

# America250 – #3 – Early Life in Havre de Grace

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 bahoukas.net/america250-3-early-life-in-havre-de-grace

admin

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Our January 2026 snow and ice storm is a great reminder of the challenging times of early life in Havre de Grace. In this episode, celebrating our own history as we celebrate the nation's during the [America250](#) celebrations, we share images of our oldest homes, a couple of pictures of the streets, and a few more to give you a sense of life in those early days.

Imagine, if you will, dirt roads filled with horse-drawn carriages and wagons – mud, rain, and snow creating a mess. Add cold temps. No heated cars. Brrrrr...

**[And ice was a major challenge from the earliest days in Havre de Grace.](#)** The Susquehanna River would freeze. As the ice jams broke, they destroyed boats, the shoreline, and many buildings.



**ca. 1890 photo of ice jams breaking up along Water Street in Havre de Grace**

Although some of the photos are from the 1900s, we chose those we think best represent what it might have been like to live here up to and through the War of 1812. In 2013, Havre de Grace commemorated the attack and burning of the City by the British on May 2, 1813.

During this commemoration, an amazing model was built showing what the City looked like at that time. It was a 2-year project by volunteers of the Chesapeake Heritage Conservancy, Inc. As you look at the following images of the model, you'll realize that about a block west of today's Union Avenue, it's farmland.



**Full model of the City in 1812-1813 before the burning of Havre de Grace by the British during the War of 1812 – previously on display at the Havre de Grace Visitors Center.**

There were about 60 dwellings in 1813, and about 40 were torched by the British during the War of 1812 (on May 3, 1813). [CLICK HERE](#) for more info from the National Park Service site.

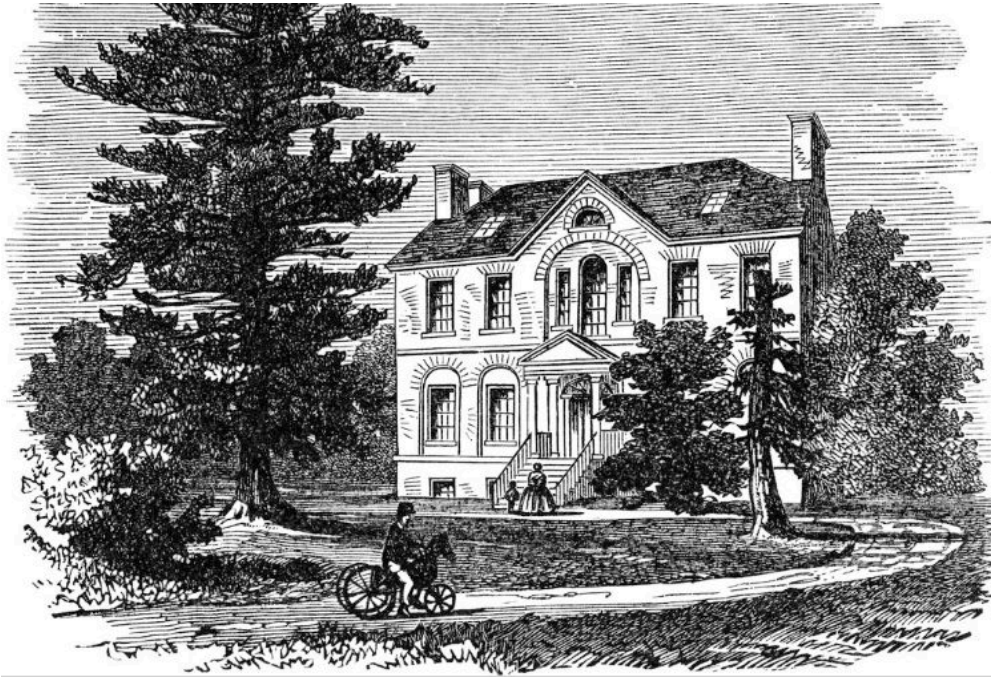
### **“Home of Refuge” – the Pringle Mansion House (aka Bloomsbury)**

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Located on Lewis Lane near the Senior/Activity Center (where the marker is located today), this home was a refuge for people fleeing the burning of the city on May 3, 1813, by the British. Below is an excerpt from a newspaper article in the Republican (not sure of date):

The building (Pringle Mansion House) was damaged in the war of 1812, when Havre de Grace was bombarded by the British fleet under Admiral Cockburn. The mansion was only spared after Mrs. Goldsborough had begged the British Admiral on her knees to let the place remain standing. Havre de Grace nearby was burned by the marauders. Mrs. Rodgers, wife of Commodore Rodgers, Mrs. Pinkney, grandmother of Senator Pinkney Whyte, and Mrs. Goldsborough had taken refuge in the mansion, then occupied by Mark Pringle, who had erected it some years before the war. William Pinkney helped put out the fire started by the marines before Mrs. Goldsborough returned with the Admiral’s orders to let the house remain.

*from The Republican newspaper*



from Harper's New Monthly Magazine

As the British savagely burned the buildings in Havre de Grace during their morning attack May 3, 1813, the townspeople ran west for protection to a home that stood near this location. The home, known as Bloomsbury, was owned by Baltimore businessman Mark Pringle. His warehouses of flour, which lay close to the water's edge, were lost; however, the British spared the home.

*(Inscription next to the image of the Pringle Mansion)*

Pringle Mansion House, known as Bloomsbury, was located on land that is now part of the railroad right-of-way. Illustration by Benson J. Lossing, *Field Book of the War of 1812*, 1868

VISIT [HISTORIC HAVRE de GRACE](#) website for hundreds of historic homes with details of owners, architecture, and more.

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Here are 3 sections of the above model.

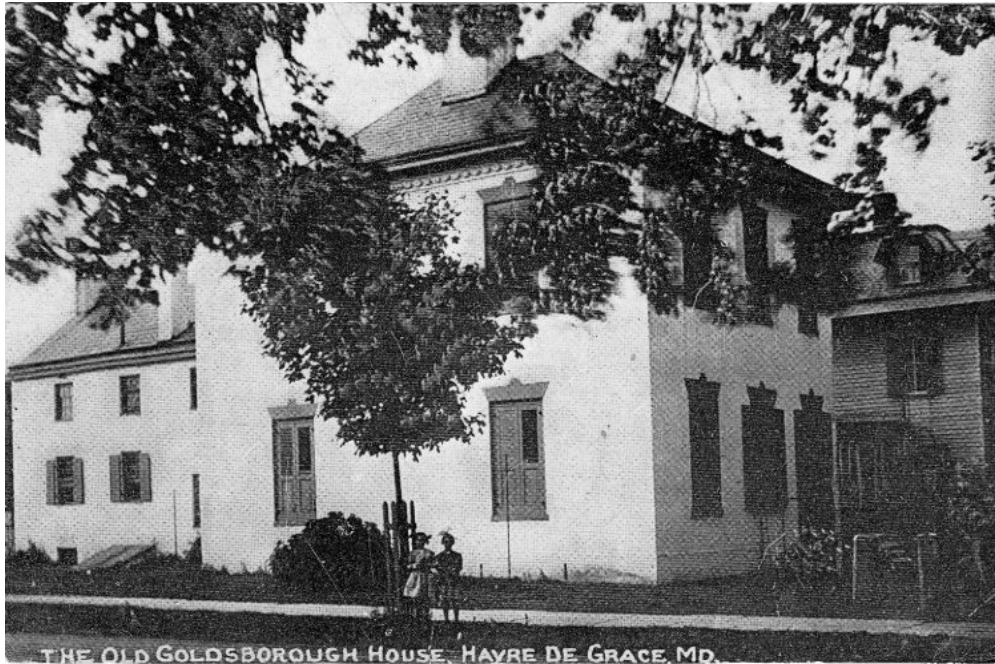




**Images of the early homes of Havre de Grace (Use the address to**

learn more details on the [historic havre de grace website](#)):

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Aveilhe-Goldsborough House at 300 North Union Avenue – before the front porch was added c.1801



Aveilhe-Goldsborough House at 300 North Union Avenue , Havre de Grace, MD – brick smokehouse c.1800s



Barnes-Boyd House at 301 St. John Street, Havre de Grace MD c.1920



Joseph Carver House – 117 South Washington St – Havre de Grace MD c.1798



Currier House – 800 Market St, Havre de Grace MD c.1790



Currier House history starts in the 1790s with the central portion of this Federal style cottage with entry from Lafayette St, consisting of the kitchen, dining room and three upstairs bedrooms being built.



Jacksteit House – 814 Market St, Havre de Grace MD c.1850?



Joshua Green House – 140 St. John St, Havre de Grace, MD c.1800s



The Lock House – 817 Conestee St, Havre de Grace, MD c.1840



McCaskey Double House – 366-368 Congress Avenue – Havre de Grace, MD



McCaskey Double House – 366-368 Congress Avenue – Havre de Grace, MD



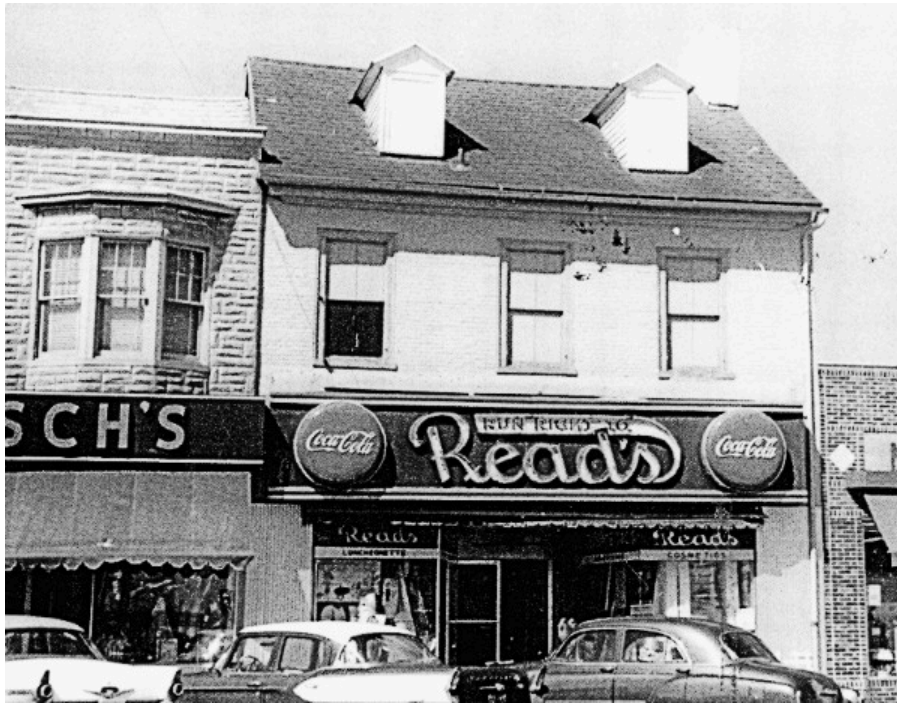
The Old Ordinary at 100 St. John St, Havre de Grace, MD c.1800 Image from 1936



Poplar House at 308 St. John St, Havre de Grace, MD c. 1835



Rupalta House at 1319 Superior St., Havre de Grace, MD c. 1780s



Rodgers House at 226 North Washington St (now Butcher on the Bay) c. 1787



Sion Hill at 2026 Level Road, Havre de Grace, c.1790s – notable as home of Commodore John Rodgers  
(1997 image)



Sion Hill at 2026 Level Road, Havre de Grace, c.1790s – notable as home of Commodore John Rodgers



Sutor (or Sudor) House at 121 South Washington St, Havre de Grace MD c. 1790s



Thompson House located at 127 North Stokes St, Havre de Grace MD – c. 1790s



Burns Bros. Carriage Business replaces Empire Shops at Erie and Water Streets, Havre de Grace, MD late 1800s



Cook Grist Mill (where MacGregor's Restaurant is now – 331 St. John St, Havre de Grace, MD – image before 1908 – Lyon's Pharmacy Bldg on right



St. John's Episcopal Church at 114 N. Union Ave, Havre de Grace, MD – c. 1809

Below is an interesting video from the late *Jane Currier*, where she shared her stories of the homes located along Market Street.



[Watch on YouTube](#)

In looking back, we pay tribute to the hardy citizens who continued to put their shoulders to the wheel, creating the city we enjoy today. Their perseverance, even when half to two-thirds

of the town was burned in 1813, leaving many families homeless and destitute, was steadfast.

It's also interesting to note that our fine city, with its amazing historic buildings, is a result of residents caring about our history over the centuries.

George, our *casual historian*, encourages you to visit the [main blog page](#) and scroll through the posts for more stories. You are also encouraged to stop in at [Bahoukas Antique Mall](#) and browse more than a dozen cases and a huge wall of Havre de Grace History memorabilia! Be sure to say 'hi' to George!

Stay tuned for our next blog post – #4 John O'Neill and more, following the War of 1812.