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### **Maryland House & Garden Pilgrimage offers a glimpse of Calvert's past history**

The Calvert Garden Club is sponsoring an 11-site tour of a few of the beautiful and historic homes and institutions of Calvert County during the Maryland House and Garden Pilgrimage on May 17. Visiting these sites we have learned many local stories and legends, viewed beautiful gardens and heard the history of early education in 1880's one-room schools. Here is the first in a series of articles about them to share with you written by Garden Club members.

#### **Tynewydd Farm**

Overlooking the Patuxent River, **Tynewydd Farm**, owned by the David Lewis Family, is located in southern Calvert on Mackall Road. The 120-acre property includes a gate- or caretaker's house set close to the road; a cluster of farm buildings, including a tobacco barn and stables; a large and stately main house set back from the road, but visible behind cultivated fields and gardens; and a smaller building—the 'studio'-- now converted to cozy living quarters. Except for the gatehouse, the buildings are situated on high ground with sprawling views to the west of more fields and pastures sloping to the shores of the Patuxent River...a perfect site for splendid sunsets and cooling summer breezes.

The property was settled in 1668 by John Milton and was called *Milton's Lot*. His daughter married a Hellen and the property remained in the Hellen family for generations. Sometime along the way, it became known as *Patuxent Farm*. Tobacco was the main crop at the farm and throughout the county until mid-twentieth century and during the Steamboat Era, tobacco from this farm was rolled down to the end of the road, to Mackall Wharf for pickup by the St. Mary's steamboat. The original (main) house was built in 1782. It was of modest size then,

its bounding walls extending only as far as the length of the current living room. Sometime in the late 1800's, the owners raised the roof, gaining a second story, and added the four-column front porch. One can see the date, although partially covered, set in white glazed brick on the exterior wall between the two chimneys.

Major changes to the house and property were initiated by the Clarks, who came to the farm in 1906. Virginia Keep Clark was an artist, and photographs of the property exist from that time, which show her artist's eye for beauty in the buildings and landscaping. It was she who had the small separate house built to serve as her studio and retreat. The main house now has 20 rooms and 7 bathrooms. Most of the rooms and bathrooms were added during the Clark's time at the farm. Subsequent owners allowed the house to fall into disrepair.

The Lewis Family bought the farm in this state in 1987 and spent the next three years restoring the property, keeping anything that worked or could be repaired. A construction crew was on site, but the Lewis' also did a lot of the work themselves in the gardens and stables. The first project was to restore and expand the studio into a livable home, where the Lewis' could live while work proceeded on the main house. They tore down and replaced the caretaker's house. They changed the name to *Tynewydd* (pronounced *Tin-with*), Welsh for 'little house', reflecting the house's humble origins and David Lewis' Welsh heritage. However, *Tynewydd* was no longer a little house, and its many rooms needed furnishing. So, in 1989, Mr. Lewis traveled to England where he and his nephew searched out unique English country antiques and shipped them home. There are also a few art pieces in the home that reflect his South African birthplace heritage.

With old houses and gardens, it is an ongoing process. More recently, the kitchen in the main house was updated and two extensions were added to the studio so that the Lewis' could make it their primary home and leave the main house to accommodate the large Lewis family of children and grandchildren when they visit.

In addition to its spectacular river view and furnishings, *Tynewydd* is a place of unusual charm and constant activity. In the growing season, the fields alternate with crops of field corn and sorghum. The stables are filled to capacity with the Lewis' horses and those of the Tynewydd Riding Club (including winners of State and National Jousting Tournaments) and during the fox hunting season, the Lewis', in their turn, host the riders, horses and hounds of a Southern Maryland Hunt Club. The main house now can accommodate as many as 13 or 14 for an overnight house party; the studio, a few more. The Lewis' intend to hold such a party and test that capacity after the Pilgrimage.

***By Marcia Olson***

To take the tour, information is available at [www.mhgp.com](http://www.mhgp.com). Order tickets for \$30 in advance or \$35 on site; a gourmet lunch box for \$15 must be ordered by May 1 at [www.jefpat.org](http://www.jefpat.org).