

THE CLAMSHELL

A Quarterly Newsletter of the Maryland State Archives

Box 6, Folder 4

Fourth Quarter of 2025

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Image Caption: A sample of silica gel packs.

Desiccant – A Definition

A substance used to remove moisture from the atmosphere or from materials.¹ In commercial instances silica gel is often the material used as a desiccant.

¹ <https://dictionary.archivists.org/entry/desiccant.html>

Letter from the State Archivist

On October 13, I had the pleasure of unveiling not one, but two, portraits of my predecessor, retired State Archivist Timothy D. Baker. It is the tradition for State Archivists to have a portrait made upon leaving office, and these are accessioned into the inventory of the Commission on Artistic Property.

Dr. Morris Radoff, who served from 1939 to 1975, was painted by J.B. Thoms. Radoff is depicted on the grounds of St. John's College standing in front of the original Hall of Records Building built in 1934-35. Dr. Edward C. Papenfuse, in anticipation of retirement after serving nearly 40 years, from 1975 to 2013, sat for a lenticular photographic print at the studio of Rob Munday in Twickenham, England. The portrait, illuminated with LED light, morphs from the sitter holding a copy of an 18th century map, to holding an iPad featuring the same map as a digital image. This technologically innovative portrait is a tribute to Ed's vision in guiding the Archives into the digital age.

For Tim, who retired in 2021, Medford Canby photographed him at our Rolling Run Road facility located in Woodlawn. It is thanks to Tim's leadership and determination that the Archives was able to acquire this second building, enabling us to consolidate three separate rented warehouses where records had been stored since 2000, when the Annapolis building was filled to capacity. Not only are the state's records secured for the next few decades, the Rolling Road building was also renovated to accommodate the state's art collection as well as Special Collections and artifacts. To honor this achievement, we have named it the Timothy D. Baker Building, surprising Tim with this news at unveiling. Thus, the need for two portraits—one in Annapolis and one at the *new* Baker Building.



Caption: Timothy D. Baker by Medford Canby, 2025

The portraits of Maryland's State Archivists not only document our leaders for posterity—but also the development of the state's historic records agency itself over the last century.

Elaine Rice Bachmann, State Archivist

Staff Updates

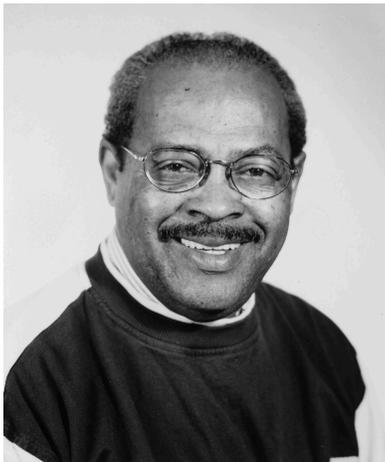
Awards

In fall 2025 Chris Haley, Director of Research, Education and Outreach, and the Legacy of Slavery in Maryland Program, received the Baltimore Heritage Board of Directors Award for his work consulting on the permanent B&O Railroad Museum's exhibit, [The Underground Railroad: Freedom Seekers on the B&O](#).

Publications

Website Updates

Chris Haley, Director of Research, Education and Outreach, and the Legacy of Slavery in Maryland Project



In spring 2025, the Legacy of Slavery Department debuted two interactive websites which are designed to promote and benefit from the contributions of scholars and volunteers who have been part of our research family over the years. Jerry Hynson (pictured left) was a Maryland State Archives volunteer and member of the Search Room Advisory Committee who specialized in African American and genealogical studies. Over the course of his long association with the Archives from the 1990s into the 2000s, Mr. Hynson served on various historical and genealogical organizations throughout our state. He also published several volumes full of information he mined on both free and enslaved Black Marylanders to aid other researchers in their work. In his honor, staff dedicated this site as an avenue on which skilled scholars, historians, and professors can share quality narratives of

their findings, drawn, at least in part, from research they conducted with Maryland State Archives resources. While the main focus of Jerry Hynson's work was primarily African American history and general genealogy, topics covered among the articles presented in the [Jerry Hynson African American Legacy and Journal](#) are unlimited.



Caption: Illustration by Rachel Frazier, Across Generations, 2025

The second website, [Down the Rabbit Hole](#), is primarily a web resource for volunteers to publish self-authored reports about the many subjects they have explored during their service with the Archives. For instance, first a volunteer finds and enters demographic facts into our searchable

database from primary sources. This data may include an individual's name, race, gender, financial or domestic situation, such as a high personal estate value for a formerly enslaved person or a multiracial household where both black and white children are apparently reared, for instance. Then, the volunteer's curiosity is piqued, and they decide to investigate further by performing research in additional Maryland State Archives sources. This site is designed to allow the many generous contributors who regularly share their time and talents with us to also publish their discoveries online. These stories have made history exciting and alive for them, and we are pleased to make their additional work accessible.

Please contact Chris Haley at chis.haley@maryland.gov if you would like to contribute work to either website.

Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission Releases Final Report on Racial Terror Lynchings

On December 9, 2025, the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission (MLTRC) submitted its final report to the Maryland General Assembly, marking the culmination of more than six years of scholarship, community engagement, and spiritual reckoning with Maryland's history of racial terror lynching between 1854 and 1933.

The MLTRC represents the first state-sponsored effort in the United States to investigate, document, and reckon with the history of racial terror lynching within its borders. The report chronicles the stories of 38 documented victims of racial terrorism and offers 84 comprehensive recommendations for repair and reconciliation. The full report is available on the MLTRC's [website](#).

"This work represents an opportunity to investigate and address 38 open murder cases – crimes against humanity for which no one was ever held accountable," said Dr. David O. Fakunle, MLTRC Chair. "There is no statute of limitations on murder, and the systems that enabled racial terror lynching did not disappear in 1933. They transformed into today's racial wealth gap, disproportionate incarceration rates, and persistent racial inequalities."

The Maryland General Assembly established the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2019 to research, document, and make recommendations to address Maryland's history of racial terror lynchings. Chris Haley, Maryland State Archives' Director of Research, Education and Outreach and the Founder of the Study of the Legacy of Slavery in Maryland, served as a Commissioner and additional staff provided support over six years.

Since its establishment, the MLTRC held fourteen public hearings across Maryland in counties where lynchings have been documented. At these hearings descendants, historians, community leaders, policymakers, experts, and advocates testified and examined thousands of pages of archival records and historical evidence. From this work, the Commissioners have put forward 84 recommendations in the final report across the following categories: an apology and acknowledgement of responsibility; material reparations; criminal justice reform; community healing; education; mental health; symbolic initiatives; and implementing the reforms.

The MLTRC final report represents a sacred commitment to truth-telling, accountability, and repair for crimes that have shaped Maryland's institutions and fostered racial disparities for generations. "This report is not an ending, but a foundation for ongoing work in homes, classrooms, courthouses, and communities across Maryland," said Dr. Charles Chavis, MLTRC Vice Chair. "May truth remain our guide, justice our practice, and reconciliation our legacy."

Retirements

In September 2025, Christine Alvey, librarian, retired after thirty years of state service. Ms. Alvey joined the Maryland State Archives in 1995, after working in libraries in the public and private sector. She worked initially on the Maryland Manual editorial staff, before later becoming the librarian for the Archives.

Christine loves to share her wealth of knowledge with others, and can always be counted on to share stories about her days working at the Little Campus, anecdotes about well-loved animals, or time spent on the water. We wish her well in her retirement, and hope that she enjoys more time to read widely and share her knowledge with others.

You can read about some of Christine's work as librarian, setting up the Rolling Run Library, in the [Winter 2021 issue](#) of *The Clamshell*.



Caption: Rolling Run Library, Winter 2021

Collection Highlights

Where Culture Meets Memory: From Records to Community Voices

By Maria Vivar-Guzman, University of Maryland, Field Study Intern

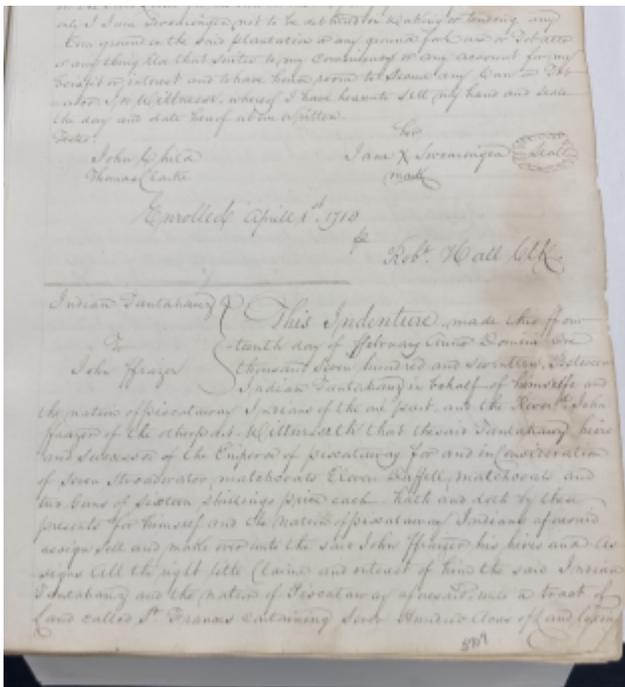
Editor's Note/Content Warning: The reader is advised that there is a mention of corporal punishment towards women.

Culture lives on in the stories we choose to preserve, and this semester at the Maryland State Archives has shown me just how powerful and fragile those stories can be. As a nontraditional student and immigrant from Mexico, these past few months at the Maryland State Archives have not only been an incredible experience, they have almost felt like a fever dream. My background is in public libraries, where I worked with community members by connecting them to resources and providing engaging programs. However, growing up in Maryland, particularly in Prince George's

County, I was always drawn to the history of the state and the American Revolution. I continue to be excited as neighborhoods evolve and the various communities transform the spaces around us.

This semester I had the opportunity to work with the Special Collections Department to describe Jesse Raudales' donated collection (MSA SC 6433) and the architectural blueprints of the Barrett School for Girls (later the Montrose School for Girls) under the Samantha Rogers Mathias Collection (MSA SC 6461). I also had a wonderful chance to join Maria Day, Senior Director of Special Collections and Conservation, on a donor visit to meet Mrs. Grout. She is donating her late husband Phil Grout's photojournalism collection to the Archives. It is an incredible collection that contains 20th-century Maryland photographs and negatives, as well as images from his travels in Africa and Asia. I also spent much of my time researching land and court records for the [Mayis](#) project and was even able to lend a helping hand during the Latino Voices Preserved event for Hispanic Heritage Month and American Archives Month.

My interest in working with the Maryland State Archives began when I first met Megan Craynon, Director of Special Collections and Library Services, and Maria Day during my first semester, while I was working at the Hyattsville Branch Library in Prince George's County. A colleague and I had been brainstorming ways to provide programming to highlight current Piscataway communities in the county. After meeting with Chair Tiara Thomas of the Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs at Piscataway Park, I based a class research project on the history and archival presence of the Piscataway-Conoy Tribe in Prince George's County. Megan and Maria D. kindly agreed to be interviewed so I could learn more about the Mayis project, and Dan Ramirez, the branch manager, invited Maria D. to present to library staff.



MSA C61237, MdHR 5709

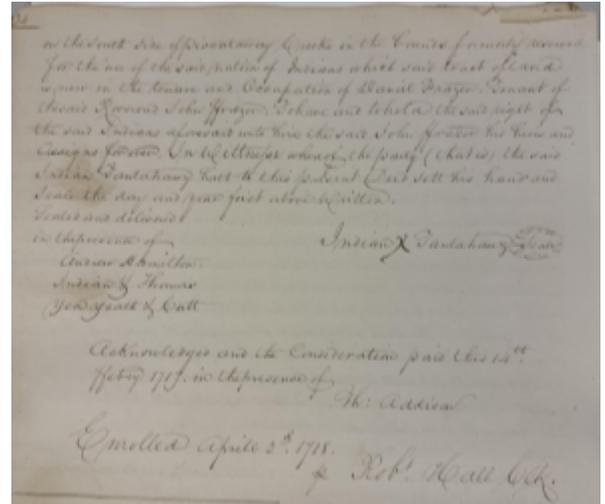
I later began research work with Dr. Diana Marsh and Mario Harley of the Piscataway-Conoy Tribe, assisting with museum, archival communication and repatriation research as he works on his book. This led to my continued interest in learning more about the Mayis database and providing in-person support by examining the Prince George's County Court Land Records (1710–1717). Both Maria D. and I were excited to find an entry dated February 14, 1717, for Tantahauz, heir and successor of the Piscataway Nation.² In this record, 700 acres were sold to John Frazier in exchange for seven stroadwater matchcoats, eleven duffel matchcoats, and two guns worth sixteen shillings each. For Tantahauz's signature, a large X was marked. Exchanges such as this have at times been characterized as an agreement; however, an unspoken dynamic is the coercion of the Native and Indigenous peoples, especially as it pertains to land usage and rights.³

² Prince George's County Court (Land Records), Book F, Old Series 6, 1717–1719, Pages 33-34, MSA C61237, MdHR 5709, location 01/20/06/07.

³ Scott Richard Lyons, *X-Marks: Native Signatures of Assent* (University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

Throughout the record book, I found various spellings of rivers and towns I grew up seeing: Potomack, Pettuxent, Piscattaway, and Marlboro; along with some unfamiliar names such as Annalostan Island (also recorded as Annalostian, Mason Island, Theodore Roosevelt Island), and even Barbadoes.⁴ Reading through the record offered a glimpse into colonial Maryland that I had never encountered in any public-school textbook, making it an enlightening experience.

I also had the opportunity to read through the Charles County Court and Land Records from 1658–1662 for Mayis research. I found myself drawn to the range of cases documented, and so many involved debt disputes or slander. What left the largest impression on me, however, was the treatment of women in the mid-to-late 1600s. One case, in particular, described an unmarried woman who was sentenced to 30 lashes for naming a man as the father of her child. His denial, the lack of proof, resulted in her receiving this horrific punishment by the sheriff.⁵ There was also another case where a couple was accused of slander and were sentenced to 5 lashes each. However, because the wife was pregnant, she was to receive her punishment after childbirth.⁶ I did some more research and found out that women were not protected from corporal punishment or public shame. The Colonial Williamsburg blog posted that “[the] whipping post were common punishments administered to women, while the stocks, pillories, and gallows were primarily men’s domain.”⁷ The punishments unfortunately reminded me of the witch trials, which, in this case, the Salem Witch Trials were only a few years later.



MSA C61237, MdHR 5709

Within Special Collections, I worked with both the Jesse Raudales Collection⁸ and the Samantha Rogers Mathias Collection.⁹ The Rogers Mathias Collection contains a variety of architectural blueprints, floor plans, and whiteprints of the Montrose School for Girls, which I was able to handle and describe. I enjoyed learning about its evolution from the Barrett School for Girls to the Montrose School for Girls, and reading about Jane Porter Barrett’s activism in her work with young African American girls and women. Though it is now known as Camp Fretterd Military Reservation, honoring Adjutant General Fretterd, the prints revealed the thoughtful planning of student spaces that contained cottages, an auditorium, and even a chapel.

On the other hand, working with the Jesse Raudales Collection was particularly meaningful because of its significance to Latin American culture, not only in Maryland but throughout the United States. Raudales is the first Latino Olympic Artist and has combined educational outreach and activism in

⁴ Boese, Kent, “Lost Washington: Analostan,” *Greater Greater Washington*. July 29, 2009, <https://ggwash.org/view/2447/lost-washington-analostan>.

⁵ Charles County Court (Land Records), Book A, 1658–1662, page 32, MSA C670-1, MdHR 8114-2, location 01/07/06/001.

⁶ Charles County Court (Land Records), Book A, 1658–1662, page 26 MSA C670-1, MdHR 8114-2, location 01/07/06/001.

⁷ “‘Engine of Correction’: Women, ducking stools, and whipping posts in early Virginia,” *Colonial Williamsburg*, March 30, 2022, <https://www.colonialwilliamsburg.org/discover/18th-century-people/stories-of-women/engine-of-correction/>.

⁸ Maryland State Archives, Jesse Raudales Collection, MSA SC 6433.

⁹ Maryland State Archives, Jesse Raudales Collection, MSA SC 6461.

extraordinary ways, much like Barrett. This collection also holds a special place for me because it is the first official collection I have been able to describe and make accessible to the public, and it is partially connected to my former workplace, the Hyattsville Branch Library.

Raudales' art pays homage to important Maryland figures such as Harriet Tubman and Governor Wes Moore. The collection includes the triptych he created for the 2006 Winter Olympics, but I was especially moved by the canvas print honoring the lives lost in the collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge on March 26, 2024: Dorlian Ronial Castillo Cabrera, Carlos Hernandez, Alejandro Hernandez Fuentes, Miguel Angel Luna Gonzalez, Jose Mynor Lopez, and Maynor Yassir Suazo Sandoval.



MSA SC 6433-2-4

The past year has been especially uncertain for the Latin American community, and I was honored to help with the Latino Voices Preserved event on October 6, 2025. I was thrilled to learn about the Latino History Project, and I'm grateful to Maria D. and Andrew Forschler for the chance to review the interviews used in the highlight video presented that evening. Viewing these oral histories, alongside those gathered through Mayis, helped me understand the importance of framing questions in ways that respectfully allow historically overlooked communities to be visible. The partnerships and trust that shape these interviews are instrumental in helping participants feel comfortable sharing their stories.

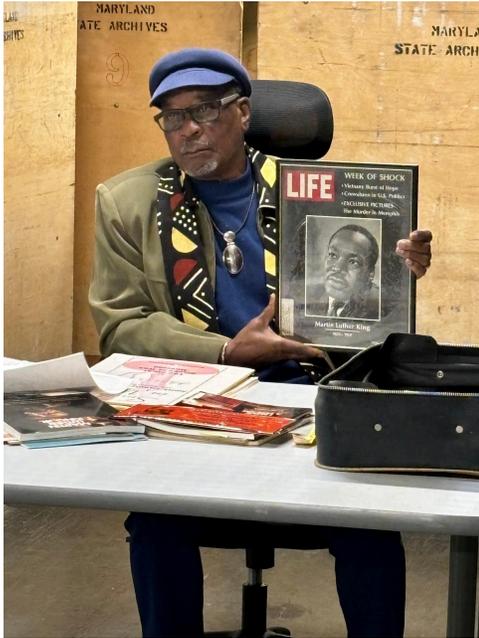


Many faces in the interviews and events were familiar to me from my work with the library, and seeing everyone share how Maryland has become a home for them, and for so many immigrant and refugee communities, was inspiring. I was also delighted to see the exhibits and demonstrations that the staff provided to attendees. Events like this remind me of how important outreach and networking are as we work together to make collections and histories accessible to the public.

I leave this experience with tremendous pride in having grown up in Maryland, and with great hope for how the State Archives is creating space for the diverse voices of this state. I want to thank Megan and Maria D. for the opportunity to complete my field study at the Maryland State Archives. I also want to thank Camille DiMarco, Edward Heimiller, Jen Abbott, Rachel Frazier, Rhys Burns, Morgan Miller, Trey Rowe, Assistant State Archivists Emily Oland Squires and Corey Lewis, State Archivist Elaine Rice Bachmann, and everyone I've met in Annapolis and at the Rolling Run facility for their support and patience as they answered my questions and helped me feel welcome. This has been a wonderful experience!

Continuing the Legacy: Highlights from the Past Year of the MSA–Blacks of the Chesapeake Foundation Partnership

By Rhys Burns, Reference Archivist & Andrew Forschler, Appraisal Archivist



In 1984, what is now the Blacks of the Chesapeake Foundation (BoCF) began as a labor of love for the founder Vincent O. Leggett (pictured left). He sought to capture, document, and chronicle African American life along the reaches of the Chesapeake Bay, before time and evolving generations allowed it to float away. In 1994, the Foundation began to document African Americans who worked in the maritime and seafood processing industries of the Chesapeake Bay region. In 2000, the Library of Congress designated the Blacks of the Chesapeake as a Local Legacy Project for bringing to light the significant contributions of African Americans in the maritime and seafood related industries.

Starting in 2019, the Maryland State Archives and BoCF partnered to preserve the collection that documented the 35 years worth of this work, leading to the creation of the Blacks of the Chesapeake Special Collection [MSA SC 6250], which consists of documents, photographs, audio visual material, and objects that were stored inside private homes and storage facilities for many years. Work is ongoing to thoroughly inventory and organize the collection, making it more accessible to researchers and the general public. You can view digitized materials from the collection on the website, [Digital Maryland Online Blacks of the Chesapeake Bay Collection](#), which is a collaborative, statewide digital preservation program of the Enoch Pratt Free Library. At the time of writing, the collection includes more than 40,000 images portraying Black water workers and their boats, harvests, lifestyle, families, and efforts in keeping Maryland's seafood and maritime industries thriving. The collection is a vast quantity of material including records, broadsides, research papers, books, magazines, journals, and articles. Audiovisual materials include home videos, cassette tapes, and VHS recordings. The collection also is rich with visual art: prints, commissioned artworks, entertainment memorabilia, and personal artifacts.

Rhys was an intern with the Blacks of the Chesapeake Collection during the summer of 2023 where he processed and described materials. A significant portion of the work included the digitization, post-production work (color balance, cropping, etc.), and metadata creation for scanned materials, mainly color photographs. Once those steps were completed, all entries were uploaded to Digital Maryland Online. Rhys and Vince developed a deep bond as they met weekly over the summer where Vince provided context on the photographs before their upload. But Vince would provide more than basic contextual information like the names, dates, and places depicted; each photograph told a story that Vince would share, weaving the photograph into the larger fabric of the records representing the African American watermen. Rhys has remained involved with the collection by supporting research and outreach initiatives by the Foundation. He has mainly provided support in researching the Elktonia Beach cottages and the Carr Family. All of this work contributes to the

planning for a historical, cultural, and environmental center on the original site of Carr's and Sparrow's Beaches that highlights African American history along the Chesapeake Bay.

Andrew (pictured top right with Vincent Leggett) was an intern with the Collection during the spring of 2024. Andrew also processed, described, and digitized materials. One moment with Vince that made a significant impact on Andrew was when they were working together to add details and contextual information to descriptions of a set of photos of Black watermen. One [photo](#) (MSA SC 6250-53-14-1) featured two men on a boat. Vince could remember that one of the men was Captain Sunny McQueen, but all he could remember about the other man was that he was Captain McQueen's First Mate. Vince called up Captain McQueen on the spot and asked him what the name of his First Mate is. Captain McQueen told Vince that his First Mate's name was Kevin Thompson. Vince then told Captain McQueen that he was putting a photo of Captain McQueen and Thompson in the Archives and that they were going to be remembered. Andrew does not remember exactly what Vince or Captain McQueen said at that point, but he does recall it being a beautiful moment in which the importance of Vince's work became clear. Vince was going to ensure that the names of these watermen were not forgotten. Vince's legacy of bringing to light and ensuring the preservation of the history and lives of Black watermen inspired Andrew to continue working with other community groups to ensure often ignored or undocumented history and people are archived and remembered in the future.



During the spring of 2024, Rhys (pictured bottom right with Vincent Leggett) and Andrew visited the Moore Cottage at Elktonia Beach with Vince. The Moore Cottage was the last remaining summer cottage at Elktonia Beach and was owned by Dr. Parlett Moore, a former president of Coppin State University. The Moore Cottage had just been acquired by BoCF and the City of Annapolis. The Cottage had been vacant for a number of years, so certain aspects were original to the heyday of Elktonia Beach, Carr's Beach, and Sparrow's Beach. It was one of the last tangible connections to that period left in the area and made a significant impression on anyone who visited it as it felt like stepping back in time. Unfortunately, the Cottage has since been torn down, but the memory of it still holds strong amongst those who were fortunate enough to visit it.

Over the last year, the partnership between the Maryland State Archives and BoCF has strengthened through the shared grief of Vince's sudden and unexpected passing last November. Despite this grief, both parties have continued to collaborate with the shared goal of continuing Vince's legacy. The bulk

of this partnership has been through the continuation of undergraduate and graduate level student interns working on processing and research with the goal of making the collection accessible to the public. The research completed by interns will be used to inform interpretative work as included within the master plan for the newly established Elktonia Heritage Park. BoCF is working with the City of Annapolis to prepare a master plan for the 6.5 acre site which encompasses the last undeveloped parcel of the original 150 acres owned by Frederick and Mary Wells Carr along Bembe Beach Road in Annapolis. The Carr Farm and Beach resorts operated by Fred's daughters, Elizabeth Carr Smith and Florence Carr Sparrow, served the African American community of the region as a cherished space of recreation and leisure during the Jim Crow era. Frederick offered the beautiful Chesapeake Bay beach vistas on his property as a setting for community and church outings and his daughters continued the hospitality with their resorts from the 1930s through the mid 1970s. During the Jim Crow era, the resorts of Carr's and Sparrow's Beaches were legendary *Green Book* destinations and a stop on the Chitlin Circuit for the era's nationally acclaimed entertainers. These recreation spaces offered members of the community a respite from the stresses of a segregated society and allowed the community to strengthen their bonds with one another and build the confidence that was needed to mount the Civil Rights Movement that brought the Jim Crow era to an end.

The research will also be used to supplement the upcoming *Elevating Black Voices and History at the New Elktonia Heritage Park* exhibition which will be opening at the Annapolis Maritime Museum in early 2026. The exhibition defines interpretation features at the new park that will connect visitors to the deep, complex, and often emotional stories associated with this unique place. Themes of the exhibition include the African Diaspora beginning with the story of Abu Bakr II's 1312 voyage from West Africa to the West Indies and Brazil, slavery and freedom seekers along the Chesapeake Bay, and joy as a form of resistance as seen in The Black Coast of Anne Arundel County (which includes Carr's and Sparrow's Beaches, as well as Highland Beach, Bay Highlands, Arundel-on-the-Bay, Oyster Harbor, and Venice Beach).

Over the summer, Latifat Adebakin, a Ph.D. candidate from Morgan State University, completed extensive research into Frederick Carr and his children. The purpose of her research was to explore the cultural, social, and historical significance of Carr's and Sparrow's Beaches as a central site of Black leisure and community in the mid-20th century. She aimed to connect the legacy of these sites to contemporary discussions of memory and belonging. Through her research, Latifat was able to bridge informational gaps between government records and oral histories. Record types she found to bridge these gaps included vital records, census records, land records, and newspapers. The key themes of her research were that Black leisure was seen as a form of resistance and cultural expression during Jim Crow, that land ownership gave Blacks autonomy during segregation, and frequently these primarily Black spaces were erased following the Civil Rights Movement.

Two other interns have contributed to the continuing collaboration between the Archives and BoCF. Nataki Hewling, a Morgan State University student, worked on digitizing items from the collection this past spring. Over the fall, Robert Gasperino, current member of the Imaging Department and soon-to-graduate MLIS Student at University of Maryland, has continued to process and catalog new boxes accessioned into the collection for his field study.

There are three events from the last year that best highlight the continuation of Vince's legacy through the partnership between the Archives and BoCF, the first was in February where the Archives

welcomed the Anne Arundel County Chapter of The National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Inc. for a tour and a series of talks. Approximately 15 young women that are part of the “Today’s Girl, Tomorrow’s Leaders Mentoring Program” were given a tour of the Archives facilities, had the opportunity to view original archival records, and listened to talks about the opportunities for careers in archives and environmental justice.

The second event was in May where BoCF hosted “A Day on the Bay!” for students from four Anne Arundel County high schools. The day included a boat ride along The Black Coast of the Chesapeake Bay; stops were made at Carr’s & Sparrow’s Beaches, Highland Beach, Venice Beach, Oyster Harbor, and Arundel on the Bay. At each location, students learned about the site’s significance as a center of African American leisure and recreation during the Jim Crow era. These sites collectively illustrate the deep and enduring connection between African Americans and the Chesapeake Bay. Students heard lectures focused on the recent efforts to restore the health of the Bay and engaged in



hands-on activities like eDNA water and soil sampling, shoreline photography and data collection, which was run by the Blacks in Marine Science (BIMS) staff. Students also had the opportunity to build oyster cages which were supported by the staff of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF). Rhys, as the Archives representative, spoke with students about career options in archives and handed out material related to researching African American history.

Caption: (from left to right) Deedee Strum, Rhys Burns, and Aldena Leggett at “A Day on the Bay!” event

The third event was in November where the Archives welcomed members of the Carr Family for a “Lead with Listening” conversation. The Search Room was open for about 12 family members, all descendants of Frederick Carr, to engage in a roundtable conversation about their family and the stories they remember. One of the family members shared his binder of research, containing mostly copies of black and white photographs and newspaper clippings. He also shared memory map drawings he made of both Carr’s and Sparrow’s Beaches that the family was able to discuss at length; such as what rides and booths were where and where the cutoff between the two properties were. The Archives also had original records on display showing the Beaches during their heyday and samples of photographs from the Blacks of the Chesapeake Collection.

Vince’s legacy is large and impossible for one person to carry, but all of the above named students and individuals that worked with and for Vince are carrying but one torch of his legacy. Vince truly believed in pouring into the younger generations and teaching them about cultural, educational, environmental, and historical events happening in their community. He wanted the next generation to be prepared and experienced in using their voice to stand for what they believe in.

Conservation Corner

Stressed Out Portraiture: Anna Maria Tilghman Chew Miniature Treatment

By Edward Heimiller, Conservation Archivist

Understanding materials and the construction of objects is a critical component in their long term care. Even under best practice storage conditions, some objects still inherently deteriorate. Conservation staff's main goal is to slow the rate of deterioration and physically intervene when necessary in order to repair damage and take measures to reduce risk of and prevent further damage. While stored in an environmentally stable area, enough environmental change over time caused stress in the frame housing for the portrait of Anna Maria Tilghman Chew (c. 1740-1811) to cause the frame to come apart [MSA SC 4680-12-0011].

A native of Maryland, Anna Chew, born Anna Maria Tilghman, was the eldest daughter of Col. Edward Tilghman of "Wye," Talbot County, High Sheriff of Queen Anne County, and Speaker of the Lower House of the Maryland Assembly (1770-1771) and his wife Anna Maria Turbutt. She married Bennett Chew, the son of Samuel Chew and his wife Henrietta Maria Lloyd on January 20, 1763. She ultimately joined the household of her widowed brother-in-law William Paca, one of Maryland's signers of the Declaration of Independence, who she was related through her husband's sister, Mary Chew. During Paca's tenure as Governor of Maryland (1782-1785) Anna served as his official hostess and established a reputation in Annapolis for her famous "routs" or parties she hosted on Gov. Paca's behalf.¹⁰

The tradition of miniature portrait paintings began in the 16th century and continued until it was phased out following the invention and introduction of photography in 1839. In comparison to large scale portrait painting, portrait miniatures served a different purpose, as they could be held by viewers and sometimes even worn. As a result of their small scale they are often more intimate and were intended to be personal mementos of individuals. Initially, portrait miniatures were painted in watercolor on vellum. Vellum is a fine, thin animal skin and these small paintings are often found supported on a piece of card. Later, a sliver of ivory became the preferred



Caption: Portrait Miniature of George Richard by Richard Morrell Staigg. Sarah Redwood Horsey Collection, MSA SC 5804-1-4.

¹⁰From Private Fortunes to Public Gifts: Treasures of the Peabody Art Collection of the Maryland State Archives", <https://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc3500/sc3520/013000/013074/html/13074bio.html>

support as the surface of ivory has a luminosity that can be manipulated by the artist to enhance the illusion of flesh.

Miniatures are often housed in jewel-like lockets that create tight tiny micro climates. This makes them particularly susceptible to fluctuations in humidity. A major conservation concern for miniatures painted on an ivory support in tight fitting lockets is the risk of the ivory absorbing humidity or desiccating, resulting in moving, warping, or cracking and splitting. This can be seen in the portrait of George Richard Carroll by Richard Morrell Staigg which has a clearly visible vertical crack ([MSA SC 5804-1-4](#)). High humidity can also cause the mobilization of magnesium phosphate crystals to emerge from the ivory that can then recrystallise on the surface of the paint layer.

When consulted about the miniature of Anna Maria Tilghman, conservation staff inspected and examined the portrait, measuring only 3" X 2.35" inches, and the parts of the frame housing. Painted by noted Anglo-American artist Robert Field in 1802 in watercolor on ivory, the delicate paintwork of the miniature was immaculate, and had no signs of damage. Although the frame was in several pieces, all pieces were accounted for and intact, including the fragile back panel made from a flat slightly convex ring of cobalt blue glass with a foiled backing that mimics the appearance of guilloche (engine turned) enamel. Mounted in the center of the glass ring is a locket containing a braided lock of the sitter's hair, a feature that is not uncommon to find on miniature portraits of this period. The front cover of the framing, consisting of a bezel made from a convex glass panel contained in a copper frame, was found to have some corrosion on the inside rim in addition to traces of the original gilding, completely worn away on the exterior of the frame. In a previous conservation treatment completed in 2000 the miniature was lightly cleaned and the blue glass ring replaced due to extensive damage and losses to the original glass, but the original was retained and stored separately. There were also several mysterious tiny strips of metal, which proved to be key. Used as filler between the glass and the frame these pieces ensured the tension that held the elements of the frame housing together. A minor shift in the placement of these strips of gilt metal, probably from minor temperature fluctuations, caused the tension fitting of the framing elements to fail. Once the construction and likely cause of the incident was understood, conservation staff created a treatment proposal that was approved by the staff of the Maryland Commission on Artistic Property.



Caption: Portrait Miniature of Anna Maria Tilghman Chew (Mrs. Bennett Lloyd Chew) by Robert Field. Peabody Collection of the Maryland Commission on Artistic Property, MSA SC 4680-12-0011.

The portrait miniature and the framing housing were photographed to document the current condition. This also proved an opportune time to capture new images of the portrait as it was able to be photographed without the convex glass lens cover which slightly distorts the portrait and typically reflects glare from lights. Minor corrosion on the inside of the framing elements was cleaned and removed, enabling the pieces to fit correctly into place snugly, but without added pressure. With some patience the elements were then carefully reassembled. Similar to a jigsaw puzzle, the pieces were interlocked with care not to overly stress the glass elements. Once re-assembled the miniature was photographed again to document the treatment. A custom cushion fabricated from foam covered in

archival acid free tissue was made to nestle the miniature while in storage. Though simple, this treatment required an understanding of the materials and their inherent vices to provide the best treatment and assist in its ongoing preservation.



Caption: Portrait Miniature of Anna Maria Tilghman Chew (Mrs. Bennett Lloyd Chew) by Robert Field. Peabody Collection of the Maryland Commission on Artistic Property, MSA SC 4680-12-0011.

For those interested in seeing and learning more about miniatures in the State Art Collection, check out the website:

https://msa.maryland.gov/msa/speccol/sc1500/sc1545/apc_web/apcpaintings_minatures.html. Other Maryland institutions with collections of portrait miniatures include: The Baltimore Museum of Art, The Maryland Center for History and Culture, Evergreen Museum & Library, Mount Clare Museum House, and The Walters Art Museum.

For more about women who served as Maryland First Ladies and Official Hostesses, check out: From Private Mansion to Public Residence: Homes of the First Ladies and Hostesses of Maryland, 1753-present" <https://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc4800/sc4806/bios/html/0000.html>

Research Reflections

Digging Deeper: An Episode of Human History around Old Stone House

By William F. Kelly, Ph.D., Research Archivist



Photo credit: P. Kurtze, 1/23/2008, Maryland Historical Trust

The Old Stone House sits just off of Baltimore-Annapolis Boulevard in Severna Park, Maryland. As the weather chills, you can catch a glimpse of its brick chimney through the holly trees jutting out of the home's ironstone exterior. Smoke gently puffs up into the air; snowflakes of ash drift down upon your shoulder. And you marvel at the fact that this house – and the land on which it rests – is a direct connection between your presence and over 340 years of difficult Maryland history.¹¹

Most modern motorists miss this opportunity. They zoom past the property in the hurried shuttle between Annapolis and Baltimore. But in October 2025, a local article about the Old Stone House prompted me to slow down and pay attention to the property's human past, present, and future.¹²

This research did not begin in Severna Park. It began ten feet away from my desk – in the stacks at the Maryland State Archives.

Between 1685 and 1687, Charles Calvert, Lord Baltimore granted 1,879 acres of land to two individuals: William Gibbs and Richard Beard. However, the land Lord Baltimore granted to Beard and Gibbs – the land upon which the Old Stone House would sit sixty years later – was not his to give. In the 17th century, the Piscataway constituted the most recent in a long lineage of Indigenous people

¹¹ "Robinson House," AA-130, Old Stone House, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, NR-1488.

¹² Kevin Murnane, "Old Stone House Plantation Dates Back To 1680s: Plantation On Baltimore-Annapolis Boulevard Started With 700 Acres," *Severna Park Voice*, 02 October 2025, <https://www.severnaparkvoice.com/stories/old-stone-house-plantation-dates-back-to-1680s,68373>.

who had stewarded the land for millenia. European colonization wreaked havoc on Indigenous health, identity, and livelihood. And Lord Baltimore, Beard, and Gibbs participated in that disruption.¹³

Gibbs owned the land granted to him by Baltimore for only two months. In August 1685, he sold it to Richard Beard who then conveyed 706 of his amassed acreage to Thomas Robinson, Sr., seventeen years later in October 1702. By the time Robinson, Sr., bequeathed the land to his son, Oneal¹⁴, in 1710, the property stretched 332 acres between the Magothy and Severn Rivers.¹⁵

Oneal Robosson's ownership of the land is marked by two facts. The most materially enduring is his construction of the Old Stone House sometime around 1740. The most haunting is Robosson's enslaving.

Oneal Robosson's probate records provide some of the earliest evidence revealing the land upon which the Old Stone House sits is also a former site of enslavement.¹⁶ Upon his death in 1768, Robosson enslaved eleven humans: two men named Pierce and James; two boys named James and Silvanus; five women named Maureen, Junah, Moll, Phebe, and Hager; one girl named Chloe; and Rose, the "child" of Hager. The inventory does not list their last names nor does it include their ages. Instead, it dehumanizes their identities to include only their first name, a sporadic and vague identification of their sex, and the chattel value imposed upon them by Robosson.¹⁷

I learned about the Old Stone House while preparing for the approaching 250th commemoration of the Declaration of Independence. As a result, I naturally wondered about the history of the Old Stone House during the American Revolution. And while no evidence suggests that the structure itself played a role in the fight for American independence, its proprietor during the conflict did serve in the war.¹⁸

Oneal Robosson bequeathed "his loving son," Elijah, every tract of land he owned in Maryland upon his death in 1768. The Old Stone House came with it. But Elijah Robosson did not inherit any of the humans his father enslaved. Instead, Oneal's will dictated the separation and distribution of his enslaved holdings amongst his other children and grandchildren.

¹³ "Robinson House," AA-130, NRHP; "Piscataway," *Native Land Digital*, accessed 02 December 2025, <https://native-land.ca/listings/territories/piscataway>; "Piscataway," *Mayis*, Maryland State Archives, accessed 2025, <https://mayis.msa.maryland.gov/Pages/documents.html>; "Piscataway-Conoy: Rejuvenating ancestral ties to southern parks," Maryland Department of Natural Resources, 01 October 2018, <https://news.maryland.gov/dnr/2018/10/01/piscataway-conoy/>.

¹⁴ The first and last names of Oneal Robosson are spelled in a variety of ways throughout his life. However, he chooses to spell his last name "Robosson" in his last will and testament signaling the official shift in spelling from Robinson to Robosson. "Robinson House," AA-130, NRHP.

¹⁵ ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY COURT (Land Records) 1699-1702, 29 October 1702 [MSA CE 76-6]: pp.333-335; ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY (Land Records) 1709-1712, 10 January 1710 [MSA C97-9]: 320; "Robinson House," AA-130, NRHP.

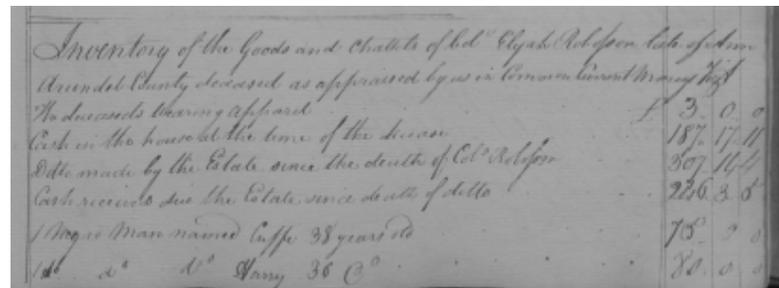
¹⁶ PREROGATIVE COURT (Wills) 1767-1768, Liber WD 1 folios 535-536, 657-659 [S538-52]; PREROGATIVE COURT (Inventories) 1768-1769 [SM11-100]: 318-321; PREROGATIVE COURT (Testamentary Papers) 1769 [S541-86]: Box 77, folder 29; PREROGATIVE COURT (Accounts) 1770-1771 [S531-65]: 86-87.

¹⁷ For more on American chattel slavery and colonialism, see *The Chattel Principle: Internal Slave Trades in the Americas*, ed. Walter Johnson (Yale University Press, 2005); Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery, 1619-1877* (Hill and Wang, 1993); Stephanie E. Smallwood, "Reflections on Settler Colonialism, the Hemispheric Americas, and Chattel Slavery," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 76, no. 3 (July 2019): 407-419;

¹⁸ MARYLAND STATE PAPERS (Series A) "Order to pay Col. Elijah Robosson, 29 May 1781 [S1004-42-134]; MARYLAND STATE PAPERS (Red Books) "Oath of Fidelity, Anne Arundel County, before Elijah Robosson [S989-33-30].

On the surface, it might seem that Oneal Robosson cut his son out of perhaps the most financially lucrative part of his will. Oneal not only bequeathed enslaved laborers to his children and grandchildren; he also bequeathed the reproductive labor of the enslaved women guaranteeing the Robosson family control over a pool of enslaved labor for generations.

In reality, Elijah Robosson (1731-1796) already enslaved a number of people himself when his father died. On February 11, 1757, an enslaved man named Tom escaped from Robosson's bondage on the "North Side of [the] Severn." He was not immediately captured. One month later, Robosson placed a runaway slave advertisement in the *Maryland Gazette* in hopes that broadcasting Tom's escape might lead to his re-enslavement. Robosson described Tom as approximately 24 years old, around 5'5" in height, "slender," and "stutters a little." After detailing the clothes that Tom took with him, Robosson speculated that the freedom seeker might head down the Broadneck Peninsula towards the Chesapeake Bay to find refuge among "some of the Negro Quarters between the Head of Severn and Annapolis." It is unclear if Tom ultimately seized his freedom. A sheriff did not publish a committal notice declaring that Tom had been recaptured and lodged in a Maryland jail. And Robosson's



Caption: ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY Register of Wills (Inventories) 1795-1799, Liber JG 4, folios 97-98 [C88-7].

inventory at the end of his life does not list a "Tom." However, forty years separated the two documents. Tom may have been re-enslaved and sold; or he may have navigated his way towards freedom.¹⁹

Fugitive slave advertisements are an excellent primary source for researchers interested in the timing and geography of freedom seeking. However, archival records about enslavement go beyond fugitive slave advertisements. As I searched for more evidence about Elijah Robosson's enslaving, I adhered to the reliable researcher's adage, *if you want to know more about a person, start at the end*. Probate records – records produced at the end of a person's life, such as wills, inventories, accounts, and a catch-all category called "testamentary papers" – can be thought of as a sort of broad-lensed photograph capturing a person's life at the moment of their passing. Elijah Robosson's inventory, for example, was a short walk from my desk into the stacks. Zeroing in on the record's location, I pulled down a heavy ledger, brought it out to the search room, flipped to the proper page, and gazed at

¹⁹ "RAN away from the Subscriber..." 24 March 1757, *Maryland Gazette* (Annapolis): 3.

the record that gave this research a whole new scale.²⁰

Elijah Robosson enslaved 31 men, women, and children upon his death in 1796: 19 men and boys, 12 women and girls. Their ages ranged from 65 years old to 3 months. Taken together, the chattel value placed by Robosson upon those he enslaved constituted 44% of the total value of his Anne Arundel estate at his death. He began acquiring enslaved property in his 20s. But these actions are not evident in his probate records. To understand when and how Robosson bought and sold enslaved people in colonial Maryland, one must turn to the land records with a skeptical eye.²¹

The index of colonial Maryland land records only conveys part of the story. They help a researcher find the grantor or grantee in the record, the record's location, and the general nature of that record (deed, mortgage, bill of sale, etc.). But these broad terms often disguise the terms and content of the record. In colonial Maryland, enslaved people were chattel property – looked upon by governing whites as financially and materially equal to cattle, sheep, and even acres of land. As such, the record for a mortgage on a tract of land sometimes follows or precedes a mortgage on an enslaved person in Maryland land records. So after recording every appearance of Elijah Robosson in the index for colonial Maryland land records during the 1750s, I found common terms like “mortgage” and “deed.” But for what?

Diving into the record, it quickly became apparent that a handful of Robosson's mortgages and deeds involved enslaved people. In March 1758, for example, Nathan Hughes settled an £85 debt with Elijah Robosson. After achieving financial parity, Hughes then sold Robosson two parcels of land totaling 214 acres. On top of the acreage, Hughes also sold Robosson four young enslaved people: three “boys” named Choqely, Henry, and Poros, and one “girl” named Patience. But the transaction went beyond Choqley, Henry, Poros, and Patience. Illustrating the dehumanizing nature of chattel slavery in the United States in a single clause, Robosson acquired “the Increase of the said Negro Girl Patience and the said Black Cattle and Sheep together.” Robosson not only purchased their bodies, but also the reproductive capacity of Patience to secure future enslaved generations for the Robosson family.²²

Two months after Robosson enslaved Choqely, Henry, Poros, and Patience – along with Patience's reproductive labor – Robosson engaged in a more straightforward slave sale with a certain William Bishop. For a total of £30, Robosson purchased nine enslaved people from Bishop: Tom (“man, about 28 years old”); Isaac (“man”); Jack (“man”); Judith (“woman”); Grace (“woman”); Priss (“woman”); Amy (“girl”); Sibb (“girl”); and George (“boy”). Similar to his purchase of Patience, Robosson guaranteed his enslavement of future generations by the “increase of the said Negro women and girls” into his agreement with Bishop.²³

Between March 8 and May 12, 1758, Elijah Robosson purchased and enslaved thirteen people, all of whom were likely under the age of 30 – and an unknowable number of whom were unborn. Robosson later operated a tavern out of the Old Stone House, rose to the rank of colonel in the Maryland militia

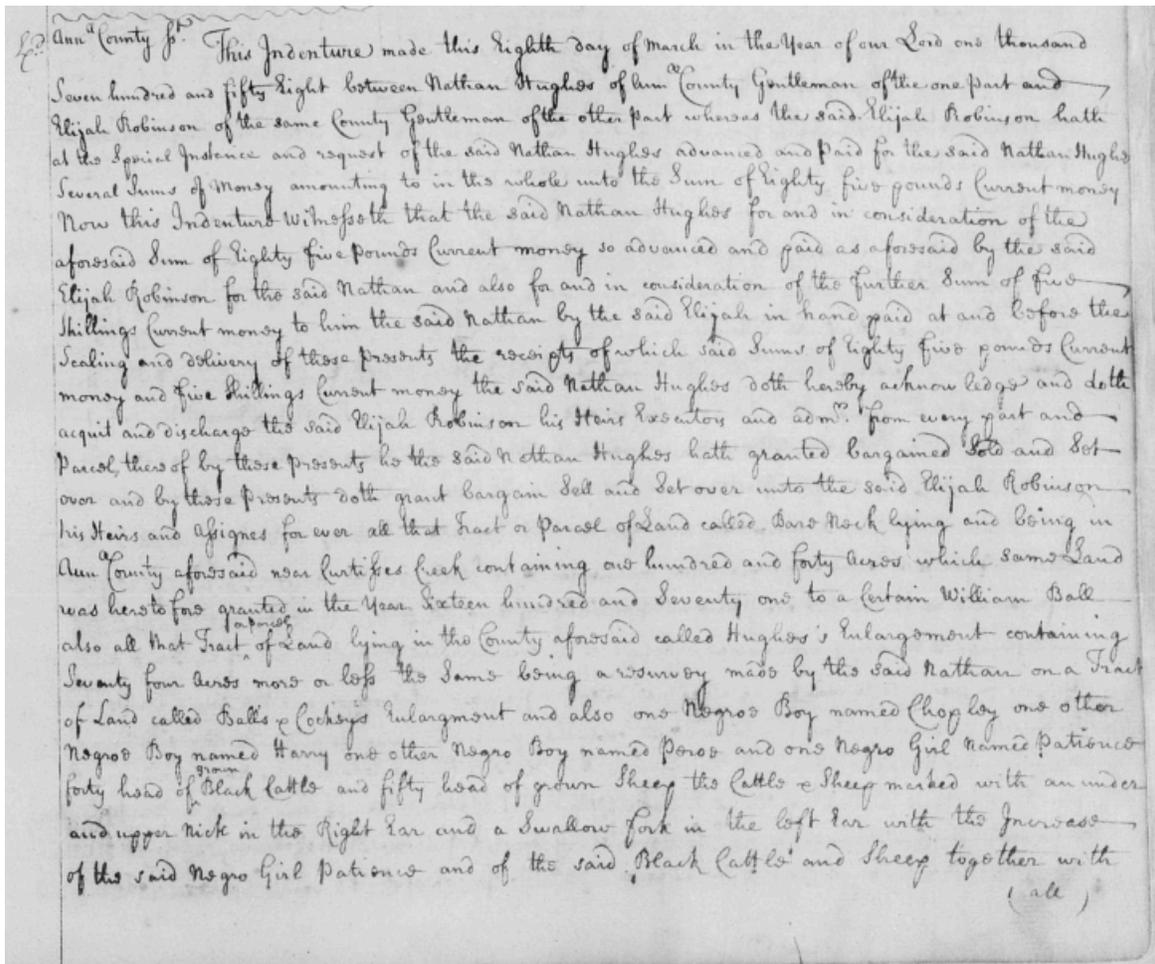
²⁰ ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY Register of Wills (Inventories) 1795-1799, Liber JG 4, folios 97-98 [C88-7].

²¹ ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY Register of Wills (Inventories) 1795-1799, Liber JG 4, folios 97-98 [C88-7].

²² ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY COURT (Land Records), Elijah Robosson and Nathan Hughes, 08 March 1758, Liber BB 2 folios 97-98 [MSA CE 76-22].

²³ ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY COURT (Land Records), Elijah Robosson and William Bishop, 12 May 1758, Liber BB 2, folios 134-135 [MSA CE 76-22].

during the American Revolution, became a Justice of the Peace who recorded Oaths of Fidelity, purchased land across the state of Maryland, and bought and sold enslaved people to generate more wealth.²⁴



Anne Arundel County Court. This Indenture made this eighth day of March in the Year of our Lord one thousand Seven hundred and fifty eight between Nathan Hughes of Anne County Gentleman of the one part and Elijah Robosson of the same County Gentleman of the other part whereas the said Elijah Robosson hath at the Special Instance and request of the said Nathan Hughes advanced and paid for the said Nathan Hughes Several Sums of Money amounting to in the whole unto the Sum of eighty five pounds Current money Now this Indenture Witnesseth that the said Nathan Hughes for and in consideration of the aforesaid Sum of eighty five Pounds Current money so advanced and paid as aforesaid by the said Elijah Robosson for the said Nathan and also for and in consideration of the further Sum of five Shillings Current money to him the said Nathan by the said Elijah in hand paid at and before the Sealing and delivery of these presents the receipts of which said Sums of eighty five pounds Current money and five Shillings Current money the said Nathan Hughes doth hereby acknowledge and doth acquit and discharge the said Elijah Robosson his Heirs Executors and adm^r. from every part and Parcel thereof by these presents to the said Nathan Hughes hath granted bargained sold and set over and by these presents doth grant bargain sell and set over unto the said Elijah Robosson his Heirs and Assignes for ever all that Tract or Parcel of Land called Base Rock lying and being in Anne County aforesaid near Lurtifes Creek containing one hundred and forty acres which same Land was heretofore granted in the Year sixteen hundred and Seventy one to a certain William Ball also all that Tract of Land lying in the County aforesaid called Hughes's Inlargement containing Seventy four acres more or less the same being a survey made by the said Nathan on a Tract of Land called Balls & Lockers's Inlargement and also one Negro Boy named Choploy one other Negro Boy named Harry one other Negro Boy named Poros and one Negro Girl named Patience forty head of Black Cattle and fifty head of good Swallow Sheep the Cattle & Sheep marked with an under and upper nick in the Right Ear and a Swallow fork in the left Ear with the Inward of the said Negro Girl Patience and of the said Black Cattle and Sheep together with (all)

Caption: ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY COURT (Land Records), Elijah Robosson and Nathan Hughes, 08 March 1758, Liber BB 2 folios 97-98 [MSA CE 76-22].

In 1798, one year after Elijah Robosson's death, the United States Congress enacted the first federal tax levied upon American citizens to raise funds for a potential war with France. As chattel property, enslaved people were assessed alongside homes, out-buildings, and land. The Maryland records for this assessment – known as the 1798 Federal Direct Tax – provide a snapshot of the state of enslaving in Maryland at the turn of the century. If Elijah Robosson had survived past the assessment

²⁴ "As many Freeholders in Anne-Arundel County..." *Maryland Gazette*, 31 December 1767; Beverley W. Bond, Jr., *The Quit-Rent System in the American Colonies* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1965); S. Eugene Clements and F. Edward Wright, *The Maryland Militia in the Revolutionary War* (Family Line Publications, 1987). Journal of Correspondence of the State Council, March 20, 1771 - March 28, 1778, Archives of Maryland Online, vol. 16, pp. 77, 263, 274, 282, 357, 525; GENERAL ASSEMBLY HOUSE OF DELEGATES (Assessment Record) 1783 [SCM 871-11; S1161-1-15]; MARYLAND STATE PAPERS (Federal Direct Tax) 1798 [SCM 3468-1; SM56-1]; "1798 Federal Direct Tax," Archives of Maryland Online, vol. 729; "Robosson Log House," Flintstone, Allegany County, Maryland, Maryland Historical Trust National Register-Eligibility Review Form, 03 March 1986, Maryland Historical Trust (Inventory of Historic Sites) [SE5-109, AL-II-A-060]; "Elijah Robosson," Chancery Court, "Patuxent Iron Works, Ledger," 06/25/1767-06/24/1769, [S528-12], pp. 88, Image 199/250; "Will be SOLD, at PUBLIC SALE," 03 May 1798, *Maryland Gazette*.

date, his enslaved holdings would have put him among some of the largest enslavers in Anne Arundel County.²⁵

What began as an inquiry about a structure turned into an investigation of enslavement on one slice of Revolutionary Anne Arundel County. The story of Elijah Robosson's enslaving – and that of his ancestors – is not exceptional. The history of enslavement at the Old Stone House and the land on which it sits is representative of Maryland's history of enslavement. In the 21st century, Marylanders trod each day on grounds soaked in the blood, sweat, and tears of people enslaved there from the 1630s to 1864. Some of the stories of those enslaved people rest in the stacks at the Maryland State Archives waiting for a researcher to slow down and pay attention.

Legacy of Slavery in Maryland Project Report

By Julia Chan, Legacy of Slavery in Maryland Project Intern

For the past few months, I was given the opportunity to work within the Legacy of Slavery in Maryland project. During this time, I transcribed entries in the Maryland Penitentiary's Prisoners' Record from 1844-1850 and 1864-1866. Although the prisoner records were already digitized, transcription expands public accessibility by making documents more legible and searchable for those who want to do research using these documents. One of my main objectives during this internship was to utilize the transcriptions from 1844-1865 in the Maryland Penitentiary Records in order to look for instances of slave rebellion, riots, or revolts.²⁶ Typically in the Maryland Penitentiary Records, the prisoner's crime was not listed as "inciting an insurrection/riot." Instead crimes like arson, murder, and enticing a slave to run away helped highlight slave resistance. Our main primary source was the Maryland Penitentiary Prisoner's Record, though we also sourced from primary newspapers who covered the crimes and other archival documents, like court dockets, wills, census records, and pardon papers. Additionally, I recorded laws relating to slavery from law books, session laws, and Maryland codes to contextualize my work.²⁷

During my research, I noticed how different counties influenced the amount of information we were able to find. For example, Baltimore County and Baltimore City had the most information. In comparison, counties like Charles County were sparse with information due to fires having destroyed documents. For me, this further emphasized the importance of archives in protecting these historic documents from this loss of history.

I wrote case studies on 10 individuals who resisted slavery, compiled from the Maryland penitentiary records. These 10 individuals varied —those who wanted to help their families escape, those who

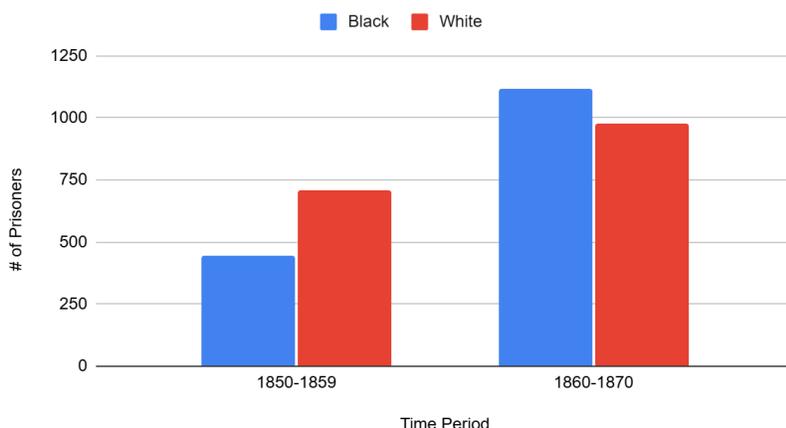
²⁵ "Introduction: 1798 Federal Direct Tax," Archives of Maryland Online, volume 729; MARYLAND STATE PAPERS (Federal Direct Tax) Anne Arundel County General [MSA SM56, M3468]; MARYLAND STATE PAPERS (Federal Direct Tax) 1798 [SCM 3468-1; SM56-1]; "1798 Federal Direct Tax," Archives of Maryland Online, vol. 729.

²⁶ Maryland Penitentiary (Prisoners Record), MSA S275-2

²⁷ Kilty, Williams, Harris, Thomas, and Watkins, John N. *The Laws of Maryland, vol. 6*. Annapolis, 1818; General Assembly (Laws) 1844-1870, MdHR 820925 - MdHR 820944-2, Accessed at Archives of Maryland Online <https://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc2900/sc2908/html/legislative3.html>; Otho Scott, Hiram M'Cullough, compilers. *The Maryland Code : Public General Laws and Public Local Laws*. (Baltimore: John Murphy & Co., 1860). Accessed at Archives of Maryland Online <https://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc2900/sc2908/000001/000145/html/index.html>

to be 'fair', 'florid', 'sallow', or 'ruddy.' Most Black inmates were described as 'black', 'tawny black', 'mulatto', or 'negro.' However, even these descriptions are not all encompassing, with 5 inmates who were described as 'fair' and a slave/colored person at the same time.

Races in the Maryland Penitentiary (1850-1870)



In addition, I explored other penitentiaries, specifically, the House of Reformation, which was one of the first juvenile detention centers for Black youth in Maryland. It was originally opened in 1870 as a more humane alternative to adult level prison, but mistreatment proliferated. Currently, it represents a historic mass grave site and I searched for records within the Maryland State Archives in order to try and document the names of the children buried there. I looked through annual reports of prisons in the state, court dockets, and state death records.²⁹ I compiled 100+ names of children held there throughout the years, from as young as 9 years of age to as old as 19 years and 6 months.

Throughout my time working with these materials, I noticed that the language of the penitentiary was impersonal, breaking each individual down into physical characteristics, crime, and sentencing. This extended to the newspapers where typically only trials or short notices were included. If it was not impersonal, the tone of the newspapers tended to be dismissive and derogatory of acts of resistance. However, every bit of information allowed one to build more information about each person's life and uncovered multiple examples of resistance between the gaps. There are examples of community, compassion, determination, and perseverance from those who were enslaved and those who were abolitionists.

Overall, I appreciated my time here and the work I was able to do. Thank you to everyone who taught me how to navigate the archives, how to read 19th century handwriting, and to those who listened to me while I ranted about the numerous research rabbit holes I went down.

²⁹Maryland State Archives (Publications, State Agency) Biennial Report of the Board of Managers of the House of Reformation (for Colored Boys) , Roll 304, SR94188, MSA SM278-21; Maryland Penitentiary (Prisoner's Record), MSA S275; Baltimore County Circuit Court (Criminal Docket), MSA C315; Baltimore City Criminal Court (Criminal Docket) MSA C1849; Board of Health (Death Record, Counties) Prince George's, SE42

Maryland250 Musings

MD TWO FIFTY

On July 4, 2026, America will commemorate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence with many events, displays and activities. The Maryland State Archives serves on the MD250 Commission and will join the semiquincentennial celebrations by sharing a number of reflections and projects over the next few years. Our focus is to raise up the contributions of all people, document the untold and underrepresented stories of Marylanders, and to preserve their rich legacy for future generations.

Recap of MD Two Fifty Eastern Shore Site Visit

By Danielle Smith, Reference Archivist

On December 10, 2025, I had the opportunity to represent the Archives at the meeting of the MD250 Commission held on the Eastern Shore. When we arrived at Centreville we were welcomed into Wright's Chance. Wright's Chance is a 1744 farm house that still has its original structure, from the paneling to the glass windows. In the mid-1960's the Queen Anne's County Historical Society rescued the plantation house from demolition and moved it four miles into the Town of Centreville. At Wright's Chance we received a tour from Barb Pivec, an active and enthusiastic volunteer with the Queen Anne's County Historical Society. Ms. Pivec started our tour by discussing the history of Wright's Chance, and the relationship between Wright's Chance and Thomas L. McKenney. McKenney was appointed the head of Indian Trade under the War Department by President James Madison, providing him firsthand experience in federal-Native relations from 1819 until the department was abolished in 1822. After the abolition of the U.S. Indian Trade program, McKenney became the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, serving from 1824 to 1830.

During his time as Superintendent of Indian Affairs McKenney commissioned the painter Charles Bird King and began a collection of portraits of prominent Native chiefs, elders, and their wives who visited Washington between 1821 and 1842. While King created the portraits, McKenney obtained a biography of each individual. At Wright's Chance, the Queen Anne's County Historical Society has curated an exhibit titled *Astonishing Portraits, Untold Stories: The World of Thomas L. McKenney* which opened on October 4th, showcasing these 19th century Indigenous portraits. The original portraits were once housed at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., but in 1865 almost all of the original painted-from-life oil portraits of the Indian Gallery were lost in a fire.

The reproductions (pictured right) viewed at Wright's Chance were from the lithograph prints published in the book *History of the*



Indian Tribes of North America (1836-1844), that McKenney also commissioned. This exhibit received an Inclusive History grant from the Maryland 250 Commission. After visiting Wright's Chance, we walked a few doors down to the Tucker House. The Tucker House is home to the historical society's office and collection of genealogical records, and also displays artifacts from several periods including late 18th century clothing, Rose Medallion china, and a spinning wheel. The Tucker House itself was built circa 1794 and stands as an example of architecture in the Federal Period.

Once we finished touring the Tucker House, we headed to Easton to participate in the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area meeting that was held at the Talbot County Free Library. The leading agenda item for this meeting was to promote a new national heritage area that would encapsulate the unique culture of Maryland's Eastern Shore through the exploration of four themes: Living Waterways, The Land Remembers, Freedom's Shores, and Working the Land, Working the Water. Two main discussion points were addressing the description of the Indigenous people who lived in the Eastern Shore before and during the colonial period and the lack of representation of African American watermen who have worked the waters of the Eastern Shore throughout history. After the meeting we toured the Maryland Room inside of the Talbot County Free Library; we were able to see special collection items the library had in their collection, including items given to the Talbot County Free Library from the family of James A. Michener, who wrote the novel titled "*Chesapeake*" set on the Eastern Shore. The fictional work presents the narrative of colonist Edmund Steed, and follows his family's experiences through generations.

It was a wonderful experience and informative trip, learning about the communities of the Eastern Shore of Maryland and their connection to the history of our nation. To learn more about the work of the MD250 Commission please visit their [website](#).



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](#).

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