

THE CLAMSHELL

A Quarterly Newsletter of the Maryland State Archives

Box 5, Folder 2

Spring 2024

In this Issue:

[Letter from the State Archivist](#)

[Staff Activities](#)

[Events and Outreach](#)

[Sticks and Stones: \(De\)humanizing Words? Considering the Language of Slavery, Race, and Marginalized Communities - A Panel](#)

[Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission Update](#)

[Collection Highlights](#)

[Book Notes](#)

[An Audiovisual Digitization Field Study](#)

[Now on Display: The USS Maryland Engine Room Clock](#)

[Research Reflections](#)

[Uncovering a Hidden History: A Hypothetical Reconstruction of the Henry & Isabella Randall House North Brentwood, MD](#)

[Every Day History: The Tale of Susanna Brayfield](#)



DEIAB - A Definition

DEIAB is an acronym that stands for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility and Belonging and denotes organizations, programs, positions and events that support people of all races, ethnicities, religions, abilities, genders and sexual orientations. The Maryland State Archives has long embraced these values and continues to employ them in our public service, collections care and management, outreach and staff development. We believe that all communities should see themselves in the Archives, and we continue to work toward having all people's stories be a part of our shared heritage.

Letter from the State Archivist

On June 13, 1874, Frederick Douglass made his only known visit to the Maryland State House. It was less than ten years after the abolition of slavery in his home state, and three months since the 56 year old was made president of the Freedman's Savings Bank—which, in the midst of a national economic crisis, would declare bankruptcy on June 29. The burden of his responsibilities must surely have weighed upon Douglass when he arrived in Annapolis, where he addressed the local congregation of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, most likely at Mount Moriah which now houses the Banneker Douglass Museum.

Yet remarkably, what is noted about his visit in a newspaper account, is that while in the State House he viewed the monumental painting *Washington Resigning His Commission* then installed in the Senate Chamber (what we now know as the “Old” Senate Chamber). While pacing in front of it, Douglass recited *from memory* the text of George Washington's resignation speech as commander-in-chief of the Continental Army, delivered in that room on December 23, 1783.

What had motivated Douglass, so keenly aware that he, and all formerly enslaved people, were excluded from the rights declared in America's founding documents, to honor Washington's peaceful transfer of military power to civilian authority? His writings and speeches excoriated this hypocrisy, perhaps most memorably conveyed in his 1852 address “What, to the Slave, is the Fourth of July?”

On the 150th anniversary of Douglass's historic visit, the MD250 Commission will commemorate his recitation and consider what remembering the events of America's fight for independence might have meant to him—and what they should mean to us, as we plan for Maryland's celebration of the nation's semiquincentennial. It's the first of many programs over the next two years in the lead up to 2026, and more information can be found on the MD250 website: <https://mdtwofifty.maryland.gov/>



Elaine Rice Bachmann, State Archivist



Staff Activities

Please join us in congratulating the following staff for reaching milestone state service anniversaries this year. We are so pleased to have them on the Archives' team and grateful for their hard work.

Five Years

Morgan Miller
Justin Williams
Pat Anderson

Fifteen Years

Megan Craynon
Nate Miller

Twenty Years

Camille DiMarco
Chris Kintzel
Joe Leizear
Chris Schini

Twenty Five Years

Elaine Rice Bachmann
Teresa Fawley
Corey Lewis
Jen Abbott
Rob Schoeberlein

Thirty Years

Christine Alvey

Thirty Five Years

Wei Yang

Events and Outreach

Sticks and Stones: (De)humanizing Words? Considering the Language of Slavery, Race, and Marginalized Communities - A Panel



On Thursday, March 28th, Chris Haley, Director of Research, Education, Outreach, and the Study of the Legacy of Slavery in Maryland, led a presentation and panel discussion on the use of language as it relates to slavery and race. The event was moderated by Dr. Eric Elston, Storyteller, Filmmaker, Board Member of Wiley H. Bates Legacy Center, and Director of Diversity and Development with Telegraph Creative. Panelists also included Maya Davis, Riversdale House Museum Director and former Legacy of Slavery Department archivist; Joe Toolan, Chair, Annapolis Pride and Commissioner, Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs; and Hannah Lane, Maryland State Archives Research Archivist for the Study of the Legacy of Slavery. Sponsored by Chesapeake Crossroads Heritage Area, the program focused on how complicated and often controversial it is to speak, write, or present on race related issues. Before a full audience, the speakers covered the subject from various

perspectives of history and museum fields. Haley provided a general overview of historical, legal, journalistic, and commercial usage of racially charged terms in the United States. Davis shared examples of her efforts to diversify interpretation at a colonial themed historic site primarily saluted for its European significance. Lane recounted modern historic references in books and articles compared with the primary source documents on which they are based. Tolan concluded the presentations with deeply personal reflections on experiencing life as an adopted queer man of mixed ancestral American heritage. The event ended with a fully engaged Question and Answer session between the attendees, who were primarily from local historic sites and cultural heritage institutions, and the expert panelists. A [full recording of the event](#) is available on the Chesapeake Crossroads Heritage Area YouTube Channel to stream at no charge.

Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission Update

The Maryland State Archives proudly serves on the [Maryland Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#) which held its sixth public hearing on April 13, 2024 at Lincoln Elementary School in Frederick County Maryland. This hearing recognized the lynchings of [James Carroll](#) on April 17, 1879, [John H. Biggus](#) on November 23, 1887, and [James Bowens](#) on November 16, 1895, all having occurred in Frederick. During the hearing, biographical and genealogical narratives were shared about the lives of Carroll, Biggus and Bowens, and their murders by local lynch mobs were detailed. Descendants of the victims were also invited to speak during the proceedings, as well as community representatives to discuss the impact of these incidents on Frederick and its people. A full recording of the hearing is available on the Commission's [YouTube Channel](#).



Photo courtesy of Frederick News Post staff Andrew Schotz. Audience attending the April 13, 2024 Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission public hearing at Lincoln Elementary School.

The Commission is planning to hold additional hearings across the State throughout 2024. Details are still taking shape for these events and will be published on the Commission's [website](#) as soon as possible. Members of the public can also virtually attend Commission and Committee meetings held each month, and volunteer to participate in the work of the Commission, by consulting the schedule and online links posted there as well. You can also read more about the history of lynching in Maryland on the Archives' [Legacy of Slavery website](#).

In 2021, the Commission was awarded an Emmett Till grant from the US Department of Justice to help support this important work. With these funds, the research company Heritage Associates has been engaged to conduct genealogical research and to identify community members who may have knowledge of or information about these lynchings. The group continues to seek descendants of victims and anyone who would like to participate in the telling of these stories. If you have information to share, or would like to participate, please contact [Heritage Associates](#) directly. Members of the

public may also submit comments on what reconciliation and restorative justice means to them [online](#), and they can also email the Commission directly using mltrc@maryland.gov.

Collection Highlights

Book Notes

By Christine Alvey, Librarian, Maryland State Archives

Does the Maryland State Archives (MSA) Library have fiction?

Yes. The MSA Library has, among its collections, works of fiction in the following genres: novels; poetry; and “memoirs” as imagined (based on historical facts). This material informs the rich cultural life of the State of Maryland and while clearly distinct from books of history, is important in documenting our State. Included are books set in Maryland and those by Maryland authors, some well known and some not so familiar. The Library also has cookbooks, songbooks, and books about cooking and songs.

You can search the Maryland State Archives Library catalog, using the following url:

<https://library.msa.maryland.gov/>

An Audiovisual Digitization Field Study

By Haden Kramer, Field Study Volunteer, Maryland State Archives

For my field study this spring semester, I worked in the Appraisal Department alongside Christopher Schini on several audiovisual digitization projects. These involved digitizing audio and digital video cassettes, capturing the metadata, and organizing the files. Digitization will create more efficient pathways of access to these materials, as computers which can play MP3 files are much more ubiquitous today than, say, cassette decks. Another benefit is the “insurance” digitization provides against the unavoidable decay of these tapes over time and as they’re played again and again. Since the Appraisal Department has players for both formats across two workstations, they could be digitized simultaneously—I may have worn a groove in the floor walking back and forth between my two desks!



The first and more straightforward project involved the digitization of small digital video cassettes (miniDV), which were widely used in camcorders from their introduction in 1995 through the early 21st

century. On these cassettes, I encountered several sorts of videos, all of which are worth preserving for posterity; these included lectures given to intern cohorts by MSA staff, intern presentations, talks given by former Maryland State Archivist Dr. Edward Papenfuse, Hall of Records Commission meetings, and some more singular recordings, such as a brief clip from Gov. Martin O'Malley's inauguration. To digitize a cassette, one must simply start the recording software on a computer (for these, we used iMovie on a Mac Mini which Chris had outfitted for the task), press "play" on the cassette player, then wait for it to play through. Later on, I followed a similar process to digitize VHS tapes from the Thurgood Marshall State Law Library. Contemporaneously, I worked on my second project (and one of the most interesting projects of my archival career to date), the digitization of oral histories from [SC 2140: The Annapolis I Remember Collection](#).

Before my first day at MSA, I had never set foot in the city of Annapolis, so between my twice-weekly commute and my work with The Annapolis I Remember materials, I became quickly familiar with the city, both historically speaking and with present-day Rowe Boulevard. My work here involved the digitization of cassettes containing oral histories collected from senior Annapolitans between the late 1980s and 1990 by Mame Warren, former curator of photographs at MSA, and two of her friends and colleagues, Sharie Valerio and Beth Whaley. Warren, Valerio, and Whaley conducted over 80 interviews, and most of those interviewed had been born, and in many cases lived their entire lives, in Annapolis. As I listened to these fascinating stories, learning more about the city, its close relationship with St. John's College and the U.S. Naval Academy, its social milieu, and its development from a "large small town" into the hub of tourism it is today, I became more interested in this project as a whole and the lives and memories of those interviewed. I connected with Mame Warren, and over Zoom, she imparted a wealth of information. I learned of other outgrowths of the project, including a book Warren published (*Then Again... Annapolis, 1900-1965*, which features extracts from these interviews alongside photographs taken by, among others, Marion E. Warren, Mame's father) and a theater production spearheaded by Whaley and Valerio, attendance at which, according to Warren, filled Francis Scott Key Auditorium at St. John's for several nights and may have backed up traffic all the way to Route 50!

I concluded my field study experience with a presentation on the afternoon of April 22 in which I discussed many of the above ideas. Not only was it a useful way to complete the capstone project course component of my field study, but it felt fitting to end my time at MSA by sharing my newfound knowledge of and passion for this collection with other MSA staff. I am endlessly grateful for the time I've spent and the experiences I've gained at MSA this semester; thanks for having me!

Now on Display: The USS Maryland Engine Room Clock

By Robin Gower, Curator, Maryland Commission on Artistic Property of the Maryland State Archives

Maryland and the U.S. Navy have long had a connection, even before the founding of the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis in 1845. To date, there have been four ships named after the state. The first USS *Maryland* was a Baltimore-built, 20 gun sloop-of-war, commissioned in 1799. In the early 20th century, two USS *Marylands* were commissioned; the Cruiser (ACR-8) in 1905 and the Battleship (BB-46) in 1926. There is even a USS *Maryland* still serving our country today. Commissioned in 1991, it is an Ohio-class, ballistic missile submarine.

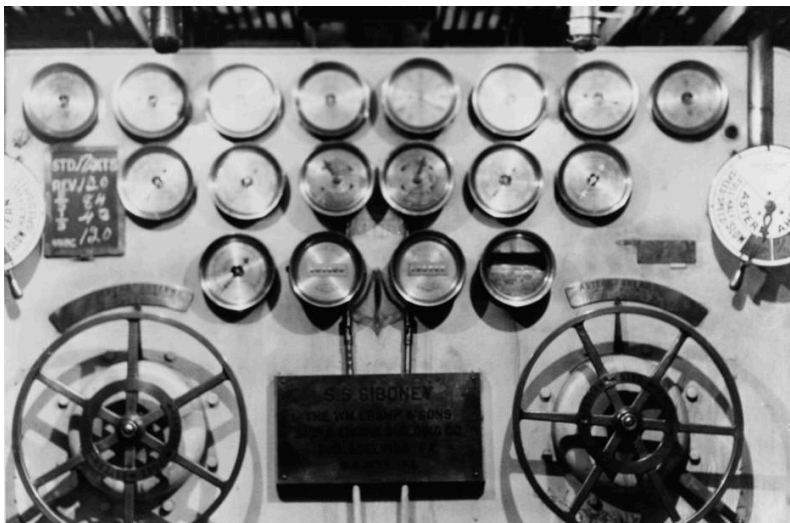
The legacies of these ships can be found on display at the Maryland State House. The ship's bell from the battleship USS *Maryland* was presented to the state after it was decommissioned in 1947 and sits on the State House grounds. A beautiful and unique silver service made by the famed Baltimore firm Samuel Kirk and Sons in 1906 is on display in the Caucus Room. And in June 2024 a new object was added to the display; an engine room clock [MSA SC 1545-3507] believed to be from the same USS *Maryland* cruiser as the silver. Generously donated in 2019, this clock is a touchstone of both the construction and service of the USS *Maryland* cruiser.



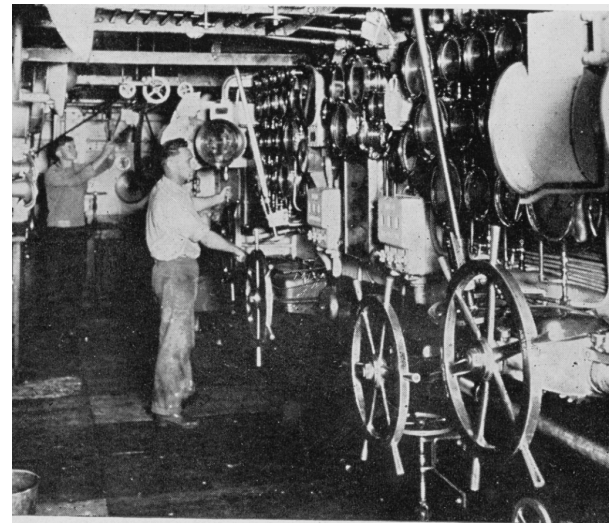
MSA SC 1545-3507
Imaged by Chris Kintzel, 2019,
Maryland State Archives

What exactly is an “engine room clock”? It is a heavy duty, “high-grade”, and “absolutely dust proof” clock meant to be used in utilitarian spaces and designed to withstand extreme conditions.¹ They were not wired, which meant they could be installed virtually anywhere on the ship, and did not need power as they were hand-wound.² Nothing in particular separated these clocks from other clocks found on ships, although engine room clocks do not have chimes. This is likely due to the loud nature of the engine rooms, which would have rendered the chime useless.

Interior photographs of cruisers from the early part of the 20th century are limited. However, images of engine rooms from various models of ships from the period are available, and provide a general idea where the clock on the USS *Maryland* would have been located and utilized.



Left: USS *Siboney* engine room throttle board, 1918³



Right: USS *Mississippi*, c.1918⁴

¹ Trade Catalog, 1900 Vermont Clock Co., pg. 12

² “The Trick to Getting Ship Clocks to Work: A Pedantic Battle with @USSCod.” n.d. www.youtube.com. Accessed May 2, 2024.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KM9YScXCA_A.

³ Machinist John G. Krieger, USN. *USS Siboney engine room throttle board*. December 24, 1918. Photograph. U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command, Washington, D.C.

<https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nhhc-series/nh-series/NH-43000/NH-43477.html>

⁴ A.M Simon. *Main Engine Room (operating throttles) U.S.S Mississippi*. c. 1918. U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command, Washington, D.C.

<https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nhhc-series/nh-series/NH-106000/NH-106611.html>



Image of clock's face.
Imaged by Robin Gower, April 2024,
Maryland State Archives

Unlike other engine room clocks pre-1900 and post 1910 found in the collections of other museums or at auction, this engine room clock is not labeled with the ship's name on the clock face. How then can we learn if this clock was used onboard the engine room of the USS *Maryland*?

As an object cannot tell us its secrets, we must follow the trail of clues found on the object. The most logical place to start is with the information presented on the clock's face. From this we know that "Newport News Shipbuilding & Dry Dock Company" clearly had a part to play, as well as "The Ashcroft MFG Co, New York."

A previous owner of the clock had started the investigation into the clock's provenance decades ago. They wrote to the various companies represented on the clock in an attempt to narrow down where it originated from. Newport News Shipbuilding & Dry Dock Company was able to confirm in a 1967 letter that the company

did make the piece, and had reasons to believe that it was from the USS *Maryland*.

H. LeRoss Browne, Assistant to the President wrote:

[...] determined that your clock was installed on one of the ships built by this company having a Hull Number some place between 37 and 56 [...] Through a process of elimination, the exact details of which are unknown to me, officials of the Hull Outfitting Division of this Company are fairly certain that your clock was installed on the armored cruiser MARYLAND which bears our Hull number 39 [...] While I do not believe this can be proved, we are satisfied that this probably is the ship [...] ⁵

While in conservation in April 2024, the horologist, an artisan who makes or repairs clocks and watches, noted that there were markings on the back of the clock that are believed to have been added during the foundry process, as two pieces fused together bear the same numbers. Perhaps these are some of the markings used by Newport News Shipbuilding & Dry Dock Company to determine the clock's connection to the USS *Maryland*.



⁵ Browne, H. LeRoss letter to clock owner October 6, 1967.

Images of foundry markings on two pieces welded together⁶

Additionally scratch marks were found indicating a previous repair to the clock. Depending on how you read them, the marks could say, “10/14/10 MD” or “OW 10/14/10”. The USS *Maryland* was at the Naval Yard in San Francisco in October 1910, so it is possible that is when the repair occurred.⁷

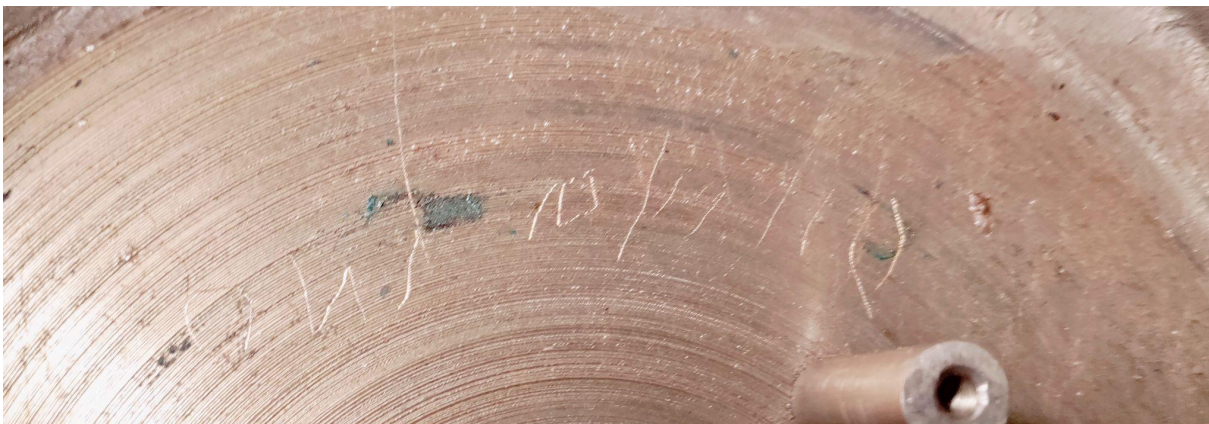


Image of 10/14/10 marking⁸

Further interior inspection revealed that “Chelsea Clock Co., Boston, U.S.A.” was involved with creating the clock’s movement, as evidenced by their name on the clockworks as well as the part number “14677”. Their involvement in the construction of the clock was confirmed in October 1967, when the company determined it was sold to the U.S. Naval Oceanographic [Office] on October 8, 1904.⁹ The company, however, did not know where the clock’s movement went from there.



Chelsea Clock Company markings¹⁰

Fortuitous to this project, Ashcroft Manufacturing is still in business today. When showed images of the clock, a company representative replied:

Please see the attached copies of Ashcroft catalog pages; these identify the product as an Engine Room Clock. Manning, Maxwell & Moore produced this item under the Ashcroft brand and one of the key industries was marine service (US Navy) [...].¹¹

⁶ Steven Siracki. From *Observations and Repairs to the USS Maryland Engine Room Clock*. April 2024.

⁷ Hartwell, Joe. “ACR-8 USS Maryland / USS Frederick.” USS Maryland/USS Frederick, December 23, 2018. https://freepages.rootsweb.com/~cacunithistories/military/USS_Maryland_Frederick.htm.

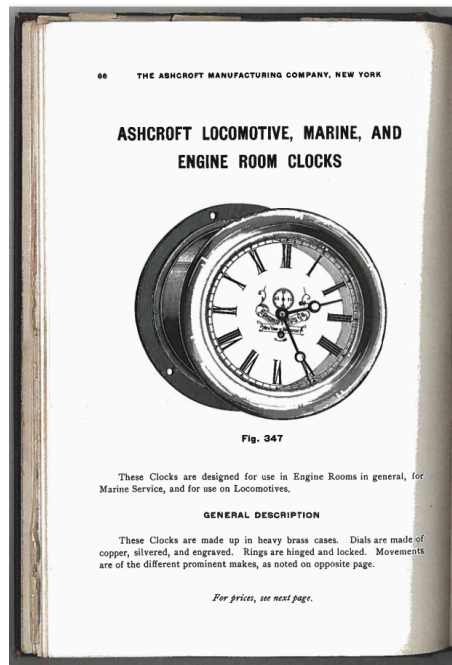
⁸ Steven Siracki. From *Observations and Repairs to the USS Maryland Engine Room Clock*. April 2024.

⁹ DuVally, J. F. letter to clock owner September 7, 1967.

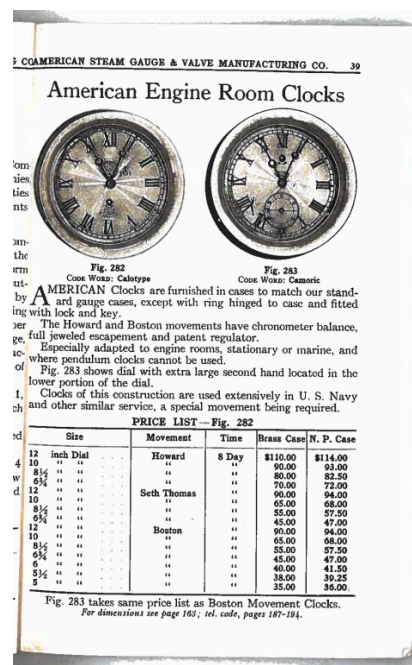
¹⁰ Steven Siracki. From *Observations and Repairs to the USS Maryland Engine Room Clock*. April 2024.

¹¹ Robert Rychlik, email message to author, April 1, 2024.

When asked if they had specific records related to this clock, they responded, “[They] would not be able to offer details as to the parties that purchased instruments as the records had not been retained.”¹²



13



14

Trade catalogs from Ashcroft Manufacturing

The c. 1930 catalog (left) clearly states, “These Clocks are designed for use in Engine Rooms in general, for Marine Service, and for use on Locomotives.”¹⁵ The pictured clock also matches the shape and general design of MSA SC 1545-3507. The c. 1913 catalog (right) notes that, “Clocks of this construction are used extensively in U.S. Navy [...] service, a special movement being required.”¹⁶

Unfortunately, the correspondence with all three parties involved with the manufacturing and installation of the clock do not provide conclusive evidence that MSA SC 1545-3507 was used on the USS *Maryland*. However, none of the information provided excludes the possibility either. The dates provided by Chelsea Clock Company and Ashcroft Manufacturing align with the construction of ships with Hull Numbers 37-56, as stated by Newport News Shipbuilding & Dry Dock Company, which indicates that the USS *Maryland* is still a plausible candidate.

As to why MSA SC 1545-3507 does not include the name of the ship on the clock face, the author theorizes that Newport News Shipbuilding & Dry Dock Company was not taking additional time to customize parts for each ship, including but not limited to engine room clock faces, due to the competitive and high stakes environment at the time the USS *Maryland* was constructed. Since they were working on many vessels concurrently, they would have looked for ways to streamline production, such as making similar components at the same time that could be installed on any vessel. Newport News Shipbuilding & Dry Dock Company were more likely concerned with

¹² Ibid.
¹³ Trade Catalog, c. 1930 Ashcroft Manufacturing Co., pg 66
¹⁴ Trade Catalog, c. 1913 Ashcroft Manufacturing Co., pg 39
¹⁵ Trade Catalog, c. 1930 Ashcroft Manufacturing Co., pg 66
¹⁶ Trade Catalog, c. 1913 Ashcroft Manufacturing Co., pg 39

manufacturing seaworthy ships and completing their contracts on time and budget then adding unique and identifying details.

The period in which the Newport News Shipbuilding & Dry Dock Company was acquiring clocks for use on ships at the turn of the century was a busy one. Starting in 1890, the yard was producing 1-2 vessels per year. This increased to seven vessels in 1899, which brought in an excess of \$10.5 million in contracts and supported the employment of 4,500 people.¹⁷ Four more vessels were contracted in 1900 and three additional ones, including the USS *Maryland*, in 1901.¹⁸ At its peak in the fall of 1901, the Company had 13 ships in production with a total of \$28 million in contracts.¹⁹ To meet the demand, the shipyard expanded the machine and joiner shop, making them the largest in the country at the time.²⁰

At this point, there is enough information to begin to assemble MSA SC 1545-3507's provenance. During the early 1900s, the U.S. Navy was building up its naval fleet, making large purchases of parts, and contracting with shipyards. Parts for the engine room clock's case were sent to Newport News Shipbuilding & Dry Dock Co. from Ashcroft Manufacturing circa 1904.²¹ Simultaneously, clockworks were sold/sent out to the U.S. Naval Oceanographic [Office] on October 8, 1904 from the Chelsea Clock Company.²² The clock case and clockworks were assembled with parts made at Newport News Shipbuilding & Dry Dock Co. and possibly installed on USS *Maryland* (hull 39²³) sometime after October 8, 1904 and before the ship's commissioning on April 18, 1905.²⁴

It is unclear exactly how the clock entered private hands. The USS *Maryland* (by then renamed the USS *Frederick*) was decommissioned in 1922, stricken from the Naval Register on November 13, 1929, and sold on February 11, 1930.²⁵ It is likely that the clock was sold off the ship at that time. From 1930 through the 1960s, it is unknown where the engine room clock was. By 1967, it was in the possession of a gentleman who owned a clock repair business on Maryland's eastern shore. Did they have more information and reasoning to believe the clock was off the USS *Maryland*?

These are the stories that will continue to be researched. However, given the assertion from the Newport News Shipbuilding & Dry Dock Company of their belief it was from the USS *Maryland*, the engine room clock has been selected for display in the Caucus Room of the Maryland State House. It is a quiet witness to all those involved with the construction of and served onboard the USS *Maryland*. It patiently waits for us to uncover its full story.

For more on the construction of the USS *Maryland* and its engine room clock, be sure to check out the summer edition of *The Clamshell*.

¹⁷ "Newport News Shipbuilding And Dry Dock Co.." Encyclopedia.com. Accessed April 5, 2024.

<https://www.encyclopedia.com/books/politics-and-business-magazines/newport-news-shipbuilding-and-dry-dock-co>.

¹⁸ Browne, H. LeRoss letter to clock owner October 6, 1967.

¹⁹ "Virginia News." *Alexandria Gazette*, March 15, 1901. https://www.newspapers.com/image/46177631/?match=1&clipping_id=145061928 .

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Robert Rychlik, email message to author, April 1, 2024.

²² DuVally, J. F. letter to clock owner September 7, 1967.

²³ Browne, H. LeRoss letter to clock owner October 6, 1967.

²⁴ "Maryland II (Armored Cruiser No. 8)." Maryland II (Armored Cruiser No. 8). Accessed February 22, 2024.

<https://www.history.navy.mil/research/histories/ship-histories/danfs/m/maryland-ii.html>.

²⁵ Ibid.

Research Reflections

Uncovering a Hidden History: A Hypothetical Reconstruction of the Henry & Isabella Randall House North Brentwood, MD

By Rhys Burns, Reference Archivist, Maryland State Archives

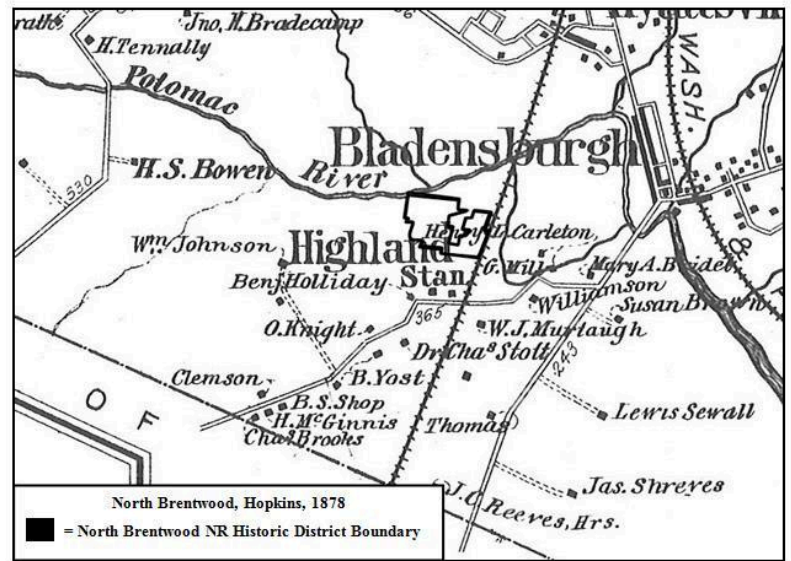


Left: Olivia Meoni & Rhys Burns excavate the front area of the Henry Randall House June 2022. **Right:** Photograph of the Henry Randall House (left) and the Peter Randall House (right), Pearl: M-NCPPC North Brentwood Historical Survey, 1991.

In 1892, the first home built by free African Americans in what would become the first African American incorporated town in Prince George's County was built. The first home was built in a community that would explode in growth over the next forty years. It would become a safe community of entrepreneurs following the atrocities of Slavery and the Civil War, a place where a man could safely raise his children and grandchildren while running his own coal and ice business from his basement. As archivists we frequently consider the best practices to preserve physical records of permanent historical value, but how does one go about preserving the three-dimensional objects around us such as family homes?

Archival research can be augmented by Digital Historic Preservation. Digital Heritage Projects typically consist of documentation, representation, and dissemination on the main component of the project. While these projects are mainly composed of computer-based materials of enduring value that should be kept for future generations, physical records and artifacts can be cross-referenced to deepen our understanding of the built environment's past. All relevant metadata and documentation can be stored in a central repository for the specified project, keeping related information together. This repository needs to be secure while also remaining accessible, which is especially important to stakeholders. These principles tie into the most important aspect of digital heritage, recognizing the values of the community and working with the community to preserve what is important. While doing this work, a researcher also needs to consider how community values can change over time, which can impact what different generations of stakeholders view as important. While it is against best practice to archive all materials, even born-digital items, if large portions of stakeholders value specific items, it is important to prioritize their documentation and preservation.

This article briefly delves into the historical context of North Brentwood and the Randall Family, a historically African American community that was born from the settling of Randall Family members in the late 1890s. All of the research culminated in the designing of a three-dimensional reconstruction of the Henry & Isabella Randall House. Supported by architectural precedents and archaeological evidence, we can now begin to get an idea of what the first house built in the first African American incorporated town in Prince George's County felt like for a free Henry Randall, his wife Isabella, and their children.



Left: “Map of Bladensburg District, Prince George’s County, Maryland” 1879. G. M. Hopkins Atlas. **Right:** Detail of G.M Hopkins Atlas with North Brentwood Historical District Boundary.

The town of North Brentwood rests along the Northern Branch of the Anacostia River. Prior to European colonization, the Anacostia River Watershed was within Piscataway territories, they were the dominant Native American tribe of Maryland’s Western Shore, migrating to the region during the 14th century. This is confirmed by archaeological evidence and oral tradition. The Piscataway draw lineage from the Lenni Lenape or Delaware People. The floodplains and land surrounding the Northern Branch of the Anacostia River would have served as a site for agriculture and the harvesting of marine wildlife for these individuals when possible.²⁶

In a modern context, North Brentwood is a small community with a population of five hundred and seventeen residents. 51.9% of the community’s population are African American, 41.4% are Hispanic, and 3.6% are white. There is not one dominant trade or occupation of the residents; however 10-16% work in construction, waste management, education, healthcare, public administration, or the arts.²⁷ Historically North Brentwood can be viewed as a working class neighborhood that in recent decades has seen a significant rise and development of the Hispanic population.

North Brentwood was specifically designed for African American families by Captain Wallace A. Bartlett, a veteran commander of the United States Colored Troops during the Civil War. Originally

²⁶ Gabrielle Astra Tayac, *To Speak with One Voice* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1999).

²⁷ “U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Maryland, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/map/MD,US/PST045222>.

453

District of Columbia, D.C.
I hereby certify that on this 17th day of May A.D. 1887, personally appeared before me a Mary Belle within and for the District aforesaid to whom I have read Margaret & Stitt his wife the within named grantors and acknowledged the foregoing deed to be their respective act and deed.
Witness my hand and seal this 17th day of May A.D. 1887.

M. S. Taylor
Notary Public.

Enrolled May 19th 1887. X

Cooke, Adams & Bartlett

This Indenture made this 7th day of April, A.D. 1887, by and between Jackson Ralston unmarried, of Hyattsville Prince Georges County Maryland, party of the first part, and Wallace A. Bartlett, J. Lee Adams and Emma C. Cooke of Washington District of Columbia Trustees of the Holladay Land and Improvement Company, parties of the second part. Witnesseth that the said party of the first part for and in consideration of the sum of Five (\$5) dollars to him in hand paid by the said parties of the second part, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, and upon the special consideration of the assumption by the said parties of the second part of the debts of trust herein after referred to, hath granted, bargained, sold, and conveyed and by these presents doth grant, bargain, sell and convey unto the said parties of the second part their heirs successors and assigns as joint tenants but not as tenants in common in fee simple firm, in trust nevertheless for the Holladay Land and Improvement Company, their heirs successors and assigns to sell, lease, mortgage and convey in fee simple or by way of deed of trust in such manner and upon such terms as to them may seem most advantageous, all or any part of the land herein conveyed, and without any liability in the part of the purchaser, lessee or mortgagee or lender to see to the application of the purchase money or said deed or money loaned or advanced in the securing of all or any part of said premises and with full power in the said parties of the second part their heirs successors and assigns to subdivide said premises, and allocate any part of the same for public use as in their judgement may seem advisable and generally to do and perform in and about the land herein conveyed in connection with its transfer, improvement and control, in any respect any act that might be done or performed by any owner in fee simple in his own right. And the said party of the first part hereby covenants that he will warrant specially the property hereby granted unto the said parties of the second part their heirs successors and assigns except as against the debts of trust herein referred to and that he will execute such further instruments of said land as may be requisite, witness the hands and seals of the said party of the first part the day and year first herebefore written.

Witness
Edward J. Sturtevant.

Jackson Ralston.
Wallace A. Bartlett.
J. Lee Adams.
Emma C. Cooke.

District of Columbia, D.C.
I Edward J. Sturtevant a Notary Public within and for the District aforesaid do hereby certify that on this 7th day of April A.D. 1887, personally appeared before me Jackson Ralston party of the first part and acknowledged and sealed April 7th 1887 and acknowledged the same to be his act and deed.
Witness my hand and official seal this 7th day of April A.D. 1887.

Edward J. Sturtevant
Notary Public.

Enrolled May 19th 1887. X

454

made subject to the servitude of a certain mill race crossing the land herein conveyed. Together with all the rights, ways, easements, franchises and appurtenances thereto belonging in anywise appertaining and all the right title and interest both at law and in equity made of the said party of the first part, do have and to hold the same unto and to the use of the said parties of the second part, their heirs successors and assigns as joint tenants, but not as tenants in common in fee simple firm, in trust nevertheless for the Holladay Land and Improvement Company, their heirs successors and assigns to sell, lease, mortgage and convey in fee simple or by way of deed of trust in such manner and upon such terms as to them may seem most advantageous, all or any part of the land herein conveyed, and without any liability in the part of the purchaser, lessee or mortgagee or lender to see to the application of the purchase money or said deed or money loaned or advanced in the securing of all or any part of said premises and with full power in the said parties of the second part their heirs successors and assigns to subdivide said premises, and allocate any part of the same for public use as in their judgement may seem advisable and generally to do and perform in and about the land herein conveyed in connection with its transfer, improvement and control, in any respect any act that might be done or performed by any owner in fee simple in his own right. And the said party of the first part hereby covenants that he will warrant specially the property hereby granted unto the said parties of the second part their heirs successors and assigns except as against the debts of trust herein referred to and that he will execute such further instruments of said land as may be requisite, witness the hands and seals of the said party of the first part the day and year first herebefore written.

Witness
Edward J. Sturtevant.

Jackson Ralston.
Wallace A. Bartlett.
J. Lee Adams.
Emma C. Cooke.

District of Columbia, D.C.
I Edward J. Sturtevant a Notary Public within and for the District aforesaid do hereby certify that on this 7th day of April A.D. 1887, personally appeared before me Jackson Ralston party of the first part and acknowledged and sealed April 7th 1887 and acknowledged the same to be his act and deed.
Witness my hand and official seal this 7th day of April A.D. 1887.

Edward J. Sturtevant
Notary Public.

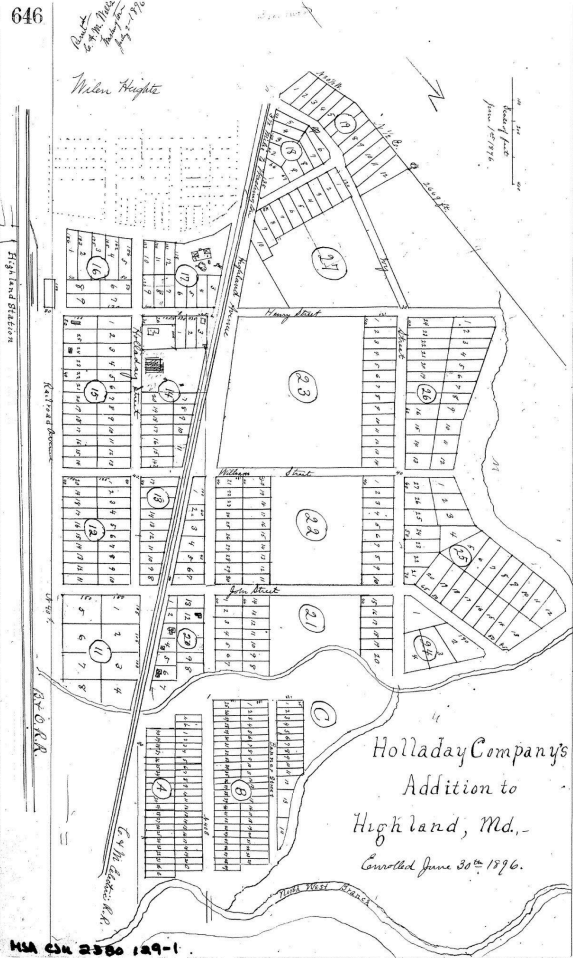
Enrolled May 19th 1887. X

“Deed of Trust between Jackson Ralston and Wallace A. Bartlett, J. Lee Adams, Emma C. Cooke as trustees of Holladay Land & Improvement Company, page,” JWB 8, Pages 453-454, 1887, MSA CE64-39.

from New York, Bartlett commanded the “Colored Men in Blue” regiment in Texas during the war. This regiment was largely composed of volunteer African American soldiers recruited from the Eastern Shore of Maryland.²⁸ Following the war, Bartlett and his family would settle near Washington D.C. and form the Holladay Land and Improvement Company in 1887 with partners J. Lee Adams and Samuel J. Mills. That same year the Holladay Company purchased 206 acres of farmland along the northeast boundary of Washington adjacent to the existing Highland Subdivision. This land was part of the Benjamin Holiday farm, owned then by Jackson Ralston. The land had the benefit of proximity to the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad as well as being between the existing town of Hyattsville and the New Highland Development.

In 1891, Bartlett through the Holladay Company would plot out the section south of the Northwest Branch of the Anacostia River, then referred to as the “Holladay Company’s Addition to Highland.” Due to the proximity of the Anacostia, the northern part of this addition was at a risk of severe flooding and the properties were deemed unsuitable for whites. The risk of flooding was further exacerbated by the presence of a mill race that was constructed during the early 18th century and ran through the center of the Holladay Addition. “Lots in this less desirable section of the subdivision were

²⁸ Prince George’s African American Museum & Cultural Center, “History of the Town of North Brentwood,” <https://pgaamcc.org/mission/north-brentwood-history/>.

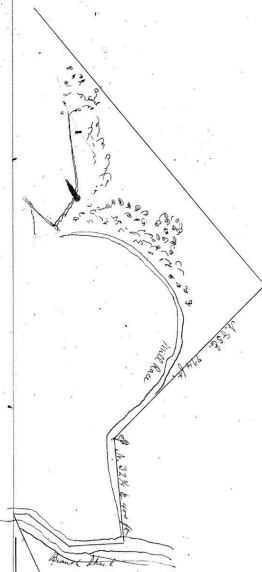


PRINCE GEORGES COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT (Fees from Land Records) MSA C2380-129-1

This is to certify that this is a correct copy of survey plat of the subdivision known as the Holladay Company's Addition to Highland (Bladensburg Station District) Prince Georges County, Md., for Record in the Clerk's Office for said County.

Witness my hand & seal of the County of Prince Georges, Md., this 30th day of June 1896.

Wallace A. Bartlett
J. Lee Adams
Samuel J. White } Justices



PRINCE GEORGES COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT (Fees from Land Records) MSA C2380-129-2

MSA C2380 129-2

Holiday Company's Addition to Highland, MD," JWB 5, Pages 646-647, 1896, MSA C2380-129.

sold for lower prices than the lots to the south, and their sales were directed to African Americans, many of whom had an indirect association with Wallace Bartlett through his service in the U.S. Colored Troops after the Civil War.²⁹ While it is known that the sale price of these lots were lower than those properties that were not at risk for flooding, it is not certain that the lots were priced fairly for the African American populations that purchased them, as African Americans were often disproportionately charged when considering the potential risk factors involved.³⁰

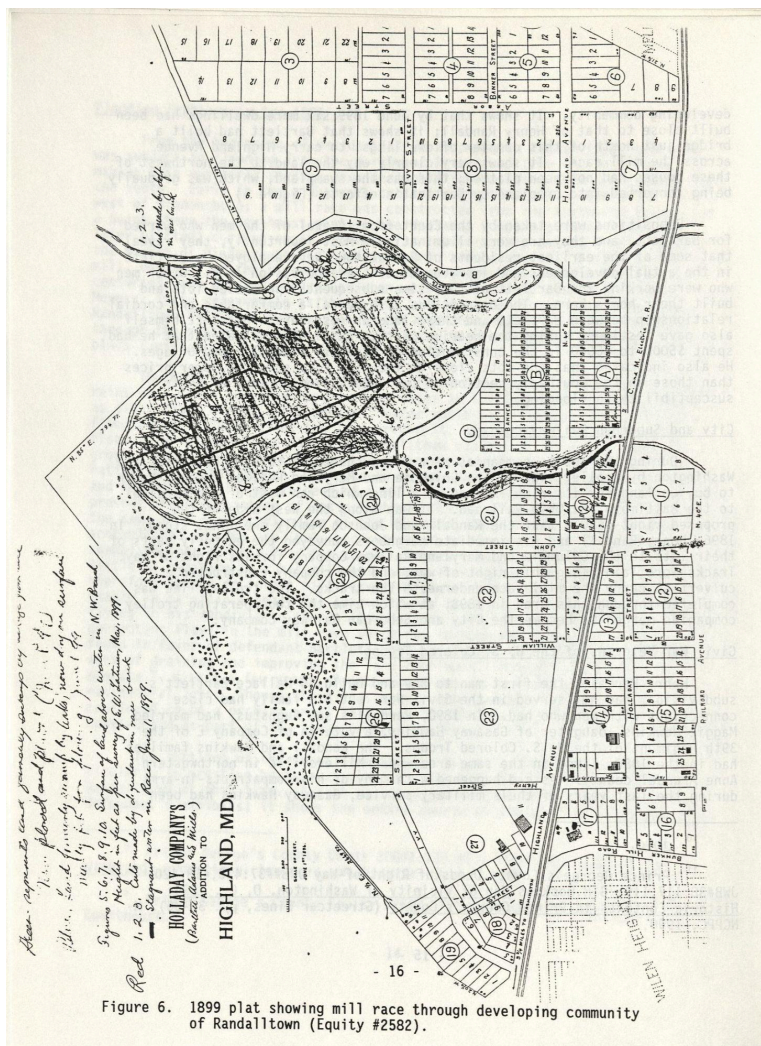
The first lots would be sold in 1891 to Henry Randall, a free African American male from Anne Arundel County. Though not a member of the US Colored Troops, the Randall Family had close connections to the men who had fought in the Civil War. For example, in 1890, Henry Randall's son Augustus Randall married Maggie Hawkins, daughter of Gasaway Hawkins; a veteran of the Colored Troops. These families lived in the same area of Anne Arundel County for nearly a decade prior. In 1892, Henry would build his house on lot 3, block 20. The following year, Henry's eldest son Peter Randall would move into the adjacent property at lot 2, block 20. In the following years, other members of the Randall family would move into properties within the Addition to Highland. Following the family's arrival to the neighborhood, the name Randalltown was used to delineate the northern

²⁹ Susan G. Pearl, National Register of Historic Places Nomination: North Brentwood Historic District, Prince George's County, Maryland, Upper Marlboro: M-NCPPC, 2003, page 8.
³⁰ Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law*, New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2018.

Black community from the rest of the predominantly white neighborhood to the south known as Brentwood.

This early settlement period of North Brentwood carries significance as a “prototype of an urban Reconstruction-era black community.”³¹ The idea of direct land ownership in a majority Black community made the location incredibly desirable for African Americans who had only been emancipated less than three decades prior. This idea was supplemented by the reunion of the US Colored Troops in DC in 1892, this event resulted in an increase in the sale of properties to Black Americans in the area. The dramatic expansion of the federal government following the Civil War and the increasing presence of African Americans in the Washington political landscape combined with the desire for a safe community made neighborhoods such as Randalltown appealing to migrating Americans. In 1896, the demand for property in Randalltown would be so high that the Holladay Addition to Highland would be replated to allow for the inclusion of new lots and give right to the Columbia & Maryland electrical railway. This rail line would run down Highland Avenue, now called

Rhode Island Avenue which is part of US Route 1. The decision to allow a streetcar to travel through the small community was made by members of the Randall family to further expand the growth of their neighborhood. Despite these foundations, the land that Randalltown was settled on was prone to excessive flooding due to the proximity of the Anacostia River. In 1899, the mill race that exacerbated flooding would be removed as it was no longer operable. Bartlett would employ the residents of Randalltown to open up the area for crops. These changes encouraged the growth of the small community. The owner of the mill brought an injunction against Bartlett claiming that the mill was still operable. The courts would side with Bartlett on account of the harmful effects the mill had on the community and “within a few years the former swampland was drained.”³²



1899 Plat of the Holiday Addition to Highland Showing the Mill Race Through Randalltown from Pearl: M-NCPPC North Brentwood Historical Survey, 1991, page 16.

The earliest houses built in Randalltown reflect the lives of the working class African Americans that were living in them. These homes were built by Black craftsmen for their families. Most of these homes were built in the *bungalow* or *I-House* styles, traditional vernacular architecture forms that were

³¹ Pearl, *Historical Survey*, 1991, 9.

³² Pearl, *Historical Survey*, 1991, 14.

workhorses across the middle and upper-middle-classes during the 19th and 20th Centuries along the East Coast.

Following the English tradition, the I-House style was a two room plan with a kitchen and a work/sleep room that was divided by a central hallway. This typology became popular for early American colonists following their independence from the British. By the 1800s, the typology was appealing to newly freed African Americans as it was simple and effective in plan and space.³³ As seen in North Brentwood, a popular adaptation of the plan was to attach a kitchen wing to the rear of the structure creating either an L or T-shape. This adaptation provided more space in the front two rooms for familial and work spaces. The central hallway would often become a stair hallway, creating a buffer for public and private spaces across each floor. When built prior to 1850, I-House typologies were seen as distinctly middle-to-upper-middle-class dwellings. Then during the second half of the century and at the turn of the new century, the typology spread West and were seen as a more common design. One story versions were made to serve as cottages for workers, sharecropper shacks, and log cabins. This was once again due to the increased square footage of the home and the buffer of public and private rooms within the structure.

As a student of architecture, I wanted to analyze how and why Henry decided to build his home in this vernacular style. Did he previously live in an I-House in Anne Arundel County? Did he see them in Anne Arundel County, and perhaps did they seem more spacious and desirable for his own family? These questions fueled the research into an Anne Arundel County building that follows a similar floor plan and exterior design to the Henry Randall House. This information was further supported by excerpts from *How the Working-Class Home Became Modern, 1900-1940* by Thomas C. Hubka, a book that catalogs and analyzes American vernacular architecture.

The architectural case study that I researched was the Anne Arundel Academy County Boarding House in Millersville, Maryland. Built in 1865, the Boarding House is a two-and-a-half story, three bay, cross-gable, center-hall plan I-House. When looking at current Google Earth imaging, the structure appears to follow the adapted L-shaped I-House form, however the Maryland Historical Trust Nomination Form does not mention this. The exterior walls of the structure are cedar shingles applied over German siding. In form and geometry, this building is visually similar to the Henry Randall House.³⁴ This building was the only historically relevant and thoroughly documented vernacular structure that I located within the Millersville District. Perhaps Henry and Isabella's children attended school here or it was a building frequently passed by the Randall's.

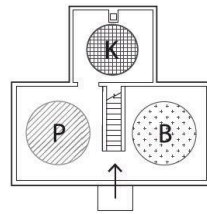
When comparing the Boarding House to the few photographs of the Henry Randall House and to the still standing, adjacent Peter Randall House; the similarities in geometry and form are striking. All three buildings are two-and-a-half story structures, each are three bays wide, with a central cross-gable. The visual architectural analysis of the case study structure along with understanding the historical context of vernacular architecture can confirm that the Henry Randall House was in fact an L-shaped I-House. This information was further supported through the archaeological evidence uncovered during the Summer 2022 excavation that occurred on the site. Excavations from Test

³³ Thomas C. Hubka, *Two Worlds Apart: Domestic Conditions at the Turn of the Twentieth Century*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2020, 47.

³⁴ Sherri M. Marsh, Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form: Anne Arundel Academy Boarding House, 1997.



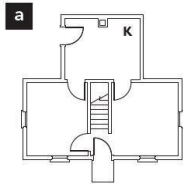
Elevation



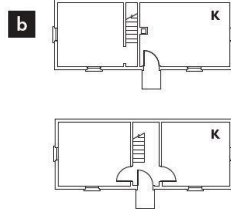
Plan Diagram

Top Left: Facade photograph of the Anne Arundel Academy Boarding House, Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form: Anne Arundel Academy Boarding House, 1997.

Top Right: Peter Randall House with the northern elevation of the Henry Randall House, Maryland Historical Trust of Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form: Peter Randall House, 2004.



Kitchen Addition (T-plan)

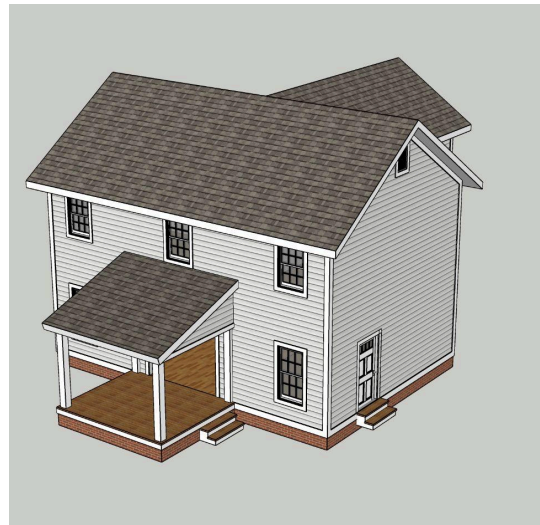
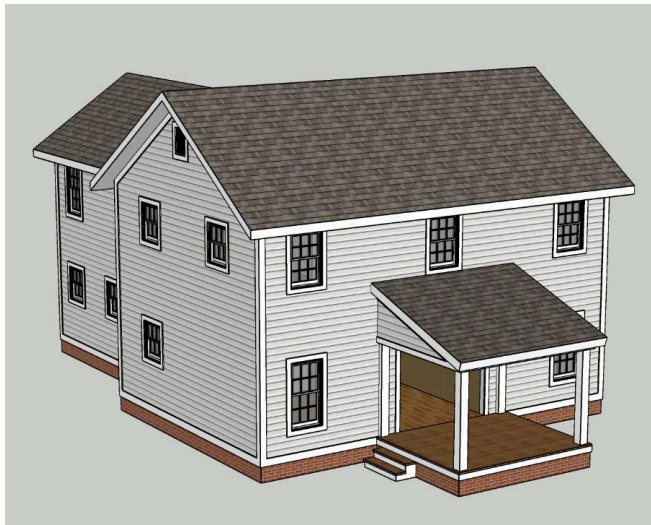


Top: Two-Room, Hall-and-Parlor Plan
Bottom: Center-Hall Plan

Bottom Left: I-House typology elevation and plan, Thomas Hubka.

Unit 3 revealed a portion of the original foundations, on the south wall. Excavations from Test Unit 4 also revealed the foundations. However, with each new layer excavated, more construction debris was uncovered, showing that when the Henry Randall House caught fire in the 1990s, the structure seemed to collapse under itself. And in regards to “clean-up” from this disaster, it seems that the rubble was pushed down into the basement section and then covered.

All of this research and archaeological interpretation informed my design of the following three-dimensional model of the Henry and Isabella Randall House using SketchUp Pro. This is very much a working model, as I focused on creating the exterior of the structure mainly. I am still working on connecting with and interviewing willing descendants of the Randall Family and/or other individuals that lived in this house at any point. When working with them, I ask questions about the materiality, lighting, spatial, and physical properties of the interior. I am currently still working to create memory maps based on what the community members have provided for us. I plan to use that information to refine the interior and exterior model.



Model Images of a Digital Reconstruction of the Henry & Isabella Randall House, completed in SketchUp Pro by Rhys Burns, 2023-2024.

My work into the three-dimensional hypothetical reconstruction of the Henry and Isabella Randall House is just a small part of a larger digital heritage project. The Digital North Brentwood Heritage Project / The North Brentwood Archaeology Project is a community led digital documentation and archaeological effort in North Brentwood, Maryland that aims to aid in the storytelling and preservation of the historically African American neighborhood in Prince George's County. Following the wants of the community, the project seeks to create a virtual platform where residents and descendants of North Brentwood can engage by sharing their historical and cultural experiences with one another and outside visitors. This virtual platform will manifest as a video game that users can play to interact with the town and learn from its historic locations across all time periods. Town elders pushed for this project in an effort to excite the youth of the community to actively participate and engage with their history, so it is not lost with time.

Current plans for the site of the Henry and Isabella Randall House include the creation of a park to honor the rich history of entrepreneurship in North Brentwood. The park, named Entrepreneurial Park, is being designed by the Neighborhood Design Center in close collaboration with community members and other stakeholders. Proposed plans for the park seek to incorporate the remains of the structure uncovered by the 2022 archaeological excavations; while featuring signage on the history of entrepreneurship in the town, supplemented by *Minding Our Own Business: An Oral History of North Brentwood's Entrepreneurs* (completed in 2004).

Every Day History: The Tale of Susanna Brayfield

By Ame Schimminger, Archival Technician, Maryland State Archives

When people think of history, they tend to think of epic battles or dusty old records. There is good reason for this, as history in school is often taught as a combination of the two. After you learn about the Battle of Lexington and Concord, you learn about the Declaration of Independence. After you finish reviewing the First World War, you review the Treaty of Versailles. For a broad overview of history such education is fine, but history is so much more than that.

In my junior year of high school, my Advanced Placement US History teacher asked us what happened during the Civil War. We came up with the standard answers: Gettysburg was the bloodiest battle on American soil; more soldiers died from infection than battle; the first legion made entirely of Black soldiers was created. When we could come up with no more, my teacher said, "People lived." He said people did their laundry, tended crops, went to work, celebrated birthdays and Christmas. People went about their daily lives even as the country was falling apart.

That statement has stuck with me ever since and I find myself drawn to the mundane daily life of history. The more I learn about it, the more I realize that while big events in history tend to happen once in a generation, daily life never stops. There are always dishes to do, local gossip to catch up on, games to play, people to love, and drama, even 400 year old drama, is always interesting.

The drama I present here is the age old question of 'who is the father?' A female servant is pregnant but her beau does not claim the child. The said beau is charged with "damnifying" the woman's master, and a seemingly random man is alleged to be the father. Though the truth is lost, the story remains one of the riveting tales which you can find in court records from the 1660s.

Maryland, despite being a Catholic province, was ruled by the English and followed Anglican Church customs, including use of the Julian calendar, which by the 1660s placed New Years' Day on 25 March, in official documents.³⁵ The laws were also shaped by Christian beliefs and dogma, including restrictions against premarital relations and their consequences.

The labor force was made up of indentured servants and enslaved people in the 1600s. Some indentured servants, unlike enslaved persons, chose to enter into servitude to pay off their voyage to the New World. Such an indenture meant that a person would serve for a given amount of time, during which the master must "maintain" the servant with food and clothing. During their time of service, the servant lost all personal freedoms, including the ability to marry. Any breach of the contract could result in being brought to court.³⁶

Despite rules and regulations, the servants were still human and susceptible to the same wants and desires of those not in servitude. The American colonies at that time were devout Christian. The Puritan ideals we are familiar with from the Salem witch trials and Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter* permeated the Chesapeake area as well. If two people, regardless of their status, produced a child out of wedlock, there were serious repercussions. Women were heavily fined, whipped and, if they were not free, they may have lost custody of the child.³⁷ The fathers were also fined and forced to pay for the child's welfare.³⁸ The children, labeled as bastards, were often held as servants themselves from infancy until their thirty-first birthday.³⁹ Note that Englishmen and women of "proper" parentage would serve only a limited number of years, likely not to exceed seven years.⁴⁰

³⁵ All dates are given in the Julian Calendar.

³⁶ Warren M. Billings, "The Law of Servants and Slaves in Seventeenth-Century Virginia," in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 99, no. 1 (1991): 46-47, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4249198>.

³⁷ Lois Green Carr & Lorena S. Walsh, "The Planter's Wife: The Experience of White Women in Seventeenth-Century Maryland," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 34, no. 4 (1977): 549, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2936182>.

³⁸ Billings, "The Law of Servants," 50.

³⁹ Billings, "The Law of Servants," 55.

⁴⁰ Billings, "The Law of Servants," 48; Carr & Walsh, "The Planter's Wife," 545.

Every once in a while, a couple would fall in love and decide to get married, only to be thwarted by the woman's continued indenture. There were ways to remedy this, however. If the prospective husband was wealthy enough, he could pay his fiancée's master for the remainder of her service. Alternatively, he could take on some of her remaining time himself, thereby serving out her term consecutively.⁴¹

This is where our story begins. Looking at dates and working backwards, we can conjecture that Susanna Brayfield came to Maryland in 1662. At that time, the typical term for an indentured servant over the age of twenty-two was four years.⁴² Susanna was to serve five years, indentured to a Randall Revell, who, judging by the proliferation of his name in the court records, was a prominent member of Somerset society, and attorney to many.

Immediately after his name in the court records where, for other men it stated "planter" or "mariner", Mr. Revell's occupation was simply that of "gentleman." The abundance of his name in the court records calling on debts implies a man of wealth and influence. He was not infallible, however. In one court case, he accused a neighbor of trespassing on his land to trade with the local Native Americans. He lost the suit as it was determined that the trading spot was well established before Mr. Revell purchased the land.⁴³

A man named John Cooper met Susanna shortly after she arrived in Maryland. Lacking the funds to buy her indenture from Mr. Revell, Cooper instead indentured himself to shorten Susanna's time. Cooper signed a contract with Mr. Revell in February of 1665, saying he would work two years "in Consideration of two yeares of the woman servant of the house named Susanna Brayfeeld."⁴⁴ The contract, in recognition of Cooper and Susanna's relationship, also stipulated that should Susanna become pregnant while still indentured, and the child was determined to be Cooper's, Cooper would be fined for the "damages" caused to Mr. Revell.⁴⁵

Since Cooper was a man, he likely did "man's work," that is, working in the field doing the labor-intensive job of tending tobacco. The couple might not have seen much of each other, their relationship reduced to longing glances through windows and stolen embraces in the shadows (although, given Susanna's indenture, that was likely little change). And during one of these stolen embraces, human nature overrode lawful contracts and religious devotion.

Cooper was released from his contract sometime before his two years ended in February of 1665 because by December 1665 (two months before February 1665 in the Julian calendar), Susanna was also released from Mr. Revell to serve the remainder of her term under Cooper.⁴⁶ This could have been generosity on Revell's part, or perhaps Cooper saved enough money to buy the last few months of Susanna's indenture. Susanna, who appeared to give birth a month later, must have been heavily pregnant at this time.⁴⁷

⁴¹ Carr & Walsh, "The Planter's Wife," 548.

⁴² Carr & Walsh, "The Planter's Wife," 545.

⁴³ [AOMOL vol. 86, pp 8-17](#)

⁴⁴ [AOMOL, vol. 54 p. 622](#)

⁴⁵ [AOMOL vol. 54 p. 622](#)

⁴⁶ [AOMOL vol. 54 p. 610](#)

⁴⁷ [AOMOL vol. 54 p. 615](#)

With little known of Mr. Revell's character, besides being a stickler for rules, it is hard to determine why Cooper and Susanna were released from him early, especially since Susanna's pregnancy would have been obvious and entitled Revell to a substantial payment from Cooper. Perhaps Cooper and Susanna were hard workers and Revell felt they had earned their early freedom. Maybe Revell had a romantic side and wanted the young lovers to be together legally before their child was born. Revell had put in a suit against Susanna, but withdrew it after releasing her to Cooper. Perhaps after he had put in the suit, Susanna and/or Cooper convinced him to withdraw it, by entreaties, bribes, or coercion.

On the tenth of December, Cooper filed a suit against John Griffith for unknown reasons.⁴⁸ After releasing Cooper and Susanna, Revell filed against Susanna on the same day, the 11th of December.⁴⁹ It's possible that Cooper had filed a case against Griffith for getting Susanna, now Cooper's servant, pregnant. However, there is no further record of that case. Revell likely filed against Susanna because she was pregnant and, as such, broke the law twice because she was a servant and an unmarried woman. However, Cooper was the one who signed the contract and who would be fined if it was his child. Perhaps even Revell knew the child was actually Griffith's, or at least not Cooper's.

One month later, on the 11th of January, court was stopped because Susanna had gone into labor. She must have been at the courthouse (or, the house of Thomas Poole, who was hosting court that day) when her pains started. When court resumed, Revell withdrew his action against Susanna.⁵⁰ It is possible that was his aim at the start of court, but maybe the birth of the child changed something.

That spring, on April 3rd, it appeared to the court that John Cooper "Damnified" Randall Revell. This grievous accusation came from the apparent fact that Cooper got Susanna pregnant while still a servant to Revell. If the accusation was true, then that would be a direct violation of the contract Cooper had agreed to with Revell. In fact, a few days later, the said contract was copied into the court record, telling us the start date of Cooper's indenture (6 February 1663) and explicitly stated that "in Case the said Susanna Brayfeeld should prove with Child by the said Jn^o Cooper in the time of their servis; Then the said Cooper shall be liable to all Damadges according to Lawe."⁵¹ As far as the record shows, Revell *did not* bring this to court. A later and different case involving bastard children shows that the court could and did act on behalf of the Lord Proprietary to charge the ne'er-do-well parents, as such acts were "Contrary to Act of Assembly".⁵² Therefore, the simple existence of the child and the known relationship between Cooper and Susanna was enough for the court to charge Cooper. Regardless of who brought the case to court, Cooper was ordered to pay one thousand pounds of tobacco to Revell.

For five months, there is no mention of Cooper or Susanna in the records. We might assume the fine was paid and life moved on. But in September, Cooper filed a petition against John Griffith on the basis that Susanna claimed Griffith was the father of her child.⁵³ If the child was born in January, this

⁴⁸ [AOMOL vol. 54 p. 615](#)

⁴⁹ [AOMOL vol. 54 p. 610](#)

⁵⁰ [AOMOL vol. 54 p. 615](#)

⁵¹ [AOMOL vol. 54 p. 622](#)

⁵² [AOMOL vo. 86, p. 67](#)

⁵³ [AOMOL vol. 54 p. 642-643](#)

would be ample time for them to grow into resemblance to their parents. Perhaps Cooper already knew of Griffith's possible paternity, hence the suit against Griffith in the preceding December. Now, however, with the child being nine months old and perhaps some paternal resemblance, he had more solid evidence than just Susanna's word.

Over the next several months, both Cooper and Griffith called witnesses for their case. On 29 January 1666, when their case was to be heard, Cooper failed to appear before the court and Griffith was granted a nonsuit.⁵⁴ Cooper re-entered his suit on March 4th and once again the court gathered to hear the case on 26 March 1667.⁵⁵

In what must have been the court case of the month, if not year, the court listened to the depositions put forth. Unfortunately, those depositions no longer exist. After deliberations, and for reasons lost to us, the court ruled that John Griffith was the father.⁵⁶ With his newfound paternity, Griffith was ordered to pay Cooper 1,300 pounds of tobacco, enough to cover Cooper's fine to Revell plus extra. Susanna was fined five hundred pounds of tobacco or work towards the new road system being built at the time. If she did neither, she would be publicly whipped. The following order is less clear. It stated:

“whereas John Cooper & Susanna Brayfeld refuseth to deliver the child to be kept & disposed of by him the sd Jn^o Griffith Itt is Further ordered that John Cooper doth forthwith give in securitie to the Countie for the Maintenance & bringing up of the said child borne of the afore said Susanna Brayfeld.”

It is obvious that Cooper must pay the county for the upbringing of the child, but where are they? The opening of the court record said that Cooper was looking for Griffith to take the child, but by the end, it seems he and Susanna were unwilling to give their child up. Yet, Cooper was asked to pay the county for the “maintenance” of the child. However, as mentioned, children born out of wedlock could be given to other families as servants. What happened during the time between weaning and being able to work is unclear. Regardless of what may have happened, there is no record of this child's name and therefore it's impossible to discern where they ended up.

On 28 May 1667, Cooper and Susanna married.⁵⁷ But their story was not over. During court held on 24 September 1667, both Cooper and Susanna were called to the next court for nonpayment of their fines.⁵⁸ On 26 November 1667, claiming to be “sick & weake,” Cooper was excused from court and ordered, along with his wife Susanna, to appear at the next one.⁵⁹

It is unclear what happened next. From 1668 to 1670, there is a gap in the Somerset County judicial records, where the previous information came from. There are several mentions of a John Cooper in Kent County in the following years, but any proof that it is the same John Cooper has yet to be found. Except for the cases mentioned above, Susanna seems to be absent from the records.

There are so many questions left unanswered and possibilities unexplored, as is the case most times when researching. Even just reviewing this piece for the umpteenth time causes another conclusion

⁵⁴ [AOMOL vol. 54 p. 656](#)

⁵⁵ [AOMOL vol. 54 p. 658](#); p. [659](#)

⁵⁶ [AOMOL vol. 54 p. 659](#)

⁵⁷ [AOMOL vol. 54 p. 671](#)

⁵⁸ [AOMOL vol. 54 p. 686](#)

⁵⁹ [AOMOL vol. 54 p. 691](#)

to assert itself: what if Randall Revell was the father of the child? If human history has taught us anything, it's that when a man has power over a woman, there is always a possibility of sexual "favors," Christian morality and wife notwithstanding. Perhaps Revell had wanted to persecute Susanna, and Cooper, but when confronted with the possibility that the child was his, he withdrew his action against Susanna and did not pursue his case against Cooper.

Alas, the lack of evidence leaves us only with conjecture and educated guesses at best. But why look into this episode, and why share it? It does not further the study of Colonial America, it opens no new insights into the history of Maryland. I share this research to show the constantness of humanity. That humans have always been, and will always be, human. Do we not still read books that tell of forbidden romances and the struggles that the couple must go through? How many times throughout history have we heard of the scandal of premarital sex and its consequences, even in the modern era? There is a reason why the *Maury* show, with its infamous paternity tests, is so popular.

Many people claim history is boring, and some aspects can be. However, it is just as boring and exciting as our everyday lives, with the same mundane chores and exhilarating experiences. Even when the wider world is in chaos, life goes on. So, no, this research does not further the field of history in any way, except perhaps making the people who once lived and worked in Somerset County more than names on a piece of paper but rather real people, who had hopes and dreams and difficulties, just like us.



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.



Editorial Staff:

Elaine Rice Bachmann, State Archivist
Emily Oland Squires, Assistant State Archivist
Megan Craynon, Director, Special Collections & Library Services
V. Joyce Phelps II, Appraisal Archivist