

Public Programs offered to share the Story of The Met

To add context to the fun, the B&O 150th planning committee offers presentations for your group edification and enjoyment. Any of these PowerPoint presentations can be scheduled through Germantown Historical Society at info@germantownmdhistory.org and donations to MPI will be welcomed.

From Corn to Commuters: How the Coming of the Railroad Changed the Way of Life and the Future of Montgomery County

This presentation tells the story of how the arrival of the railroad changed the face of Montgomery County forever. Featured are the railroad stations designed by E. Francis Baldwin, extraordinary feats of engineering such as the curving trestle over Little Seneca Creek and the Bollman Truss viaduct over the Monocacy River, and new suburban and agricultural towns spawned by this catapult into the Industrial Age. The talk explores how this branch line became the mainstay of the B & O Railroad and evolved into the current commuter and freight line.

Viaducts, Trestles and Bridges: Magnificent Structures of the Metropolitan Branch of the B & O Railroad

This presentation explores how engineering feats on the Metropolitan Branch were required to address the steep grades and six major waterways of the 42.4-mile-long line. This was in the early 1870s when new materials and techniques such as modular construction, dynamite, and steel girders were coming into use. Meet the talented chief civil engineer for the project, James Randolph, and James Boyd, a primary contractor. Learn how double-tracking in the early 20th century affected the line. And discover the difference between a bridge, a trestle, and a viaduct.

Architect E. F. Baldwin and Station Houses on the Metropolitan Branch of the B & O Railroad

Nearly all of the station houses on the Metropolitan Branch were designed by Baltimore architect Ephraim Francis Baldwin. While most recognized for the large Victorian Gothic Station at Point-of-Rocks, his small one- and two-room station houses were also significant architecturally. The original stations at Rockville, Kensington, Gaithersburg, Dickerson, and Point of Rocks still stand. The waiting sheds constructed in 1997 at some stations are taken from his 1906 designs for sheds and milk platforms. Baldwin also designed numerous buildings in the County, Washington, DC, and Baltimore.

All presentations are by historian Susan Cooke Soderberg, an independent historian and writer living in Germantown, MD. After achieving a Master's degree in American Studies from George Washington University she worked for ten years for Montgomery County Parks and Planning as a public historian. She has written several books and articles on local and state history and will have a biography of Josiah Henson coming out next year.

The Met: A History of the Metropolitan Branch of the B&O Railroad, published in 1998 for the 125th anniversary of the rail line and updated in 2016, will be available for sale to benefit the Germantown Historical Society.

Contact: info@germantownMDhistory.org