

CATOCTIN MOUNTAIN PARK NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



BESSIE DARLING: **A BRIEF REPORT ON THE LIFE OF A CATOCTIN MOUNTAIN PROPRIETESS**

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May 2018

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Abstract

On the morning of 31 October 1933, Bessie C. Darling died in her rural Foxville home from a gunshot wound. The only witnesses were the gunman and the maid. As the story spread, details changed until the woman and her life became lost in the still repeated morass of rumor, speculation, and sensationalism about her death. Investigation of primary sources reveals a middleclass woman striving for social improvement... in other words, seeking The American Dream.

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Introduction

Unless one recently arrived to the Thurmont area, the story of Bessie Darling and her untimely demise is not new. As with the children's game of "Telephone," the telling and retelling of this tale has mixed and distorted the facts, leaving a one-dimensional heroine best known for her manner of death. Published accounts rely heavily on oral interviews of area residents or news articles based upon oral interviews of area residents. The circular referencing builds a character sketch of an urbanite woman from a rural perspective. Period sources that do not rely on sensationalism destroy the caricature and reveal a more robust image of the woman, Bessie Darling.

Historiography

Darling researchers rely primarily on a single information node and hearsay. Newspapers outside the city of Frederick, MD used news agencies for their coverage of the murder. The Maryland newspapers used the Associated Press (AP). The AP writer(s) sourced officials: the sheriff, the doctor who conducted the autopsy, and the Maryland State Health Department.¹ Newspapers outside the state and as far away as Oregon ran the Central Press agency story which identified the Foxville proprietress as one of the first licensed aviatrixes.² The two newspapers in Frederick wrote their own reports with information obtained from the sheriff's office, Darling's Baltimore relatives, and unnamed Foxville neighbors, with the later contributing the most to the story.³

News articles about the trial focused on the proceedings, the accused, and the crime. The reporters gave the facts of the proceedings and some verbatim testimony from the maid and the accused.⁴ Afterwards, when the murderer came up for parole hearings, reporters used their paper's

¹ "Autopsy is Held in Darling Case," *Baltimore Sun*, 1 Nov 1933; "Woman Slain at Deerfield By Health Dep't Employe," *Hagerstown Herald*, 1 Nov 1933.

² "Slain Aviatrix," *Brownsville Herald*, 15 Nov 1933, *Oshkosh Northwestern*, 10 Nov 1933, *Roseburg News-Review*, 7 Nov 1933, *Harrisburg Evening News*, 3 Nov 1933.

³ "Woman Murdered, Man Shot and May Die of Wound," *Frederick News*, 31 Oct 1933.

⁴ "Guarded During Night," *Frederick News*, 13 Mar 1934; "Shultz Guilty of Murder in Second Degree, Sentenced by Court to 18 Years in Prison," *Frederick Post*, 13 Mar 1934; "Mrs. Darling's Slayer Guilty; Given 18 Years," *Baltimore Sun*, 13 Mar 1934.

archived articles on the trial as the sole information source.⁵

Mazie Willard Bowman approached the National Park Service for an interview on the murder in 1971. The old Darling property was now part of the Catoctin Mountain Park and the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) was interested in the story of Darling's death. In a recorded interview, Bowman recounted what she knew of the property, Darling's relationships, and the day of the murder. Of particular note is Bowman's comment that she only knew Darling from working as her maid for the summer of 1933.⁶

George Wireman contributed a full page article on the Darling murder to *The Catoctin Express* in 1978. He acknowledged that "details [of the story] are confused, names distorted, and facts forgotten."⁷ The article contains the full text of the *Frederick Post* trial article from 1934.⁸ Additional information comes from an unspecified interview with Bowman and recounting of area folklore.

In 1998-9 Spencer Watson published two articles on Darling's death and the trial of her killer for *The Catoctin Banner*. His text is almost entirely a transcript of an interview he conducted with Bowman. Some of the details Bowman gives in this interview differ from what she gave the YCC nearly three decades earlier.⁹ This article is the first published account linking the killer's jealous rage to an alleged date Darling had for the Mummer's Halloween Parade.¹⁰

The next published account of Darling is from Edmund Wherle in a historic resource report on Catoctin Mountain. Wherle spends less than 2% of his text on the subject of Darling's business and death. The only new source he introduces is an interview with Charles Anders.¹¹

In spring of 2012, Spencer Watson's play *Bessie Darling: the Musical* premiered in Thurmont. Publicity for the production in the *Frederick News-Post* touted the extensive research that went into the scripting and that it is "entirely based on fact".¹² However, a different publicity

⁵ "Three Countians Seeking Parole," *Hagerstown Daily Mail*, 9 Mar 1940; "Parole Recalls Shooting Case," *Hagerstown Daily Mail*, 1 Feb 1943; "Five Prisoners Ask to Remain in Jail, Don't Want Parole," *Salisbury Daily Times*, 14 Mar 1940.

⁶ YCC interview of Bessie Darling, 1971, Catoctin Mountain Park Archives, FC 2, drawer 2 (hereafter cited as YCC).

⁷ "Bessie Darling Murder Still Brings Vivid Memories," *Catoctin Enterprise*, 8 Jan 1978.

⁸ "Shultz Guilty of Murder in Second Degree, Sentenced by Court to 18 Years in Prison," *Frederick Post*, 13 Mar 1934.

⁹ YCC, *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Spencer Watson, "The Halloween Murder of Bessie Darling," *The Catoctin Banner*, 7 Nov 1998.

¹¹ Edmund F. Wherle, *Catoctin Mountain Park: A Historic Resource Study* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2000), 151.

¹² "Local playwright brings Frederick County history to life onstage," *Frederick News-Post*, 29 Mar 2012.

article from the *Catoctin Banner* website indicates it is based on “many known facts” and “half conjecture.”¹³

More recent articles are regurgitations of previously published articles. Some information is completely wrong, such as continuously using the wrong name for the maid, Mazie Willard.¹⁴ Other facts are distorted through poor rephrasing of the original texts.¹⁵

Academic scholarship on Bessie Darling does not exist. Wherle’s report is an academic work, but his focus was not Darling, so his research into her life and death was cursory. Watson and Wireman relied on interviews, or reports based on interviews, with individuals who had limited knowledge yet regarded as subject matter experts. In our Internet Age, solid document resources are readily available, but are getting smothered by the sensationalized story.

Discussion

Darling spent most of her life in Baltimore’s 15th Ward. Born on 4 Aug 1885, she resided in the city until age thirty-two, when she opened her tourist hotel near Thurmont in western Maryland. However, she relocated outside Baltimore only for the summer months. Few available records detail her city life, but those that do exist offer tantalizing glimpses of Darling’s focuses on family and music.

Bessie Darling was born into a lower middle-class family. Her father, John Wesley Warren was a grocer. By age 36, he owned the family house with a free title and within the decade operated his own general store. Her mother, Fannie Fresh Warren was the daughter of German immigrants. As the second child and eldest daughter, Darling would have helped her mother around the house and cared for her younger brother and two younger sisters. She attended school at least through the eighth grade. By 1920, Darling worked as a teacher and was a married mother of one son.¹⁶

¹³ “‘Bessie Darling’ Musical Premiere Scheduled for Spring,” *Catoctin Banner*, January 2012, vol. 17, issue 1, 1.

¹⁴ James Rada, Jr, “Bessie Darling’s Murder Haunts Us Still,” *The Catoctin Banner*, 27 Aug 2015, <https://www.thecatocinbanner.com/tag/bessie-darling/>.

¹⁵ Rada, *Ibid*; Robert L. Eyler, “Bessie Darling.... Murder on the mountain,” *Gateway*, May 2018, 12.

¹⁶ Bessie C. Warren: 1900 census, Baltimore City, Maryland, T623, roll 614, page 6B, ED 0197, FHL microfilm 1240614, *Ancestry.com* (3 Jul 2017); Bessie C. Darling: 1910 census, Baltimore City, Maryland, T62, roll 557, page 2A, ED 0245, FHL microfilm 1374570, *Ancestry.com* (3 Jul 2017); 1920 census, Baltimore City, Maryland, T625, roll 664, page 10A, ED 263, *Ancestry.com* (3 Jul 2017); 1930 census, Baltimore City, Maryland, T626, roll 858, page 10B, ED 0237, image 1094.0, FHL microfilm 2340593, *Ancestry.com* (5 Jul 2017); R. L. Polk & Co., *Baltimore City Business Directory, 1902-1903*, page 408, *Ancestry.com* (10 Oct 2017).

Darling married around 1902. Her husband, Charles Howard Whitridge Darling was the “son” in the Charles W. & Son Bakery.¹⁷ She gave birth to her only child, Charles Howard Wesley Darling, on 21 November 1904.¹⁸ Her marriage ended around 1918.¹⁹ Financial difficulties played a role in the dissolution as Howard Darling lost the bakery due to mismanagement of resources in 1907.²⁰ Overnight, Mr. Darling went from a prestigious position as a store owner to a mere clerk.

Darling’s son Wesley remained close to his mother throughout her life. He lived with her after the divorce²¹ and often accompanied her on visits to relatives and church socials.²² As an adult, he remained in their Baltimore residence during the summer season while Mrs. Darling ran the Foxville hotel. As a young man, he showed interest in joining the Navy and attained a position of first alternate to the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland.²³ However, he did not enter military service. Instead, Wesley Darling worked as a book keeper for a bank.²⁴

Before 1914, Bessie Darling found employment as the secretary for famed German conductor Joseph Pache. Because of this association, Thurmont residents thought that she was a prominent musician within the Baltimore Oratorio Society. However, newspaper accounts do not mention her by name as a musician. Instead, the only report linking her with the Society is as Herr Pache’s secretary.²⁵ Darling’s association with the conductor continued throughout the remainder of his life.²⁶

Bessie Darling enjoyed a B-listing social status. Reports of her activities in the society pages were of her attending Warren Family hosted parties or visiting with her relatives.²⁷ It is

¹⁷ R. L. Polk & Co, *Baltimore City Business Directory, 1905-1906*, page 447, *Ancestry.com* (25 Sep 2017).

¹⁸ Wesley Darling: The National Archives in St. Louis, Missouri; St. Louis, Missouri; *Draft Registration Cards for Maryland, 10/16/1940 - 03/31/1947*; Record Group: *Records of the Selective Service System, 147*; Box: 118, serial number 4, order number 1029; “Obituary - Charles Darling,” *Newport News Daily Press*, 1 Jan 1966.

¹⁹ Charles Howard Whitridge Darling: Registration State: *Maryland*; Registration County: *Baltimore (Independent City)*; Roll: 1684140; Draft Board: 16; Bessie C. Darling: 1920 census.

²⁰ “Notes of the Court - C. Howard W. Darling,” *Baltimore Sun*, 24 Jul 1907; “Permits to Build,” *Baltimore Sun*, 27 Nov 1906.

²¹ Bessie C. Darling: 1930 census.

²² “Surprise Party for Miss Carback,” *Baltimore Sun*, 8 Feb 1909; “Personal – Mrs. C. Howard Darling,” *Baltimore Sun*, 11 Aug 1905; “West-Warren,” *Baltimore Sun*, 23 Jun 1907; “Enjoy a Day at Chase,” *Baltimore Sun*, 16 Jun 1909.

²³ “Naval Quiz Next Wednesday,” *Baltimore Sun*, 10 Feb 1922.

²⁴ Bessie C. Darling: 1930 census.

²⁵ “Pache Will Sail Soon,” *Baltimore Sun*, 25 Sep 1914.

²⁶ “Administratrix’s Sale,” *Baltimore Sun*, 17 Apr 1927; “Orphans’ Court Sale of Valuable Leasehold Property, No. 1532 Harlem Ave. Baltimore,” *Baltimore Sun*, 8 May 1927; “Orphan’s Court – Judges Block, Gaither and Dunn: Sales Ratified,” *Baltimore Sun*, 20 Dec 1927.

²⁷ “Personal,” *BS*, 11 Aug 1905; “West-Warren,” *BS*, 23 Jun 1907; “Surprise Party,” *BS*, 8 Feb 1909; “Detour,” *Frederick News*, 24 Sep 1929; “Detour,” *Frederick News*, 28 Jun 1932.

possible that Mrs. Darling held a more preeminent position within Baltimore's German community that might have been reported in their native language newspaper, *Der Deutsche Correspondent*.

Darling and Pache's business relationship led to the purchase of Valley View Manor in November 1917. The roughly 36 acre property came from two tracts of land. The first, called Mount Lent after the seller Mary Lent, contained the manor. The second measured under an acre and was a convenience purchase. Pache must have fronted the "unspecified goods"²⁸ in the down-payment. Although Darling had lifetime rights to the property, upon her death, ownership would revert to Pache or his heirs.²⁹ Both Darling and Pache were Defendants in a 1921 lawsuit filed by a visitor for \$15,000 in damages after the Manor's driveway bridge collapsed under him.³⁰ Available records do not indicate Pache had any further involvement in the property.

In 1918, Bessie Darling opened The Valley View Manor as a summer boarding house for the elites of Baltimore. Thurmont residents assumed she used her friends as customer base.³¹ Darling ran regular advertisements in the *Baltimore Sun*,³² so it is more likely that her customers became her friends rather than her friends became her customers. The 12-room Manor stood three stories high in a clearing 518 feet above the Lantz Station.³³ A staff of two operated the Manor. Darling cooked meals, entertained guests, and provided transport to and from the train station. A hired maid did cleaning, waiting, and anything else required.³⁴ It is unclear how successful the business was, but Darling did almost lose the property twice for failure to pay property taxes on it.³⁵

Bessie Darling's life ended in a domestic violence incident on Halloween morning 1933. Two days after her last guest departed, George F. Schultz, an ex-lover with a history of violence³⁶ broke into the Manor and then into her locked second floor bedroom. The murderer fired one round into Darling, severing an artery and causing instantaneous death. The only witness was the

²⁸ Frederick County, Maryland, Land Record, No. 322, pages 524-6, Mary E. Lent & Bessie C. Darling, 5 Nov 1917, Frederick County Circuit Court, Frederick, Maryland; Frederick County, Maryland, Land Record, No. 322, pages 526-7, Joseph Englar & Bessie C. Darling, 5 Nov 1917, Frederick County Circuit Court, Frederick, Maryland.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ "Suits Filed," *Baltimore Sun*, 18 Nov 1921.

³¹ Edmund F. Wehrle, *Catoctin Mountain Park: A Historic Resource Study* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2000), 115.

³² A Newspapers.com search of "Valley View Manor" returned 193 ads 1918-1924 and 25 ads 1930-1.

³³ "Classifieds," *Baltimore Sun*, 5 Aug 1919; "Darling House Sold," *Frederick Post*, 2 Jul 1934.

³⁴ Mazie Willard Bowman, interviewed by Youth Conservation Corps, Thurmont, MD, July 21, 1971.

³⁵ "List of Delinquent Tax Payers," *Frederick News*, 23 Jan 1923; "Notice of Tax Sale," *Frederick Post*, 29 Feb 1932.

³⁶ "Councilman Knocked Down," *Baltimore Sun*, 29 Nov 1903.

eighteen year-old maid, Mazie Willard. The assailant then held Willard hostage for around an hour before sending her to get the authorities. When the sheriff arrived, the gunman was at the head of the stairs, bleeding from a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the chest. Medical staff at a local hospital managed to save his life, so he could stand trial.³⁷

The one-day murder trial took place in Frederick on 12 March 1934. Proceedings started late because Willard had transportation trouble. The trial could not start without the star witness, so the sheriff had to fetch her.³⁸ The State called eleven witnesses.³⁹ Prosecutors outlined a premeditated intent to kill with a motive of jealousy, based on threats the murderer made against Darling in the days prior to the murder and comments he made en route to the Manor that fatal morning. On the other hand, the Defense went with a tri-prong approach of Self-Defense, Crime of Passion, and Reasonable Doubt.⁴⁰

Schultz entered a formal plea of “Not Guilty”.⁴¹ He claimed self-defense since Darling pointed a handgun at him after he forced his way into her bedroom. Although her weapon was on safety, he did not know that at the time he fired. The defendant tried explaining he broke into the bedroom in a fit of jealousy, thinking Darling was ensconced in her bed with another man. He therefore was unaware of his actions as his jealousy was so great, ergo a “Crime of Passion.” The defense counsel tried casting reasonable doubt in the minds of the jury by presenting a picture of their 64 year-old defendant as a highly regarded citizen. Schultz was a deputy sheriff, a veteran of The Great War, and a Major League Baseball player.⁴² By comparison, the eye-witness was an underage, female nobody. The jury did not buy it.

The jury’s deliberation lasted less than an hour. They did not accept that the murder was a premeditated and deliberate act. Instead, they returned a verdict of Guilty of Murder, Two. Instead

³⁷“Woman Slain at Deerfield,” *Hagerstown Morning Herald*, 1 Nov 1933; “Alleged Slayer Admits Jealousy,” *Baltimore Sun*, 2 Nov 1933; “Man Who Slew Woman Taken from Hospital,” *Frederick Post*, 11 Nov 1933; “Mrs. Darling’s Slayer Guilty,” *Baltimore Sun*, 13 Mar 1934; YCC, 1971.

³⁸ YCC, 1971;

³⁹ Frederick County Circuit Court (Minutes) Case No.: 18, George F. Schultz, Book: EGH 19, Page: 67, Box: 42 [Maryland State Archives T126-37; 01/40/13/30].

⁴⁰ “Schultz Says Shooting was Self-Defense,” *Hagerstown Daily Mail*, 4 Dec 1933; “Murder Charge Entered,” *Baltimore Sun*, 27 Feb 1934; “On Trial Today,” *Frederick News*, 12 Mar 1934; “Geo. F. Schultz to Face Murder Charges Today,” *Frederick Post*, 12 Mar 1934; “Slayer Guilty,” *BS*, 13 Mar 1934; “Schultz Guilty of Murder in Second Degree,” *Frederick Post*, 13 Mar 1934.

⁴¹ Frederick County Circuit Court (Criminal Docket) Case No.: 18, George F. Schultz, 1934, Docket: 16 [MSA T138-16; 01/52/03/039].

⁴² FCCC (Minutes), George F. Schultz; “Slayer Guilty,” *BS*, 13 Mar 1934; “Schultz Guilty,” *FP*, 13 Mar 1934; “Five Prisoners Ask to Remain in Jail,” *Salisbury Daily Times*, 14 Mar 1940; “Parole Recalls Shooting Case,” *Hagerstown Daily Mail*, 1 Feb 1943.

of a life sentence, the convicted murderer could only get a maximum of thirty year.⁴³ Immediately, the judge handed down a sentence of eighteen years in the state penitentiary, commencing the following day.⁴⁴ This concluded the whole sorry affair. Or did it?

The eighteen year-old maid, Mazie Willard-Bowman only knew Darling from working at the Manor during the 1933 season. Anyone wanting to know about the murder would interview Mrs. Bowman, making her relive the trauma of that morning. This continued for sixty-four years, until her own death.⁴⁵

Bessie Darling's father, John Wesley Warren died within a year of his eldest daughter. On 25 Sep 1934, a short distance from his home, he stepped off the trolley and into the path of a dairy truck.⁴⁶ It may have been a deliberate act of suicide or a lack of situational awareness due to emotional stress.

Bessie Darling's son, Wesley Darling wanted no reminders of Valley View Manor. He lived in Baltimore for several years with his mother's family and left his position at the bank. Eventually, he worked his way through the ranks of Baltimore's utilities company.⁴⁷ He married Mildred Davis of Mathews, Virginia and died a few months after her at the end of 1965, with no offspring.⁴⁸

The murderer, George F. Schultz, served nine years of his sentence before getting parole. He died within a year of his release.⁴⁹ Searches of historic Major League Baseball team rosters do not corroborate his statement under oath of being a MLB player.⁵⁰ Likewise, research does not support his claim of belonging to the US Bureau of Investigation during World War I. However, it is possible he held membership in the American Protective League.⁵¹ If so, then his statement

⁴³ MD Code §2-201 – §2-204 Criminal Law.

⁴⁴ FCCC (Docket), George F. Schultz; "Guarded During Night," *Frederick News*, 13 Mar 1934.

⁴⁵ YCC, 1971; George Wireman, "Bessie Darling Murder Still Brings Vivid Memories," *Enterprise*, 6 Jan 1978; Spencer Watson, "The Halloween Murder of Bessie Darling," *Catoctin Banner*, 7 Nov 1998; Spencer Watson, "Bessie Darling's Burial and Her Slayer's Trial," *Catoctin Banner*, 7 Apr 1999; Social Security Number: 215-18-1445.

⁴⁶ YCC, 1971; "Four Are Killed in Auto Mishaps," *Baltimore Sun*, 25 Sep 1934, "Obituary – John W. Warren," *Baltimore Sun*, 26 Sep 1934, "Truck Driver Exonerated," *Baltimore Sun*, 29 Sep 1934.

⁴⁷ Wesley Darling: 1940 census, Pikesville, Baltimore County, Maryland, T627, roll 1503, page 6A, ED 3-34A, *Ancestry.com* (5 Jul 2017); Wesley Warren: Draft Card, WW2.

⁴⁸ R. L. Polk & Co., *Polk's Baltimore Suburban Directory* (Baltimore: R. L. Polk, 1957), p.179; "Marriage Licenses – Wesley Warren," *Frederick News*, 4 Feb 1950; "Obituary – Charles Darling," *Newport News Daily Press*, 1 Jan 1966; "Deaths – Wesley Darling," *Baltimore Sun*, 30 Dec 1965; "Executor's Sale," *Baltimore Sun*, 27 Mar 1966.

⁴⁹ "Parole," *HDM*, 1 Feb 1943; SSN: 213-22-1748, YCC, 1971.

⁵⁰ "Schultz Guilty," *FP*, 13 Mar 1934; "Parole", *HDM*, 1 Feb 1943; <https://mlb.mlb.com/mlb/players>.

⁵¹A WW1 era citizen, vigilante, informant group with quasi governmental backing from the Department of Justice

was only misleading instead of blatant perjury.

The Valley View Manor house lasted a few years beyond the death of its mistress. According to the deeds, upon Bessie Darling's death, the property was to go to Joseph Pache's heirs in Germany. Instead, the property went into foreclosure in the summer of 1934.⁵² At the auction, Wesley Darling purchased the property for \$3,000.⁵³ He immediately signed the property over to his grandfather and step-grandmother.⁵⁴ After John Warren's death, his widow did not want the property. In 1937 the U.S. Government sought land on Catoctin Mountain for inclusion in the Catoctin Recreational Demonstration Area, providing her an opportunity to off-load the property linked to the family tragedies.⁵⁵

The Manor House saw limited use under the National Park Service. For the first few years, it stood empty while visitors to the camp told stories of the old boarding house and its proprietress who haunted the premises.⁵⁶ In 1940, the NPS installed three bathrooms, a sewage system, and electricity to the house. The park renamed it "The Short Term Lodge" and intended on renting out individual rooms for urbanites wanting a less rustic escape from the city.⁵⁷ The plan got derailed the following year by the Lend-Lease Act.

In June of 1941, the Department of the Navy requested use of various NPS camps for recreational use by the British Royal Navy. NPS selected Catoctin RDA as the site conducive for sailors whose ships went to the Baltimore repair facility. Personnel from minelayers *HMS Menesethus* and *Agamemnon* and the communications ship *Bulolo* stayed in the Lodge.⁵⁸ This is the last recorded use of the Manor.⁵⁹

After the attack on Pearl Harbor and the subsequent entrance of the United States into

⁵² "Court News," *Frederick Post*, 10 Jul 1934.

⁵³ "Darling House," *FP*, 2 Jul 1934; Frederick County, Maryland, Land Record, No. 395, page 256, Bessie C. Darling (deceased) & Wesley Darling, 4 Aug 1934, Frederick County Circuit Court, Frederick, Maryland.

⁵⁴ Frederick County, Maryland, Land Record, No. 395, page 257, Wesley Darling & John W. and Alma M. Warren, 4 Aug 1934, Frederick County Circuit Court, Frederick, Maryland.

⁵⁵ Frederick County, Maryland, Land Record, No. 411, pages 96-7, Alma M. Warren & US Government, 29 Dec 1937, Frederick County Circuit Court, Frederick, Maryland; Frederick County, Maryland, Land Record, No. 414, page 241, Alma M. Warren & US Government, 29 Dec 1937, Frederick County Circuit Court, Frederick, Maryland.

⁵⁶ Joyce F. Litteral letter to Sally E. Griffin, 7 Dec 2002, CATO Archives, FC 5, drawer 2.

⁵⁷ Handwritten Report of Improvements made to Structures. c1940. CMPA, FC 2, drawer 1.

⁵⁸ G. B. Williams memorandum for NPS Region 1 Director, 26 Jun 1941, CMPA, FC 2, drawer 2; *Ibid*, 13 Aug 1941; *Ibid*, 16 Sep 1941; *Ibid*, 29 Sep 1941; *Ibid*, 1 Nov 1941; *Ibid*, 3 Nov 1941; Wilfred F. French letter to Harold L. Ickes, 28 Jun 1941, *Ibid*; "Men from British Warships Given Vacation in Mountains," *Baltimore Sun*, 24 Sep 1941.

⁵⁹ This use gave rise to reports that the lodge served as a facility for Allied intelligence officers during WW2. Ronald Reagan and Douglas Brinkley, *Reagan Diaries Volume 1: January 1981-October 1985* (ebook: HarperCollins, 2010), location 1682, Kindle.

World War II, the War Department took over the entirety of Catoctin RDA. There are no indications that they used the Manor for any purpose during the war. Years of neglect left the facility unusable after the war. The destructive forces of time and elements brought the building to its current state of an Archaeological Ruin.⁶⁰

Conclusion

The story of Bessie Darling is entrenched in Thurmont folklore. The focus for the region's inhabitants is the sensational manner of Darling's death, framed in a rural perspective of an urbanite. Added elements of elaboration, romanticism, and fabrication have intermingled with facts and distorted the picture of the woman and her death. Primary sources look beyond the few minutes of her demise and reveal a multi-faceted woman.

⁶⁰ Locals discuss reports of long-term looting and a fire as causes of the destruction. There are no confirmed instances of looting at that property. Perhaps people confuse a post-WW2 case of two locals going to trial for taking wood from an Army war building that had to be dismantled before the park was returned to NPS control. As to the fire, there are no marks at the site indicating fire damage. The Superintendent's quarters burned in 1945 and may be the source of the destruction-by-fire rumor.

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Figure 1 - Front of Valley View Lodge, circa 1938 - CATO Archives



Figure 2 - Cornerstone indicating construction in 1907 for Mary Lent, 1991 - CATO Archives



Figure 3 - Rear of Valley View Lodge, circa 1938 - CATO Archives



Figure 4 - Ruins of Short Term Lodge, 1969 - CATO Archives



Figure 5 - Short Term Lodge Archeological Site, 2017 - CATO Archives



Figure 6 - View of valley from Short Term Lodge Archeological Site, 1985