



Upcoming Events at the Garrett-Jacobs Mansion

December 9 (Sunday): Speakers Series. WYPR’s “Your Maryland”: Finding the Drama, Color, and Humor in Maryland History with Ric Cottom (2:00 pm to 3:00 pm)

January 6 (Sunday): Everything’s New: Baltimore in the Roaring Twenties (2:00 pm to 3:00 pm)

January 15 (Tuesday): Taste & Tour (6:00 pm to 7:00 pm)

Mrs. Dr. Jacobs’ Christmas



MESSENGER BOYS HAPPY
Guests Of Mrs. Henry Barton Jacobs
For Three Hours.
SOCIETY FOLK SERVE THEM

MESSENGER BOYS GUESTS
Doctor and Mrs. Jacobs Provide
Entertainment At Their Home.

LUSTY CHEERS FOR HOSTS
With Employers Of Uplands, Followers Of Mercury Eat Their Fill And Get Stocking Full Of Goodies
Spick and span in their blue uniforms, with their shoes polished brightly and their faces shining, 75 or more messenger boys of the American District Telegraph Company were given their annual treat yesterday afternoon by Doctor and Mrs. Henry Barton Jacobs at their home, 31 West Mount Vernon Place.

I Remember ...
The Messenger Boys' Christmas
By David M. Jeff

For twenty years, or thereabouts, over the turn of the century, Mrs. Henry Barton Jacobs gave a Christmas party for Western Union messenger boys at her Mount Vernon place home. The boys marched there in a body, also camp to the city and help make merry. Mrs. Jacobs has arranged for a vegetable performance which will be held in the supper room of her home. The best local talent will entertain her guests and at the conclusion of the performance ice-cream, cakes and candies will be served. To cap the climax of the day's enjoyment, Mrs. Jacobs will give each of the lads a Christmas gift of money.

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bill. Then we were marched back downtown and dismissed if we weren't on Christmas duty, which many of us were when a lot of us got home as

“At all the telegraph offices in the city, the boys are talking about ‘Mrs. Dr. Jacobs’ feast,” reported *The Baltimore Sun*, shortly before Christmas in 1907. The “feast” to which they were referring was Mary Frick Garrett-Jacobs’ annual party held for Baltimore telegraph messenger boys on Christmas.

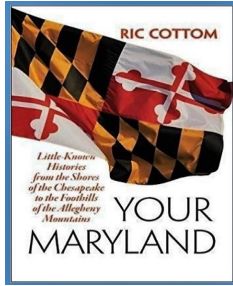
B&O Railroad President Robert Garrett, Mary Frick’s first husband, began the tradition of Christmas celebrations in the 1880s, when he gave dinners for boys employed by the B&O’s telegraph business. Messenger boys, employed to deliver telegraphs in a time when

child labor laws were less stringent, could be as young as 10 and were expected to be prompt and presentable in their tidy uniforms and caps. Hours were long: “I worked 12 hours a day with no time off; even on Sunday. Pay was \$15 a month for day duty, \$17 for night,” wrote a former messenger boy who attended one of the Garrett parties in 1893.

For the hard-working boys, attending one of Mary Frick’s parties was like entering another world. “I was a Western Union messenger boy and those parties were really impressive to me,” wrote David M. Jeff in a 1955 *Baltimore Sun* remembrance. “Didn’t people say that Mrs. Jacobs owned the biggest house in the city? Didn’t everyone know she was about the richest lady in Baltimore? And the party itself. It was fantastic to me, a little fellow making \$3 a week and taking most of that home to help support our family.” (Cont. next page)

(*Messenger boys, cont.*) The parties were held in the mansion's supper room, or "Hall of Mirrors." Festivities typically began with entertainment, usually a vaudeville show or magician, which was received with enthusiastic applause. Next, refreshments were served—with Mary Frick and her friends doing the honors—and the children filled up on cakes, candy, and ice cream. Finally, after several hearty rounds of caroling, gifts of candy, fruit, dollars, and tin horns were handed out. While the boys behaved as "gentlemen" as they left the mansion, once outside they would blow their new horns, wave their candy canes, and loudly cheer for "Mrs. Jacobs' Christmas blowout."

"Your Maryland": Finding the Drama, Color, and Humor in Maryland History



Robert I. Cottom—better known as "Ric" to friends and public radio listeners—was serving as editor of the scholarly *Maryland Historical Magazine* when he was called to share his knowledge of Maryland history on Baltimore public radio station WYPR. He soon became host of "Your Maryland," which quickly caught on for its colorful, human-interest glimpses into the state's past.

With the release of his book, *Your Maryland: Little-Known Histories from the Shores of the Chesapeake to the Foothills of the Allegheny Mountains*, Cottom's rich and insightful stories have gained an even wider audience. Join Baltimore Heritage and the Garrett-Jacobs Mansion on Sunday, December 9, at 2 pm as Cottom shares a few of his marvelous stories and insights into how he creates them. Tickets can be purchased at www.baltimoreheritage.org.

Sally Johnston Joins GJMEF Board of Directors

The Garrett-Jacobs Mansion Endowment Fund welcomes Sally Johnston to its Board of Directors. Johnston has a deep connection to Baltimore's historical preservation and education worlds, as evidenced by her storied career as a programmer, educator, author, fundraiser, and nonprofit officer.

A graduate of the University of Pittsburgh, Johnston developed and designed education programs and exhibits for school-aged children at historical organizations—including Baltimore City Life Museums and the Maryland Historical Society—before becoming the director at The Star-Spangled Banner Flag House in Baltimore from 1996 until 2004. There, she organized a capital campaign that raised \$4.1 million and oversaw the construction of the 12,000-square-foot Star-Spangled Banner Museum.

Johnston has published, with co-author Lois Zanow, *Monuments to Heaven: Baltimore's Historic Houses of Worship* and, with co-author Pat Pilling, *Mary Young Pickersgill: Flag Maker of the Star-Spangled Banner*. She currently lectures on Baltimore's historic houses of worship and serves on the board of the Mary Young Pickersgill Chapter of the U.S. Daughters of 1812.

Public Officials to Tour Tower Project

Public officials, press representatives, funders, and GJMEF Board Members gathered November 13 to celebrate the official opening of the Garrett-Jacobs Mansion's recently completed Tower Project. The decade-plus, \$2.7 million effort makes the mansion ADA compliant, bolsters its fire-prevention capabilities, and streamlines movement within the mansion via the new elevator. After brief speeches and introductions from GJMEF Board President Carl Eastwick and Doug Suess (who, along with Bruce Votta, co-chaired the Capital Campaign Committee), Baltimore City Councilman Eric Costello (District 11) cut the ceremonial ribbon to the new addition. Attendees, including a representative attending on behalf of Baltimore City Council President Bernard C. "Jack" Young and former state delegate and senator American Joe Miedusiewski, toured the new addition.

The GJMEF is grateful for the support provided by two Maryland State Bond bills in the amounts of \$100,000 in 2016 and \$200,000 in 2018. Major funding was also provided by the France-Merrick Foundation and The John L. Stasiak Private Foundation. Additional support came from members of The Engineers Club, Kimball Construction, various engineering societies in the region, engineering firms, and generous donors who support the mission of the Endowment Fund. In addition, special thanks to M. Nelson Barnes & Sons Inc. for mechanical and plumbing work.

Bruce Votta and Doug Suess were enthusiastic about the way Kimball Construction was able to bring the project to completion within the available budget. Votta said, "Without the efforts of Kimball Construction to value-engineer the project to reduce the building costs to the amount of money we had raised, this project would not have happened." Suess added, "It was a very difficult site to work with—tight spaces, historic buildings, and myriads of utility pipes. Kimball's crew did a fantastic job for us."



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