a family-operated business at **4702 E. Benning Rd [Site 7]** that rents marine construction equipment and provides tug services.
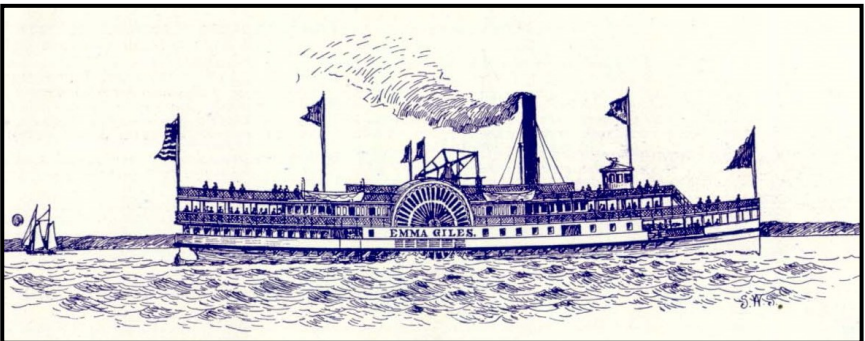
Transportation and Recreation

Between the 1880s and 1930s, Galesville was an important steamboat landing on the Rhode and West Rivers and on the Chesapeake Bay. Steamboats were the quickest and most cost-effective way to deliver passengers and freight. The steamboat-era began to fade in the 1930s, when the automobile became commonplace and road systems made overland travel easier.

This steamboat pier at **4851 Riverside Drive [Site 9]** was originally owned by the Tolchester Steamship Company. Converted to a restaurant by the Dixons, a local family, in the 1930s, it continues to serve the community and visitors today as a restaurant.

Photo courtesy of Galesville Heritage Society, Inc.

Launched in 1887, the *Emma Giles* was one of forty-seven steamers operating out of Baltimore. She made trips up the West River until 1932.

CHESAPEAKE BAY
and WEST RIVER TRIPS.

Don't forget the popular trips on the Steamer Emma Giles five times a week at $1.00 for the round trip, including street car fare. Connecting trains leave 15th and H streets N. E. Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at 9:30 a. m., Saturdays at 2:30 p. m., and Sundays at 10:30 a. m.

Tickets at station or at city ticket office, new Evans Building, 1424 New York ave. N. W.

WASHINGTON, BALTIMORE AND ANNAPOLIS ELECTRIC RAILWAY COMPANY.   au13-2t

By the turn of the 20th century, Galesville had become a popular spot for vacationers and recreational pursuits. Sailing, vacationing, and enjoying the cool breezes off the West River made this an ideal location for visitors arriving by steamboat to spend their leisure time.

Several homes in Galesville operated as boarding houses and the village's stores and restaurants supported summer visitors to Galesville and the surrounding area throughout the 20th century.

[Site 10] The house that sits at **961 Main St. (c. 1890s)** has a simple architectural style, known as the gable-front and wing plan. It was moved from its original location, on Church Lane, to its current location to save it from demolition in the early 1990s. As a result of its rehabilitation, the house continues to be an architectural gem of Main Street.

Private houses, similar to this one, once served as boarding houses.

RIVER VIEW COZY CORNER
GALESVILLE, MARYLAND

Photo courtesy of Galesville Heritage Society

1004 Main Street [Site 11], constructed c. 1875, has served both the Galesville community and visitors arriving by steamboat for 140 years, operating as a general store, a boarding house and ice cream parlor, apartments, and several restaurants.

The Hartge Family significantly influenced the marine trades and maritime heritage of the West River and throughout Galesville and Shady Side since the family arrived from Germany in the 19th century.

Emile Hartge established the **Hartge Yacht Yard** and built his home at 4**881 Church Lane [Site 12]** in 1879. The family became well-known throughout the Chesapeake Bay for innovative and quality boat building.

In 1930, a group of sailors from Cedar Point in Shady Side and from the shores of the West River formed OODYC (Our Own Damn Yacht Club).

In 1933, the name was changed to **West River Sailing Club.** Their clubhouse at **4800 Riverside Drive [Site 13]** was built in the 1960s and continues to host sailing activities, regattas, and cruises.

West River
SAILING Club
Galesville, MD

Galesville is the birthplace of the Chesapeake 20. One of the oldest "one-design" boats still being raced, the '20s' were custom designed by Dick Hartge to take advantage of the Chesapeake Bay's unique light air conditions. They are still actively raced today!

1004 Main St.

ZANG'S PIER

Chesapeake 20s

Photo c. 1950

Zang's Pier operated as a Crab and Oyster house in the early 20th century and it was the first location of the West River Sailing's Clubhouse. A favorite gathering spot for locals and actors from the "Showboat," this floating theater barge docked in Galesville every summer during the 1920s and 30s and provided live entertainment. Today, Pirates Cove Restaurant operates here at **4817 Riverside Dr. [Site 14]** and still welcomes sailors and boaters to its dock.

Galesville Hot Sox

The Galesville Hot Sox were a semi-professional Negro league team founded in 1915.

They competed against other sand-lot teams throughout Anne Arundel and Prince George's Counties and against teams from the Negro Professional League. Several players, including Chester Turner and John Makell, Jr., went on to tryout and play for the Major Leagues.

The Hot Sox Field at **862 Galesville Rd [Site 15]** was carved out of the farmland Henry Wilson bought in the 1870s. Proving to be poor soil for farming, Wilson's son, Richard, abandoned farming on the property and transformed it into a baseball field for the Hot Sox Players and the community.

Many of the players worked at Woodfield Fish & Oyster Company, and lived on West Benning Road. The ballfield was a community gathering place, and it, along with the church and school, were central to the African American community. Games are still played on the field today!

The Hot Sox Field at Wilson Park is one of only a few surviving sandlot fields in Maryland. It is owned by Anne Arundel County's Department of Recreation and Parks Department.

The Galesville Rosenwald School, now known as the **Galesville Community Center,** was built as a one-room school house in 1929 to educate African -American children. Construction was funded by the Julius Rosenwald Program, and it is both individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places and a part of the West Benning Road Historic District. Today, the building at **916 West Benning Road [Site 16]** is an active community center with a commercial kitchen and hosts a variety of events, exhibitions, classes, and community gatherings.

The Galesville Rosenwald School was one of 23 that were built in Anne Arundel County; only 10 survive today.

Julius Rosenwald was the President of Sears, Roebuck Company from 1909-1924, and was the benefactor for many social causes. Scan for more information about Rosenwald Schools and their legacy.

Memorial Hall (c. 1915) at **952 Galesville Road [Site 17]** is operated by the West River Improvement Association and is a focal point for the Galesville and South County community. The hall provides a venue for dances, receptions, church services, blood drives, fundraisers, church plays, yoga classes, and much more. The Dutch Revival-style Hall was renovated in 2005 to ensure its continued use for future generations.

The Dixon House (c. 1880s) at **945 Galesville Road [Site 18]** served as the first post office in Galesville. Agnes Dixon and her mother, Mary, both served as Postmasters.

July 18, 1879 the post office was established as "Galloways," named after Samuel Galloway, owner of Tulip Hill. It wasn't until 1924 that the "Galesville" post office was established. The post office today has not gone far, and is located just across the street at 948 Galesville Road.

Galesville contains several fine examples of late 19th and early 20th century architecture styles, including Dutch Revivals, Bungalows, Tudor Style, Colonial Revivals, modest Queen Anne, and simple vernacular styles.

The H.E. Leatherbury grocery store was built in 1902 at **970 Main Street [Site 19].** This vernacular front-gabled structure is typical of residences and stores of that era in Galesville. The building has been used as an antique shop since the 1960s and retains its original historic character.

The C. Francis Kolb General Store opened for business in the mid-1800s and was operated by the same family for over 100 years. It is believed to be the second oldest structure in town. With few changes, the building at **1000 Main St [Site 20]** is still in use today.

Carrie Weedon, a much beloved local teacher and principal, purchased the property at **988 Main Street [Site 15]** in 1901 for $800. The house is a center-cross gabled vernacular dwelling with a side passage entry. The property has been preserved and has served as the **Galesville Heritage Museum** since 2002

The **Bungalow or Craftsman** style of architecture, like this one at **4725 Woodfield Rd.[Site 21],** was popular from 1905-1940s. They have low-pitched rooflines, wide eaves, large front porches, and tend to be 1$^{1/2}$ stories tall.

This **Tudor Revival at 4820 Riverside Dr. [Site 23]** is evocative of early English building traditions, and emphasizes steeply-pitched roofs with a façade dominated by one or more cross-gables.

The **Colonial Revival** style was most popular between 1900 and 1930. The **Dutch Revival** style, such as this one at **1039 E. Benning Rd. [Site 22],** is a variant of the Colonial Revival and can be recognized by its steeply pitched gambrel roofs that contain the

Not all buildings are "high-style." **Vernacular** architecture like that found in Galesville is based on local needs, construction materials, and local traditions.

Historic Galesville in 1905
USGS Quad: Owensville SE, MD
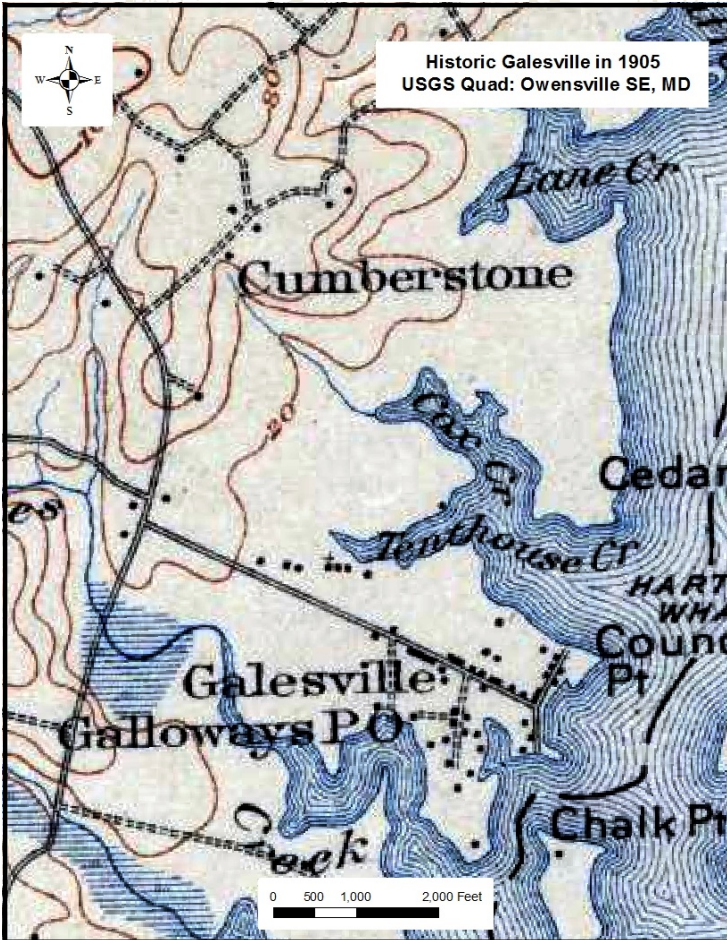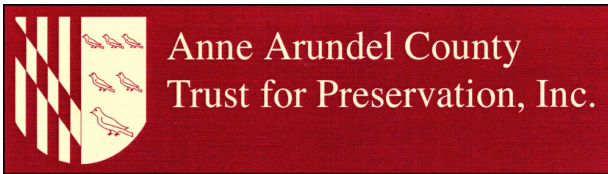
Galesville Today:
Looking to the Future ~ Remembering the Past

Galesville remains an important local center for community, commerce, and recreation in Anne Arundel County, as represented by its active local institutions, small stores, and private residences. A landscape that was solidified by the late 1800s, the village retains many of the structures that contribute to its historic character and significance.

Many of these buildings were constructed and lived in between 1870 and 1945. Through the preservation, appreciation, and continued use of these historic buildings and landscapes, the village of Galesville can remember, celebrate, and build upon its rich and diverse past.

four
rivers

THE HERITAGE AREA OF
ANNAPOLIS,
LONDON TOWN,
AND SOUTH COUNTY

MARYLAND
HERITAGE AREA
Maryland Heritage Areas Authority

Anne Arundel County
Trust for Preservation, Inc.