The Dairy Farm

Early History
Matthias Hammond (b. 1748), a gentleman farmer, established what was first called Hammond’s Addition.

Hammond inherited not only a great deal of money but also a keen business sense. Indeed, he managed to accrue more and more real estate while still successfully managing his various tobacco plantations. In April of 1773, then 25, he was selected as a member of the vestry of St. Anne’s Parish and in May of the same year he was elected to represent the City of Annapolis as a delegate to the Maryland General Assembly.

His interest in architecture was also of note. Matthias commissioned William Buckland, a noted architect of the time, to build a large house in Annapolis. William Buckland was influenced greatly by the 16th C. Italian architect Andrea Palladio. The house he designed for Hammond is on Maryland Avenue and is considered a fine representation of Buckland’s work. Matthias never lived in the house, as he had taken up residence in Gambrills and tended his farm after an unhappy and convoluted love affair. The farm became his life and he died in Gambrills in 1786 at the age of 38. He, his brothers, John and Philip, and Major John Hammond, their great-grandfather, are buried in a little Cemetery located on the Dairy Farm. Other Hammonds in this Maryland family are buried in St. Anne’s Cemetery in Annapolis.

After his death, the Dairy Farm property was referred to as Hammond’s Inheritance. After surviving almost 300 years (the house was constructed before 1713), the Hammond Manor House on the farm was burned by vandals and is no longer standing. The property was purchased by the Navy on August 21, 1909 for use as a dairy farm. From 1911 to 1917, part of this site was also used for the first Naval Air Station.

Today
Through the years, the Dairy Farm continued to be a large, beautiful farm, home to dairy cows, vegetable gardens, and horses. In 1998, Anne Arundel County obtained a lease from the Naval Academy to operate the farm and to develop the acreage with public access. Ed and Marian Fry took on the management of the Farm as Sunrise Organic Farm. Marian’s herb gardens, which have become the Village Garden, are a testament to their interest in pure organic farming. Visitors to the Farm can enjoy the agrarian atmosphere, the expansive vistas, and the experience of another time. Life on the Dairy Farm harkens back to Thomas Jefferson’s notion that a working farm could be beautiful as well as utilitarian.