

**HISTORY OF FERNDALE**  
*Dedicated to Leo F. Harnen*  
*Past President F.L.A.C.C.*

The Annapolis Short Line had been put through the community in 1885 and to commute to Baltimore was an hour long ride on the steam train. The adult round trip fare to Baltimore was thirty five cents and to flag a train at night the community would throw a piece of lit paper on the track. The railroad was later electrified and used until a few years ago when the bus service began.

At the turn of the century four farms belonging to the families of Cromwell, Pumphrey, Downs and Steward dotted the area now known as Ferndale and Garland. In 1914, there were about thirteen houses in Ferndale. It was primarily a farming community, with a grocery store (now the site of Ferndale Tavern), a general store, and a train station (a simple three - sided shelter), formerly Wellham Station.

Mr. Roy Pumphrey related an incident told by his mother: when Barnum & Bailey circus went from Baltimore to Annapolis they would come through the community on Hollins Ferry Road, which was at that time an oyster shell road, with the elephants pulling the troop wagons. The Hollins Ferry Road was the only through road in the community and there was no road to Glen Burnie. The present concrete road was built around 1915.

The community at that time was known as Wellham, after a former resident, William Wellham, who had one of the largest truck farms in the country. The section known as Garland and Garland Park belonged to the estate to Mr. Sedwick Pumphrey. In 1913 there were thirteen houses in the Ferndale Garland section and the development of Garland began a few years later. Because the name Wellham conflicted with a Wellham station on the North Shore Train Line, in 1921 the community adopted the new name of Ferndale from an Indian settlement called "Dale of Ferns" (ferns grew profusely in some areas of the community).

Because of the sandy soil the main crops in this area were strawberries, beans, tomatoes and sweet potatoes. Mrs. Herbert Pumphrey recalled that in early May wagons were sent to Baltimore and families of pickers were brought to the farms and would stay until the fourth of July. While working here they lived in a large yellow picker's shanty located where Holzinger's store once stood. Like most farms of that era the family burial grounds were on the property.

The Board of Education appropriated \$ 1,000 for the first school in the community, a one room frame building located at the extreme corner of Hollins Ferry Road and Packard Ave. Miss Ruth Parker, now Mrs. Eason of Glen Burnie, taught from 1915 until 1917, the student enrollment was approximately 35 and the grades taught were the 1st through the 8th. The building was heated with a Jacket stove and drinking water was brought from a nearby stream. Each child had his own cup at the back of the room and his own slate. Mrs. Eason remembers when the school superintendent would arrive on horseback for his regular visits. In 1920, the school was closed because of so few children in the community and the students went by bus to Linthicum School. In 1924, the Busy Bee Social Club bought and donated it for the building of a new school, Ferndale Elementary. The new school was opened in 1925. It began as a four room building with a small auditorium and the student enrollment was approximately 50. Two classes comprised three grades each. As the community grew four more rooms were added and the auditorium was enlarged. The Ferndale P.T.A. was organized in October, 1925.

1924 marked important event: the first service of what is now known as the Ferndale Methodist church was held on January 13. The Rev. George H. Fielding of Wesley Grove Circuit of the Methodist Episcopal Church South officiated and outlined plans for the worship service and for the Sunday school. On January 22, 1928, the Rev. Rembert D. McNeer was appointed pastor. Incorporation papers were applied for on May 3, 1928. The Cromwell Brothers donated the lots at the corner of Ferndale and Hollins Ferry Roads for a church building, Mr. George Cromwell acted as contractor. Ground was broken on August 29, 1928 and the corner stone was laid on October 3. The opening services of the church were held on Sunday, June 9, 1929. The same day at 10:00 AM the members of the Sunday school assembled and marched in a

body to the new church singing " Onward Christian Soldiers, " The Rev. McNeer organized the Epworth League in the spring of 1929. The organization was to encourage youth activities in the church, in addition to the meeting, the young enjoyed social activities including parties and picnics.

The Women's Missionary Society of the Ferndale Methodist Church was formed on December 18, 1933. The name was later changed to the Women's Society of Christian Service and is one of the most active organizations in the church. Ferndale had a Post Office in the mid 20's that operated from a local store, or several in fact, as it passed from one to another. It finally came to a place of its own in the little building between Holsinger's store and Law Brother's. At first our mail service was part of the Brooklyn Post Office. It did become independent of that for a period before becoming a part of the Glen Burnie Post rented to the Law Brothers who started a Hardware Store. It started in Office territory as it is today. In the late 20's, Ferndale had its first, and hopefully last, tornado, which destroyed the building. It was rebuilt and a small way but became a very successful venture; it's now almost a landmark in Ferndale's business district.

The Ferndale community Club was incorporated in 1934, during the depression of the " 30's" the club, whose objective is to build community morale and administer local charity, supported a large number of needy families in the community. The club also donated the material and the government furnished the workers from the W.P.A. project and sidewalks covering a large area of the community were laid at this time.

In 1936 the residents watched with interest the erection of the county police station in Ferndale. Law Brothers opened for business in 1936 and shared their building with the Anne Arundel County Police Department. Court was held there and the jail cells were in the back. The Police Department later moved up the street to the building next to Ashley's which is now a real estate office. At some point the Ferndale Police Department was closed and the personnel were transferred to Millersville.

The second year of the World War II, 1942 marked the inception of the Ferndale Volunteer Fire Department. Air raids were anticipated and at that time the fifth district's firefighting equipment and trained personnel were inadequate to meet this type of configuration. It became imperative for each community to equip and train men in the fundamentals of fire fighting. George Law, Sr. and George Stolze are credited with organizing the fire company. The first problem confronting the company was fire fighting apparatus, which at that time was not available because of war time shortages. On the suggestion of Chief Law, it was decided by the members to build a truck equipped for fire fighting. The design was drawn and submitted by Chief Law and with the cooperation POLICE of volunteer labor the truck was completed in 1943.

In March of the same year the members of the Fire Department made known their willingness to sponsor a local Boy Scout troop. The Ferndale Community Club supported the movement. A call was sent to fifteen boys who were acting messengers for the Civil Defense unit at that time. On June 5 the first meeting was held and on July 3 the charter for the new troop 375 of Ferndale was presented in the school auditorium. At the end of one year the troop had a membership of more than forty boys with the 80 % advancing on more ranks in scouting, making it the only troop to attain a standard rating that year.

The Ladies ' Auxiliary of the Ferndale Volunteer Fire Department was organized in January of 1943 with the cooperation of Mr. George Stolze. The meetings were render all possibly aid to held in the school and at a later date at the fire house. The objectives of the auxiliary were to the fire company and assist in raising funds for equipment.

In 1944, Mrs. Alfred Thackston organized the first Girl Scout troop in Ferndale. The troop received the number 41 and 21 girls attended the first meeting. The first activity of the troop was a play called " Old maid's Convention; " the proceeds were donated to help pay off the mortgage on Camp Woodlands, the Girl Scout camp at Riva. The troop raised \$ 439.00 for the camp fund and on January 18, 1945 the mortgage was burned. The troop participated in numerous activities including making dolls for the children in the Harriet Lane Home at the Johns Hopkins Hospital and making friendship bags for the girls in The Netherlands. Also in

1944, the first Brownie Troop was formed, troop 34. The troop had 34 girls and was sponsored by the Ferndale Methodist Church and meetings were held in the church basement.

During 1944 the residents watched the erection of a new and attractive fire house. Through the untiring efforts of the late Richard M. Shipley, the building fund chairman, and generous contributions from the members of the community, in a little more than a year enough money was solicited to start the building. Chief Law had submitted plans and designs of his own making and the same craftsmen who had built the truck plus the help of the many new members worked on the building. The project was completely finished in 1945.

The first meeting of the Ferndale 4 - H club, sponsored by the Ferndale Homemaker's Club, was held on June 30, 1949. The members also participated in the county rally and were awarded red ribbons. Five months later the club received its charter and an honor ribbon, at that time the membership totaled 32. Ribbons have been awarded the members for their work that has been exhibited at county rallies, and 4 - H club week at the University of Maryland and Timonium Fair.

1950 found Ferndale with a new neighbor, Friendship Airport (June 24). The airport was named after the area, known as Friendship in Anne Arundel County. It was the second regional airport in the area, the first being Washington National Airport. Nothing remains of the original airport. Gone are the days when you were allowed to go out on the roof on the airport to watch planes take off and land. Today's building currently known as BWI- Thurgood Marshall Airport BWI observation areas are enclosed and not as exciting. Ferndale Fire Hall became a newly created voter precinct in May of 1964. Our local population growth was so great that we, indeed, warranted one.

1962 will be remembered as the year Ferndale Elementary School became a "big" school. New classrooms, a large front lobby, modern "tower" enclosure for the steps, principal's office, health room, new lavatories, teachers' lounge and other new amenities were added. The old section of the school was painted, and new counters and lockers were installed. Indeed, our school's appearance had undergone considerable change, both inside and out. Packard Avenue was widened, at this time, to accommodate parking.

Early in 1978 or late in 1977, some of the leaders in the community were discussing things that we could be doing in the community. After many suggestions we decided to have a day of fun and celebration and that we would simply call it "Ferndale Day." We thought it would be a good idea to get as many service or community oriented groups together and have the opportunity to raise funds for the individual groups and also to support the center that was being for the seniors, rather than have the building become another burden on the tax payers.

It began to work well immediately. Each year we have tried to make this a fun day, some better than others, but always community day, always a great parade, always good food and drinks, excellent entertainment, fun and rides for everyone attending. And of course it wouldn't be Ferndale Day without the Little Miss Ferndale Contest. The parade traditional includes units from North County and Glen Burnie High Schools, the Anne Arundel Alarmers, the Ferndale Volunteer Fire Department, as well units from other fire departments throughout the county. The parade also features classic cars and marching groups from throughout the county.

The event is made successful through the efforts of volunteers from both the community and local businesses. In recent years local bands (Striker and Family Tradition) have contributed their time and talents to entertain the thousands of people attending the event. Each year the Ferndale Community Club, the Ferndale Garden Club, Michael's 8th Avenue, and the Ferndale Tavern all operate food and drink concessions to raise funds for the event.

This year's event will mark Ferndale Day's 33rd anniversary and will for the first time include a full scale Ferndale Spring Carnival. Operated by Shaw & Sons, the carnival will run for six days and promises to be a significant addition to our annual celebration. Rides will be available for all ages. Games, cotton candy, funnel cakes, candy apples, and popcorn will be available as well. Hosted by the Greater Ferndale Community Civic Association, Ferndale Day is a day of celebration in a close knit community which, although small, prides itself its heritage and of a long standing tradition of family values.

In 1985, the Ferndale Senior Citizen's Center was built. The center is home of the Ferndale Senior Citizens Club, the Ferndale Garden Club, the Friends of Ferndale, Inc., and the Greater Ferndale Community Civic Association (formerly the Ferndale Linthicum Area Community Council).

Ferndale's open spaces have been filled by a nine decades of building, and today's residential and commercial landscape presents a startling contrast to the 13 scattered houses of 1914. The post office has been closed, the police department has been moved to Millersville. Ferndale Elementary is now the Ferndale Early Education Center. We now have shopping centers, many new stores and homes, North County High School, and several new elementary schools. The train that passed through the area stopped operating in 1951. But in 1992, with the historic spike pulling from the old tracks, a new transportation entered Ferndale, the Light Rail. In 2010, Ferndale is still a thriving local community with citizens and organizations that work together to maintain an environment for the common good of all.