



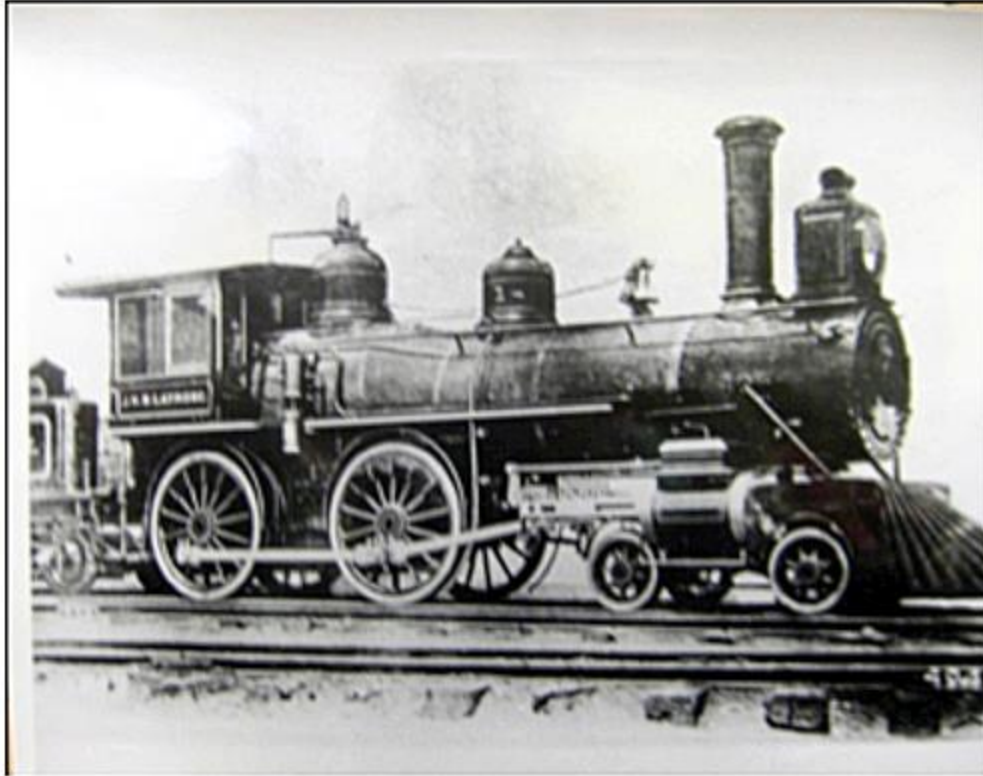
The story of the railroad serving Arnold

The coming of the railroad to the Broadneck Peninsula allowed the Arnold community to shed its cocoon and emerge as a vital part of the world around it. The seemingly isolated area was suddenly able to participate in the social, cultural, commercial, and educational activities of Baltimore and Annapolis.



There had been a steam railroad between Baltimore and Annapolis since 1840. The problem for Arnold residents was that the Annapolis & Elkridge Railroad was on the south side of the Severn River, so people from Arnold still had to cross the river to use this route to Baltimore.

In 1880 the Annapolis & Baltimore Short Line was chartered by a group of New England promoters. The project proceeded at a leisurely pace, with actual construction of the railroad began in 1886; and in March 1887, the new Short Line's Engine No. 1 left Bladen Street station in Annapolis. The new steam line was actually four miles shorter than the old Elkridge line, and passed through scenic and sparsely populated farmland, in an almost straight line to the Severn River, where the rails crossed on a wooden trestle. In 1893 the company was sold to George Burnham, and reorganized as the Baltimore & Annapolis Short Line.



In 1908 the line was electrified and changed its name to Maryland Electric Railways Company. Steam engines were still used for the freight business; but passenger service became much cleaner, faster, and more frequent with the nine new high-speed Pullman type coaches. The luxurious coaches were 56 feet long, weighed slightly over 44 tons, and were equipped with four Westinghouse 100 h.p. motors along with Westinghouse triple-valve automatic traction brakes, which allowed operation with some of the older steam line coaches that were being retained as trailers.

Today, Anne Arundel County Historical Society's Browse and Buy Shoppe, located at Jones Station Road and Baltimore Annapolis Boulevard, occupies the original sub-station. High tension feeders entered the building through the large holes in the top of the wall on the north side. Visible on the railroad side of the building are short sections of track at right angles to the main line. They lead into two bricked-in doors. The rails and doors were for dollies that could shift the heavy transformers for repairs or replacement.'

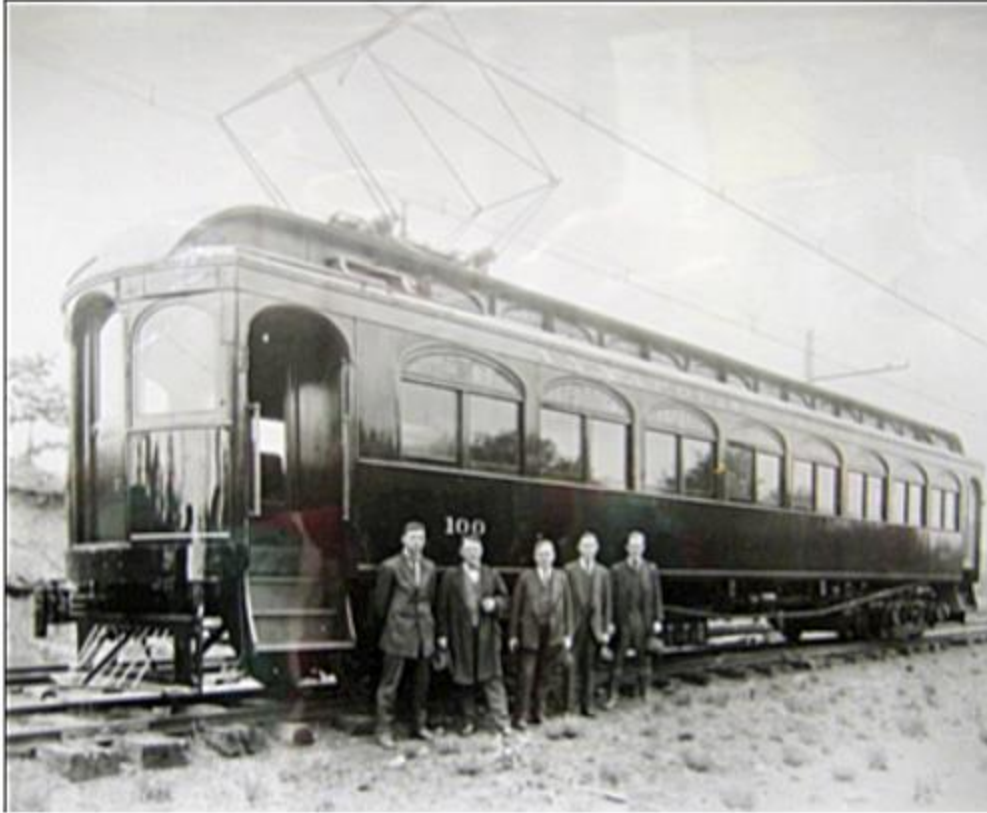
Anne Arundell County Historical Building



After 1913, riders could experience the elegance of interior decoration of the times. An arch above the upper windows was enhanced with stained glass s. The coaches were divided into two sections, one with seats upholstered in plush green mohair and the other with leather. This latter section was called the “smoker.” Beside each seat was a bright brass cuspidor, and there were knurled brass plates by each window for striking matches.²

Shortly after the turn of the century, realtors touted the benefits of land along the Severn River, and summertime cottage communities began to develop. The Sherwood Forest Company attempted to develop a sister community called Ashby, on the north bank of the Severn at the end of Joyce Lane. Prospective buyers were instructed to take the B & A Railroad to Joyce Station, and the club ferry to Sherwood.

1900's Era



Pines-on-the Severn was sub-divided into lots for summer and weekend cottages in about 1924. Edwin Pugh Baugh, a Florida businessman who made his money in fertilizer, chemicals and land deals, built an expansive copy of a French seaside chateau on the banks of the Severn, in what is now the community of Rugby Hall. He named it Uchillyn on the Severn. Passersby can still see the name on what was the gatehouse, now a private home on Old County Road. After Mr. Baugh died in 1921, the main building became known as Rugby Hall, a small hotel and restaurant. The estate eventually became Wroxeter-on-Severn, a private co-ed prep school, now closed. The building is still standing as a private residence.

The Arnold family reaped rewards by having the railroad cross their properties. Arnold's store at Revell became the post office. In 1902 the post office was moved to another store run by two of Thomas Arnold's daughters about one mile south, in what is now called The Depot at Arnold.

The railroad not only brought development of real estate in Arnold, but brought other commercialization. Charles Tate opened a cannery next to the post office. Local farmers could bring their produce to be processed and shipped to Baltimore.

During its heyday, the years between 1918 and the late 1920s, the B & A transported as many

as 1,750,000 passengers per year between Baltimore and Annapolis. Trains left every hour from 6 am through 11 pm (during rush hour, the trains left every 30 minutes). Thomas Arnold's obituary even suggested scheduled departure times of the trains from Baltimore to his funeral in Arnold. Because of its strong performance, the neighboring Washington Baltimore & Annapolis bought the Annapolis Short Line in 1921. In 1931 the line went into receivership and finally emerged as the Baltimore and Annapolis Railroad Company. The right-of-way and some equipment were bought by the Bondholders Protective Society.

Several tragic incidents mar the history of the railroad serving Arnold. John Mellen, who wrote a series of articles called *Arundel Vignettes* for The Evening Capital., recalls one colorful incident told by Nelson Molter :

Tuesday the 24th was an otherwise pleasant June morning in 1913 when Old George, the keeper of the draw, had waved to the regular passenger car, on time for Annapolis at 7:45 a.m. According to schedule, the morning freight, which was still a steam run, would follow in seven minutes, and George, thinking he had enough time, opened the bridge (this was a swing bridge, not a draw) to accommodate a two-mast schooner which had called for clearance. As the center span swung open to its full 900, suddenly there was the whistle from No. 5, leaving Winchester ahead of time on the long downgrade to the bridge. In the days before self-lapping brakes, a "straight air" valve permitted only one application before the train line had to be recharged for another try. In such a situation came the locomotive and six cars at a fair speed around the curve and out onto the trestle. Old George remained heroically at his post, clutching frantically at the lever which controlled the bridge mechanism, but the ponderous workings of multiple gears would grind only so fast, until the span closed to within a scant 24 inches from the locking position. As the engine crew jumped into the river, No. 5 reared slightly, then plunged into the channel, dragging the loaded cars, one by one, behind her, until only the cabooses could be seen above the water. For six days thereafter patrons of the Short Line were ferried from the foot of King George Street to Severnside via steamboat.

Another accident actually took place at the Arnold station crossing. The Baltimore Sun reported on December 11, 1924, that four people died when the Washington, Baltimore and Annapolis Electric Railroad two-car train crashed into their automobile. Mr., Harry D. Holme and his sister, Miss Anne W. Holme, of Mount Washington and Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Joseph Hansli were killed. Five-year-old Joseph Hansli Jr., thrown clear of the wreckage at impact, survived. The automobile was bound northeast on a 12-foot private road which leads from Pines-on-Severn, a real estate development, to the Baltimore Annapolis Boulevard.

The Holme family had a cottage at Pines-on-Severn. Mr. and Mrs. Hansli and their young son had been guests for dinner, and were returning to Baltimore.

Albert W. Miller, motorman, said he had almost reached the crossing when, the automobile seemed to leap from behind the trees on the roadway directly in his path. He jammed on the brakes, but was unable to prevent the crash. The big electric car struck the automobile fairly in the center and ripped it to pieces. Despite his efforts to stop the train it continued on past the crossing for at least 175 feet. When it finally was brought to a stop the bodies of all four dead were wedged beneath the trucks of the first car.

The crossing is about 200 yards south of the railroad station at Arnold. South of this, the tracks disappear, around a curve. A train from Annapolis, after rounding this curve has a straightaway of between 600 and 700 feet before reaching the crossing. Two big trees on the narrow roadway hide the railroad approach from the south from automobiles bound from the Severn settlement for Baltimore. It likewise hides from the view of motormen on the trains automobiles approaching from the Severn.

At the crossing there are no safety gates, warning lights or bell. Instead, there is a sign on which is painted in large letters: "Private Railroad Crossing." Below, in smaller letters: "Trains do not signal when going over this crossing."

The third tragedy is reported in *Discovering Our School Community*, a document compiled by the 5th and 6th grades of Arnold Elementary School in 1953:

George Gray, (a local farmer and garbage collector) served the Pines with his wagon and two oxen. One day they were crossing the tracks when the W.B. & A. train came through. The oxen were killed but the driver survived. Now the community has garbage collection twice a week by truck.

With the start of World War II and gas rationing, the B & A often ran with all available equipment in service. Trains were packed with midshipmen from the Naval Academy and their supporters going to the Army-Navy games in Philadelphia. ³Before Severna Park High School was built, students from Arnold and surrounding neighborhoods went to Annapolis High School via the train. Mail came to the Arnold post office by train. Workers remember a large hook beside the tracks that they hung the mail bag on, and the train crew would pick up the mail "on the fly" if there was no reason to stop.

Following World War II, gasoline rationing was over, returning servicemen were buying cars, highways were improving; people were again using their cars for transportation. Eventually B & A substituted buses for the more expensive-to-

operate trains, and by 1950 rail passenger service was discontinued. The B & A purchased a diesel engine and maintained freight service between Baltimore and Annapolis on a full carload basis only, until the old trestle across the Severn River was condemned unsafe.

It seemed like the end of the line for the old faithful B & A. The abandoned property deteriorated and became an eyesore in many places. Public interest in restoring the land as a linear park began in the mid-1970s. The Severna Park Jaycees maintained a portion of the railroad right-of-way as a hiking path. Other civic groups and private citizens lobbied for a trail. By 1980 the Anne Arundel County Department of Recreation and Parks adopted the idea, and Anne Arundel County purchased the 66 foot wide corridor between Glen Burnie to Arnold for just \$80,000. Construction began in 1985 and was completed in 1990. The county spent \$9.0 million on the project, which included paving 13.3 miles of trail, erecting five new bridges, and restoring two historic buildings. Even before it was finished it was the most-used park in the county, and is hailed nationally as an outstanding example of a linear park.⁴

Footnotes

1. Baltimore & Annapolis Trail Park Guide, UMBC Department of Geography, 1992
2. MOLTER, Nelson. Severna Park Anne Arundel County, Maryland - A History of the Area, 1988.
3. Baltimore and Annapolis Railroad. Retrieved January 3, 2011 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baltimore_and_Annapolis_Railroad
4. Baltimore & Annapolis Trail Park Guide, UMBC Department of Geography, 1992