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During the early days of Maryland every county was decreed that it had to have certain public buildings, including an almshouse, as well as a jail and a courthouse, and other buildings. Carroll county was created in 1837, and it wasn't until 1852 that we actually got the alms house. It had to be approved by the Legislation so that the funds could be appropriated for building it. It was quite an undertaking to build such a large structure.

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And until that time people were held in homes under a pension system, or some orphans were sent off to Frederick. Frederick's alms house was active during the Revolutionary War, so it was really an early almshouse. When it was built it took about a year; the commissioners were very active in its design and its construction. There was a brick yard close to here; there was a quarry down the woods for the foundation stones. It was built architecturally as a balloon structure which meant that some mortise joints but mostly nail joints and filled with bricks. So they built bricks, the commissioners inspected the bricks before they went in the walls; the walls are seventeen inches thick from these bricks.

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They built a boiler so the place would be heated. They insured that there would be ventilation with transient windows over the doors, and ventilator shafts in the walls. They commissioners had traveled to alms houses throughout Maryland and Pennsylvania to find the best and latest technology to put in this almshouse.

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The alms house is built on a large farm, about 300 acres, and later sections were sold off by the county, and it became a 175 acres. Currently we believe we have about a 100 acres because over time the land was sent off to become the hospital, the ag center, the baseball field, and so forth. So the county owned the land and all the buildings from the beginning and it still does.

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The purpose of an almshouse was to care for people who could not care for themselves, and they came from all walks of life, and they were all different ages. And we were open in 1852 with mostly elderly people, then after the Civil War, you had a lot of broken families here. Or you know after the men couldn't support the family, they would put them here for a few weeks, a month, a year. Then we had a lot of moms who had no longer support because women basically could not have an income back then; they had to go somewhere.

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So we had a lot of children in the almshouse; it was heavily a young population. I'd say half of it, half of the population was about 30 years old or younger, and that was about until 1900 when there was new social programs. Because the almshouse system developed in the United States, they also starting looking about how children and mothers

were being cared for and they felt having them at home rather than in an institution was much better. So after 1900 there were very few children here.

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And you might wonder how children were educated in the almshouse. The public school system started in Maryland after the Civil War, in the late 1800s. Up to then, children were indentured to a community member, and we have a belief that a lot of times these were relatives. A child of first grade age, five or six would be indentured until they were 18 for a boy or 16 for a girl. And they would learn a trade. They received clothing and they received money when they turned that age. Up until then they were working for someone, and they also went to school to learn reading, math and writing.

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So basically the system of almshouses was to have people be supported somehow, learn a little means of support for themselves. If they could work at the farm; they did, they made a lot of butter, it was a very active farm with over 10,000 pounds of pork products in a year, bushels and bushels, 150 bushels of apples, I mean excuse me potatoes, 150 bushels of potatoes, turnips, lot of wheat, corn, oats. The almshouse supplied the jail with all of its bacon, butter, and flour for bread. They also sold the remainders, and they also tried to balance their own budget. One issue was how many transient hoboese came to knock on the door asking for a job or a place to stay overnight. And in one year there was well over 3,000 extra meals served. It's really hard to balance a budget when you have, you know an extra 100 people day to day. So that was again after the Civil War when things are in transition in the country.

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The almshouse did go until 1965, gradually other systems of aid came into play, and fewer and fewer residents lived here. It was finally closed, and then because it's attached to a Pennsylvania German farm with beautiful buildings, the county wisely decided to turn it into a farm museum or a museum of rural agriculture before that was lost.

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The staff to operate the almshouse; this is an interesting question because the steward and his wife, the main people in charge, that was a political appointment to get the steward here so the stewards changed from time to time, but sometimes the same steward came back. It depended on the political structure of the time. Now the steward was paid \$400 a year from 1852 well until after World War II, so you had to make due with that salary. And then the matron was paid about \$75; she was in charge of all the people, cooking and feeding and making all the linens that were used here; she really had a busy job. There was a washer women and laundress to do the wash. There was a fireman, and everyone thinks, oh could they be putting out fires all the time. Well actually the firemen kept the fires going so that everybody would be warm and cozy. They had a big boiler in the big house, and then each of these little dormitory rooms, where men had a little stove, a little wood stove. And there was a teamster, and the teamster like we know today, there's truck drivers, teamsters back then drove teams of horses to pull all the farm equipment.

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The almshouse started with the main structure for the women and children, and also for serving food and meeting the public. And then the dormitory was added for the men to live in, with their separate sitting room, with a summer kitchen, and that was a place to take baths. The unusual thing about this almshouse is everyone took a bath twice a week; highly unusual for the time.

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In a few years they built a very large almshouse barn to house the animals and keep the hay, and also a pig yard in front, a piggery, and that's where they raised like 300 pigs each year. They also had a place for storing corn, you know, a corn crib with a wagon shed, nearby was an icehouse, the icehouse now we know as the blacksmith shop. Back in 1941, a blacksmith moved into the almshouse as a resident, and wanted to do some smithing, so they put a floor in the icehouse, by 1941 we had refrigerators. So later when they wanted to have more demonstrations of blacksmithing, the icehouse was filled in to support animals. I think we have six animals in there now so it couldn't keep the weight. So unfortunate, I would have liked to have seen that icehouse.

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The other buildings that are still here are the spring house which is running water, cold water about 50 degrees in a trench, and you put in your milk cans to cool off the milk. It's also to keep leftovers in crocks. We have a firehouse, and again, this one though is for... We have a firehouse and that is for putting fires out. We have a wheeled cart and a few leather buckets. I'm glad we never caught fire because it looks fairly inadequate. The wheel cart has a hose and that would be attached to a pumper truck. The pumper of course would be loaded with water, and then men would be on either side pumping the water out. Good thing we didn't need it.

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There is a hay barracks that was moved after Jeb Stuart came through town. That was put here back in the old days. We also have a cemetery, everyone knows... across the street from the hospital. That was actually included in the 30s; there was a number of residents here who were buried here, a number of them also were buried in church cemeteries. But after it got a little too crowded they decided to design that potters field for people in about 1936 and Mathias made the stones. So it's called potters field; its a kind of memorial I think to all of the people who lived and died here.

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The almshouse has always been a county facility and it was a large farm. There's an English tradition of having the poor work for themselves to support themselves so the almshouse system is similar to that. So we did have a really large farm. They again sold all their products that they produced and also fed themselves. The farm was also a show place for farm equipment because as you know in the late Victorian era, there was a lot of new equipment based on steam power or on mechanization from cast iron parts. So like when the McCormick Reaper came to town they said, "Oh, let's bring it out to the almshouse." And they already had a lime kiln, one of the other duties here, burning lime

for fertilizer so they brought it here, and demonstrated how it would work because of the big beautiful fields that everybody knew.

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The residents who could work, worked on the farm and they also worked in the quarry, and they also made butter; there was a lot of jobs. There was a number of residents who could not work, so they would just be cared for. The county paid for all of the seeds and equipment and cows, and you know anything that they needed. There was always a petition by the steward and then paid later, and he was required to list every year an annual report in the paper. So they could see what was produced, what it was sold for, who they paid for every job, shingling, plumbing work anything is all mentioned, and all accounted for. And that's how they tried to show a balanced budget.

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One of the stewards, John Tracey, he would report every quarter in the paper all about everything that they had and all the fabulous things that were happening at the almshouse. And later he became a delegate to the State Legislature, so it was kind of a stepping stone for him I think to get his name in the paper.

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From the very first day anyone wanting to live in the almshouse had to petition the county commissioners. There was an ad put in the paper saying those who wish to come, come now. That was in May of 1853. After that a family member could go to the county commissioner and say please take my elderly father. I'll pay you a \$100 a year. It was always a kind of negotiable amount. Someone would bring their daughter or wife or someone who was blind or injured, the homeless on the streets, citizens would come by and say so and so is on the street, please take them in.

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Then it wasn't by law that they had to stay so we had some residents who would leave. And like we have a little document on the wall, this one man, Frank Kilbaugh; he left, he said, the food's no good. And then December 28<sup>th</sup> he's asking, oh well I'd really like to come back, so you know they would let him come back.

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And then we had another interesting story of one of the residents who was supposedly frozen to death, and he was brought to the almshouse. And then it said in the paper, well when he read about his death he was quite surprised. So it was people who were out there that needed help.

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The quarry is interesting. We actually have two quarries back in the woods, and now one of them is used as an amphitheatre. The other one has a little well across the little path from it and that was to water the horses. You can find actually the holes in the stones where it was dynamited. The quarry was quite active into the you know, World War II era. Not all residents were too happy about working in a quarry, you know all the

residents here, but it was mined for steps and Sandy Mount church; I'm not sure which one, has a step from the almshouse quarry and the foundation stones here, and they did build a jail, additions to the courthouse, and various public structures. It's that green, you know that malachite green stone that's indigenous.

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When the almshouse closed, George Greer was the county administrator at that time, and he was a friend of Landon Burns, who had a huge collection of agricultural equipment in storage at the University of Maryland. So they together formed a committee to study the idea of a farm museum and they agreed it would be a great idea. And because every building is still in its original location, you know, direction of the buildings is right, and the use and function. So it was great because there's not too many intact farms. Then meanwhile we've brought in some buildings; we needed a building to show plows so that was built and also for the big threshers, so those are new buildings.

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Currently we have a log barn that's being built here, the Hoff barn, and that is going to really great because the barn was built about 1780, and we can show the very earliest Pennsylvania-German farming from the very first settlers, and then compare that to Pennsylvania German farming in the 1800s when things were much easier, speedier, and faster—different crops were being grown. So that's really cool.

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There's a couple of other barns that have been added to house exhibits, or for recreational purposes, and for wedding receptions, and that kind of things. And we have some animal cages, some playground equipment, that kind of thing to kind of flesh it out so every family member can have an opportunity to enjoy the place.

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A more interesting question maybe would be you know why don't you portray an almshouse today? And we don't because it would look like this, and what we do with our almshouse, all the dormitories now are traditional arts rooms that we can show you the trades and techniques of spinning and weaving, quilting, cooking, things that people actually do, so it's more of a living history museum. And you know we use the buildings maybe more to a capacity then to engage people rather than just a static display.

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One aspect of researching the almshouse was to see the products that were grown here and I very interested in what kind of turnip, what kind of potato, because then we can show those very same crops growing in the heirloom garden that is down there by the animals. I really like to grow Carroll county crops and the kind of barley and corn that they would have had here because then that really reinforces the whole lifestyle that was used back then. And you could cook those things; we have a root cellar just like from the research we discovered was underneath this curing shed. So we reestablished the root

cellar and now we can put the vegetables in, and almost recreate maybe what life was like back in the 1800s, early 1900s for people here.

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A typical men's room in the dorm would house two people, and they had a separate bed, a desk, all the little belongings on the wash stand, and pegs for hanging the clothes on the wall, pictures and other things they would bring with them. Some people had nice furniture, especially women and some of the women's rooms in the large house had fancy furniture. Basically it was a place of rest and just like people today when they go to a nursing home or you know, a living center; they have very few belongings with them.

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The reason it's Pennsylvania-German, rather than something else, Pennsylvania-German houses have a door in the middle, and windows on either side, either two windows or four windows. The almshouse has two doors because one is public and one is private and then extra windows to make like nine openings, and that's the main farmhouse. Behind it is the dormitory for men. Now in a Pennsylvania-German farmhouse, there's usually a ell with the fireplace in it, because it was fire prevention to have your fireplace away from your cooking, away from the house. So now we have a dormitory with a great big fireplace in it for the summer kitchen, and that is the ell, so it's basically the Pennsylvania-German structure but just very expanded, and to house, you know, up to 50 people. So that's to me very interesting to discover when you're looking at the, you know, the structure and why did they build it the way they did.

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Much later the tunnel was added after they had a lighting system because we have a picture without it and with it. So it was in the 30s or so the tunnel was added for handicapped accessibility. Also when you look at the traditional arts center, living history center, you can see that it's not symmetrical any longer and that's because a wing was added at the end, back when they had diphtheria or typhoid and they needed an infirmary.