

THE CLAMSHELL

A Quarterly Newsletter of the Maryland State Archives

Box 1, Folder 1

Fall 2020



Letter from the State Archivist

Welcome to the inaugural issue of The Clamshell, a quarterly electronic newsletter from the Maryland State Archives! This publication respectfully carries on in the tradition of The Archivists' Bulldog which ran from 1987 through 2007, and we are proud to kick off this new endeavor in 2020--a challenging year for all--yet one that has drawn us together as a staff to refine and improve our services to the public.

One of the many lessons COVID-19 has taught us is we must adapt and broaden our communication methods to the greatest possible extent to retain our sense of community and achieve effective discourse. Publishing The Clamshell will be one of the ways we hope to initiate and maintain dialog between the Archives and the public we love to serve. We have found our new virtual world to be quite effective in serving you, and we plan to use this space to share new collections and access tips, upcoming programs, staff activities, "insider" information, and much more.

I hope you enjoy this newsletter, but more importantly, I hope you will engage us via electronic communication and share with us your thoughts, interests and needs. The "virtual" door to my office is always open. Get me directly at tim.baker@maryland.gov. You can also write to our helpdesk about "virtually" anything: msa.helpdesk@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Timothy D. Baker". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Timothy D. Baker, State Archivist and Commissioner of Land Patents

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Clamshell - A definition



A clamshell, as we know it best at the MSA, is an acid-free box used for storing manuscripts, ledgers, folders, maps, prints, documents, rare books, or most any form of collection material. It is a commonly used container in archives and libraries called a clamshell because it is a one-piece container which consists of two halves joined by a hinge at the center allowing the box to open and close just like a clam. Given our proximity to the beautiful Chesapeake Bay Watershed, we have an even deeper connection to clamshells in Maryland.

Customer Service Update

Our lives have changed significantly due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and the daily routines at the Archives have changed as well. While we never closed or stopped serving the public during this difficult time, we did swiftly pivot and adapt to largely remote-based services. Our staff has been working diligently both during staggered shifts on-site and via telework allowing us to continue to fulfill the core mission of the Archives to preserve and make collection material accessible.

One long-standing priority that has taken on added importance during this time has been our goal to digitize and place materials online. If you have not had the opportunity, check out our

[“What’s New Online”](#) feature of the website which was established as an easy “one stop shop” to review all the new record materials that have been posted over the last few months which are also linked to their catalog entries. Some highlights of this new material online include death records, patent records, as well as death, marriage, will and birth indexes. Also, staff has updated our most [popular finding aids](#) and created some new [“how to” videos](#) to help our patrons make the most of our materials online.

In addition, staff has expanded their help desk services by providing enhanced customer assistance via email focusing more staff on this process in order to serve as many patron needs as possible remotely. For sake of comparison, in September 2019 we responded to 229 emailed reference requests while in September 2020 we responded to 1,385, a more than six fold increase. Beginning in July, staff also started providing on-site public appointments with rigorous health and safety guidelines in place for the protection of our visitors and the staff. We look forward to continuing to serve you in a myriad of both new and old ways, and we encourage you to contact us via email (msa.helpdesk@maryland.gov), to place an [order online](#) by mail or phone, or to [request an in person appointment](#).



While the Maryland State House has been closed to public visitors including school field trips, the staff of the Archives is happy to provide an [online curatorial tour](#) of the Old House of Delegates Chamber to highlight the new Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass statues. This video tour will not only serve as an access point to these treasures during the immediate time of closure, but also offer a unique opportunity for those across the state and the globe to learn about these important works of art as well as the legacy of these significant Marylanders.

We were also thrilled to be able to carry on our decades-long tradition of hosting a student summer internship program, although in a completely new way. Staff mentored student interns ranging from high school through graduate level students who volunteered their time to remotely process collections, conduct online research, transcribe documents, and contribute to searchable databases. Overall, we are applying all of our professional expertise, creativity, and zeal to safely and efficiently carry out our core missions, and in doing so, we feel that we are developing processes that will benefit our agency and its stakeholders long after the pandemic is behind us. We while many things look different, one thing has remained the same, we are here to serve you.

Staff Update

The Archives bids a fond farewell to three members of our staff who are retiring before the end of 2020.

Reginald C. Shorter, Deputy Chief Information Officer, retires on October 31. Reggie began his state service in May of 1986. In the years since then he contributed mightily in a number of agencies serving Maryland's Higher Education system, the Department of Labor Licensing and Regulation and the Governor's Office in many, many vital information technology initiatives. Upon joining the staff at the Maryland State Archives fourteen years ago, Reggie distinguished himself as an immensely competent manager and a true friend to all of our staff. He will be missed, and we wish him well in his future endeavors.



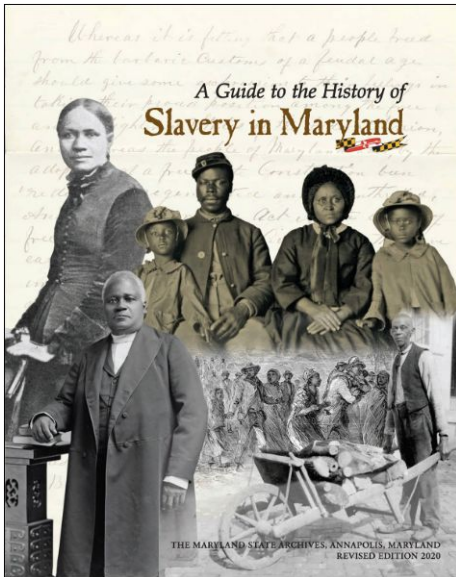
Crystal Stewart joined the Archives administrative staff in 2007, and will retire at the end of November having most recently served as MSA's procurement officer. In this position, Crystal has demonstrated excellent administrative skills and attention to the many details of ordering all manner of materials and services on behalf of MSA. Beyond these official duties, Crystal has annually led our agency's charitable outreach during the holiday season, helping to identify local charities and encouraging staff to provide donations of food, clothing, and supplies to support people in need. She will be greatly missed and we all wish her and her husband well as they relocate to California for the next chapter of their lives.



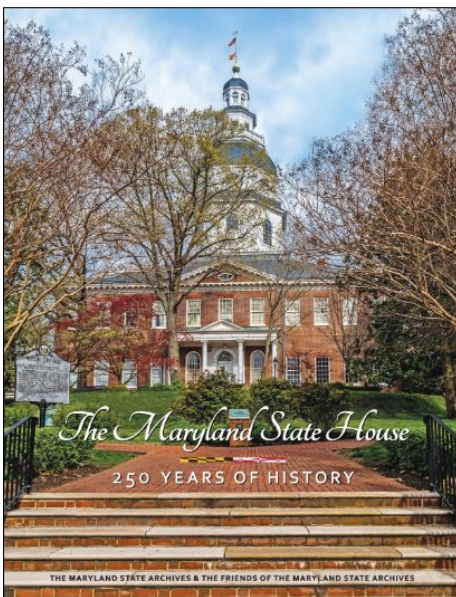
Ann J. Baker, Associate Editor of the *Maryland Manual On-Line*, is retiring at the end of this year. Originally from Iowa, Ann traveled to many parts of the world under sail and, like that sail, she has been the mainstay of the *Maryland Manual*. Formerly with the Department of Legislative Reference, Ann came to the State Archives in 1987, first as a proofreader, and quickly rose to become the Manual's Associate Editor. Her keen insight, analytical abilities, and commitment to excellence in her work have served the citizens of Maryland well, and made the *Maryland Manual* unequalled as a source of government information in the nation.

Publications

The Archives was pleased to release two new publications in 2020. Both books are available through Amazon.com and at local bookstores in the Annapolis area.



A new edition of *A Guide to the History of Slavery in Maryland* builds upon the original published in 2007, and was released in February during a special joint session of the legislature dedicating the statues of Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass in the State House. Staff of the Legacy of Slavery in Maryland program have enhanced this new edition with many new images, as well as updated narratives from Historic Sotterley and Hampton National Historic Site, as well as a new essay from Historic St. Mary's City. This new edition brings the timeline of key events in the history and legacy of slavery in Maryland up to the present day with the state's commitment to document and memorialize victims of racial terror through the establishment of the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission.



The Maryland State House: 250 Years of History, released in July, written by Archives staff and is based on the many years of research that has been done on the history of the State House, which is a National Historic Landmark. This is the first comprehensive guidebook to the State House and its historic architecture, artwork, and memorials. It is aimed at visitors to the State House and Annapolis who want to learn more about this iconic building. This illustrated guidebook is especially useful at this difficult time when the State House is closed to the public as it will provide readers with a “tour” of the building and, hopefully, encourage them to return when the closures have been lifted.

For information about the Hall of Records Commission, and access to our Annual Reports, click [here](#).

Commemorating the Women's Suffrage Centennial

August 2020 marked the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment to the US Constitution which granted women the right to vote. In order to celebrate this important centennial and the significant contributions made by Maryland's women past, present and future, Governor Larry Hogan officially proclaimed 2020 as the Year of the Woman in Maryland. To highlight our collections, the Archives published an [educational document packet](#) on its website providing both teachers and students access to primary source documents and a deeper context for the Maryland story of women's suffrage. Also, archivist Maya Davis authored a well-received article focusing on African American women suffragists for *What's Up Magazine* which can be found [online](#).



Additionally, staff of the Maryland State Archives was pleased to continue to serve on the Governor's Commission on the Commemoration of the 100th Anniversary of the Passage of the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution. In collaboration with the Maryland Historical Trust and the Women's Heritage Center, the Commission unveiled numerous historic site markers throughout the state denoting important spaces in the fight for women's voting rights, including in Overlea, Hyattsville, Westminster, St. Mary's City, Oakland, Towson and Baltimore City. In the coming year, markers in Sandy Spring and Havre de Grace will also be unveiled. The Commission also sponsored a [traveling exhibit](#), which can be viewed online as well. As a culminating event, the Commission co-sponsored a summit with the Maryland Commission for Women on August 26, 2020, Women's Equality Day, featuring speakers on both the history and the future of women's empowerment. Participants in this engaging summit included Chief Judge Mary Ellen Barbera and Dr. Ida B. Jones, Chair and Member of the Maryland Hall of Records Commission, respectively. This inspiring seminar was recorded and can be [viewed online](#) at any time. As the anniversary year draws to a close, one of the most important results of this commemoration is that these resources will be widely available now and in the future to anyone interested in learning more about struggle for suffrage. The Maryland State Archives was honored to play a small part in paying homage to the courageous women who fought, and who continue to fight, for women's rights and equality.

Heritage Awards

The Archives is very pleased to be the recipient of three Heritage Awards from Four Rivers Heritage Area of Annapolis this year. Conferred annually, these awards honor individuals and organizations that make significant contributions to our historical legacy through interpretation, education, preservation, conservation, promotion, research and support. This year the Archives was nominated in three categories, and received all three awards.

We are very grateful to Four Rivers Heritage Area for their continued support of the Archives, and for their recognition of our work over this past year.



Visitors with the new statues of Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass at the public event on February 15.

The Celebration of Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass, held at the Maryland State House on February 15, has been awarded the ***Heritage Partnership Award***. This day-long public event to celebrate the new statues of Tubman and Douglass in the Old House of Delegates Chamber, welcomed nearly 1,000 visitors to the State House for lectures, performances, children's activities, and refreshments. Organized by the Archives, the event was jointly sponsored by the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture;

the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom (National Park Service); and Four Rivers Heritage Area. Midshipmen volunteers from the United States Naval Academy provided assistance, and funding for speakers' honoraria was provided by the Friends of MSA.



Mimi Calver has been awarded as ***Heritage Professional of the Year*** for her nearly forty years of service to state government, starting in 1983 when she was hired by the Maryland Heritage Commission to write and oversee all the printed materials for the celebration of bicentennial events for Washington's resignation and the ratification of the Treaty of Paris. Hired soon after by the Archives to direct the project to commemorate Maryland's ratification of the Constitution, Mimi then served as Director of Artistic Property before retiring, and returning as Executive Director of the Friends of the Maryland State Archives. Throughout her time at the Archives, Mimi has mentored a generation of archivists and curators who have gone on to serve in leadership positions at the Archives, as well as at institutions throughout the region.



The Archives latest publication, *The Maryland State House: 250 Years of History*, has won the ***Heritage Tourism Product Award***. Principally authored by Mimi Calver, this comprehensive guidebook to the State House, a National Historic Landmark, encompasses decades of research into the building's history and architecture, as well as the art collection, by the staff of the Archives. Designed by Michele Danoff, of Graphics by Design, this guidebook includes dynamic new photography of the restored spaces and exhibits, along with historic images and illustrations.

The House of Delegates Chamber, Maryland State House

Thank You

from the Friends of the Maryland State Archives

We note with sympathy the recent death of Lillian Hackerman, who with her late husband Williard gave generously to the Friends of MSA toward several acquisitions, most importantly George Washington's original resignation speech of 1783. Mr. and Mrs. Hackerman supported the creation of the customized exhibit case for the speech which is on display in the rotunda of the State House.



Willard and Lillian Hackerman, with Mimi Calver and Dr. Edward Papenfuss in the Old Senate Chamber in 2006. (Photo by Karl Merton Ferron, Baltimore Sun)

It is through generous donors such as the Hackermans that the Archives has been able to acquire and preserve many treasures of Maryland's history. Donations support our mission to preserve and make accessible the historic records of Maryland, as well as supporting the professional development of our staff.

To donate to the Friends [click here](#).

The Friends of the Maryland State Archives is a 501(c)3 organization and donations to it are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.



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