

THE CLAMSHELL

A Quarterly Newsletter of the Maryland State Archives

Box 5, Folder 3

Summer 2024

In this Issue:

[Letter from the Assistant State Archivist](#)

[Staff Updates](#)

[Retirement of Liz Coelho](#)

[Honors and Awards](#)

[Events and Outreach](#)

[Community Collections Program Going Strong](#)

[MARMA Partnership Leads to Workshop](#)

[MSA Hosts Grant Workshop](#)

[MLTRC Update](#)

[DSCI Service Year Maryland Corps Members Graduate](#)

[Teacher Training](#)

[Collection Highlights](#)

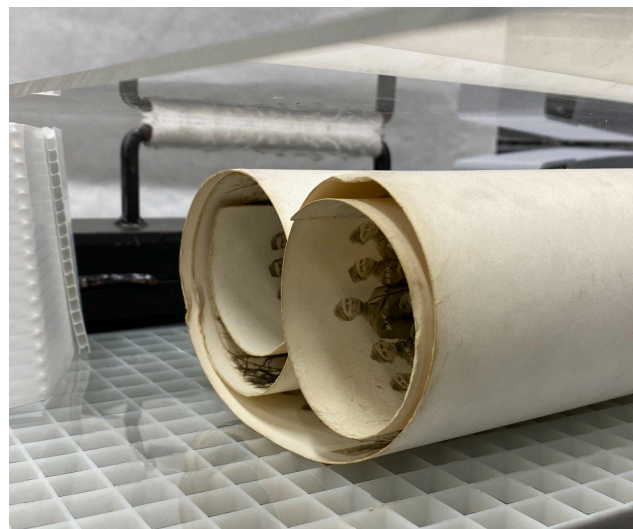
[The Great Recipe Hunt](#)

[Book Notes](#)

[The Construction of the USS Maryland](#)

[Class of 2024 Summer Interns](#)

[Project Reports](#)



Panoramic photograph in a humidity chamber. The backside of the photo is exposed to more humidity to help it relax and not crack. Photo and caption credit: Jenn Foltz Cruickshank

Humidification - A Definition

Humidification is the process of adding moisture to paper in order to relax the fibers and make them easier to open or flatten. It is a conservation technique that is particularly useful for documents that have been stored folded or rolled for a long time and become stiff or brittle and prone to breakage. By placing the document inside an enclosed area with a water source, water vapor enters the fibers of the paper, allowing them to relax. After the humidification process, a document can generally be gently unfolded/unrolled and flattened for circulation, safer handling and imaging. It is a technique that our professional conservation archivists use on a regular basis to care for our collections and make them more accessible.

Letter from the Assistant State Archivist

As this summer draws to a close, I find myself thinking a great deal about unity. There is a considerable amount of discord and division in the world today, which makes me incredibly grateful that the Maryland State Archives (MSA) strongly embraces the concept of unity among its guiding principles. MSA archivists believe that *all* of our stories add value to the historical record, and without that dedicated effort towards inclusivity, our cultural heritage is incomplete. The desire to allow everyone to see themselves in the collections at the Archives is the main reason that our formal Community Collections program was launched in 2019 with a programming grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission in cooperation with several local heritage organizations and the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives. This program initiated the hard work of establishing connections, sharing intentionality and building trusting relationships throughout the state. I am so proud that from those crucial beginnings a robust program has blossomed that is now expanded and worked on by archivists throughout the agency. During this summer alone we have hosted several Community Preservation Days with multiple heritage groups and added oral histories to *Mayis*, our Indigenous People's online project, for example. None of this is possible without prioritizing collaboration.

An essential requirement of the unity we seek is strong collaboration, and the Archives is fortunate to have many amazing partnerships. For instance, our summer internship program would not have been possible this year without the collaboration of esteemed groups such as St. John's College, the C.V. Starr Center of Washington College, and the Albert LePage Center for History in the Public Interest of Villanova University. We have hosted this educational program for over forty years, but due to budget constraints faced by our agency, we simply would not have been able to host the incredible students that you will meet in this issue without these generous partners who provided funding. Another outstanding example of collaboration is our participation in the Department of Service and Civic Innovation (DSCI) Maryland Corps Service Year Program. The first cohort is wrapping up their professional development experience with us, and we are about to begin working with the new class of DSCI Members. A funding partnership with the DSCI and collaboration of supervisors across the departments of the Archives has led to the success of this new educational and community service initiative. You will read more about all of these successful demonstrations of collaboration and unity in this issue.

I am so proud to share our accomplishments, and I am so grateful to our staff, stakeholders and our collaborators for supporting the cooperative work underlying the path to unity. We have made tremendous progress, but there is still much to do, and without a doubt, we are all stronger together.

Emily Oland Squires
Maryland State Archives Intern, Class of 1995
Assistant State Archivist

Staff Updates

Retirement of Liz Coelho



Liz came to MSA upon her retirement from the Navy after twenty-one years. She joined the staff of the Maryland State Archives in November of 2011. Since that time she has shared her talents with Constituent and Interagency Services, Reference Services and the Executive Office. Liz shares that she plans to travel, to continue to enjoy the study of history and owls, and rewatch every wonderful episode of Cocktails with a Curator, a YouTube series from The Frick Collection, which she highly recommends. Liz has contributed significantly to fulfilling the mission of the Archives throughout her time with us and we wish her well.

Honors and Awards



Chris Haley, Director of Research, Education and Outreach, received two honors in the month of June. First, Chris has been recognized by the Society of American Archivists with their 2024 Diversity Award for his outstanding contribution in advancing inclusivity within the archives profession and for his significant achievements in activism, education, outreach, publication, and service in the field. Chris received this honor in recognition of his long-term impact on improving and promoting diversity, equity and inclusion, not just at the Maryland State Archives, but nationally.

Second, Chris has been given the American Association of State and Local History's 2024 Leadership in History Award of Excellence for Individual Lifetime Achievement. The AASLH program has presented these awards for eight decades to honor the highest standards for the collection, preservation, and interpretation of state and local history.

Chris was recognized for his thirty years of outstanding contributions to the Maryland State Archives, and particularly for his direction of the Study of the History of Slavery in Maryland for over twenty years.



Corey Lewis, Assistant State Archivist, has received the Victoria Walch Irons Emerging Leader Award from the Council of State Archivists. Named for CoSA's first executive director, Victoria Irons Walch, this award encourages the development of an emerging leader in state and territorial archives. Corey has been recognized for his outstanding leadership as Assistant State Archivist, in addition to his twenty-five years of excellent public service at the Archives in the Digital Acquisition, Processing and Publications (DAPP) and Constituent and Interagency

Services (CIAS) divisions and Community Collections programming. The award is presented at the annual CoSA meeting and includes continuing education funds for leadership training in addition to a certificate.



Rachel Frazier, Director of Reference Services, has received the Ancestry Leadership Award from the Council of State Archivists in September. This award recognizes the next generation of leaders in state/territory government archives. Rachel was recognized for her direction of the Reference Services Department, as well as her twenty years of contributions to Reference, Research, and Administration. The award is presented at the annual CoSA meeting, including education funds to attend the conference with the aim to advance understanding of the field and collaborate with colleagues.

Events and Outreach

Community Collections Program Going Strong

This summer staff of the Maryland State Archives (Rhys Burns, Megan Craynon, Maria Day, Andrew Forschler, Hannah Lane, Corey Lewis, Owen Lourie, Max Schelein, and Ariana Washington) held two community preservation days in collaboration with the Venice Beach Citizens' Association. In addition, we have also worked directly with the Harlem Theater, Friends of Crownsville and the Sankofa Dance Theater Archives. These events gave members of the public the opportunity to share materials and oral histories to help document the cultural heritage of their community. We are very excited and honored to continue these partnerships with local groups and neighborhoods in our ongoing effort to build a repository where everyone can see themselves and their stories reflected in the Archives. Our next public community collections event is on Saturday, October 19th at the Hyattsville Branch of the Prince George's County Public Library. For more information, please see the library [website](#). Online registration for this event will be posted in September.

MARMIA Partnership Leads to Workshop

On July 19, Baltimore City Archives (BCA) hosted a Community Archiving Workshop (CAW) in conjunction with the Mid-Atlantic Regional Moving Image Archives (MARMIA) and audiovisual archivists from the Smithsonian. Austin Miller of MARMIA taught attendees the basics of film composition, identification, history and preservation.

Then, using examples from the Department of Recreation and Parks that were accessioned last year [BRG 51-14], they examined several films from as early as the 1940s and learned how to catalog and evaluate them for deterioration. Light tables, loupes (magnifiers) and film rewinders allowed were used to preview some of the images on these films as well.

Funded by a grant from the Mellon Foundation, MARMIA will be digitizing these City Archives films in

the near future. BCA looks forward to sharing clips! Pictured are stills from a circa 1940s film showing a parade rounding the edge of Druid Hill Park Reservoir, and a 1978 film by the Baltimore City Community Relations Commission (CRC). Other labeled films include “Pet Show,” “Orioles Parade” (1953) and “Zoo Events” (1948). Thanks go to Austin, Siobhan Hagan, CK Ming, and MARMIA’s interns Mercy and Nora for their time, expertise, and dedication to the preservation of moving images.

To learn more about MARMIA and the Mellon Foundation grant project, which will provide for additional CAWs and free digitization of audiovisual materials for the Baltimore community, check them out at marmia.org.

MSA Hosts Grant Workshop

On June 17 the Archives was pleased to host a federal grants application workshop led by the National Archives National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC). The workshop was open to any local organizations to learn strategies for making strong applications to federal grant programs, like the NHPRC and the National Endowment for Humanities in order to gain funding to manage and care for their collections. Many local historical societies, community groups, cultural heritage organizations and religious institutions joined us to learn about open opportunities and how to craft a noteworthy narrative and budget. We plan to host more of these educational workshops in the future to support local organizations.

MLTRC Update

The MSA serves the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission (MLTRC) and provides administrative support, records management and website maintenance on behalf of the Commission. The next public Commission hearing will be on Saturday, October 5th in Montgomery County, with another following that for Harford and Cecil County on Saturday, October 26. Please visit the Commission [website](#) for further details on the times and locations of these events and additional hearing dates as they are scheduled. The website also provides access to recordings of previously held meetings and hearings.

DSCI Service Year Maryland Corps Members Graduate

The Archives was honored to be selected as a host site for the inaugural year of the Department of Service and Civic Innovation’s Maryland Corps Service Year Program. Our four program Members, Kemani Burton, Kendall Hahn, Ben Lewis and Caroline Ritter, spent the last 10 months working full time on site at the MSA and rotating across many varied departments including Imaging, Research, Special Collections, Conservation and Reference Services. Our members officially graduated from the program on July 16 in a special ceremony held at Oriole Park at Camden Yards hosted by Governor Moore. We are so proud of the growth and professional development that each Member undertook during their placement with us, and we are thrilled to announce that we have been chosen as a continuing host site for year two. Our new class of Members starts with us on September 11.

Teacher Training

The MSA participated in the August Professional Development Day for Anne Arundel County Public Schools Social Studies Educators on August 19. Reference Services Archivist Danielle Smith

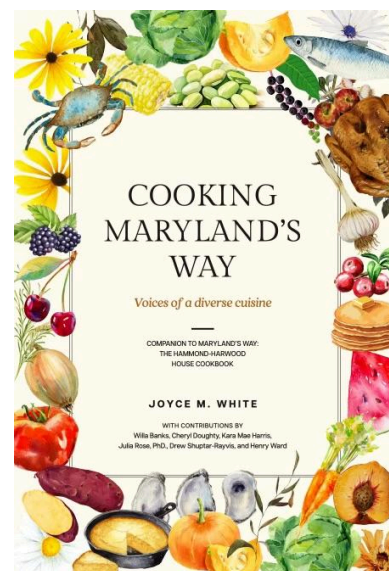
attended the day-long event and gave presentations to secondary history, government, geography and social studies teachers in the county. Her focus was on helping the teachers access the resources of the Archives online in order to build curricula, supplement lesson plans and assist their students with papers and projects, such as History Day. This event was a collaborative effort between the school system and the Chesapeake Crossroads Heritage Area, of which the Archives is a member.

Collection Highlights

The Great Recipe Hunt: Collection update & forthcoming book

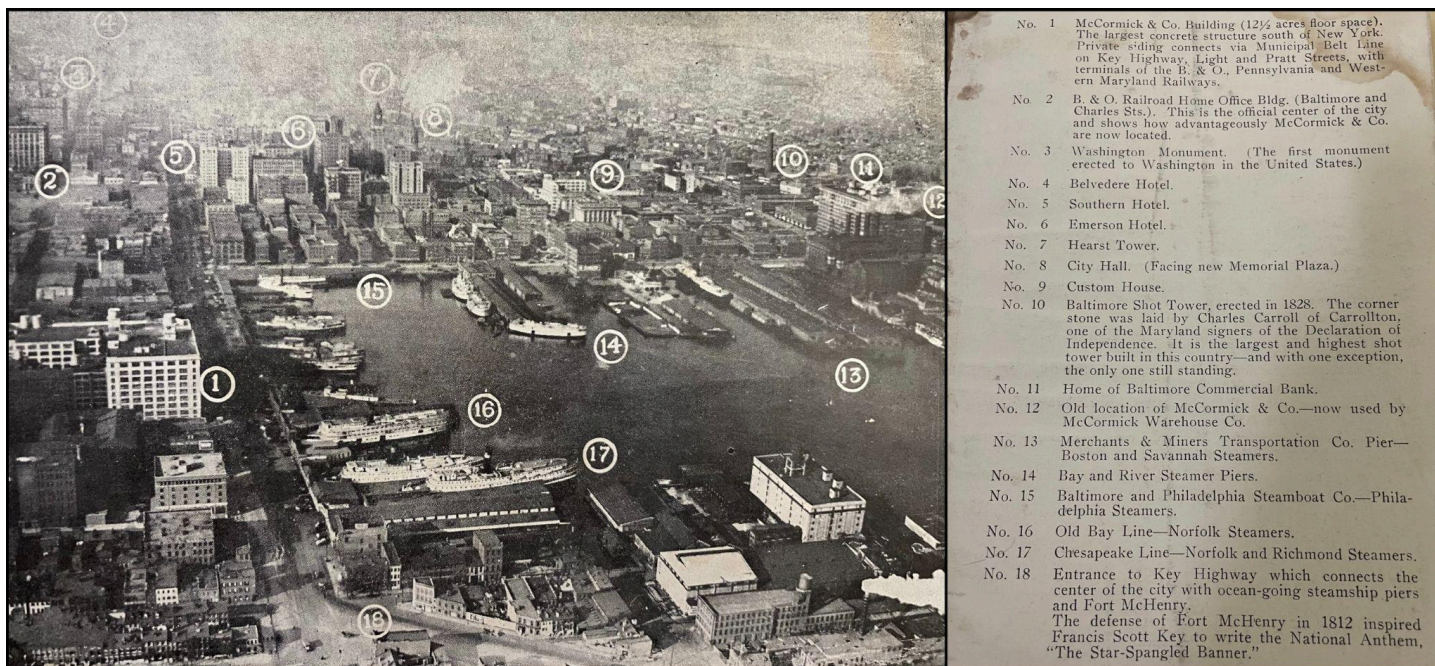
In this edition's "Book Notes" Christine Alvey, MSA Librarian, highlights unique and unexpected features and information that cookbooks can include, which are valuable to researchers. The specific item referenced is a part of a larger collection, [MSA SC 6316](#), donated by food historian Joyce White. Ms. White donated 105 community based cookbooks, as a part of a larger project leading into the upcoming release of her new book, *Cooking Maryland's Way: Voices of a Diverse Cuisine*.

Information about the books Ms. White donated can be found in the [Special Collections](#) catalog; they are also cross listed in the MSA Library. Pre-orders of *Cooking Maryland's Way* can be placed through the [Hammond-Harwood House Museum](#).



Book Notes

By Christine Alvey, Librarian, Maryland State Archives



Want to see what Baltimore Harbor looked like in the late nineteen twenties?

Look at a cookbook.

Recently the State Archives received a donation that included one hundred five (105) cookbooks. Most of these were compiled by civic organizations, local groups, and members of homemakers and church groups. Most of the recipes were contributed by women. Many times the contributor's name appears next to the recipe they submitted for inclusion in the cookbook. The combination of named local organizations and named individuals makes this material a source for local history and genealogy. The cookbooks also offer a window into family life, homemaking, and the lives of women at various times.

Occasionally other important information not related to cooking is included. For example, *BeeBrand of Cookery* (MSA SC 6316-2-103) by McCormick and Company, published in 1926, features an inside cover with a black and white reproduction aerial photograph of the Baltimore harbor. Each building has been captured in great detail. A corresponding numbered key identifies each structure.

The Construction of the USS *Maryland*

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

This is a continuation of an article from The Clamshell's spring edition.

The USS Maryland served in both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans and was renamed the USS Frederick in 1916 to free up the name to be used on a colorado-class battleship.¹ After 17 years of service, the USS Frederick was decommissioned in 1922, stricken from the Naval Register on November 13, 1929, and sold on February 11, 1930.²

In June 2024 a new object was put on display in the Caucus Room of the Maryland State House; an engine room clock [MSA SC 1545-3507] believed to be from the USS *Maryland* cruiser (ACR-8). Generously donated in 2019, this clock is a touchstone of both the construction and service of the USS *Maryland* cruiser.

Long before a ship heads out to sea in active duty, it starts with a contract and subsequent construction. In early January 1901, the Secretary of the Navy announced new conditional contracts for Navy vessels. The Newport News Shipbuilding & Dry Dock Company, in Newport News Virginia, had placed a \$3,593,000 bid to make the next armored cruiser.³ By January 24, 1901, a contract for an armored cruiser of 14,500 tons at a cost of \$3,885,000 was officially signed.⁴ Records provided by The Newport News Shipbuilding & Dry Dock Company [the Company] indicate that the USS

¹ "Maryland II (Armored Cruiser No. 8)." Maryland II (Armored Cruiser No. 8). Accessed February 22, 2024.

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

² Ibid.

³ "Contracts Awarded Conditionally". *The Virginian-Pilot*, January 6, 1901.

https://www.newspapers.com/image/605368412/?match=1&clipping_id=145061291

⁴ "Virginia News". *Alexandria Gazette*, January 28, 1901. <https://www.newspapers.com/article/alexandria-gazette/145061468/>.

Maryland's keel was laid on October 29, 1901.⁵ Newspaper reports periodically mentioned the USS *Maryland's* ongoing construction in passing.

The eleven ships under contract are:
First-class battleship Virginia, first-class battleship Missouri, armored cruiser *Maryland*, armored cruiser West Virginia, protected cruiser Charleston, harbor defense monitor Arkansas, Pacific Mail steamer Korea, Pacific Mail steamer Siberia, Old Dominion steamer Monroe, oil steamer for Saginaw Steel Steamship Company, lumber steamer for Pacific coast trade.

6

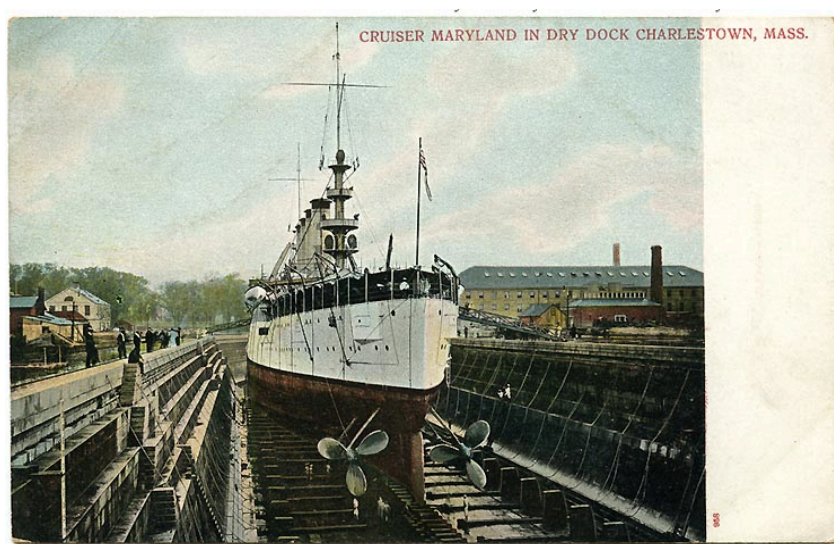
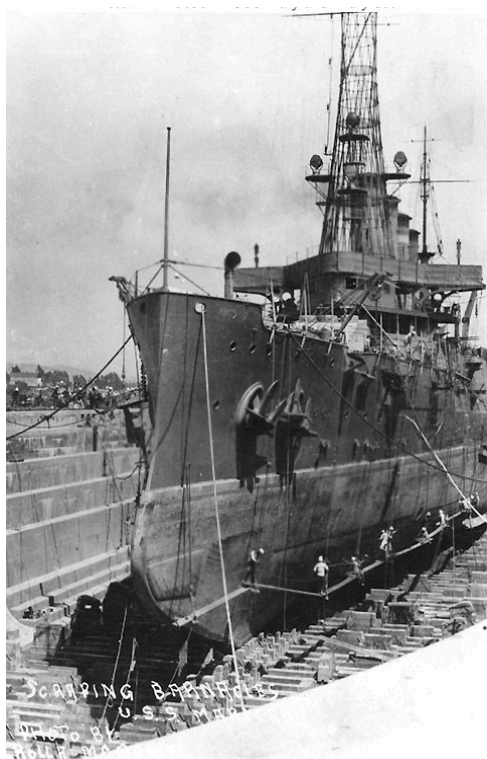
RAPID WORK AT SHIPYARD

Cruiser *Maryland* Be Nearly
Finished When Launched.

7

Local papers continued to emphasize the pace at which the vessels at the Company were being made. By early August 1903, it is reported that the USS *Maryland* is, "beginning to look like a naval champion."⁸

While no images are known to exist of the USS *Maryland* under construction at the Company, other images taken during later repairs provide a good reference of what its construction at the dry dock may have looked like.⁹



Left: USS *Maryland*, at the Navy Yard in San Francisco, 1911¹⁰ Right: USS *Maryland*, at the Navy Yard in Boston, c.1905¹¹

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

⁶ "Work at Newport News". *The Virginian-Pilot*, April 13, 1902. https://www.newspapers.com/image/605092423/?match=1&clipping_id=145061069.

⁷ "Rapid Work At Shipyards". *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, August 5, 1903. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/827185868/?match=1>.

⁸ "Rapid Work At Shipyards". *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, August 5, 1903. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/827185868/?match=1>.

⁹ Extensive research, including contacting U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command and the The Mariners' Museum and Park where the early records of the Newport News Shipbuilding & Dry Dock are kept has not revealed any images of construction.

¹⁰ Rolla McDaniel. *USS Maryland*. c.1911. U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command, Washington, D.C. NH 50364

¹¹ A.C. Bosselman & Company, New York. *USS Maryland*. c.1905. U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command, Washington, D.C. NH 103845-KN

Work must have progressed better than anticipated, as by the end of August 1903 the ship's expected launch date had been moved from October 1st to mid-September, and plans were drawn up for the launching ceremonies.¹² Miss Jennie Scott Waters, eldest daughter of General and Mrs. Waters of Baltimore was selected to be the sponsor of the USS *Maryland* cruiser.

Her selection by Governor Smith was due to her familiar connections. Miss Waters was the descendant of William Corbin who fought in the Revolutionary War and served two terms in the House of Delegates representing Worcester County.¹³ Her father, General Francis E. Waters was described as, "one of the leading men of the State, socially and in business and politics [...] he has been the life-long friend and business associate of Governor Smith, and is judge advocate general on the Governor's military staff."¹⁴ Miss Waters herself was a 24 year old socialite of Baltimore and Annapolis, described as, "young, pretty and cultured" by the press.¹⁵

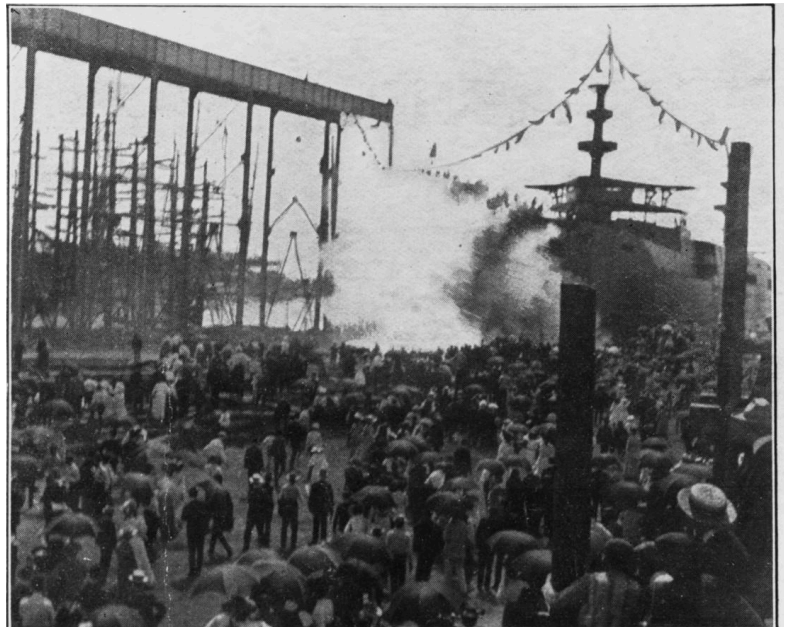


Miss Waters, 1903¹⁶

With much anticipation and fanfare the time finally came for the, "Armored cruiser of the Oriole state [to] glide into the James from the ways of the Newport New Yard."¹⁷ The launch was scheduled for 1pm on September 12, with over 400 specially invited guests confirmed to attend, including both Governor Montague of Virginia and Governor Smith of Maryland.¹⁸ The subsequent gala and public events were expected to draw upwards of 20,000 people.¹⁹ The USS *Maryland* was decorated, "with gay colors, while patriotic bunting will be used to hide the rough and unsightly material used in the construction of the stand."²⁰

A rare surviving picture (shown right) of the event, published on a postcard by Mrs. Alice W. Morton, provides a glimpse into its launch and the ensuing celebrations.²¹

The USS *Maryland*'s launch was not "smooth sailing" (pun intended). When it came time for the ship to launch into the water, its supports that would have rolled her into the James seemingly collapsed. It is thought that:



¹² "Miss Waters The Sponsor." *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, August 30, 1903.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/827203276/?match=1&terms=Miss%20Waters>.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ "She Will Christen The United States Cruiser Maryland." *The Baltimore Sun*, August 28, 1903.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/371450541/?match=1>.

¹⁷ "Maryland To Take Dip Today. *Virginian-Pilot*, September 11, 1903.

https://www.newspapers.com/image/844503501/?match=1&clipping_id=145043866.

¹⁸ "Maryland To Take Dip Today. *Virginian-Pilot*, September 11, 1903.

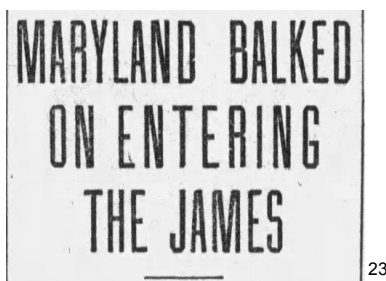
https://www.newspapers.com/image/844503501/?match=1&clipping_id=145043866.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Mrs. Alice W. Morton. *USS Maryland*. September 12, 1903. U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command, Washington, D.C. NH 93710

The intensity of the sun's rays caused the melting of the tallow with which the ways were greased and the big keel instead of gliding evenly down to the water, clung to her cradle. When she was finally sped upon her way the warship dipped her stern heavily.²²



The Company attempted to use “five powerful tugs and the steamer Newport News” but the lines snapped.²⁴ It was decided that the USS *Maryland*'s position was not dangerous to the ship and that it would likely refloat at high tide the following day. Several newspapers also noted that the weight of the ship could have been a contributing factor as the ship was believed to be the heaviest vessel ever put overboard.²⁵ Regardless of the USS *Maryland* not being able to fully launch, the parties and festivities seemed to go on without second thought. Only one newspaper pessimistically predicted that the ship would take more time to relaunch than 24 hours, even going so far as to call the ship “unlucky.”²⁶

The following day during high tide the USS *Maryland* was successfully floated. An account of how this was accomplished is in the excerpt from *The Portsmouth Star* below. Afterwards, she was taken to a dry dock to finish painting and crews reconfirmed the USS *Maryland* was undamaged and ready for the next steps of her construction.

After fully investigating the condition of the ship, the officials of the yard made preparations for an extraordinary effort yesterday afternoon, and when the tide was at its flood work was begun. The experts at the yard had figured out that the best way to handle the ship was by purchases from the piers and by hydraulic jacks pushing on the bow. Four hundred tons of the latter pressure was brought to bear on the huge steel hull, and after a start was made the balance of the work was comparatively easy.

27

Though the USS *Maryland* was christened and launched in 1903, it would be another two years before she would be commissioned and visit Annapolis to receive her silver service. Generally, the

²² Ibid.

²³ “Maryland Balked On Entering The James”. *Virginian-Pilot*, September 13, 1903.

https://www.newspapers.com/image/844503536/?match=1&clipping_id=145043772

²⁴ “Stuck On The Ways”. *Virginian-Pilot*, September 1903. https://www.newspapers.com/image/605121521/?clipping_id=145044045.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ “The Unlucky Maryland”. *The Portsmouth Star*, September 15, 1903.

https://www.newspapers.com/image/907120723/?match=1&clipping_id=145059578

²⁷ “Cruiser Maryland Floated”. *The Portsmouth Star*, September 16, 1903.

https://www.newspapers.com/image/907120772/?match=1&clipping_id=145059670

framework of the ship is in place at launching but the, “weapon and electronic systems, galley, and other equipment required to transform the new hull into an operating and habitable warship are installed” afterwards.²⁸ It is at this stage that the clock [MSA SC 1545-3507] was installed in the hull of the USS *Maryland* as the U.S. Naval Oceanographic [Office] purchased parts for MSA SC 1545-3507 on October 8, 1904 from the Chelsea Clock Company.²⁹

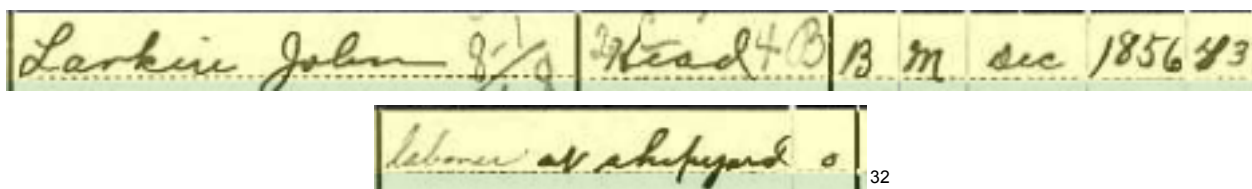
When the case of the clock [MSA SC 1545-3507] is opened, it reveals the name “John L. Larkin etched into the clock’s face just above the “XI” (9).



30

Without context this name could be associated with a number of possibilities; someone at the Company during construction, a repair worker at any of the naval yards the USS *Maryland/Frederick* visited, a seaman who served aboard the USS *Maryland/Frederick*, the first owner of MSA SC 1545-3507 before it appeared in a clock shop in 1967, etc. Their name is not visible unless the case is opened, which implies it was intentionally placed in an area so as not to be seen.

The author has assumed that since many of the markings on the clock appear to date to the time of manufacture, that the name may be associated with someone who built it rather than a later addition. Research into the name “John L. Larkin” in connection to the state of Virginia revealed a “John Larkin” in the 1900 Newport News U.S. Census. Mr. Larkin was born in December 1856, was African American, and had been married to his wife Mary for four years. In 1900 he was 43 years old, and listed his profession as “laborer at shipyard”.³¹



32

While no specific shipyard is mentioned, Newport News Shipbuilding & Dry Dock Company was certainly the largest employer in the area at that time. When asked if the Company’s shipyard was diverse, Bill Barker, Archivist at The Mariners’ Museum and Park, which holds the early records of the

²⁸ “Ship Commissioning.” Wikipedia, October 18, 2023.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ship_commissioning#:~:text=Before%20commissioning%2C%20the%20new%20ship,World%20War%20II%20landing%20ship

²⁹ DuVally, J. F. (1967, September 7). Untitled. Boston , Massachusetts; Chelsea Clock Company .

³⁰ Robin Gower, April 2024, Maryland State Archives

³¹ U.S. Census Bureau (1900). *1900 United States Federal Census*,. Retrieved from <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

³² Ibid.

Company replied, “the shipyard did have a very diverse workforce in the time frame the *Maryland* was built. In addition to a large number of African Americans, the shipyard employed many women.”³³

Unfortunately, the Mariners’ Museum and Park’s collection does not contain any personnel record information from that period.³⁴ Further research at present has not been able to uncover any additional information about this particular John Larkin.

Deeper research into the USS *Maryland/Frederick* could be conducted to confirm or eliminate the possibility that it was a sailor onboard. The author was not able to locate another “John Larkin” on the muster information of USS *Maryland/Frederick* available online, but further research could be completed in direct connection with the U.S. Navy. It is likely not possible to discover if the name is associated with a repair person at any of the shipyards over the course of the ship's life without fully investigating the ship's movements and finding records for individual shipyards.



Image from the trial of the USS Maryland, January 27, 1905³⁵

According to the records of the Company, the USS *Maryland* officially started trials (where they test all the elements on board) on January 27, 1905 and left the yard for good on April 18, 1905.³⁶ That same date, the vessel was commissioned with Captain Royal R. Ingersoll in command.

On May 31, 1906, the USS *Maryland* received her silver service, an impressive 48 piece set depicting 167 scenes from the state’s history, made by the famed Baltimore firm Samuel Kirk and Son Company. Today, the silver service is on display in the Caucus Room of the Maryland State House, alongside the engine room clock.³⁷

³³ Barker, B. email to Robin Gower April 25, 2024

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Bailey, Charles. F. *Smoke, USS Maryland*. The Mariners Museum and Park, Newport News, VA. MS0270/-03.43#41

³⁶ Browne, H. LeRoss letter to clock owner October 6, 1967.

³⁷ The Maryland State House is open to visitors 7 days a week, 8:30 am - 5 pm. You can also visit https://msa.maryland.gov/msa/speccol/sc1500/sc1545/apc_web/apcsilver_ussmaryland.html for information on and detailed images of the USS *Maryland* silver service.

Class of 2024 Summer Interns

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

Our summer 2024 intern class walked through the front doors in early June to spend ten weeks working with staff mentors on assignments such as imaging services, order fulfillment, computer programming, network operations, 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 the Maryland Institute for Innovative Computing, 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.



As our summer program wrapped up, so did our inaugural class of the Service Year Option and Maryland Corps Program. Over the course of nine months, these four young adults rotated through several departments at the Archives and learned a variety of skills along the way, while providing valuable contributions to our daily operations. We thank them for choosing to spend a year of service with us and wish them well in their future pursuits. Please enjoy the following project reports submitted by the participants in these educational professional development programs.

Project Reports

Baltimore City Archives

[Coroner's Inquests Records](#)

Conservation Department

[Special Projects in the Lab](#)

Imaging Services

[Scanning Projects](#)

Information Technology Department

[IT Programming](#)

[IT Operations Internship](#)

Research Department

[The Rainbow Books Project](#)

Special Collections Department

[The Fascinations of the John McGrain Collection](#)

[Reflections on Archival Processing: My Time With the May Albright Seitz Collection](#)

[A Pathway Forward – MAYIS](#)

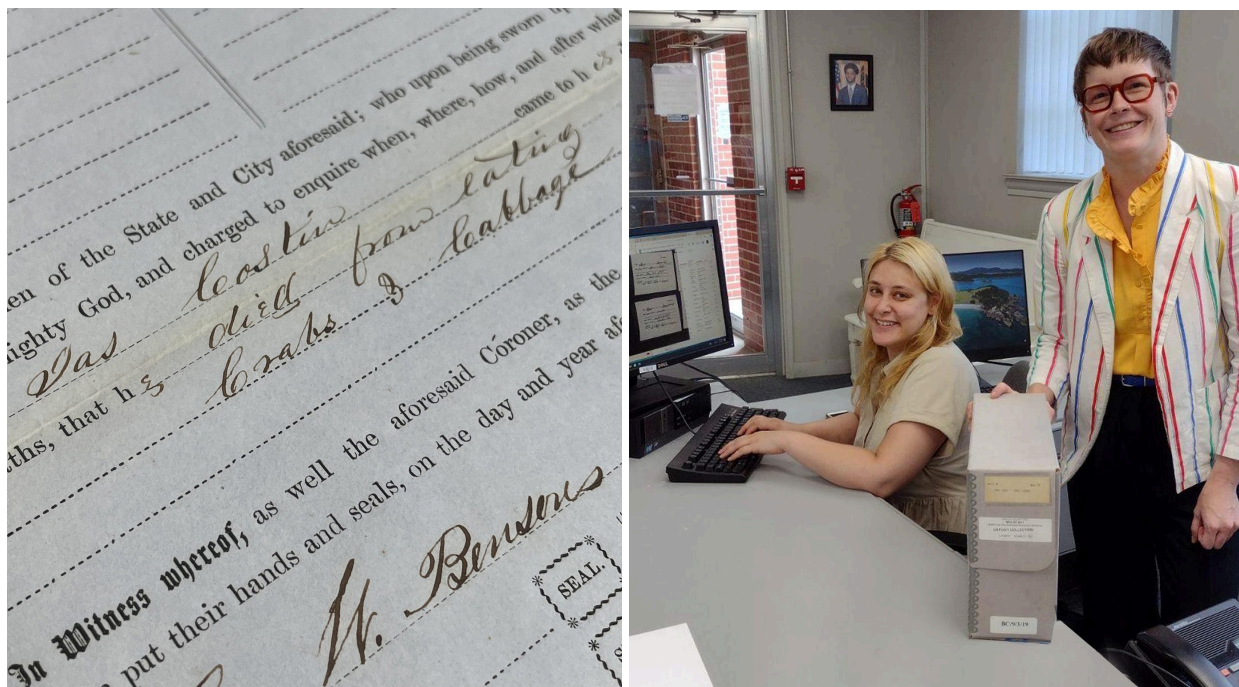
The Study of the Legacy of Slavery in Maryland

[The Maryland State Penitentiary: Incarceration Patterns in the Post-Emancipation Era](#)

BALTIMORE CITY ARCHIVES

Coroner's Inquests Records

Jeni Spamer, Deputy City Archivist



Left: Coroner's inquest declaring cause of death "Eating crabs and cabbage."

Right: Baltimore City Archives intern Katie Mayer with Deputy City Archivist Jeni Spamer

This summer at the Baltimore City Archives, we are hosting a part-time intern from the University of Maryland MLIS program. Katie Mayer is working with Deputy City Archivist Jeni Spamer on a project to improve public access to certain Baltimore City Health Department records related to 19th century deaths. These records are important to genealogists, but they also provide an interesting window into city life almost 200 years ago.

Coroner's Inquests were investigations performed to determine cause of death when someone's

passing was unexpected. Interment reports were lists of all deaths in the city, including cause as well as burial location. Both of these records series had handwritten name indexes on digitized microfilm, and Katie has been transcribing the indexes into a searchable, sortable, and easily accessible spreadsheet.

In the process of this morbid task, she has seen many surprising “official” causes of death, including “Eating crabs and cabbage,” and more frequently, “Drinking cold water” or “Visitation of God.” Historically, the City Coroner did not have to be a medical doctor!

Katie says, “I enjoy this project because despite there being so little information on these cards, they really say a lot.” Pictured are examples of these original documents and one of the index cards.

Katie will also be digitizing as many inquests as possible, since these are often in very delicate condition and at greater risk with each retrieval. We look forward to being able to link these digitized records and the searchable index in our online catalog! ([BRG19-1](#))

CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT

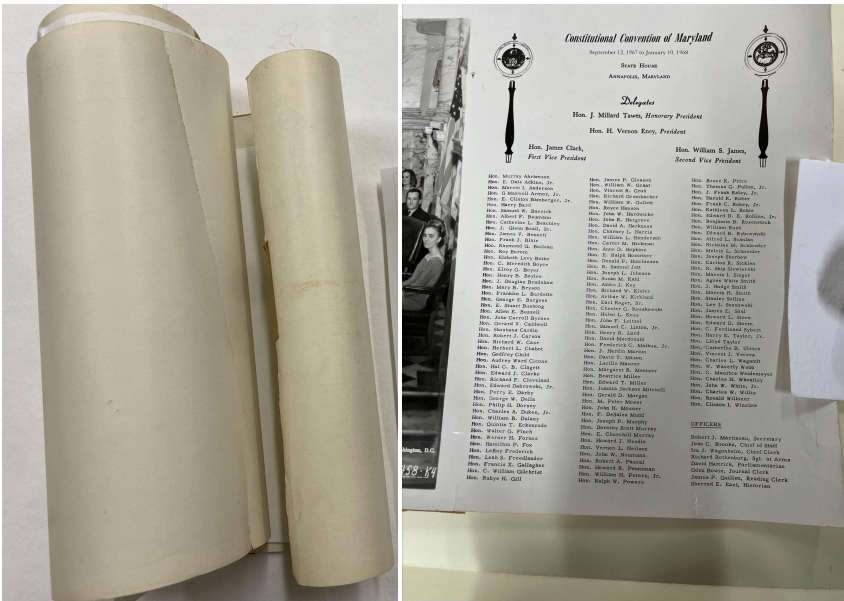
Special Projects in the Lab

Sophia Derico from St. John's College

This summer I worked with the Conservation and Special Collections staff at the Maryland State Archives, assisting in the repair and rehousing of many collections and items. I developed new skills, learning about various conservation materials and tools to determine which would be best to apply to the needs of the collections. For the Gray Collection ([MSA SC 1879](#)), consisting largely of lists of debts and confiscated British property from the 1780's, I used heat-set tissue to repair pieces that had torn or come apart. These documents were written in iron gall ink, notorious for its unfortunate tendency to oxidize and flake apart over time. In places where the author had used more ink, holes had appeared in the paper. Some of these were not of immediate concern, but any that compromised the structure or obscured the information of the record had to be treated.

While the ink had aged poorly, it fared far better than many of the volumes of government records I worked with which were suffering from extensive red rot. Red rot is the degradation of leather, which causes the material to turn into a fine red powder over time. These too needed treatment, although they could not be repaired. To prevent any further damage, and to make the books usable for patrons, these volumes had to be wrapped in tyvek covers, taped, and relabeled. After which they could be handled without staining the hands of the reader or shedding large portions of binding. New labels also made these records more accessible, allowing them to be easily identified and retrieved even after the covers have worn away.

I also assisted in the humidification of documents, newspapers, and one particularly ill treated photograph. This panoramic black and white photo of the 1967 Maryland Constitutional Convention ([MSA SC 6247-2-6](#)) had been stored for some time in a very tight roll and as a result could not be opened or viewed without risk of damage. In order to unfurl the material we built a humidification chamber using a large bin with wet techwipe wrapped in tyvek and a plastic grate barrier. The



exposure to moisture, without allowing water to directly contact the photo, improves its flexibility. After being placed in and taken out of the chamber repeatedly over the course of several days it was unrolled and let to dry under a wool cover. It could then be treated for cracks and creases with tissue and gelatin and stored properly in a folder.

But not all of the projects I worked on were focused around repair and storage. Most collections needed to be described, cataloged, and organized as well. For collections that were new or

unprocessed, all of the material had to be read and arranged. An unprocessed box from the Magruder Collection ([MSA SC 1247-1-23](#)) containing over 130 items had no existing description and was housed in folders in no particular order. I read through all these documents, sheets of notes, newspaper clippings, and letters; then wrote descriptions, organizing them based on categories related to their contents, and finally re-folded the entire box. The documents were then accounted for, easily accessible, and much more useful. This required quite a bit of research, piecing together information so as to get an overall picture of the relevance of the items in the collection. I ended up learning not only about the life and family members of Dr. Magruder but also of the contentious case of the Naval Academy's attempt to acquire St. John's College, the controversy surrounding the move of the Land Office from the original Hall of Records building, and the Ark and Dove Society, among many other things.



Another organizationally challenging project was centered around removing oversized maps from the basement storage in order to roll and relabel them. The vast majority were stored flat on shelving that was overcrowded, resulting in wasted space and crumpled edges that made the maps very difficult to find and use. Their former storage also made it almost impossible for them to be put back in any

semblance of order after they were taken out to be viewed. I helped to amend this inefficient system by taking all the maps down and putting them in order by item number, rolling them in small groups, and then wrapping and labeling each roll. Once intermediate shelves were removed from the range much more space was available and the maps were easy to locate and return.

This internship allowed me to develop my skills as a researcher, conservationist, and historian, while also giving me the opportunity to learn about the importance and complexities of the Archives. Working here I was able to explore historical sites and museums in Annapolis, as well as the many different departments within the Archives itself to get as much practical and educational experience as possible. I am incredibly grateful for getting to work alongside so many talented and knowledgeable people and to have been a part of their mission to preserve Maryland history.

IMAGING SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Scanning Projects

Maxwell Schleien from St. John's College

During my weeks in the imaging department, I have scanned and processed many collections. The two primary scanners I used were the Kodak and the overhead camera system. The Kodak was used to scan text based documents that were similar or smaller than a standard piece of 8 1/2 by 11 inch paper. The overhead camera system was used for scanning large documents, such as scrapbooks, documents with colors, such as pictures, or any documents that were a century or more old. While the overhead camera is fantastic for capturing detailed images, it takes time to set up and can be slow to use. The camera must be refocused for books as the pages turn and the operator must change the height of the camera. Wrinkled or folded items need to be flattened to properly capture them. Conversely, the Kodak can scan documents at an incredible pace. In a single day I could scan thousands of items with it. However, the Kodak is limited in that it can't capture color and can only be fed with modern paper.

The first collection I digitized was the new Venice Beach Collection, [MSA SC 6386](#). After completing that, I joined the ongoing scanning of marriage certificates from the 1940s, [MSA S1772](#). I continued to work on this collection, both scanning and processing, throughout the summer when I was available. Both of those were scanned on the Kodak. The next collection I was assigned to scan was MSA SC 6250, a collection of images from the Blacks of the Chesapeake organization. These were scanned using the overhead camera system. The last collection I scanned was [MSA SC 6227](#), the collection of Maryland Senator John C. Astle. I digitized photographs and documents from this collection, using the overhead camera for photos and the Kodak for documents.

In addition to digitizing items, I also processed scanned items so they would be ready for public access. The majority of the processing I did was adding metadata to scanned items, particularly descriptions. Using Adobe Bridge, I added metadata descriptions to some of the Rainbow Books, primarily [MSA S989](#) through [MSA S991](#). These descriptions could prove to be of great use to future researchers who, like myself, have trouble reading the old cursive used in old documents like the Rainbow Books.

My time working at the Archives has provided me with greater understanding of the archival process, particularly the relationship between an archive and the general public. Between the main projects I worked on, we received numerous requests for court cases, marriage certificates, or other documents to be scanned. Regularly, members of the general public asked for records kept by the Maryland State Archives, and everyday we delivered digital copies of those records for patrons. Whether it be for a court case or someone looking into their family history, we preserve and provide information for people to use. Without the Archives, our history would not only be inaccessible, but it would be lost forever.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT

IT Programming

Steven Arias from University of Maryland, College Park

Reflecting on my internship in the Archives' Information Technology Department, I am amazed at how much I have grown. When I first started, I was eager to learn but unsure what to expect. Throughout my time here, I worked on two development projects and one project relating to cybersecurity.

My first project was an introductory one called "Early Settlers," which helped me become comfortable with VB.NET. This two-part project consisted of 1) creating an application that allows users to find information from "The Early Settlers of Maryland" and 2) recreating the application as an ASPX webpage. The last line of code I wrote in Visual Basic (before this internship) was in college about two years ago, but this project quickly refreshed my memory. After completing it, I was ready for my next project.

My second and last development project was called the "Page Viewer Link Generator." Before I created this webpage, the process for staff to send links to a series in Page Viewer to patrons was rather inconvenient. The series must first be located in the public catalog, The Guide to Government Records, and copied from there. The process is further complicated by the fact that Page Viewer uses encrypted links. Therefore, the Page Viewer Link Generator allows users to request the links for multiple series' at a time (up to 450 direct scan links simultaneously). After submitting the first version, Frank Patnaude (Director of IT Development) and Nikki Schultz (Lead Programmer and Analyst) quickly noticed several design and functionality drawbacks that I could improve. In my final versions of the project, I took their suggestions and effectively created a better-looking, better-working web application.

I also had the opportunity to work with the IT staff on website user analysis including access and download patterns for digital images online. I was engaged in public server monitoring, AI recognition and defense then reporting and these tasks sparked my interest in the fields of computer science that I had not explored in the past. This internship has done so much to grow my interest and skills in computer science, and I will forever be thankful for this experience!

IT Operations Internship

Dorian Smith from University of Maryland Global Campus

For the end of the spring semester and summer I worked as the new IT intern at the Maryland State Archives. My office was located in the Archives' lower level, where I performed most of the work while being taught and managed by Tony, Trey, Marius, and Betsy. Throughout my internship I learned how to fix, update, and manage existing computers and technologies used within the Archives.

One of my first tasks was to complete an inventory of the technologies cataloged throughout the Archives. I introduced myself to everyone and took the time to catalog any missing information and update existing records of currently used technologies.

The Archives' inventory allows the IT staff to know what items are still in use, what's broken down, and what items are missing. Knowing this information makes operating in the IT department more effective, as there is less confusion when looking for items or understanding what items need to be replaced.

One of the ways I accomplished this task was through weekly meetings with the IT staff where I would update them on my current progress and explain any other ongoing projects for which I was involved. They would then work with me and explain anything for which I had questions.

Another task I was responsible for was called "Frankensteining" computers together. The name is not real; the IT staff created it. They use it to explain when you would have two computers that have problems, and the IT staff replaces the parts of one using parts supplied from another. Further explained, one of the computers is having some issues; however, it's ultimately solvable and not severe. In contrast, the second computer has a problem that is so serious it will only ever be functionable again with some serious work. The IT staff would then proceed to take bits and pieces from the seriously damaged computer and put them into the moderately damaged one, thus allowing them to fix it more cost effectively than simply replacing the parts by purchasing new ones.

My experience using this technique was when I had a computer that blew out its power supply (the plug and battery that provides power to the computer). The IT staff had on hand a box of previously used batteries that still worked, even though the computers they came from had bit the dust. It was my job to research the current power supply of the computer I was working on, look through the box of batteries to find a power supply that might work for this computer, and then take apart the PC and replace its power supply.

I was nervous because it was the first time I had gotten my hands inside a PC, and I feared breaking something; however, I was pleasantly surprised to find that the inside of a PC, at least at the Archives, was very well organized. As a result of that, replacing the power supply was a straightforward act of remembering where I took all the wires and pieces out of the computer and replacing them correctly. What helped the most throughout the process was using Trey's iFixit tool kit which he lent to me. I highly recommend those tools if anyone reading this is considering working with computers or phones.

Another issue I worked on was improving the speed of staff's workstations. Sometimes, the computers worked fine; however, they were very slow. When something like this happens, it would be my responsibility to replace the hard drive with a SSD (Solid State Drive). Simply replacing the hard drive allowed the computers to run faster because the hard drive uses hardware to read and write information. This is slower than an SSD, which uses something called flash memory to make reading and writing information to the SSD almost instantaneous.

The one main thing I learned throughout this internship was that it is not a one-person operation. Everything that is done here at the Archives is accomplished by many people, who work together to solve problems. It makes me feel like I always have someone looking out for me and ready to help whenever needed. Additionally, this internship has allowed me to experience an IT department's day-to-day operations from a first-person perspective. Consequently, I now have desirable marketable skills for entering the IT field.

RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

The Rainbow Books Project

Mattie Gilliam from Washington College

During my time as an intern at the Maryland State Archives (MSA) this summer, I worked with the research department to finish cataloging the Rainbow Books series. The Maryland State Archives is working alongside the Society of the Cincinnati in Maryland to digitize the Rainbow Books and publish them online. The Rainbow Books are a set of Revolutionary War-era papers inserted into their bindings similar to how one would assemble a scrapbook. The books get their name from their colorful bindings, which theoretically signify the contents of the books: Red for letters to the governor, Brown for military records, Blue for "Executive Miscellanea," and Black for colonial records. This incomplete rainbow of categories does not necessarily reflect the actual contents of the book, as the categories overlap and contain little, if any, organization. The volumes contain documents ranging from petitions to the governor to invoices from craftsmen to muster rolls for regiments in the army. The volumes of these books contain over 7,800 documents total, with each book color split into multiple volumes; there are six Blue Books ([MSA S990](#)), eleven Black Books ([MSA S987](#)), eleven Brown Books ([MSA S991](#)), and fifty Red Books ([MSA S989](#)).

A series of calendars to the Maryland State Papers were created in the mid-twentieth century in an attempt to make the records more easily searchable, including key pieces of information about items, such as their dates, senders and recipients, and descriptions. The calendars contain a complete register of the documents within the Rainbow Books, but the accession numbers within are outdated; there is a similar problem with the finding aids accessible online, like the Maryland State Papers Index ([MSA S1484](#)), which has its own issues of missing or incorrect entries. I utilized both the calendars to the Red and Black books alongside the online Maryland State Papers Index to create an entry for each document, including its sender, recipient, description, and the MSA and MdHR (former accession information standing for Maryland Hall of Records) numbers; this data will be used to organize the documents clearly alongside digital scans of the original items on the MSA website, where users can search by specific criteria to access a wealth of documents.

Over the course of my internship, I worked through the latter portion of the Red Books, the complete set of Black Books and their oversize box, and the Executive Portfolio. After finishing that work earlier than anticipated, I completed the General Assembly papers. I recorded the contents of 45 sets of documents, from books to clamshell folders, organizing approximately 3,433 items in total. The most challenging part of my work was understanding the prior inconsistent organization and cataloging of the records. For example, some documents had discrepancies with their MdHR and calendar numbers. Others had been divided into pieces, sometimes but not always cataloged separately. Some documents had wandered to places they should not have gone without proper tracking. For example, there were instances where I had to trace parts of items into other repositories' collections, dating back to decades ago when the papers were held by the Maryland Historical Society. While the Red Books could be sorted with their MdHR numbers, the Black books did not have consistent MdHR numbering — some completely lacked a new set of numbers, while others were numbered every five pages — and had to be addressed by their original calendar numbers.

The challenge posed to me by the Rainbow Books led me to further appreciate the importance of good organizational practices, especially in an archival setting, and strengthened my ability to make sense of eighteenth and early nineteenth century handwriting. I learned how to use guides to access and explore archival collections, as well as how to find items within an archive. While not working on my cataloging and research, I was able to shadow the Reference Desk to learn about and participate in daily public outreach work. I observed interactions between the reference staff and patrons, gaining an insight as to how the reference archivists guide patrons to the materials they might be searching for, and how orders and appointments are scheduled.

My experience at the MSA has been invaluable, and led me to affirm that this is the kind of career I wish to pursue. I am very grateful for the ten weeks I spent here at the Archives, and for the people within it who received me so warmly.

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS DEPARTMENT

The Fascinations of the John McGrain Collection

Ben Lewis, Service Year Option and Maryland Corps Member



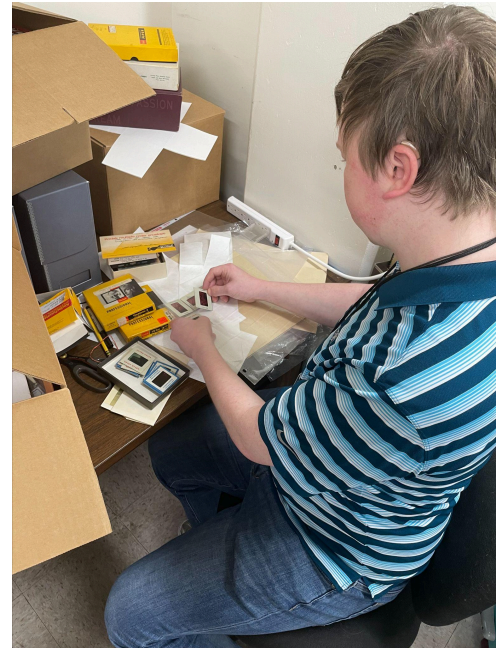
As a participant in the Service Year Option and Maryland Corps program, over the last few months I have been rehousing and reorganizing a portion of the John McGrain Collection ([MSA SC 4300](#)) to make it more accessible for future researchers. During the months of April, May, and June I worked with the Special Collections and Conservation Departments to tackle this mountainous collection of research, photographs, lecture notes, correspondences and more.

I am sure that many people don't know who John McGrain was or what his collection contains, and before I took on this project, I did not know either. Megan Craynon, the Deputy Director of Special Collections described the backstory of Mr. McGrain and his research to me, as she

had met Mr. McGrain a few times when he was a researcher in the Archives. She also helped transfer the last set of his research to the Archives, after he passed. At the time, during the pandemic, there were not enough resources to fully process the collection. A colleague of Mr. McGrain's provided the Archives with a basic inventory, however there was no final publicly accessible detailed inventory to convey the true breadth of the collection.

I was told how Mr. McGrain had spent his entire career dedicated to researching molinography. Molinography is the study of mills of all types, including steel mills, cotton mills, iron mills and more. What I found most interesting about the collection was when researching or photographing a mill, he also focused on all of the surrounding factors. McGrain was also very passionate about photography, so he would always take dozens of pictures when he visited a mill that he was researching. He took pictures of architecture, city streets, churches and beautiful scenery across Maryland. He truly wanted to get the full perspective of the areas around the mills, their histories, and what they looked like when he was researching them. The collection contains many beautiful photos of nature and architecture. It also has souvenirs, maps, pamphlets and in-depth research on mills in Maryland as well as other states, and even other countries.

Over the course of his life, McGrain had thousands of pictures stored in many different formats and it was engrossing to figure out how best to preserve and store all of the different mediums. Some of the many mediums included print photos, negatives, slides, microfilm and dvds. When organizing them, it was a challenge to find the best combination of taking up less space, but still maintaining easy access. One thing that was a particularly engaging part of this project was seeing all of the ingenious ways that McGrain found to store things. When I received this project, it became evident by McGrain's methods of storage that he was raised from the Great Depression. This is because I found photograph slides and note cards in old cardboard boxes for tea bags. I also found microfilm canisters in cookie tins and a shoe box full of miscellaneous souvenirs. It was fascinating to see his resourcefulness in using storage containers he already had, even though it wasn't best practices from an archival stand point.



One of the most interesting pieces of research that I came across was a collection of several original deed copies dating back from the middle of the 1700s to the early 1800s. The information provided on them showed that the land was actually used as an Iron Forge called Nottingham Furnace. It was very fascinating to find that McGrain's research on mills took him all the way back to the era of the Revolutionary War.

McGrain's passion, and dedication to decades of research was truly inspiring. He continued to have correspondences about research and lectures well into his later years. When he passed, he left all of his research to the Archives so that his knowledge could benefit others in the future. Knowing the importance of making the research more easily accessible, I spent a lot of time figuring out his notes and deciphering where his pictures were taken, so that researchers in the future can find and make use of all of his hard work. The online Special Collections Guide does not yet reflect all of the

nuances of his research, but the inventory work I did will be placed there. Until then, I encourage anyone interested in McGrain's research to inquire about it with Special Collections. McGrain's research is interlaced with the history and geography of Maryland and I am grateful for the opportunity that I have had to help make it available for others.

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS DEPARTMENT

Reflections on Archival Processing: My Time With the May Albright Seitz Collection

Caroline Ritter, Service Year Option and Maryland Corps Member

During my time as a Maryland Corps employee here at the Maryland State Archives, I was given the opportunity to process a large collection of family materials – now entitled in the Guide to Special Collections The May Albright Seitz Collection ([MSA SC 5767](#)). When I began the project, I was simply excited about the prospect of performing a more involved and challenging task for the Archives– I would sift through boxes of accessioned photographs and documents putting names to faces, discovering family relationships, and establishing a set of facts about these people that would someday, hopefully, be useful to a researcher looking for more information about something “ungoogleable.” Then, my task would be to organize the manifold contents of the accessioned material by taking into account both accessibility and document preservation, so that it could ultimately find its place in the Archives’ stacks as a series of cultural records of permanent value. It was going to be a months-long puzzle, and a means of contributing to the work of the agency while challenging myself with something interesting and unknown.

Few people, I think, have access to the richness of their recent family history in its near-entirety. Most of us have never seen or handled cabinet cards or cartes de visite– not to mention tin-, ambro-, and daguerreotypes of our family members. Even fewer have access to the letters and papers their ancestors wrote on and held 200-odd years ago, or even detailed vital records chronicling major family events and movements. The Seitzs, Hoffmans, and Albrights, fortunately, descend from generations of devoted genealogists and meticulous family historians– the central figure of this family practice being May Albright Seitz (1861-1964). Mrs. Seitz, the daughter of Timonium farmer Milton Albright and his wife Sarah Hoffman Albright, wrote and researched extensively about her progenitors and those of her husband, Baltimore-area ice manufacturer S. Clayton Seitz. She was passionate not only about her family history, but Maryland and American history at large, with a sharp focus on early German immigration to the colonies and the histories of papermaking and ice manufacturing– trades practiced in Maryland by members of the Hoffman and Seitz families.

Mrs. Seitz also collected any and all items– though not indiscriminately– that she thought might be of use in the recording and retelling of her family's story. The collection abounds with newspaper clippings, photographs, letters, receipts, heirlooms, and typewritten manuscripts and notes, in addition to extensive typewritten genealogical compilations. In one volume in particular, she writes in the introduction:

“Genealogies make dry reading. Most of them fail to arouse any interest outside of the limited circle of those whose ancestors and relatives are mentioned. This little book is not a genealogy or a family history. From the genealogical point of view it is

incomplete. The author's task was not to enumerate the various members of the four or five generations of the Hoffman family. What she tried to do was: to show the contributions which this family made to the industrial development of our country, in particular of the State of Maryland.... The following is not the story of William Hoffman and his descendants. It is the story of the Hoffman paper mills.... the story of the Hoffman paper mills is almost the story of the Hoffman family.”

Mrs. Seitz’ pride in her ancestors’ early industriousness is striking in this opening passage, as is her desire to reach beyond the conventional limits of the practice of family genealogy. Like many other compilers of family histories, she seeks to find a definite place for her ancestors in the early history of the United States. Here, she also demonstrates a desire to contribute her acquired genealogical expertise to a specific historical subject, and attempts to highlight her family’s place within that domain. This pursuit, however, only encompasses part of Mrs. Seitz’ interest in genealogy. Uplifting her ancestors— even those she had never met, or had discovered not through oral or written family history but through in-depth research and incessant information inquiries and records requests— was not her sole mission. She also meticulously collected and even cataloged her own items and those of her close family members, presumably for use by future generations, and perhaps as a collection of her own precious keepsakes.

As one unfamiliar with the work of genealogists, especially those as dogged and committed as Mrs. Seitz apparently was, I was often taken aback by the sheer variety of material to which her descendants are privileged to have access. Sifting through the collection in a cursory parsing of the Seitz’, Albrights’ and Hoffmans’ materials, I saw entire life spans pass by, witnessed careers and families form and tragedies unfold through documents, photographs, and letters. Each birth, death, marriage, anniversary and accomplishment of Mrs. Seitz’ family is treated as an important historical event; one deserving of documentation and preservation. Though puzzling at first, it occurs to me that this practice and mindset is an admirable one— “history” at large, after all, is merely a cumulative display of the smaller stories of individuals and family units. Further, it may also be said that one’s family history is just as consequential and worth knowing as those of one’s larger local, national, or international community.

Having worked at the Archives since October of last year, I have become familiar with the various functions of the State Archives, the different departments encompassed by the agency, and the different kinds of documents it holds that may be requested and viewed by researchers and ordinary citizens alike. Processing a collection with the Special Collections department enabled me to synthesize and apply that knowledge in meaningful ways by exposing me to official and impersonal materials as well as the primary, personal ones that Mrs. Seitz collected throughout her lifetime. After the initial project of gleaning as much information as possible from the records in the collection had been completed, I began to describe individual items for use in the online Special Collections [catalog](#).

Cataloging and describing, though seemingly mundane, is a specific science in itself at the intersection of accessibility and preservation, an exercise both in creativity and precision. I wanted to make the descriptions of the Seitz’ personal items, such as photographs, notes, and letters, as comprehensible and precise as those of ordinary vital, probate and military records to maximize accessibility and usage. A few times, I got carried away in my attempts to divine family relationships and identify unknown subjects of photos and other records— these items were patently less

straightforward than government-generated records. I encountered another difficulty when I discovered that the stark emotion and familiarity of personal family items can be challenging to briefly and scientifically summarize in a spreadsheet entry. Take, for example, Mrs. Seitz' collection of family letters and postcards, many of which document tragic occurrences in the Albright family such as the deaths of children, parents, and spouses. In the description of one, I write formulaically:

"Postcard and papers concerning the death of Sarah (Hoffman) Albright (1839-1928). Two medical bills, a small note containing written instructions for the administering of Mrs. Albright's medicine, two envelopes containing a postcard addressed to Mrs. Albright from her daughter May. A. Seitz; both inscribed: "This is the last post card received by my dear mother, from me. She died Wednesday night February 23-1928." The post card is dated 1928/02/19. From the possessions of May Albright."



Though the description is unemotional, one may glean from it the personal and emotional contents of the corresponding records. I transcribed the envelope because it touched me in some way, and also because more detail (given the requisite time to include it) increases comprehensibility and accessibility for users of archival institutions. The dates I included partly as a matter of course and regular processing practice, but also, admittedly, to bring to the researcher's attention the closeness

in dates and the sad reality that Mrs. Seitz was likely not able to see her mother on Thursday when she said she would return.

Even some of the recent material (largely research and notes collected by the donor, Mr. R. Carlton Seitz, and his equally dedicated family members) is striking in its show of devotion to Mrs. Seitz' legacy and work, while also being potentially significant to regional history. In one entry– the corresponding item being a clipping of a news article printed from the internet– I write (perhaps unnecessarily) in the description:

“News clipping of an article about Terry Seitz, a York police officer accused of racism. Enclosed with a letter from Karen Pinzola to Carlton Seitz in which she writes ‘Don't know if this is our Seitz or not. He was in the news before about the incident. If he is ours, then I guess it's part of our history.’”

It was a detail I personally found interesting – one I for some reason felt compelled to include in my description. For a family researcher? Maybe– but more likely for anyone stumbling upon this collection, to give them a sense of this family's intergenerational, multi-branched genealogical project and highlight something telling and interesting. In either case, I figured that transcribing an item can never hurt the quality of processing, as long as I refrain from personal analysis and speculation in my little spreadsheet box– which is, at times, difficult to resist. But, as someone new to this science, it struck me; and I thought it might resonate with others, too.

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS DEPARTMENT

A Pathway Forward – MAYIS

Felipe Tassara from Washington College

For the past two months of working at the Maryland State Archives, I have truly grown an appreciation for preserving the past while still being able to look to the future. The main part of my internship was to work on the [Mayis Indigenous Records](#) project. I completed several tasks over the course of the internship: land record extraction, oral history transcript editing, and Instagram reel creation for media releases. Another assignment that I worked on included updating descriptions for Marion Warren's photos of Piscataway Peoples. Each of these projects were quite unique themselves and overall very interesting to work on.

One of the tasks that went along with the Mayis website was to analyze land records from counties on the Eastern Shore. These land records dated from the mid to late 17th century to the early 18th century. Kent County and Somerset County were the focus of the land record extraction process. Kent County is located on the northern part of the Chesapeake Bay, while Somerset County is located on the southern part of the Bay. The land record books presented me with two challenges: handwriting and legal terminology. Before working with the records, I had never read a 17th-18th century legal document. The records are in different handwriting, of a type not often seen today, and different scribes had unique handwriting styles. After two months of working with the land records, this allowed me to gain a new skill in reading this type of writing.

When working with the land records I used a spreadsheet to record the words such as Chesapeake or Wicomico. Once a word was identified, I would then have to determine whether it is a tribe (community), geographical location, or an item. For example, the word “Chesapeake,” was spelled many ways throughout the books and would be labeled as a location, referencing the bay. Another word was a bit trickier: “Sassafras.” Sometimes it was mentioned as the tree, while other times it would be mentioned as the river. The specific context was used to identify the type of reference. The next option that would be available would be “person.” Some of the land cases/indentures mentioned Indigenous People. When a record like this is found it can be very beneficial to a community or individual with Indigenous background, to aid in tracing genealogy or trying to find out how their ancestors interacted with the colonial land system during this time. This can also help with protecting certain areas of land if documentation is clear an area has specific Indigenous ties.

The Mayis website is not only an educational tool to be utilized by the people of Maryland, most importantly it is a resource for the Indigenous People of Maryland. The mission is to recognize them and the land that we are on for the rich histories and cultures that these tribes have. With more information being added to the website, the hope is that it will make Indigenous history more accessible for everyone in Maryland and throughout the country.

When taking a break from reading the land records, another part of the project’s work included listening to oral history interviews. This was done to hear the voices of the Indigenous Peoples of the Eastern Shore, but it was also to ensure that the transcript accompanying the audio best represented what the interviewee wanted to say on record. The transcripts were generated by AI (artificial intelligence), edited by Archives staff, and then sent back to the person who had participated in the interview for final review. The interviewee could request any edits that they saw fit and would send it back to the Archives. Once we had received their edits the official audio and transcript would then be updated to match what the interviewee had sent back to us. The transcript was sent back to them for a final approval and then was considered finished. Other parts of this process included figuring out who is speaking at certain points, if there were more than two people present for the interview. This editing process also included correcting timestamps, especially if the interviewee had decided to edit the audio recording.

After these were finalized, the process of creating social media posts for the Oral History tab of the Mayis website began. With approved audio, I was able to cut and stitch together parts of the file that seemed to best represent what was being said in the full interview. Images from special collections or my personal collection from the Eastern Shore aided the creation of the Instagram reels to promote the website. In addition to creating two reels during my time at the Archives, I also worked to create regular Instagram posts, as well as preparing a document of further ideas to use for future posts. While all these tasks went along with the Mayis project there was another assignment, and that was working with Marion Warren’s donated photos.

Marion Warren donated over two hundred photos identified to be specific to the Piscataway people. These photos are in a Special Collection, including a wide representation of his photographic work, ([MSA SC 1890](#)). Photographs in the collection include members and events from the Piscataway Communities. When working with the film negatives, a light table was needed to properly view the photographs. In an inventory spreadsheet, I filled out the title of the photo based on Mr. Warren’s

notes and then provided a short description about the topic or focus of the photo. If there were people in the photos, and the names of those people identified, then they were added to the description. If the person in the photo was not known then the task was to write a description so the Piscataway People can review and possibly identify their community members. These descriptions were uploaded onto the Special Collections website to accompany the photos. This made the images more searchable to anyone interested in them.

One of the greatest finds of the summer was when I located the name of Queen Wehocomonus of the Indian River Indian Town Peoples. Her name first appeared in a land record book from Somerset County from the year 1741. This was a substantial find as this record was made well past the early stage of colonization the state of Maryland, and she had 1,000 acres of land signed to her name. The case that I was searching for was here in this land record³⁸; authorizing the sale of 200 acres of land to a Mr. William Burton. There were several other names involved within the record that ranged from her son Harry Wasposon to Robin the Interpreter, all members of the Indian River Indian Town are Native American. This was one of the first times that I had truly completed original research, as her name was not common on the internet, and took some digging to even find one source from the Delaware Public Archives which had cited records from the Maryland State Archives. After finding this record and learning about those involved who I knew nothing about, especially not a Queen, my interest had peaked. I was able to ask research colleagues to further identify specifics about the land purchase case and those who were involved with the case. Once collecting several volumes of debt books (MSA S12) and another land record book from 1736, I was able to find more mentions of the land, the people involved, and the location of the land itself. Most importantly, however, I was able to write a short report and send it to a representative of the Nanticoke Indian Nation, some of whom are descendants of Queen Wehocomonus. This was one of the most important things that I had done throughout the internship and truly highlighted the values and the mission of the Maryland State Archives.

With all of these tasks and research completed, this has truly shown me the importance of the Archives and the people who work there. The mission and values of the Archives are something that I will carry on into my later years and I hope to pass along to anyone with interest as well.

THE STUDY OF THE LEGACY OF SLAVERY IN MARYLAND

The Maryland State Penitentiary: Incarceration Patterns in the Post-Emancipation Era

Janis Parker from Villanova University

During my time at the Maryland State Archives (MSA) in the summer of 2024, I worked in the Legacy of Slavery in Maryland department on the “A Jury of One’s Peers” project, researching the history of the Maryland State Penitentiary. Specifically, I conducted research on the racial dynamics of the penitentiary and legal treatment of Black people in the post-emancipation era of 1869-1886. In the mid-1860s, as the Civil War ceased and ushered in the initial phase of Reconstruction, the penitentiary underwent a stark shift in racial demographics – from majority white to majority Black. Therefore, studying how race influenced the prison and emerged in the records offers critical insight

³⁸ [Somerset County Court, Land Records, 1665-1851, C1778](#)

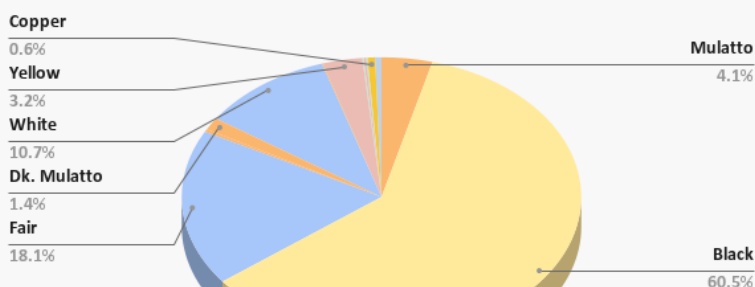
into the immediate period sans antebellum slavery.

I mainly worked with the Prisoner Record of 1869-1886 ([MSA S275-3](#)). One of my tasks included transcribing as much of the record as I could into a master spreadsheet; out of 4,200 entries, I transcribed ~ 25%, up until 1874. Prisoner Record volumes

documented the bare-bones information of a person and their time in the penitentiary: name, birthplace, age, complexion, features, place of residence, occupation,

where they were convicted and for what crime, duration of servitude, their occupation in prison, and, lastly, how they were discharged from prison. The record also includes information about a person's literacy, whether they were "bound out" (apprenticed), marital status, temperance status, and whether they attended church or were orphaned, but this information was not consistently recorded. The column on "complexion" (race) reveals that at this point, from 1869 to 1873, Black people disproportionately composed the bulk of incarcerated people, at 60.5%, white or "fair" people at 28.8%, and supposedly interracial people rounding out that last ~10%.

Prisoner Complexion 1869-1873



Maryland Penitentiary—Annual Report of the President and Directors.—The annual report of the president and directors of the Maryland penitentiary for the year ending November 30, 1871, refers to the prosperity of the institution, and the fact that, owing to the improvements made in the buildings, every one of the inmates whose physical and mental condition will admit, is at work, and remunerating the State beyond the cost of consumption and keep. The labor account, notwithstanding a loss of \$21,000 from tin canmaking, has amounted to \$39,780. The report recommends a house of refuge for young colored delinquents, and the value of a law computing and lessening the sentence of a prisoner as an incentive and reward for good behavior. The whole number of prisoners November 30th, 1871, were: white males, 203; colored males, 408; white females, 6; colored females, 52; total, 669.

Of the above aggregate 120 are employed by Messrs. Reed, Jones & Co., manufacturing boots, shoes and brogans; 106 by Messrs. Geo. L. Solter & Co., manufacturing barrels; 73 by Messrs. Howard Evans on furniture and plumbers' marble; 16 by Messrs. Glanding & Co., on harness; 53 by Messrs. Magne & Chipman, caning chairs. They have also lately entered into a contract with Messrs. Gardner & Co., manufacturing brooms, who will probably employ some 20 men. Of the fifty-two women, thirty-eight are employed by Messrs. Wheeden & Bell, making match boxes, the remainder being at work washing, mending, ironing, &c., for the State. Number of prisoners remaining November 30, 1870, 669. Received from December 1, 1870 to November 30, 1871, inclusive, 262. Total 931.—Discharged by expiration of sentence 181; pardoned by the Governor 67; died 14; remaining 669. Total 931. The highest number in prison during the year was 710, the lowest number 618, and the average number 669; the average number under contract was 297.

"Maryland Penitentiary—Annual Report of the President and Directors". *The Baltimore Sun*, January 8, 1872.

Apart from transcription work, I also consulted multiple other primary sources from MSA collections, including county court records, general assembly laws and sentencing guidelines, annual reports on the penitentiary, meeting minutes of the board of directors, governor papers, and newspaper articles. Diving into these resources not only assisted my research goals, but also introduced me to the diversity of archival materials and the functions of the Archives as an institution. While some of these records are digitized, the vast majority are compiled in boxes or bound books, allowing me to work hands-on with the material and acquaint myself with cataloging methods.

The record trail led me to one of the sub-projects that emerged over the summer, which focuses on the penitentiary's contract labor/convict lease system. While the penitentiary, since its inception in 1811 required that prisoners "labor" as they completed their sentences, by the 1860s the contract labor system had grown. By the late-1860s and early-1870s, the penitentiary had cultivated a contract labor system that made the institution financially self-sustainable and returned surpluses to

the state coffers. The prison contracted with various companies, some located within Maryland but others located out-of-state. Two of the major companies that contracted in the 1860s until the 1880s included Howard & Evans, who manufactured furniture, and the Davis Shoe Co., based in Ohio and Massachusetts, respectively. This was an interesting lead to follow as it contextualized the penitentiary's shifting relationship with industries, as "outside" industries such as furniture manufacturing, shoemaking, stovemaking, and others increasingly overtook more "traditional" prison occupations like weaving. This shift, coupled with the transformation in the prison's racial composition provide interesting insights into Maryland's post-emancipation trajectory as a state with a growing prison population.

All of these records helped me to identify, research, and write mini-biographical case studies on select prisoners. These case studies seek to emphasize the prisoners' humanity and the diverse ways in which they landed in the penitentiary, from perjury and larceny to arson and murder. Larceny and other nonviolent offenses were the most common crimes committed. Once completed, these case studies will be featured on the Legacy of Slavery website.

Delving into the history of the Maryland State Penitentiary, especially in the late-nineteenth century as the entire state underwent rapid postwar changes, helps us better understand Maryland's recent carceral history. Maryland's prison population is still disproportionately over 70% Black, a stark mirror to the post-Civil War levels, buttressed by mass incarceration. As we continue to grapple with these contemporary numbers, turning to Maryland's nineteenth century history and penal practices is crucial. Further, with all of this quantitative data, it is important to humanize these records and the lives of individuals bound within them, as this history is composed of countless people caught within the penitentiary's walls, asking for their stories to be heard.



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