

The HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF HARFORD COUNTY, Inc.

Preserving Our Past For Your Future



143 N. Main Street
Bel Air, MD 21014

Society News

July / August 2018

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The Historical Society of
Harford County, Inc.,
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HAYS HOUSE NEWS

This spring, Hays House Museum was the grateful recipient of a grant from the Maryland Questers to restore a marble-topped Victorian dresser, a major piece of furniture in the house's North Bedchamber. Harford County's Arthur Benser, a specialist in the restoration and repair of antique furniture, did a beautiful job repairing the piece. While the dresser's appearance to the casual observer is not very different, it was structurally unsound and in danger of falling apart. Mr. Benser repaired all the structural components and now the drawers slide easily and are useable for storage. The marble top and attached mirror are securely in place as well. Our thanks to the Smithson Questers and Art Benser.

On June 10, needle work expert Kathleen Franetovich visited Hays House to talk about schoolgirl samplers and their importance in the education of young girls in the 18th and 19th centuries. Not only are the antique examples of this handwork beautiful, they are excellent records of earlier times. Hays House proudly displays one of these samplers, a framed piece created by a Harford County resident, eight-year-old Blanch Hall Lee, who embroidered her piece in 1830. For embroidery enthusiasts, the charts to recreate this piece are also available at Hays House.

This summer for the first time, Hays House Museum has joined Bel Air's First Friday celebrations by hosting an Open House. Free tours conducted by costumed docents along with lemonade and cookies are available to visitors from 5 to 7 pm. Upcoming dates are July 6 and August 3. Also coming up, Hays House will host its traditional Open House on the Fourth of July from 9 am to 12 noon. Stop by for a visit as we celebrate our country's birth.

(pictures cont'd on page 2)

(cont'd from page 1)



Restored marble-topped Victorian dresser, thanks to a grant from the Maryland Questers.



Kathleen Franetovich talks about school girl samplers at the Hays House

COMING EVENTS

The Rat Pack Tribute, Live From the Richlin: On Saturday, September 15th, The Historical Society will transform the Richlin Catering & Event Center (formerly the Richlin Ballroom) into a vintage Las Vegas showroom as it hosts a special fundraiser featuring a four-course dinner and show. Guests will enjoy bar libations, hors d'oeuvres, salad, a choice of three entrees (Lemon Chicken, Oven Baked Flounder Filet Almandine or Vegetarian selection) and a gourmet dessert.

The evening's highlight will be a musical tribute show featuring "Dean Martin", "Sammy Davis, Jr.", and "Frank Sinatra". Performers, Eric Richardson, Steve Roman and James Young will portray the famed trio and guests are also invited to step out onto the dance floor for a turn around the room to the vintage music of these great crooners.

Dress is cocktail or business attire. Tickets are \$75 per person and reservations must be received by September 5th. To reserve your tickets, contact the Society at 419-838-7691 or visit www.harfordhistory.org. Please indicate your meal choice at time of reservation.



Society Host's Annual Dinner Meeting: The Historical Society of Harford County will host its Annual Dinner Meeting and Lecture on Thursday, September 20th at the Maryland Golf and Country Clubs, MacPhail Road at 6:00PM. Tickets are \$35 per person and reservations are required in advance. The three-course meal (cash bar) will feature a choice of entrees including, Chicken Marsala, Bistro Beef Medallions or Vegetable Stir Fry. Please indicate your meal choice upon making reservations.

The evening's speaker will be Gina Marie Aleo, who will portray Martha Jefferson wife of President Thomas Jefferson. Dress is business attire. Guests will also be able to bid on silent auction items. For reservations make checks payable to: the Historical Society of Harford County or visit www.harfordhistory.org.

FALL GENEALOGY SERIES

By Mary Worthington Schweers

Genealogy is an exciting adventure in the discovery of your family's history. As a genealogist you become a detective proving family tales as fact or fiction, uncovering untold secrets, and solving long debated mysteries. The genealogy series at the Historical Society offers tips and tricks on the proper way of gathering evidence and assuring that you have the proper documentation. Your job is to gather enough of the proper evidence to prove that the subjects of your dedicated research are guilty of being your ancestors.

On September 12, 2018 we will hold a "Stump the Genealogist" session. Preregistration is required at least two weeks ahead of time. Submit your brick wall, unfounded relative or most difficult ancestor by August 28, 2018, to our genealogist to see if you can stump them. Genealogist Chris Smithson and Mary Schweers will conduct research to bring them out of hiding.

On October 10, 2018 genealogist Christopher Smithson will offer a class on all things death. This session will cover the numerous death and post mortem records available to the family genealogist. Discover how to find them and how to obtain copies of death certificates, court records and wills. You may realize that other records exist that you never thought of before that solve long debated causes of death.

On November 14, 2018 genealogist Mary Schweers will present a class on how to read old records. Terminology and handwriting has changed throughout the years and this class will help you decode those words and that scripted handwriting creating disconcertment in your inquest.

To end the year on December 12, 2018 Chris and Mary will present tips and tricks with document preservation. So many family files and photographs are affected by the storage methods and locations they were maintained. How do you deal with mold, smoke, moisture and other environmental hazards? What is the best way to keep photos and other family archives?

All classes begin at 7:00 PM and normally end around 9:00 pm. There is a cover charge of \$10 per person which is used to cover expenses to the Historical Society in presenting the class. If you have any questions, please contact the Historical Society of Harford County at (410) 838-7691.

FAMILY HISTORIANS VERSUS NAME COLLECTORS

The following is an edited excerpt of an article that appeared last month as part of a daily blog by genealogist Dick Eastman, whose permission we gratefully acknowledge. Mike Dixon, a good friend of the society, included it on his own Facebook page, "Mike Dixon, Historian."

blog.eogn.com/2018/06/06/are-you-a-family-historian-or-a-name-collector/#more-22992

Are You a Family Historian or a Name Collector?

By Dick Eastman · June 6, 2018 ·

I have a question. None of my living relatives knows the answer to this question.... I have read a few magazine articles and Internet pages about the topic, but none of them have directly answered the question -- "Why do we study genealogy?"

What makes anyone so curious about his or her family tree? What drives us to dedicate time, effort, and sometimes expenses to go find dead people? What is it inside of us that makes us spend hours and hours cranking reels of microfilm, then we go home and report to our family members what a great day we had?

I must admit that I have asked that question of many people and have received several answers. Some people report that it is simple curiosity, ... and I tend to believe that is a part of the answer. Others report that it is part of an intriguing puzzle that they wish to solve.... That doesn't make sense to me. In short, I think there is more to genealogy than there is to a crossword puzzle.

The simplest and most direct answer for many people is because it is a religious requirement. Indeed, members of the LDS Church are encouraged to find information about their ancestry for religious purposes.... Yes, I can accept that religion is a major motivator, but I believe there is still more.

We are curious about many things, but for now, I will focus on our curiosity about our origins and ourselves. It seems to me that we are all curious about who we are. When I say, "who we are," that includes questions about our origins. Where did I come from? How did I end up being born where I was? What trials and tribulations did my parents go through in order to give birth to me and my siblings and to raise a family? What did their parents go through to do the same for them? And how about *their* parents?

...there are **two different kinds of genealogists**. There are **name gatherers**, and then there are **family historians**. Let me tell you a story about an acquaintance of mine... I'll call her Linda.... I knew Linda before she became interested in genealogy and even helped coach her a bit when she first started. This was many years ago.... when I only knew a little bit more about genealogy than she did.

I only see Linda once every few years. Every time that we meet, the conversation quickly turns to genealogy as we bring each other up to speed on our latest triumphs and failures. I always enjoy talking with Linda. She is bright, articulate, and very enthused about genealogy. The last time I saw Linda, she proudly announced, "**I have almost finished my genealogy!**"

I was speechless. I am sure I stood there with my mouth hanging open, blinking my eyes. I don't recall anyone else ever saying they were "finished" with their genealogy searches. How can you be finished? Every time you find one new ancestor, you immediately gain two new puzzles to be solved.

Linda and I had a rather extended conversation. I'll skip all the details and simply give the bottom line: Some years earlier Linda had purchased a blank pedigree chart that had room to write in eight generations of ancestors, including names, dates and places of birth, marriage, and death. I suspect you know what a blank pedigree form is. Typically, on the extreme left there is room to write in your own name plus dates and places of your own birth and marriage. (Hopefully, you won't be filling in data about your own death.)

Just to the right of the space for your entry, there is room for data entry for two more people: your parents. To the right of that, there is space for data about your four grandparents. Moving further [sic] to the right, there is room for information about eight great-grandparents, sixteen great-great-grandparents and so forth. In the case of the chart that Linda had obtained, there was room for eight generations, a total of 255 individuals.

At the time I was talking with Linda, she only had two blanks left to be filled on her form, both in the eighth generation. She had found all of her ancestors through seven generations and even all the eighth-generation ancestors except for two. She was working diligently to find those last two.

Apparently, Linda's goal was to fill in the eight generations. That was her definition of "finished." I asked her, "What about the people in the ninth generation or even earlier?" She replied, "Oh, I don't care about them." I was speechless for a moment.

I recovered and then probed a bit further. Linda's ancestry is French-Canadian, and so is much of my own. Most people with French-Canadian ancestry are related. Any two French-Canadians usually can find common ancestors in their pedigree charts. As I looked over Linda's pedigree chart, I found several of my own ancestors as well as those of Celine Dion, Madonna, and probably half of the players in the National Hockey League. Since I was familiar with some of these ancestors and their history, I started commenting on their lives.

"Oh, here is the man who was killed in bed by a jealous husband who returned home unexpectedly and found his wife and our ancestor in an indelicate position."

Linda said, "Really?" I said, "Here is an ancestor who was captured by the Mohawk Indians and tortured unmercifully." Linda said, "How do you know that?"

OK, here is the next bottom line: Linda had expended hundreds, possibly thousands, of hours and a significant amount of expense traveling to various libraries and repositories. She even took a couple of trips to Quebec province. Along the way she collected eight generations of her ancestors' names, places, and dates, and NOTHING ELSE.

She did not know anything about the lives of these people; their triumphs, their sorrows, the trials and tribulations they endured to raise families that eventually resulted in the births of Linda, me, and many others. She did not know their occupations, the causes of their deaths, or even how many children each had.

I ask you: Is Linda a family historian or a name collector?

If asked, she probably would protest that she is a genealogist. The term "genealogist" isn't terribly specific, so perhaps that is a true statement. But I will suggest that she is not a family historian. She also does not know how she "fits in" with the rest of the world.

Now for my next question: Which side of the fence do you fall on? Are you merely collecting names, or are you studying family history?

The fact that you are reading this article suggests to me that you are probably a family historian, not a name gatherer. In fact, I believe that most family historians are motivated by a desire to understand how we are ALL related to each other. We all can see the "big picture" in various history books: the Pilgrims, the Mayflower, Jamestown in Virginia, the Dutch in New York City, the waves of immigration from Europe in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and well into the twentieth centuries, the wars, the politicians, the movement westward opening up new lands, and all that. Pick up any good history book and you can learn about the history of our people. But that book will not answer one question: How do I fit into all of this?

Studying history is a very useful thing, but it is only half the story. The second half is defining where you and your ancestors were involved. Was your family one of the early colonial settlers? Did your ancestors arrive in the waves of later immigration? If so, which wave? Did your ancestors cover the plains in a covered wagon and fight off [all the various dangers associated with 19th century overland travel]?

Even closer to the "real you," what values did these ancestors bring with them and then pass on to their descendants? Are you a religious person today because of the strong spiritual upbringing that you had? Are you politically conservative or liberal because of your parents' and grandparents' ideals and morals that they passed on to you?

Are you devoted to education or music or the arts or to homemaking or to other personal interests because of the morals given by your great-great-great-grandparents to their children, then passed on to their children, and so on and so on?

I believe that much of America's work ethic, religion, and respect for the rights of others is based upon ideals brought to this country centuries ago, and then passed on over the dinner tables and in front of fireplaces for generations.

I believe this is the answer to the question: many of us who are true family historians study our family heritage in order to not only learn about our ancestors, but also to learn more about ourselves.

NEW MEMBERS

Emma Beck
Artie Berry
Doris Bond
Sharon Cavallaro and Family
Amin Fareed
Donald Flynn
Anne Grafton
M. Joyce Hall

Col. and Mrs. Francis B. Holland
Kristan and Peter Holt
Juanita Larson
Jeremy Moore
Robert Reavis
Annie Thalman
Samuel Tharpe



Do you recognize this house?
 If so, please call HSHC at (410) 838-7691

RESERVATION FORM

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Fee</u>	<u># Tickets</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Sep 12	Genealogy Workshop	\$10.00	_____	_____
Sep 15	Rat Pack Tribute ... ** Sept 5 cutoff ** ___ Chicken ___ Fish ___ Vegetable [indicate quantity]	\$75.00	_____	_____
Sep 20	Annual Dinner Meeting ___ Chicken ___ Beef ___ Vegetable [indicate quantity]	\$35.00	_____	_____
Oct 10	Genealogy Workshop	\$10.00	_____	_____
Nov 14	Genealogy Workshop	\$10.00	_____	_____
Dec 12	Genealogy Workshop	\$10.00	_____	_____
TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED				\$_____

Name: _____ Ph. or E-Mail: _____

Tickets for events with fees can also be purchased via *PayPal* on the Society's web page.

For more information, check the Society's website at www.HarfordHistory.org, www.Facebook.com/HarfordCountyHistoricalSociety or call 410-838-7691. Return your Reservation form to the Historical Society, 143 N. Main Street, Bel Air, MD. 21014.

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of Harford County, Inc.
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HISTORICAL SOCIETY and GIFT SHOP HOURS

Tuesday
COURT RECORDS
9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.

Wednesday
ARCHIVES
9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.

Thursday
RESEARCH LIBRARY
9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.

Fourth Saturday
ARCHIVES and
RESEARCH LIBRARY
10:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.