

THE CLAMSHELL

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Image Caption: Audio cassettes containing oral histories from MSA SC 2140: The Annapolis I Remember Collection.

Oral History – A Definition

An interview that records an individual's personal recollections of the past and historical events. The audio or video recordings, transcripts, and other materials that capture and are associated with such an interview.¹

¹ Society of American Archivists, *Dictionary of Archives Terminology*, <https://dictionary.archivists.org/entry/oral-history.html>.

Letter from the Assistant State Archivist

In June 1995, I walked into the Maryland State Archives for the first time. I was a graduate student at the University of Maryland Baltimore County pursuing my Master's degree with a focus on public history and concentrating in women's and African American history. While I had done a great deal of primary source research during my education, I was completely "green" in the hands-on, public service aspect of archives, libraries, and museums. Thankfully, my professor, Dr. Joseph Arnold, pointed me to the long-standing internship program here and my career journey began in earnest. As the intervening 30 years have passed, I have proudly worn many hats at the Archives, but the most important of those in my view has been as a mentor. The reason that I value this role so highly on my list of priorities is the outstanding mentorship that I received from so many esteemed professionals in this field, including our State Archivist Elaine Rice Bachmann. My mentors allowed me to explore the broad portfolio of work that went into preserving, understanding and making archival collections accessible. This opportunity supplemented my classroom education with unparalleled experiential learning. I have benefited enormously from the guidance, generosity and knowledge of mentors who truly invested in me. Therefore, I resolved to pay it forward whenever I had the opportunity.



Flash forward to June 2025, where I helped to welcome my 31st cohort of interns to the MSA along with our marvelous program coordinator Jennifer Abbott. This year's amazing group came from a wide variety of schools and career stages. As their articles in this edition will reveal, during their 10 weeks with us they dove right into fundamental archival work alongside their incredible departmental mentors. The summer's hands-on learning included records handling, data mining, collections rehousing, primary research, series processing, and web programming. In addition, our interns also had the opportunity to attend presentations from leaders in the field and tour sister organizations to broaden their experience. The MSA was able to host these remarkable new professionals due to the partnership and generosity of many institutions who are equally committed to assisting students on their vocational pathways. We are incredibly grateful for the collaboration of these partner institutions, and most of all we are thankful for our amazing onsite staff mentors who have kept this program strong and relevant for 5 decades as we all work together to support, protect and raise up both the profession and those individuals who want to explore it.



Caption Top: Emily and Elaine in 1996

Caption Bottom: MSA's Intern Class of 1996

Emily Oland Squires
Maryland State Archives Intern, Class of 1995 & 1996
Director of Research, Reference, Education and Outreach

Staff Updates

New Staff



Dr. William Kelly joins us in Annapolis as a Research Archivist with the Study of the Legacy of Slavery in Maryland Program. He graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln with his Ph.D. in history, with his dissertation entitled "Sufferers' and Freedom Seekers: Claiming Indemnity and Seizing Freedom in Maryland and Beyond, 1812-1831". He has worked as a researcher with the National Park Service's Network to Freedom and Marietta House Museum in Prince George's County and was an Ashby M. Laramore Fellow with the Maryland Center for History and Culture. William currently serves as the book reviews editor for the *Maryland Historical Magazine*.



Toni Latimore joined the Archives staff as a Certified Maryland Procurement Officer. Toni brings extensive experience managing intergovernmental and interagency agreements, and has a command of complex regulatory frameworks. She has led initiatives that champion small business participation, equity in public acquisitions, and mission-driven procurement outcomes. Toni holds a degree from the University of Maryland Global Campus.



Carey Stumm joined the team at Baltimore City Archives in July as the new City Records Management Officer. Ms. Stumm brings nine years of experience with the National Archives and Records Administration to this role. She has guided the transition of federal records transfers from paper to born-digital, creating standard operating procedures for agencies. Among her many relevant skills, she has experience with facility management and design, digital asset management, grant administration and emergency response. Carey earned a Master's degree in Library and Information Science from Queens College in New York.



Casey Ventola has been promoted to the Archives new building manager, after serving in the assistant capacity with us. While Casey is a member of the Department of General Services staff, he is an integral member of our team and is onsite every day bringing his care and experience to the upkeep of our infrastructure, our interior and exterior maintenance, and facility operations.



Sari Wisch joined the staff as the Executive Associate for the leadership team. Sari is excited to be working for the Archives and comes here after serving as staff for three sessions with the Maryland General Assembly. Maryland is the third state legislature that Sari has served in - the other two being California (where she is from) and Kentucky. Sari attended University of Oregon for her undergraduate work in political science, and The George Washington University where she earned her Masters in Strategic Public Relations.

Awards

Congratulations to **Darby Nisbett Schini**, Deputy Director of Reference Services and Search Room Coordinator, who has been awarded the Council of State Archivists Victoria Irons Walch Emerging Leader Award. Darby was recognized for her diligent outreach efforts to improve our in-person and virtual customer service, as well as updating our reference archivist training programs directed towards mentoring a new generation of civil servants, focusing on accessibility, inclusivity, and mental health.

Professional Development

Darby also attended this year's annual Society of American Archivists conference sponsored by a grant from the Friends of the Maryland State Archives. Darby represented the MSA and presented on a panel titled, *Making Invisible Archival Labor Visible: Leveraging Data for Advocacy, Transparency, and Sustainability in Our Work* along with North Carolina, Iowa and Georgia archivists.



Chris Haley, Director of Research, Education, and Outreach, joined our partners at the University of Maryland iSchool to present at the National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators in Oklahoma in July. Chris presented on *Enhancing Access to Legacy Slavery Records Using Generative AI* with longtime UMD collaborators Dr. Richard Marciano and Rajesh Kumar Gnanasekaran.

Chris also represented the Maryland State Archives at the Association of African American Museums Annual Conference in Charleston, SC. This professional development was sponsored by the Friends of the Maryland State Archives.

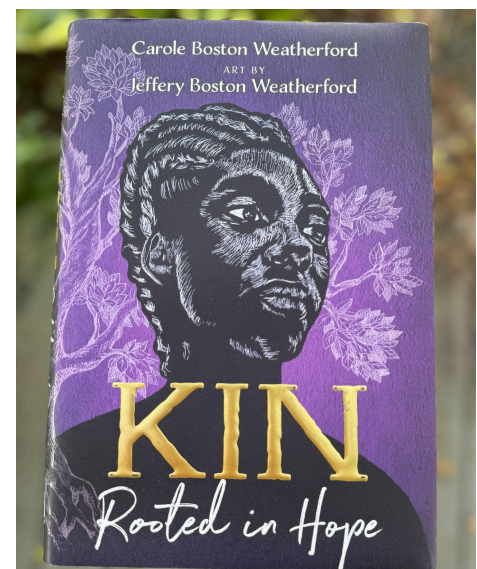
Christopher Schini, Outreach, Appraisal and Audio/Video Archivist and the Coordinator of Criminal History Research, represented the Archives at the Maryland Municipal League Summer Conference with support from the Friends.

Also sponsored by the Friends, Senior Director of Special Collections **Maria Day**, Reference Archivist **Danielle Smith** and volunteer **Alexander Callahan** represented the Archives at the Council for Maryland Archaeology's Second Annual Summit of Maryland Indigenous People and Archaeologists. Maria and Danielle gave a presentation on MSA resources and specifically focused on the Mayis website which is an Indigenous Records Guide for materials in the collections of the MSA.

Events and Outreach

Maryland One Book Partnership with Maryland Humanities

The MSA is proud to be partnering with Maryland Humanities on their One Book program this fall. This year's theme is "What We Collect / What We Tell" and the book chosen is *Kin: Rooted in Hope* by Carole Boston Weatherford and art by Jeffery Boston Weatherford a collected work of poetry and images that address the exploration of family history by the descendants of enslaved men and women. Assistant State Archivist Emily Oland Squires participated in a panel discussion with Maryland Humanities CEO Lindsey Baker as a preview to the program and author tour. We were also honored to host the kick-off event online with the author, State Archivist Elaine Rice Bachmann and Chris Haley on September 4th, and we invite everyone to attend our *Connecting with Kin: How to Research Your Family History at the Maryland State Archives* workshop on October 20th in honor of American Archives Month.



Maryland250 Musings



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.

Remembering the Maryland 400 in New York

By Owen Lourie, Research Archivist, Maryland State Archives



Caption Left: American and Maryland flags, representing the 256 Maryland soldiers killed or captured at the Battle of Brooklyn in 1776. Caption Right: Reading of the names ceremony.

On August 23, I attended the annual commemorations of the Battle of Brooklyn at the Old Stone House in Brooklyn, NY. The battle was fought in 1776 and was the first major battle of the Revolutionary War. It was a resounding defeat for the Americans. Towards the end of fighting, a group of soldiers from Maryland, now called the “Maryland 400,” kept the British from chasing the fleeing American troops. The Old Stone House is in the middle of Brooklyn, and it was a surprise to see a large number of Maryland flags--a common sight here but not expected in another state!

The commemorations featured the reading of the names of Maryland soldiers who fought at the battle. In addition, I brought copies of some documents from the Archives’ collections to share that tell the story of the battle, including the will of Daniel Bowie, written the day before the battle, and [William Sands’s letters home](#). There were easily 200 people in attendance, a huge number!

This year is the 249th anniversary of the battle, and there was a lot of discussion of plans for next year’s 250th. Part of next year’s events will be the *Finding the Maryland 400* book that the Archives will be publishing in 2026. It seems like it will be an amazing event!

Class of 2025 Summer Interns

By Jennifer Abbott, Deputy Director, Research, Education and Outreach

Our summer 2025 intern class walked through the front doors in early June to spend ten weeks working with staff mentors on assignments such as records and collections processing, computer programming, document conservation and historical research. While our group was smaller than previous summers, the talents and enthusiasm these students brought was certainly not. We are grateful to our partners with the Blacks of the Chesapeake Foundation, Fairmont Heights High School Alumni Association, the Maryland 250 Commission, Maryland Institute for Innovative Computing, the National Parks Service Network to Freedom program in conjunction with the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, St. John's College's Hodson Trust Internship Program, Villanova University's The Albert Lepage Center for History in the Public Interest, and Washington College's Starr Center for the Study of the American Experience for their support. We appreciate the privilege of being a stepping stone on their career journeys and we thank them for their contributions to the Archives this summer.



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The Study of the Legacy of Slavery in Maryland

[Study of the Legacy of Slavery in Maryland: Filling in the Canvas](#)

[Revolts and Rebellions Project: The Story of Robert Stanley](#)

My Second Year with the Information Technology Department

By Steven Arias, University of Maryland, College Park

Returning to the Maryland State Archives' Information Technology Department for a second summer internship, I was excited to continue building on the foundation I had laid the year before. During my first internship, I developed several web applications, including [Early Settlers](#) and the *Page Viewer Link Generator*, and explored cybersecurity and public server monitoring. That experience sparked a deep interest in IT development, leaving me eager to take on new challenges.

This year began much like the last: with the *Early Settlers* project. Having not worked in Visual Basic since the previous summer, it was the perfect refresher to get reacquainted with the language. My focus this year was the Archives' accessibility initiative—an ongoing effort to ensure all public-facing websites comply with ADA standards and are accessible to all users. My supervisors, Nikki Schultz and Frank Patnaude, introduced me to the accessibility project and tasked me with updating *Early Settlers* to meet compliance standards. With support from the IT team—especially Ashleigh and Raymond—I dove into research on web accessibility guidelines, learning about WCAG standards, ARIA roles, keyboard navigation, and proper screen reader support. This knowledge became the foundation for the work that followed.

Over time, I began working on live websites, applying the knowledge I had learned to real-world applications. I contributed to improving accessibility on several key web pages, including the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission's feedback form, the Archives' main homepage feedback form, Page Viewer, Plats.net, and—most recently—the Guide to Government Records. Each project introduced new challenges and increased complexity, but with each one, my skills and confidence grew.

One of the most rewarding parts of this summer was revisiting the [HistPics](#) website, a project from last year that is still in development. Updating it for accessibility brought the site one step closer to public release and gave me a sense of continuity and growth in my work.

Through these projects, I deepened my knowledge of web development, ASP.NET, JavaScript, and accessibility design. After spending the latter half of last summer focused on cybersecurity, I was excited to return to development and reaffirm my interest in programming. This internship has only strengthened my desire to pursue a career in IT development.

I'm incredibly grateful to the entire IT Programming team at the Maryland State Archives for their mentorship and support. Their collaborative spirit and dedication to teaching made this internship an enriching experience. I leave this summer with not only more technical skills, but a stronger sense of purpose and direction in my career.

Weaving Together Past and Present: Special Collections Ephemera

By Ned Gaudry, St. John's College

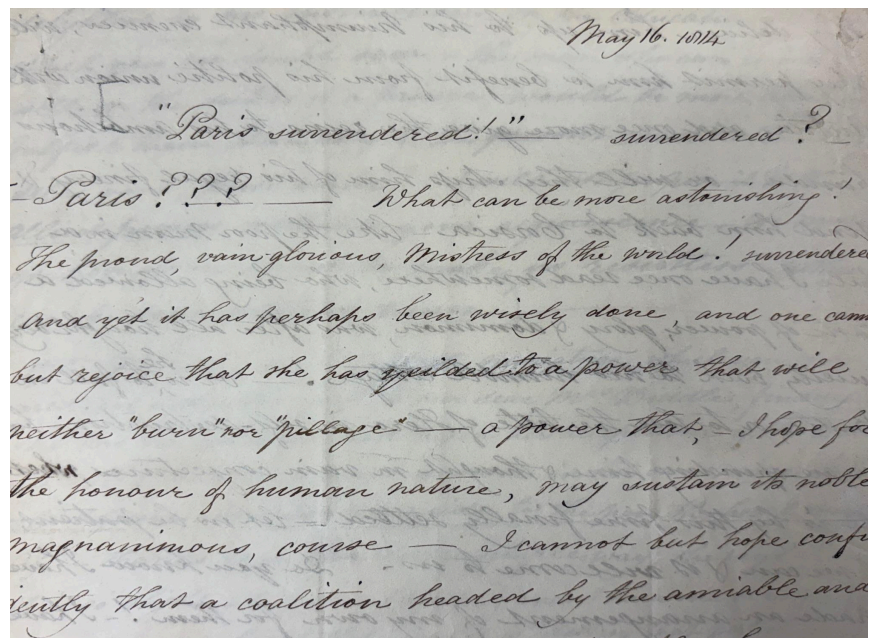
Editor's note: Portions of this article discuss issues relating to mental health and marital strife. The reader is advised that some of the language chosen to discuss this topic reflects the historical context. Some personal identifiers have been removed.

As an intern in Special Collections, I had the opportunity to handle and work on collections ranging from early donations from the old Hall of Records era to donations from this past spring. I have worked with photographs, oversized maps and drawings, published material, and paper ephemera - newspapers, letters, and research notes. This last category of items has, for me, had the power of pulling past figures into the present. In writing, we see a snapshot of a person's life and thoughts. This snapshot may not always be relatable in subject, as everyday life for many has completely changed from what is described, but these objects can contextualize the broad strokes of the past in a way that matches our experiences - day by day, moment by moment, rather than summaries. This article will touch on three examples I have found through processing new and old collections.

Some of this material has sat here for decades, uncatalogued. In the George Forbes Collection ([MSA SC 182](#)), next to dozens of boxes of photographs, were two old boxes, catalogued only as "lecture notes". While there were several stacks of lecture note booklets, there were folders and loose papers scattered. Here, there were three letters dated February 22nd, 1813, February 28th, 1813, and May 16th, 1814.² The letters were written from "EB", or "Emma", to "Mrs. R. C. Derby", or "Martha". The two appear to be wealthy society women – Emma quotes literature, writes on national and international politics, knows at least a smattering of French, and at times writes philosophically. Martha has moved away to Boston, where she attends a "drawing-school".

Emma is very interested in the politics of France. In the most recent (relatively) letter, she recounts to Martha the news of a surrender in Paris, presumably the March surrender of Paris to the Sixth Coalition (Russia, Austria, Prussia, and Württemberg) which eventually forced Napoleon to abdicate. Then, she relays which French statesman she feels would be an appropriate choice to take over as ruler of the country, and why.

Though Emma seems intrigued by politics, she also writes about her day-to-day life. She speaks of calling



Caption: MSA SC 184-4-22

² Maryland State Archives, George Forbes Collection, MSA SC 182-4-22/24.

upon friends, turning to mild gossip. She muses on grief after a visit to a friend who has recently lost her mother, and questions the nature of friendships and flattery after a visit to a mutual friend. She writes frequently of her admiration of Martha, of the absence she feels. It is the style of writing and the language she uses here that seems most familiar and also so societally different.

Take, for example, how Emma writes effusively with respect to Martha's virtues and how much her presence is missed.

"Have you guessed my Charade – I am much mortified that I cannot – I have been once to see Mrs. M – since you left us – but alas! How we wanted you! – there is, there, a – un je ne sais quoi, that I cannot break thro' – a kind of barrier, that seems to say, 'thus far & no further & etc.'"³

The world has changed drastically since the time of Emma and Martha. The internet and social media have changed the landscape of long-distance communication. Somewhere along the way, letter-writing became obsolete, and the language we use to communicate evolved more informally. Still, the sentiment portrayed here is one easily related to, and it brings alive the subjects of the letters in an unmistakable way.

Some material from the past, however, is at first glance more irrelevant to the average person. When processing a relatively new collection, I came across a letter written to Jacob Tolley Towson, of the prominent Towson family of Maryland.⁴ The letter, signed Ivanovitch, included a newspaper clipping to explain the writer's supposed criminal past before he asked Towson to aid him in retrieving a stolen sum of money that had been smuggled out of Russia in exchange for ⅓ of the sum. Unfortunately for Ivanovitch, Jacob Tolley Towson passed away in 1907, and the letter was written in 1912. So, it seemed necessary to look further into this strange letter - why would a criminal attempting to get away with a heist so openly spill his secrets, and to a man with whom he has no prior relationship?

With a quick search, I was able to find a newspaper article which transcribed the clipping and the letter nearly exactly, with a few key differences.⁵ The reported postmark date was wildly off, as was the name and location to which the receiver was supposed to send a "cablegram." Many additional details, such as the lines on the paper of the letter, held true. The article proposes that this is an example of the "Spanish prison" game, in which letters such as this are sent to names found in advertisements in a fraudulent scheme, and lists several other businessmen who have had this letter sent to them. This scheme originated in the 19th century, and has evolved into the form now commonly known as the "Nigerian prince" scam.⁶ Before it was the "Spanish prison" game, it was known as "letters from Jerusalem."⁷ Though initially this letter appeared quite strange and fascinating,

³ Maryland State Archives, George Forbes Collection, MSA SC 182-4-22.

⁴ Maryland State Archives, Towson Wells Collection, MSA SC 6332-5-1.

⁵ "'Spanish Prison Game' Is Tried", *Watertown Daily Times*, May 27, 1912.

⁶ "An Old Swindle Revived.; the 'Spanish Prisoner' and Buried Treasure Bait Again Being Offered to Unwary Americans", *New York Times*, March 20, 1898.

<https://www.nytimes.com/1898/03/20/archives/An-old-swindle-revived-the-spanish-prisoner-and-buried-treasure.html>;
Museums of History NSW, "Confidence Tricks: The Spanish Prisoner", Museums of History NSW.
<https://mhns.wa.gov.au/stories/general/confidence-tricks-the-spanish-prisoner/>.

⁷ Erik Shilling, "The 9 Lives of the Spanish Prisoner, the Treasure-Dangling Scam That Won't Die." *Atlas Obscura*,
<https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/the-9-lives-of-the-spanish-prisoner-the-treasure-dangling-scam-that-wont-die>.

this history shows how scams like this have existed all throughout modern history and are still a part of global culture today. In a world where scam texts, calls, and emails run around, the carefully copied letter (written to a late relative) sharply rings a bell.

In a different newspaper clipping, I found cause to follow another research rabbit hole. In the miscellaneous loose papers of the George Forbes collection, I happened to flip over one article to see if it continued on the back of the page⁸. On the reverse was an excerpt from a different article, which Forbes was not using for his lectures or research, but which instantly grabbed my attention. “Her Sanity Questioned – Mrs. [W] Sent To A Hospital After Suing For Divorce.” The article recounts a Baltimore-resident filing for divorce on grounds of cruelty. One day after she filed for divorce, her husband hired two physicians to examine her, and she was declared a “lunatic”. With information from the article, I was able to track down the divorce case file within the archives, eventually finding two different cases.⁹ The first was the divorce case. The second was the result of the divorce case, where Mrs. E. W. was tried by a Sheriff’s duty after Mr. W filed a petition for a *writ de lunatico inquirendo* (read: writ for inquiring about a lunatic). The divorce case was summarily dismissed, and she was forced to be hospitalized until such time that a decision was made.

Here’s a more in-depth look at the timeline. On October 15, 1907, Mrs. W’s lawyer filed her petition for divorce on grounds a) of cruel treatment from her husband and b) that he had deprived her of her property. One day later, Mr. W hired two physicians to assess her mental health, and she was thereafter confined to the hospital. He then filed for the *writ de lunatico inquirendo* on October 22nd, with two doctors testifying as to their assessment of Mrs. W. On October 24th, there was a trial held before a Sheriff’s jury (as was the standard process in the Baltimore City courts at the time). Mrs. W’s father, brother, and son, as well as several physicians, testified that she was suffering from “melancholia” and was of unsound mind, but that it was a temporary condition that would last only a few months. They also produced the certificates from the two physicians hired by Mr. W which were reportedly dated to September 22nd. This information is not found in the files, but rather only a notarized document from the two doctors on October 22nd. Melancholia, at the time, was the encompassing category that could have described mood disorders, but was shifting to usage as a synonym for depression.¹⁰ Based on the language of the case files, it is difficult to decipher what exactly they claimed Mrs. W’s ailment to be.

The inquisition on the 24th declared her a “lunatic”, and it was decided that she would remain hospitalized to receive treatment until a physician declared her to be of sound mind. The divorce did not carry on, and a committee was appointed to handle her estate, which was valued as around \$1,600 in cash (around \$50,000 in 2025 USD)¹¹. The committee consisted of two men, one who happened to be Mr. W’s lawyer, and the other a member of the same firm.

⁸ Maryland State Archives, George Forbes Collection, MSA SC 182-4-61.

⁹ Maryland State Archives, BALTIMORE CITY CIRCUIT COURT NO. 2 (Equity Papers B, Divorces and Foreclosures), Case 9773B; Maryland State Archives BALTIMORE CITY CIRCUIT COURT NO. 2 (Equity Papers A, Miscellaneous), Case 7558A.

¹⁰ Diogo Telles-Correia and João Gama Marques, “Melancholia before the Twentieth Century: Fear and Sorrow or Partial Insanity?” *Frontiers in Psychology*, Vol. 6, February 3, 2015, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2015.00081>.

¹¹ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics CPI Inflation Calculator only goes back to the year 1913. Calculations on \$1600 from 1913 translates to \$52,894 in August 2025 value, https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm.

On December 30, 1907, a little over a month after Mrs. W was declared mentally unfit, one of the testifying physicians wrote a letter certifying that he was Mrs. W's personal physician, that he was also Mr. W's family physician, and that his professional opinion held her to be now of sound mind, capable of managing herself and her estate. By January, she regained control of her properties and holdings; it doesn't seem that she ever filed for divorce after this. Based on U.S. Census records, E.W. and her husband lived together until he passed away in 1926.

There are discrepancies in the story presented through these records. First, in Mr. W's original answer to Mrs. W's bill of complaint (in the original divorce case), he references a case between her and the hospital, which does not seem to exist anywhere in Baltimore City court records and is never referenced again. Second, the certification that she was examined by physicians in September 1907 is a detail for which there is no documentation. Finally, in his petition for the writ, Mr. W claimed that she had been a "lunatic" for the last two years. He further stated that for "some time now" she had received medical treatment.

Mrs. W.'s case file indicates an all-male jury and only included male witnesses. Without further details or documents, it is not clear what exactly happened here. Was E. W. hallucinating abuse by her husband and children, as Mr. W. claimed? She was "cured" in about a month—how? Given the sensitivity of health records, there are strict legal restrictions, meaning the answer cannot be known.

The purpose of my research into this case was not to bring to light a scandal—it was about understanding what happened, and how the incident relates to current times. About one in four women experience abuse by a partner.¹² Historically, survivors of abuse are unlikely to report domestic violence, and when they do it is unlikely that the case will be handled by the authorities in a way which leads to a higher chance of prosecution for the abuser.¹³ This practice deters those who might report, believing that the trauma and process of reporting will not lead to a favorable result.¹⁴ This is statistically true at present and would have been especially true in Mrs. W's time at the turn of the century, when women were not afforded the same basic rights as men, such as the right to vote or manage their own affairs.

The snapshot of this case does not represent the vast majority of Mrs. W's life, but it paints a picture of an issue that is very real and still present for many individuals. Even more so than the letters of Emma and Martha, or the early 20th century mail scam, this chronicle connects to the experiences of people worldwide throughout time.

¹² Neil Frackelton, "1 in 4 Women Experience Domestic Abuse", Sefton Women and Children's Aid (SWACA), September 26, 2022, <https://swaca.com/1-in-4-women-experience-domestic-abuse/>.

¹³ Eric L. Nelson, "If You Want to Convict a Domestic Violence Batterer, List Multiple Charges in the Police Report." Sage Open 4, no. 1 (January 1, 2014), <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244013517246>

¹⁴ Neil Frackelton. "Why Is Domestic Abuse Often Not Reported?", SWACA, October 24, 2022, <https://swaca.com/why-is-domestic-abuse-often-not-reported/>.

What I Learned During My Summer Internship At The Maryland State Archives

By McKenzie Howell from Fairmont Heights High School

This summer, I had the incredible opportunity to intern at the Maryland State Archives through Fairmont Heights High School, located in Hyattsville, Maryland. From June to August, I served as an Archivist Intern, working with the Fairmont Heights High School Alumni Association's historical records. During this time, I gained valuable hands-on experience handling historic documents, photographs, and learning essential preservation techniques.

My primary responsibilities included organizing the collection, placing items into acid-free folders and sleeves for long-term preservation, and digitizing photographs to ensure their accessibility for future generations. I appreciated the opportunity to work independently, which allowed me to focus, take initiative, and grow both personally and professionally as this was my first job. One of the most exciting parts of the internship was learning how to carefully handle and digitize delicate materials using professional scanners and cameras.

Some materials that stood out to me the most were the photographs from the 1960s featuring Fairmont Heights band and dance teams. As a current member of the Auxiliary Band at Fairmont Heights, seeing the pride and energy captured in those images really hit home. It was incredibly inspiring to connect with the school's legacy and witness the long-standing tradition of excellence.

In addition to gaining historical knowledge, this internship also helped me develop practical skills that will support my future career goals. I became more proficient in using Microsoft Excel to track and manage data, and I improved my communication skills through daily briefings with my supervisor. As someone planning to become a nurse, I know that the ability to accurately organize and manage records will be an essential part of my future responsibilities, and this experience provided a strong foundation for that.

I'm truly grateful to Andrew Forschler, Corey Lewis, and the Fairmont Heights Alumni Association for supporting and guiding me throughout this internship. I highly recommend this opportunity to other students—it's a unique and meaningful way to explore the past while gaining skills that prepare you for your future.

History Still Speaks

By Emily Stiles, Washington College

Dr. William J. Murtagh, noted historical preservationist, once said: "The past is not the property of historians; it is a public possession. It belongs to anyone who is aware of it, and it grows by being shared."

For the past ten weeks, I have been working at the Maryland State Archives through the Explore America Summer Internship Experience with the Starr Center at Washington College. I have been

working for the Special Collections Department on the Mayis Project. Mayis is a Renape /deh nah pea/ word that means “a path forward; to go onto” in the Algonquian language. The Mayis Database and website was developed to provide “a path to” the Indigenous Peoples’ records of Maryland and the Delmarva region. The collection is compiled of both historical documents and pictures from the archive’s collections, and also modern day oral history recordings.

My job on the Mayis project was to search through the land records for words of Native origin and record them in a data spreadsheet. The main focus for this round of land records was Cecil County, Maryland between the years 1674 and 1723. Most of the time as I combed through, I found the words Sassafras and Chesapeake in various forms of spellings. These words, in context, were place names and did not refer directly to the Native People of this region. In total, I went through over 1,460 pages of land record documents. The entire time that I was reading through the land records, I needed to learn how to read the eighteenth-century handwriting. I started by reading transcripts of the land records that were written in the late 1700’s. This then helped me to be able to read the harder early 1700’s handwriting and prepared me to be able to read scripts from the 1600’s.

The most significant find in the land records came from an “Appointment of Augustine Harmon [Herrman] and Jacob Young to Trade with the Delaware Indians”¹⁵, made June 14th, 1666. The record reads “...[A] Complaint to me hath been made that several Injuries and abuses have been frequently offered to [illegible] the inhabitants... as to their stocks of hoggs, horses and cattle by the Deliware Indians hunting upon their lands and Driving away their stocks...the Inhabitants are very much molested...”. The people of Cecil County appointed Augustine Harmon [Herrman] and Jacob Young to trade with the Native Americans hoping that the trade initiation would cause them to stop hunting their livestock. Herrman was an immigrant from Bohemia (now the Czech Republic) to the Netherlands and, later, to New Amsterdam. He then immigrated to Maryland in 1660 following an ambassador trip the year prior. In exchange for 5,000 acres of land, he drew up the first accurate map of Maryland’s Chesapeake Bay. He named this land “Bohemia Mannor” and his property would be mentioned numerous times in the land records of Cecil County. His prominence in the county and knowledge of the land aided in his receiving the appointment to trade with the Native Americans and reiterate boundaries with them. This trade appointment was one of the only documents I found in my comb through land records that related to the Native American People and not the Sassafras River or the Chesapeake Bay as a body of water. As the European colonists expanded their claims on Maryland land, their records focused more and more on their own land possession. Consequently, the references to Native tribes become fewer and fewer in the written record as Native People were forced into migrating, fighting, or assimilating.

The other part of my job on Mayis was to listen to the newest collection of oral histories, set to release by the end of 2025, create a list of key words, and write a descriptive summary about them. In total, I listened to over ten hours of historical interview material. These interviews were conducted by Drew Shuptar-Rayvis, a citizen and appointed cultural ambassador of the Pocomoke Indian Nation of Maryland and a contractual research and preservation specialist with Maryland State Archives. My main focus for interviewees were members of the Nanticoke Indian Nation. Shuptar-Rayvis conducted these interviews in March of 2024 with the assistance of Bonnie Hall, a member of the Nanticoke community.

¹⁵ CECIL COUNTY COURT, Land Records, 1674-1848, C626, p. 92

The main goal behind this oral history project was to not only preserve the Elders' words for prosperity, but to also show and explain to the public that Native Indigenous Americans are still a part of today's culture. When students are asked about Native Americans in school classrooms today, most children will tell you that Native Americans do not exist anymore. This is far from the truth. The stories of individuals like Warren Jackson, also known as Toby /Tah bee/ and Marilyn Jackson both of the Nanticoke Indian Community allow for others to hear the words of contemporary Native Americans. These members of the Nanticoke community piqued my interest the most.

During the civil rights movement of the early to mid 1900s, when these individuals were young children, the Nanticoke faced multiple forms of oppression by members of their local community and government. The civil rights movement was a social war on oppression, segregation, disenfranchisement, and the violence endured by African Americans at the hands of white racial supremacists. However, the movement extended to the Native American community as well. Native Americans were not allowed to attend the white schools in their community. They were forced to either attend the African American school or a separate Native American school. This was prior to the momentous *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court case. In this monumental decision, the term "separate but equal" was finally overturned and it was deemed inherently unequal and unlawful for public schools to be segregated. Following this ruling on May 17th, 1954, schools were required to integrate their students with each other. However, the court ruled that the schools do this in an "all deliberate speed", meaning that schools did not immediately desegregate. Many Native Americans continued to be segregated following the *Brown. v. Board* case.

For generations, segregation not only in schools but in all aspects of everyday life had been common practice. This included vacation destinations. One such destination that was mentioned by multiple members of the Nanticoke community in their interviews was Rosedale Beach Hotel in Millsboro, Delaware. This particular building was a part of the green books and the Chitlin' Circuit. "The Green Book", published from 1936 until 1966, was a guidebook used by Native Americans, African Americans and other people of color while traveling. This book outlined safe spots to visit while traveling in various locales. This annual travel guide included information necessary to stay safe and comfortable when staying in places around the United States. The Chitlin' Circuit is an informal network of performance venues that were considered safe for performers and audiences of color. These places catered to African American entertainers and audiences. At Rosedale Beach Hotel, both Toby and Marilyn could remember seeing countless performers of color. This included names such as Fats Domino, James Brown, Stevie Wonder, Lionel Hampton, Ruth Brown, Ray Charles, Ella Fitzgerald, and many other prominent performers. Rosedale was the main spot for not only African Americans to frequent, but Native Americans as well. Toby and Marilyn went to Rosedale multiple times for entertainment. Though the Chitlin' Circuit is highly associated with the African American Community, the Circuit was just as important to Native Americans for entertainment venues.

I also had the opportunity to get involved in an additional processing project for the Special Collections Department, the Harry Dundore Collection ([MSA SC 6460](#)), which has since been published on the Special Collections' website. While working on this collection, I learned how to catalog records which includes photographs, newspapers and paper correspondence of Harry Dundore and his peers. Dundore advanced in his career by building ultra-precision parts for the United States' Navy Submarines during World War II. He then became president of Diecraft, Inc. a

metal plating factory in Baltimore County. Mr. Dundore later served as the Chairman of the Planning Board of Baltimore County. There, he met his life-long best friend, and future Governor and Vice President, Spiro T. Agnew. Most of the letter correspondence in this collection are either from or about Agnew.

My time at the Maryland State Archives has been of great value to me. I have had many experiences that have provided opportunities to grow as a student. This internship has allowed me to develop my skills in historical research, historical preservation and organization. I learned how to navigate the archives, how to read 17th and 18th century handwriting, and how to conduct research. As I continue my schooling at Washington College in History and Secondary and Museum Education, I will take the skills that I learned here and utilize them in my future careers to teach others—of all ages—the importance of learning from our past to better our future. It is my goal to take my learned archival skills to conduct research and teach future generations of historians.

THE STUDY OF THE LEGACY OF SLAVERY IN MARYLAND

Study of the Legacy of Slavery in Maryland: Filling in the Canvas

By Vivian Miyakawa, St. John's College

Time is a slippery thing, strangely hard to grasp. There's a sanctity to the act of holding a record dating back to a point in time I can't conceptualize. I'm sitting here in 2025 like some sort of faux-omniscient god, feeling almost ridiculous as a mere 20-year-old peering through a window into a 200-year-old time gap. Once time worms its way past the expanse of human memory, it becomes more of an abstraction than a reality. I can describe my experience of "yesterday" much clearer than attempting to pin down the vague feeling of childhood nostalgia evoked when contemplating "2010."

At the beginning of my internship, my first assigned task was to transcribe a ledger¹⁶ of information about the inmates of the Maryland Penitentiary. It had already been uploaded to the *Guide to Government Records* as a scanned document available online, but the text needed to be extracted and set into a format more suited for entering a public database. While completing this task, we were also meant to look out for any instances of revolts or rebellions against the institution of slavery. It could have been a person imprisoned for aiding a fugitive slave, an enslaved person fighting back against their master, or any other conceivable act from those who risked their lives for the chance at freedom.

The weeks spent mostly on transcription consisted of decoding Antebellum cursive and encountering people imprisoned for crimes that would seem absurd in modern times (six years for horse theft!). Wading through accordion thieves, vagabonds, and cases of larceny, I slowly built my list of those unfortunately captured in the act of freeing the enslaved. Of this list, a much smaller group emerged; those who didn't already have a case study in the legacy of slavery database. Specifically, the people I chose to research were Richard Coates, John Jones, Aaron Shorter, and Otho Snyder. Even though they were all imprisoned for the same crimes, their stories all fundamentally differ.

¹⁶ MARYLAND PENITENTIARY (Prisoner Record) MSA S275-2, <https://guide.msa.maryland.gov/pages/item.aspx?ID=S275-2>

Coates and Jones worked together along with Caleb Day, to help free a group of enslaved workers in Charles County. They fled by boat, following a tributary of the Potomac to hopefully reach Washington DC. Unfortunately, they were caught by Coates' former enslaver, George Carpenter. He beat them severely, to the point of near death, before turning them over to law enforcement. Coates and Jones received an eleven year sentence, while Day received six years upon pleading guilty. All three men served two years of their sentence before being pardoned in 1865, five months after the end of the Civil War, and almost a year since the emancipation took place in Maryland.

Shorter's story is unique in the fact that he was 52 years old at the time of his arrest. Being a free Black man, it is thought that perhaps he was risking it all to rescue his wife from a life of enslavement. During a plea for his pardon, the State's Attorney at the time expressed feelings of reluctant compliance to the law, claiming that if the law allowed, he would have pushed to lessen Shorter's sentence. Eventually, he was pardoned at the same time as Coates, Jones, and Day.

Snyder lived in Hagerstown, only six miles from Pennsylvania, the nearest free state. Since he worked as a carter, he had access to a horse and buggy, and lived near a train station with a direct route to freedom in Chambersburg, PA. Snyder was accused of helping an enslaved person escape when he was caught with a trunk full of clothes belonging to a fugitive. He tried to convince law enforcement that the clothes belonged to a friend of his, but his trial was quickly over and he was sentenced to six years and six months in the Maryland State Penitentiary. Unlike others imprisoned for this crime, Snyder served out his full time, remaining in prison for more than three years past the Civil War. A pardon was requested for his good behavior while imprisoned, but it was ultimately denied.

It feels like creating art, really, the act of resurrecting a person through research. They all started out the same way, as a vague outline of a human shaped by a name, a crime, and a short description. Now, the image is becoming sharper, enhancing itself with each record examined as I take my metaphorical paintbrush and fill in the details. Perhaps the painting remains a little crude, lacking shading, definition, or maybe entire features are missing, but the act of research at least ensures that there's something on the canvas. There's now color to interrupt the blankness of the surface, a memory to interrupt the mind, bursting life forth into a space where there once was just oblivion.

THE STUDY OF THE LEGACY OF SLAVERY IN MARYLAND

Revolts and Rebellions Project: The Story of Robert Stanley

By Nicholas Ricardo, Villanova University

During the Summer of 2025, I was privileged to work under Chris Haley on the Legacy of Slavery Project at the Maryland State Archives. One of the major duties I was assigned was transcription of the prisoner records of the Maryland Penitentiary, as part of the "Revolts and Rebellions" initiative of the Legacy of Slavery Project. The major goal of this initiative is the creation of a comprehensive transcription database of the prisoner records of the Penitentiary. I was assigned records which are over 150 years old. Specifically, I transcribed the records of prisoners 4901-5400 and 6501-7000,

representing over 1000 individuals over the years of 1855 to 1859 and 1866 to 1868. Together with the work of the other interns on the project, we were able to transcribe information on over 3000 prisoners spanning two decades, from the 1840's to the late 1860's. With these records transcribed, a trove of data is now accessible in spreadsheet format and available for future statistical analysis. The data in these records includes, name, age, complexion, occupation, place of residence, identifying marks, crime they were convicted of, length of sentence, and cause of discharge. To give an example, during the mid-1850's, a standard sentence for larceny in the Maryland Penitentiary system was two years and six months, whereas a standard sentence for aiding or enticing the runaway of a slave was six years per enslaved person.¹⁷

One of the other initiatives of the "Revolts and Rebellions" project is to track those individuals who made a concerted effort against slavery, whether it be self-emancipation, aiding the emancipation of others, or political acts of insurrection and rebellion. The project's goal is to render this data from prisoner records usable for identification and analysis of institutional forms of oppression, ultimately to investigate the origins of mass incarceration of Black Americans not only in the past, but the present as well. It is worth noting that within the penal records of the Maryland Penitentiary racial categorizations with which we are familiar are not present (e.g. several complexions are recorded, none of which are strictly labelled "Black" or "white" as modern government records state). A future researcher coming to the Archives will now have another important tool in conducting consequential research into the history of incarceration and the penal system in the State of Maryland.

Another aspect of my duties included compiling the names of people of interest, who appear in the Maryland Penitentiary's prisoner records, for further research. These were added to the "Revolts and Rebellions List," a spreadsheet which includes over 80 individuals compiled by me and my colleagues. One of these individuals, Robert Stanley, alias Charles Manorka, is the subject of a larger case study I researched and authored for inclusion on the Legacy of Slavery's website. Born free in Dorchester County, Stanley was the father of six when he moved to Baltimore somewhere between 1840 and 1850.¹⁸ Employed as a common laborer, he was nonetheless able to come to own a house worth \$900, as mentioned in his 1857 Baltimore City Criminal Court indictment.¹⁹ In the summer of 1856, Stanley became acquainted with Ms. Ann Flannigan, an enslaved woman owned by Henry S. Lankford, a merchant, member of the American Party (more commonly known as the "Know Nothings"), and the other subject of one my Legacy of Slavery Case Studies.²⁰ Over the course of a year, Stanley attempted to convince Ms. Flannigan to self-emancipate, citing his connections both to a woman in Philadelphia who aided runaways, along with connections on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. Given his knowledge of aiding runaways, is it possible that Stanley was associated with the Underground Railroad, and given his knowledge of the Eastern Shore, perhaps even Harriet Tubman herself? While that remains unknown, Ms. Flannigan was ultimately unwilling to join Stanley, and instead had him arrested for enticing her to flee.

¹⁷ MARYLAND PENITENTIARY (Prisoner Record) Volume 1811-1869 Prisoner #5158 [MSA SE65-5]

¹⁸ 1840 Federal Census; 1850 Federal Census.

¹⁹ BALTIMORE CITY CRIMINAL COURT (Criminal Docket) Volume 1857, May 1857 term indictment #140 [MSA C1849-6].

²⁰ The Know Nothings were a group of nativists, those who were fearful of more recent European immigrants to the United States, particularly the Irish and German Catholics. Much nativist paranoia was based in Anti-Catholicism, and the belief that Catholics would be more loyal to the Pope than to their government. They were most influential in American politics prior to the Civil War, and were born out of the fall of the Whig party in 1854, along with division between northern and southern Know Nothings over slavery.

As reported in *The Baltimore Sun* on 17 June 1857, Stanley had come to meet Ms. Flannigan a year prior, in the summer of 1856 on the streets of Baltimore. Throughout the year he attempted to convince her to attempt an escape, however, as *The Sun* reported, Flannigan was unwilling, “having a good home and unwilling to leave it.”²¹ Possibly upset by his attempts to convince her to self-emancipate or afraid of the discussions of freedom being discovered, Ms. Flannigan informed Mr. Lankford, her owner, about Stanley. He was promptly led into the family’s cellar under the guise of chopping wood for them and arrested. Sentenced to six years in the Maryland Penitentiary, Stanley would serve his whole time there.²² To date, the last record found affiliated with him was a bank account opened by his son, over a decade later.²³ Stories like these lend a fascinating insight into the personal lives of individuals of the past, however scant the details that survive to the present.

The Stanleys represent a tale of profound resilience, first born into a hostile nation, migration to a bustling urban center, the promise of a better future, and the final record, a bank record, and the possibility of financial, and thus political freedom. The life and times of the Stanleys represent a much more foundational goal of history than simply recording information about the past. While textbooks may fill in the basic details of the years leading up to the Civil War, the history of slavery, and the war itself, important details of individuals’ lives often fall through the cracks in service of the greater historical narrative. As part of my training in historical writing I was taught that, while a historian must always ultimately seek truth in the past, empathy and a desire to humanize the stories of individuals long dead orient the historian’s search not only on an axis of inquiry, but also of compassion.



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²¹ *The Sun*, (Baltimore, Md.), 16 June 1857.

²² MARYLAND PENITENTIARY (Prisoner Record), Volume 1811-1869, Prisoner #5158 [MSA SE65-5].

²³ U.S. Freedman’s Bank Record, Register of Signatures of Depositors, 1865-74, Roll 13: Baltimore, Maryland, May 3 1866-June 23 1874.