



THE CLAMSHELL

A Quarterly Newsletter of the Maryland State Archives

Box 3, Folder 1

Winter 2022

Letter from the State Archivist

I was struck by a statement in John Dichtl's message in the Summer 2021 edition of *History News*, the quarterly publication of the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH), for which he serves as president and CEO:

Engagement with history should always mean exposure to logical reasoning and critical thinking. Good historical work requires critical thinking to evaluate perspectives and sources and to weigh the meaning of events and trends.

It was the use of the word "critical" that jumped out at me. What Dichtl is stating is not radical. Any student of history knows that research requires work to uncover facts, which then necessitates analysis and interpretation. And yet today the word "critical" is being used to incite skepticism, and even fear, that teaching the history of this country—which for over two centuries tolerated enslavement of human beings—will adversely affect the very students we seek to educate.

It is disheartening to see a trend in legislation across the country proposing to regulate how history is taught by controlling content thought to be "critical." In such an environment, could the seminal work of author Alex Haley in exploring the history of his enslaved ancestors be shared with students exploring 18th- and 19th-century history? I myself am part of a generation of Americans who were introduced to the historical reality of slavery by *Roots*, the book and television mini-series. And it was Haley's work that inspired Paul Sluby, whose genealogical research collection was recently donated to the Archives, to help scores of individuals in uncovering their own "roots."

'Engagement with history' means encountering stories of all kinds, not all of them triumphant, or pleasant, or fair. Archival repositories provide the foundation for these stories, and I am proud of the work of the Maryland State Archives in ensuring that students, teachers, and historians can access the resources required to continue looking critically at our past.



Elaine Rice Bachmann, State Archivist

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Temperature and Humidity - A definition

As the weather outside turns frightful, our focus is on climate control from an archival perspective. Constant monitoring and the ability to control temperature and relative humidity are essential elements for the proper storage and preservation of archival collections. High temperatures and widely varying humidity levels can lead to increased deterioration of materials and welcomes dangerous pests into storage areas such as insects, rodents or mold. Very low humidity can make some materials, especially paper-based items, more brittle causing flaking and breakage. A stable environment is best, because fluctuations in temperature and humidity levels cause materials to expand and contract as they naturally absorb and expel moisture, creating damage and hastening the aging process for collections. As you think about storing your items at home, consider where you have the most stable climate conditions. Experts recommend storing significant items, such as documents, photos, scrapbooks, and heirlooms in your home's living areas, rather than in garages, sheds, basements and attics where there can be wide differences throughout the year in temperature and humidity. For more information, please see our [webpage about preservation](#).

Staff Activities

Welcoming New Staff to the Archives Team



James Bigwood has joined the staff as an Assistant Editor of the *Maryland Manual On-Line* in the Government Information Services Department. While attending Washington College, James worked as an intern on the Poplar Grove processing project, for the Special Collections Department, and later in the Appraisal Department. After college graduation, he worked as a personal research assistant to Dr. Edward C. Papenfuse at the Baltimore City Archives from 2012 to 2014.

Claire Lattin has joined the Archives as an Archivist Trainee in the Reference Services Department to support visitor services and registration in the lobby. Currently pursuing her MLIS degree at the University of Maryland, Claire was a student intern in the summer of 2021 working with Imaging Services in scanning operations.



Darby Nisbett has joined the Archives as an Archivist Trainee in the Reference Services Department. She will be both providing customer service by supporting reference operations and also staffing the NHPRC grant project to digitize and make accessible the Scharf Papers (MSA S 1005). Darby recently graduated from the University of Maryland with her MLIS degree and performed her field study with the Reference Department in her last semester.



Jeni Spamer is the new Searchroom Coordinator at the Baltimore City Archives. She served previously as the Archivist of the Virginia Mason Health System (Seattle, WA), working remotely from Baltimore since 2015. Her experience ranges from digital archiving and web exhibition curation to hands-on collection processing. She has also worked in academic libraries and special collections settings. Jeni, who holds a Master of Science of Information from the University of Michigan, volunteered at the Baltimore City Archives from 2016 to 2019.

Staff Retirements



Saul Gibusiwa, Search Room Coordinator and Reference Archivist at the Baltimore City Archives, retired on March 31, 2020 just at the onset of the pandemic and mandatory remote work. The timing of Saul's retirement left the staff unable to appropriately recognize his twenty years of service to the agency. Saul started as a summer intern in the Research Department, then worked for many years with the Special Collections Department on the processing and digitization of the S.J. Martenet collection (MSA SC 5087),

before moving to the Baltimore City Archives to provide public reference services. Happily, colleagues came together to wish Saul well in his continued retirement in December 2021.



Nassir Rezvan After serving thirty-one years in state government, including sixteen at the Archives, our Director of Administration, Nassir Rezvan retired in December. Nassir played a significant role in preparing and maintaining the agency’s budget during his tenure, as well as overseeing personnel and procurement needs. We thank him for his outstanding contributions to the Archives, celebrate his long career and wish him well on his retirement.

2022 Summer Internships

Students looking for a summer internship placement should consider the Maryland State Archives. We have a limited number of paid positions and are also hosting students for academic credit, community service hours, co-ops, field studies, and professional development. [Visit our website for more information and application instructions.](#)

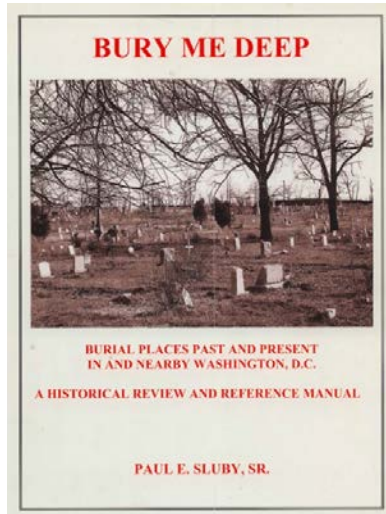
Introducing the Paul E. Sluby, Sr., Esq. and Dr. Patricia Carter Sluby Collection

The Maryland State Archives Special Collections department is immensely grateful to Dr. Patricia Carter Sluby of Oxon Hill, Prince George’s County, for the generous gift of her husband’s personal papers. Paul Edward Sluby, Sr., Esq. (1934–2019) was a renowned genealogist, legal researcher, and historian. As an army veteran, District of Columbia Police officer and helicopter pilot, Paul Sluby developed an enthusiasm for genealogy in the 1970s. The Board of Certified Genealogists names him with distinction, writing that he was the first African American to receive their certification in 1973. He was among the family historians who established the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society, Inc. (AAHGS) in 1977, and served as the organization’s first vice president for genealogical programs.



Throughout his distinguished career as a genealogist, legal researcher, and educator, Sluby was a prolific author of books about African American families and cemeteries. His background in police investigation fueled his passion for uncovering the details and evidence of hidden African American gravemarkers in

neglected burial grounds. This work is especially evident in some of his original photographs, a part of the new special collection. The research documenting African American cemeteries around the Maryland and District of Columbia region points to the significant legacy of scholars like Sluby who put in countless hours to ensure that these cultural heritage sites would not be forgotten and to provide a foundation of knowledge for the next generation of historians.



In May 2021, Paul’s second wife, Dr. Patricia Carter Sluby – herself a dedicated genealogist – donated copies of every publication that Paul authored, along with research papers, family history educational materials, photographs, and copies of digital media. Paul’s book collection is fully processed and now accessible to the public in the Maryland State Archives Search Room. The Sluby family’s personal library of books highlighting African American achievements in history, art, science and other fields are now available to researchers. Additional research files from Paul and Pat Sluby are still in the process of being donated and catalogued. To date, the Sluby Collection is the largest private donation of African American history to the Maryland State Archives. It is an honor to continue the legacy of the Slubys’ work, in providing access to records that will help more people to find their families in the Archives.

New Exhibition at MSA



Roots author Alex Haley (center) and archivist Phebe Robinson Jacobsen (right) appearing at a press event celebrating their collaboration in 1977, the year the television miniseries *Roots* premiered. Jacobsen holds the *Maryland Gazette* newspaper volume that documented Haley family oral history about “The African.”

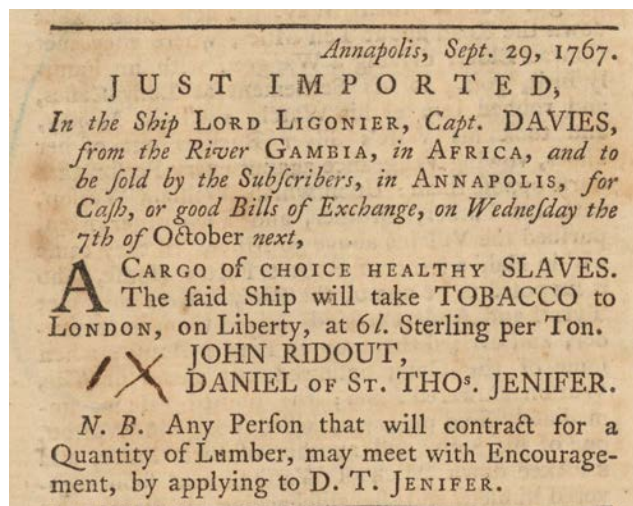
A new Search Room exhibition, **Archives Roots: The Collaborative Research of Alex Haley & Phebe Robinson Jacobsen**, will debut in February 2022. The exhibition is a further tribute to author Alex Haley, whose centennial birthday was celebrated in the Fall issue of *The Clamshell*. Haley's genealogical research at the Maryland Hall of Records in 1967 led to documentary evidence that corroborated his family's oral history of his ancestor, "The African." Archivist Phebe Robinson Jacobsen played a critical role in locating a newspaper advertisement for the arrival of Captain Davies' ship, the *Lord Ligonier*. The ship arrived in Annapolis harbor bearing enslaved individuals from The Gambia, including Haley's ancestor Kunta Kinte, to America's shores exactly two hundred years before Haley's return to Maryland's capital.

Jacobsen's professional reputation for sleuthing hard-to-find Maryland records was legendary. She is a role model who has set a high bar of customer service and scholarship within our agency's record holdings. Her special interest in African American history made her an ideal collaborator for Haley. She was known and loved by many during her tenure in the Search Room simply because she took each person's research seriously and patiently taught them how to hunt for their record – all of this in the era of card catalogs and book indices. (No Google!)

The exhibition celebrates the 25 years of cooperation and collegial correspondence between Haley and Jacobsen, which can enhance our understanding and appreciation of African American history. The 1977 television series based upon Haley's book, starring a cast of luminaries, was a broadcast watershed. After each episode of the miniseries, many people, from young school children to office workers, began to talk about African American history as *American* history. Today many family historians credit Haley's novel, the *Roots* series, or subsequent popular shows as "Who Do You Think You Are?" as their introduction to genealogy.



In April 1991, Alex Haley returned to Annapolis to attend the Phebe R. Jacobsen Conference on Maryland History and reception honoring Phebe Jacobsen, his longtime colleague. From L to R: Deputy State Archivist Gregory Stiverson; Court of Appeals Chief Judge Robert C. Murphy; Archivist Phebe Robinson Jacobsen; Author Alex Haley; and State Archivist Dr. Edward C. Papenfuse.



Detail of the now-famed *Maryland Gazette* newspaper, Sept. 29, 1767, advertisement that provided documentary evidence for the arrival of Alex Haley's enslaved ancestor Kunta Kinte in Annapolis.

Maryland State House

250th Anniversary of the Cornerstone Laying, March 28, 1772

On March 28, 1772, Governor Robert Eden laid the cornerstone for what would be the third State House built on State Circle in Annapolis. The first, built soon after the capital was moved from St. Mary's City to Annapolis in 1695, burned down in 1704. The second was completed by 1709 and, sixty years later, had become far too small for the growing business of government and was too dilapidated to warrant enlarging it. The decision was made to raze it. With Charles Wallace as the "undertaker" and Joseph Horatio Anderson as the architect, work was begun on the new State House in early 1772.

Though the cornerstone for the eighteenth-century State House has never been located, the Maryland Gazette gave the following brief account of the event:

"On Saturday last about Twelve o'Clock, his Excellency the Governor [Sir Robert Eden], attended by a Number of the principal Gentlemen of this City, was pleased to lay the First Stone of the Foundation of the State House; on which occasion a cold collation was provided for the Company, and after a few loyal and constitutional Toasts had circulated, the Gentlemen retired, the workmen giving Three Cheers on their Departure."

As part of the celebration of the State House 250th, the original Revolutionary War uniform of Tench Tilghman (1744-1786), on loan from the Maryland Center for History and Culture, will be on display in the Senate Committee Room from March 22 – April 5, 2022. A reproduction of the uniform will be displayed through June 21. From the Eastern Shore of Maryland, Tilghman was aide-de-camp to George Washington and carried the articles of capitulation outlining British terms of surrender after the Battle of Yorktown. This uniform is one of only two complete Revolutionary War Officer's uniforms to survive. This exceptionally rare uniform will be installed in proximity to the *Washington, Lafayette, and Tilghman at Yorktown* painting by Charles Willson Peale (MSA SC 1545-1120), alongside a case with Tilghman's swords and spurs.

In conjunction with Tilghman's uniform in the Committee Room, staff plan to augment exhibits in the adjacent Stairwell Room. Among the Archives' holdings are two exceedingly rare documents, the Dunlap broadside notifying citizens of the ratification of the Treaty of Paris and Governor William Paca's Proclamation of the Treaty of Paris. The Dunlap broadside is one of only thirteen copies that were printed, one for each state, of which only a handful survive, and it will be displayed alongside



Officer's uniform worn by Tench Tilghman, unknown maker, 1779–1781. Maryland Center for History and Culture, Gift of Col. Arthur Lee Shreve Jr., Mrs. Rosalie Tilghman Shreve Willcox, Mrs. Sallie Dorsey Shreve Waxter, and Col. Levin Glae Shreve, USAR (ret.), in memory of their mother, Mrs. Arthur Lee Shreve, 1949.88.1

Governor William Paca's Proclamation during this special event. Congress directed each state to inform its citizens of the Treaty's ratification, and in this broadside, Governor Paca asks Marylanders to "... observe, and carry into effect" the Treaty's requirements -- to properly live as citizens of the new republic.

The Maryland State House is open to the public every day from 8:30am to 5:00pm, except Christmas and New Years Day. We encourage you to visit during this historic year, and for more information, please see a copy of the MSA's most recent publication, *The Maryland State House: 250 Years of History* [available for sale at the Archives](#) and in local bookstores.

Announcing More Digitized Death Records Available Online

Exciting news! Death records for all of Maryland's counties are now available to remotely access online through the year 1921 via series [SE43](#). This new digital series is in addition to Baltimore City death records from 1875 through 1921 in series [CM1132](#), which were placed online last year.

The Archives' staff is working hard on a daily basis to place unrestricted record material over 100 years old online for remote use, so the available online collections will continue to expand. For more information, please visit our online [research guides](#).

Women's Hall of Fame Website Redesign



The Maryland State Archives is honored to be the host repository for the online Maryland Women's Hall of Fame in partnership with the [Maryland Commission for Women](#). In recognition of Women's History Month, the Archives is launching a full redesign of the [Women's Hall of Fame website](#). Please take a moment to look at the new site and read the biographies of these amazing women.

Friends of the Maryland State Archives: Supporting the Archives' Mission of Preservation and Acquisition

The Friends of MSA was established in 2005 to assist with the acquisition of one of the most important documents in American history: George Washington's personal copy of his speech to Congress resigning his commission as commander-in-chief of the Continental Army. This historic speech is now on permanent display in the Maryland State House and is an important part of the interpretation of the State House and national and Maryland history.

Since then, the Friends have continued to enhance the Archives' collections of historic documents and artifacts, enabling us to expand representation and diversify through acquisitions outside the scope of government records. One significant recent addition is a rare panoramic photograph of an African American unit that served in World War I. Another is a 1912 first edition copy of explorer Matthew Henson's memoir, *A Negro Explorer at the North Pole*, that contains some wonderful photographs of his adventures with Robert Peary [MSA SC 6293-1-1]. Documents from a Liberty Town family relating to the enslaved people there are also very informative and a wonderful addition to our work on the legacy of slavery.



MSA SC 6273-1-1

To see a larger version of this image [click here to open a jpg image](#).

The Maryland state art collection is one of the oldest and most historic in the country and a goal of the Friends has been to diversify this collection with works by a variety of artists. The addition of three screen prints by the late Baltimore artist, Tom Miller, was an important step towards this goal. The Friends are also working with the senior curator of artistic property, Catherine Rogers Arthur, and the director of the Study of the Legacy of Slavery in Maryland program, Chris Haley, on the commission of a portrait of Thurgood Marshall for the Senate Judicial Proceedings Meeting Room by another

Baltimore artist, Ernest Shaw. Senator Will Smith is managing the fundraising for the portrait.



Another way in which the Friends support the Archives' mission is to assist with public events. The most recent - and one of the most significant - was the unveiling of the statues of Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass in the Old House of Delegates Chamber of the State House in February 2020. This public, all-day event included talks by noted scholars such as Dr. Celeste-Marie Bernier and Dr. Kate Larson, children's activities, a performance by Harriet Tubman living history interpreter Millicent Sparks, refreshments, a

concert by the Extensions of Faith Choir and panel discussions including descendants of both Douglass and Tubman.

Supporting the research and publication of books and booklets on important Maryland historical subjects is another part of the Friends' work. These publications represent decades of research conducted by Archives staff. In the past couple of years, the Friends have received grants to support research on the legacy of slavery and the Maryland 400 regiment of the Revolutionary War.

Finally, the Friends provide support for staff members who want to take part in seminars, meetings, and other events that enhance their professional development. While the past couple of years of Covid have put the brakes on such conferences, the Friends stand ready to continue this support in the future.



It is through generous donors that the Archives has been able to acquire and preserve many treasures of Maryland's history. Donations support our mission to preserve and make accessible the historic records of Maryland, as well as supporting the professional development of our staff. To donate to the Friends [click here](#).

The Friends of the Maryland State Archives is a 501(c)3 organization and donations to it are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.



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