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Harford County to celebrate 250th anniversary of Bush Declaration signing this weekend



A portion of the mural in the Harford County Courthouse depicting the signing of the Bush Declaration. (Harford County Government/Courtesy)

Harford County is stepping back in time this weekend with events celebrating the 250th anniversary of the Bush Declaration — the nation's first declaration in support of independence, signed in Harford County in 1775.

The Bush Declaration was signed March 22, 1775, when 34 elected Harford County citizens gathered in a small tavern in the town of Bush to show their support for Boston and their disdain for King George. The committee signed the declaration one year before the signing of the Declaration of Independence and just three weeks before the Battles of Lexington and Concord which signaled the beginning of the American Revolution.

To mark the historical significance of the declaration and its connection to Harford County, the Harford County Historical Society will host events Friday through Sunday.

The first event, Descendants of Signers Meet and Greet, will be held at the Liriodendron Mansion at 502 W. Gordon St., Bel Air on Friday from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Attendees will have the opportunity to meet descendants of the 34 Bush Declaration signers, view the document, and enjoy cocktails, live music and hors d'oeuvres popular in colonial times. Also in attendance will be Joyce White, the author of "Cooking Maryland's Way," which highlights cuisine of 1775.

Tickets for the event are \$55, however, admission to events planned for Saturday and Sunday are free of charge.

On Saturday from 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the Bel Air Armory, 37 N. Main St. in Bel Air, the historical society will host the History of the Bush Declaration where attendees will learn about the Bush Declaration and decide if they would sign for freedom or remain a “loyalist.”

The event will feature dramatic readings of the declaration and musical selections presented by Patterson Mill High School students.

Also on Saturday will be the Passport to History event, which will run from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., and from noon to 4 p.m. on Sunday.



Mural in the Harford County Courthouse depicting the signing of the Bush Declaration. (Harford County Government/Courtesy)

The event features tours of eight historical sites related to the Bush Declaration including Broom’s Bloom Dairy farm, as well as a Georgian home in Belcamp built by Bush signer Aquila Hall in 1768.

Docents at each location will explain the significance of the location in relation to the Bush Declaration and stamp passports that can be picked up at **any branch of the Harford County Library**. Attendees who get stamps from at least four locations will earn a certificate and historian badge.

To learn more about the events, visit Bushdeclaration.org.