

BALTIMORE GASLIGHT

Newsletter of the Baltimore City Historical Society

Volume 18, Number 2

Fall 2019

BCHS History Honors Program and Reception

October, 26, 2019 • 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Natural History Society of Maryland
6908 Belair Road

The 19th Annual BCBS Baltimore History Honors Program and Reception will take place on Saturday, October, 26, 2019, 2:00 – 4:00 pm at the Natural History Society of Maryland (NHSM), 6908 Belair Road, Baltimore [Overlea], MD 21206. An optional tour of the NHSM collections will follow the formal program at 4:00 pm. (See a related article on the Natural History Society of Maryland in “Discovering Baltimore” in this issue.) The event is free and open to the public.

The BCBS History Honors are awarded in three categories: *Historian/Scholar Honors* - to persons who have

published and are respected in the academic and professional historian community; *Living History Honors* - to persons whose lives exemplify the civic value of community involvement and enhancement; and *In Memoriam* - to deceased persons who deserve recognition for their special contributions to Baltimore history. In addition, the *Joseph Arnold Essay Contest 2019 Award* and the *2019 Baltimore History Middle School Essay Contest Awards* will be presented. (See related articles on the *Arnold Prize* and the *Baltimore Middle School History Essay Contest* in this issue.) Recipients of the awards or their representatives are introduced individually and offer remarks. It is always an enriching and uplifting experience.

Following are this year’s recipients.

Historian/Scholar Honors

Researcher, writer and historian, **Ralph Clayton**, who worked for decades at the Enoch Pratt Free Library, amassed a wealth of data and information on the population of slaveholders and enslaved people. Clayton identified Baltimore sites where the slave trade, a mainstay of the city’s economy, flourished. In addition to journal and newspaper articles Clayton authored the following: *Black Baltimore, 1820-1870*; *Free Blacks of Anne Arundel County Maryland, 1850*; *Slavery, Slaveholding, and the Free Black Population of Antebellum Baltimore*; and *Cash for Blood: The Baltimore to New Orleans Slave Trade*.

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The Baltimore City Archives

Matthew Crenson

Baltimore City’s history is disappearing. Records of city government’s everyday business -- along with documentation of its ambitious initiatives and challenging problems -- are going astray or simply vanishing. The official repository for these historic materials is the Baltimore City Archives, but irreplaceable pieces of municipal history go missing, in unknown numbers, before they reach the Archives.

Like many of us, the City relies increasingly on computers to generate and store essential information. Its recent ordeal as the victim of a ransom-ware attack shows how vulnerable it is to digital assault. While hackers can disrupt current operations, general neglect and a shortage

of funds are responsible for a failure of the city’s historic memory. There is no protocol for deciding which of Baltimore’s electronic records to preserve. Nor does the Archives presently have the capacity to store them all. Much of the City’s electronic traffic automatically disappears into the ether after 90 days.

Paper records and photographs are also being lost. Procedures for deciding what to preserve and transfer to the Archives are set out in “retention schedules,” but no one holds responsibility for making sure that municipal agencies actually comply with these schedules, and there is ample evidence that some of the paper records designated for preservation are winding

employees into retirement, and others wind up for sale at auction or on eBay. The files of more than one recent mayor are nowhere to be found, and the Archives hold no records for the City Department of Recreation and Parks more recent than the 1980’s.

The Municipal Code provides for a Committee on Records to review retention schedules and oversee compliance with them. The Committee has not met for more than a decade. The Maryland State Archivist now exercises authority (under state law) to approve retention schedules for the City, but the State Archives clearly lacks the capacity to oversee records preservation in Baltimore.

City records, of course, hold more than historic value. Some of them provide maps of the underground infrastructure that conveys water,

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Chair of Board of Directors . . . Edward Papenfuse
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up in dumpsters or forgotten file cabinets. Some are taken by city

Larry Gibson grew up in Baltimore, graduating from Baltimore City College in 1960 as the first African American class president. After graduating from Howard University, he earned his law degree from Columbia University in 1967. In 1974, he joined the faculty at the University of Maryland Law School. Gibson has researched and designed several exhibits, articles, newspaper series, and other presentations on the history of civil rights and African American lawyers in Maryland. In 2012, he published *Young Thurgood*, focusing on Thurgood Marshall's career as a lawyer in Baltimore from 1933 to 1937.

In 2018, Johns Hopkins University Press published *On Middle Ground, a History of the Jews of Baltimore* by **Eric L. Goldstein** and **Deborah R. Weiner**. Their study describes two waves of immigration, the first during 1830-60 when German Jews came to Baltimore in great numbers and the second beginning in the 1880's when Eastern European Jews arrived. An Annapolis native with Baltimore family roots, Eric Goldstein is an associate professor of History and Jewish Studies at Emory University. Deborah Weiner was a research historian for the Jewish Museum of Maryland from 2002 to 2013.

Living History Honors

Michael S. Franch is an historian and a clergyman. He joined the BCHS board in 2008, and, in 2009, he inaugurated and since has led the BCHS's Baltimore History Evenings, monthly talks (January to June) on Baltimore history held at the Village Learning Place in Charles Village. These evenings provide scholars engaged in local research with a venue to present their work and the public with an opportunity to engage actively with subjects of local historic interest. Franch also began and manages the BCHS Facebook page, which provides a forum for the discussion of local history for over 7,000 members.

Aaron Henkin and **Wendel Patrick** are the creators and hosts of "Out of the Blocks," a radio documentary series that broadcasts explorations of various blocks in Baltimore City

through interviews with people who live and work in them. The program, launched in October, 2015, as a special edition of WYPR's "The Signal," has become a stand-alone show and podcast. Henkin and Patrick regard themselves as oral historians, letting people "speak their own truths in their own voices." Henkin conducts and edits the interviews, while Patrick composes scores for each episode, using sounds from the block. Henkin is the producer of "Out of the Blocks" and director of new local programming at WYPR. Patrick is a classical musician and an Assistant Professor of Recording Arts at The Peabody Music Conservatory.

In Memoriam

Sally Michel was a civic activist and former chair of the Baltimore Planning Commission who established the Parks and People Foundation and the Super Kids Camp. She was on the board of 57 local or state organizations, serving as chair of 19 of them. In addition, she was a founding supporter of the Baltimore School for the Arts and helped to establish the Baltimore/Chesapeake Bay/Outward Bound Program. Robert Embry, president of the Abell Foundation, wrote, "I don't think in the last half century there has been a more important private citizen in Baltimore than Sally Michel."

Rosalyn Terborg-Penn was a professor of history at Morgan State University for over 40 years. During her tenure, she established the Ph.D. program in history and innovated courses on gender, research and oral history. She was one of three African American women historians who founded the Association of Black Women Historians in 1979 to foster community and networking among black women historians. An activist-academic, she addressed contemporary issues through employing her scholarship to address questions of injustice and sexism. Her groundbreaking book, *African American Women in the Struggle for the Vote, 1850-1920*, was published in 1998.

Thomas Cripps was a professor of history at Morgan State University. A native of Baltimore, he was educated at Baltimore Polytechnic, Towson University and the University of Maryland. An expert on African American film, he wrote many studies on blacks in the film industry, including his 1977 *Slow Fade to Black: The Negro in American Film, 1900-1942*. His scholarly paper on the black reaction to D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* was awarded the George Hammond History Prize. While at Morgan, he was the coordinator of the University Television Project, which produced more than 40 programs on African American life and culture.

Ronald Hoffman, a Baltimore city native, was a leading scholar on early Maryland and the American Revolution. He joined the history faculty at the University of Maryland in 1969, publishing *A Spirit of Dissension: Economics, Politics, and the Revolution in Maryland* in 1973. In 1992, he became the director of the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture of Williamsburg, Virginia. Hoffman worked on a project to edit the papers of Charles Carroll of Carrollton. The first three volumes were published in 2001. In 2002, he published *Princes of Ireland, Planters of Maryland, a Carroll Saga, 1500-1782*.

2018 Joseph Arnold Prize Award

The winner of the 2018 Joseph Arnold Prize is **Anne Louise Hollmuller** for her essay "Judged by the Generations: Baltimore's Confederate Monuments and the Shaping of Historical Memory." The essay is posted on the Baltimore City Historical Society website.

Baltimore Middle School History Essay Contest

The winners have not been determined at the time of the *Gaslight* publication. ■

...ARCHIVES (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

electricity, and gas to the city's residents while carrying away waste. Others may be essential for establishing the ownership of property or resolving questions of legal liability. Saving records can save both money and time.

Simply saving them, of course, does not make them useful. Only some records are worth keeping, and those must be organized so that searchers can find what they need. Near the end of the Great Depression, the New Deal's Works Progress Administration put 30 unemployed librarians, archivists, and English majors to work on the Baltimore City Archives. They organized its documents by agency and assigned a brief description and unique number to each one, starting with Baltimore's town charter of 1729 and including everything up to 1938. More recent records have been wrestled into order by the Archives' limited full-time staff and a corps of historically-minded volunteers. This massive catalog is accessible on-line.

Today, the same digital technology that empowers hackers can also aid in storing and tracking the City's history. Paper documents can be scanned and incorporated into digital databases accessible through search engines. Some portion of the City's historical archive might even serve as a back-up for the working documents that the City needs for everyday business – insurance against hackers or the vagaries of digital media. But none of this will happen unless records management becomes a priority for the City, a step that will unquestionably require additional strain on already tight funds. But it is unlikely to cost as much as the millions that the City has spent recovering from the recent ransom-ware attack.

Once it is up and running, Baltimore's historic archive could be linked electronically to the records of Maryland and to electronic copies of other collections held by non-profit organizations like the Maryland Historical Society.

We could make history. ■

DISCOVERING BALTIMORE

With this issue of *Gaslight*, we are inaugurating a regularly appearing feature to introduce readers to some of the less well known locations in our City, which shed light on its history. Our first profile is of The Natural History Society of Maryland, located on Belair Road in Overlea, the site of this year's BCHS History Honors (see *related article in this issue*). Thank you to Patty Dowd of the Society who contributed information for this article.

The Natural History Society of Maryland

The Natural History Society of Maryland (NHSM) was established in 1929 when a group interested in the natural sciences broke away from the Maryland Academy of Sciences. However, interest in the natural history of Maryland started long before that time. The Maryland Academy of Sciences, the oldest scientific institution in the state, was founded in 1797 as an amateur scientific society. Members met to discuss papers on astronomy, botany, zoology, and other subjects then known as the "natural sciences." Many of the NHSM's older collections were gathered by members of the Academy in the 1800's. Currently, the Maryland Academy of Sciences operates the Maryland Science Center located at the Inner Harbor in Baltimore.

In 1936, the NHSM established a Maryland Natural History Museum at Druid Hill Park in Baltimore City. The museum was open to the public until the early 1970s, when the Baltimore Zoo (now the Maryland Zoo in Baltimore) expanded its administrative offices and NHSM lost its space. The collections were then housed in various locations that did not offer public access. In 2006, NHSM purchased a 9,000 square-foot building in Overlea to provide a home for and public access to its collections.

Since 2006, the NHSM's Overlea location has been a meeting place for citizens interested in Maryland's natural history. In addition to its displays of Maryland flora, fauna, fossils, and minerals, the NHSM offers a wide variety of programs for the beginner to the advanced naturalist to foster stewardship and preservation of Maryland's natural heritage. The NHSM is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation located at 6908 Belair Road, Overlea, MD 21206. Its website nhsm@marylandnature.org

has information about its many programs. Telephone 410.882.5376.

NHSM BUILDING. (6908 Belair Road) The building that now houses the NHSM is an historic structure. In 1910, a Town Hall/grocery store opened on the northwest corner of Belair Road and Overlea Avenue to serve the population of the growing suburb of Overlea. Over the decades, the building has had many uses. Now, in addition to serving as the home of the NHSM, the building remains a community hub. The Overlea Farmers Market takes place there on Saturdays.



Overlea Town Hall (1910), 6908 Belair Road, is now the home of the Natural History Society of Maryland

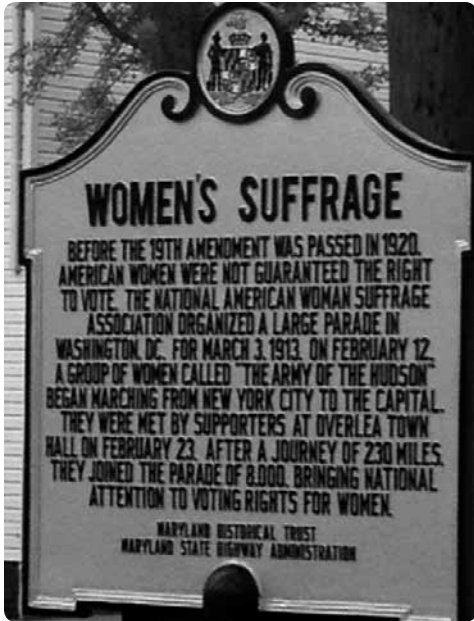
WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE MARCH. In 1913, the Overlea Town Hall figured into an historic event of national importance. The "Woman Suffrage Procession," was the first suffragist parade in Washington, D.C. and the first large, organized march on Washington for political purposes. Organized by the suffragists Alice Paul and Lucy Burns for the National American Woman Suffrage Association, thousands of suffragists marched down Pennsylvania Avenue on Monday, March 3, 1913, the day before President Woodrow Wilson's inauguration. People from all over the country flocked to Washington to participate in the Procession, many traveling on special suffrage trains.

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...DISCOVERING BALTIMORE

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One organized group calling itself the “Army of the Hudson” left on foot from New York City and planned a march that made a number of stops along its route. One of these stops was in Overlea on February 23, 1913. At the Overlea Town Hall, the marchers were feted by the residents of Overlea and an additional 300 people who took the trolley from Baltimore. Though not immediately successful, the Procession raised to high relief the cause of women’s suffrage and led to the passage of the 19th amendment to the Constitution seven years later during Wilson’s presidency. On the 100th Anniversary of the Woman Suffrage Procession in March of 2013, a commemorative march was held on Belair Road in Overlea. On June 9, 2014, an historic marker was unveiled at the Town Hall to commemorate the march and Overlea’s role in it.



Historical Marker at 6908 for the “Army of the Hudson’s” stop in Overlea on February 23, 1913 on its way to join the Women’s Suffrage Procession.

OVERLEA TROLLEY WAITING STATION. (6900 Belair Road) Overlea and many other Baltimore suburbs developed when streetcar lines were extended from downtown. These lines allowed workers to commute rapidly to and from their jobs in city offices and factories. The first streetcar service to Overlea began on July 14, 1903. The

Overlea Waiting Station was built in 1917 at the turnaround of the Number 15 Belair streetcar line. Just a few steps from the Town Hall, it is one of the few trolley waiting stations that still exist in the Baltimore area. ■



The Overlea Trolley Waiting Station was built in 1917.

The Baltimore History Middle School Essay Contest

Bradley Alston

The Baltimore History Middle School Essay Contest is an outreach and educational initiative of the Baltimore City Historical Society. In its second year, the program engages Baltimore City Middle School teachers and their students to explore, research and write about Baltimore history. Winning essays are awarded both monetary prizes and trophies. The schools participating this year are Francis Scott Key Middle School, Mount Royal Middle School, City Neighbors Charter School and the Graceland Park/O’Donnell Heights Middle School. The 2019 topic is “The Port of Baltimore.”

The BCHS partners with the Baltimore Museum of Industry, where Jack Burkert, Senior Educator at the BMI, works with all four schools to help prepare students for the contest. The Baltimore Immigration Museum and the Baltimore City Archives graciously offer use of their facilities to the students for research. The students, their teachers and families are invited to the awarding of prizes at the 19th Annual Baltimore City Historical Society’s History Honors ceremony to be held at the Natural History Society

of Maryland, on October 26, 2019. (See related articles in this issue.) In 2018, the first year of the contest, the winning essays included the titles; “The Domino Sugar Company,” “Slavery and the Port,” and “Why the Port is Important.”

The BCHS Essay Contest committee members are Bradley Alston, Matt Crenson, and Chip Markell. The 2019 contest sponsors include The Reginald F. Lewis Foundation; The American Sugar Refining Co.; Domino Sugar, Inc.; An Die Musik LIVE; and George R. Ruhl & Son, est. 1789, America’s Oldest Bakery Supply House. ■

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS!

Joseph L. Arnold Prize for Outstanding Writing on Baltimore’s History in 2019

Thanks to the generosity of the Byrnes Family, in memory of Joseph R. and Anne S. Byrnes, the Baltimore City Historical Society presents an annual Joseph L. Arnold Prize for Outstanding Writing on Baltimore’s History, in the amount of \$500.

Joseph L. Arnold, Professor of History at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, died in 2004, at the age of sixty-six. He was a vital and enormously important member of the UMBC faculty for three and a half decades, as well as a leading historian of urban and planning history. He also played an active, and often leading role with a variety of private and public historical institutions in the Baltimore area, and at his death was hailed as the “dean of Baltimore historians.”

Entries should be unpublished manuscripts between 15 and 45 double-spaced pages in length (including footnotes/endnotes). To submit an entry, address an e-mail message to:

- ArnoldPrizeBCHS@gmail.com;

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...JOSEPH L. ARNOLD PRIZE*(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)*

- attach the entry as a single document in either MS Word or PC convertible format; and
- include any illustrations within the text of the document.

There will be a “blind judging” of entries by a panel of historians. Criteria for selection are the significance, originality, and quality of the research and the clarity of presentation. The winner will be announced in the spring of 2020. The BCHS reserves the right not to award the prize. The winning entry will be posted to the BCHS website and considered for publication in the *Maryland Historical Magazine*.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: February 1, 2020

For further information send a message to Dr. Ida Jones at: ArnoldPrizeBCHS@gmail.com or leave a voice mail for her at 443-885-4294.

Since its inception, the Arnold Prize process has been shepherded by BCHS Board member Garrett Power, *Professor Emeritus* at the University of Maryland Carey School of Law. We thank him for the many years he served in this capacity. This year, Dr. Ida Jones, BCHS Board 2nd Vice President and the University Archivist at Morgan State University, will assume the responsibility for the Arnold Prize.

8th Annual Joint Program of the BCHS and the HSBC to focus on Baltimore Suffrage History

Ida Jones

The Baltimore City Historical Society (BCHS) and the Historical Society of Baltimore County (HSBC) will sponsor their 8th Annual Joint Program on Saturday, November 16, 2019, from 2 to 4 pm at the Waverly Branch of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, 400 East 33rd Street, Baltimore City 21218.

The theme of this year's joint program is Baltimore suffrage history in preparation for the 2020 national commemoration of the passage of the 19th amendment. BCHS and HSBC in partnership with the Maryland Women's Heritage Center will explore the women and organizations that lobbied for the franchise in Baltimore. The panel presentation will be moderated by historian Jean Baker, author of *Sisters: The Lives of America's Suffragists*. The presenters are Kacy Rohn, creator of “Maryland Historical Trust: Maryland Women's Fight for the Vote,” a story map of people and places of the Maryland women's suffrage movement, and Diane Weaver, author of *Maryland Women and the Transformation of Politics, 1890s-1930*.

Scholars, educators, researchers and genealogists are conducting research on the Baltimore women who were

lobbying for the franchise. Pamela Young of the Maryland Women's Heritage Center noted that the unique nature of 19th century Baltimore produced an array of unsung heroines at the beginning of the suffrage movement whose names are being rediscovered. While these women coalesced around the vote, the social entanglements of race, religion and class lines remained fraught throughout the remainder of the 20th century. Diana Bailey, executive director of the Maryland Women's Heritage Center, is coordinating the statewide celebrations planned by historical societies, local organizations and educators to place the Maryland story in the context of the 70-year national effort for the right of women to vote.

Please join us for this exciting and informative event! ■

Baltimore City Historical Society (BCHS)
&
Historical Society of Baltimore County (HSBC)

8TH ANNUAL JOINT BCHS/HSBC PROGRAM

with
Maryland Women's Heritage Center
on
Baltimore Suffrage History

Saturday, November 16, 2019 • 2 pm to 4 pm

Waverly Branch, Enoch Pratt Free Library
400 East 33rd Street Baltimore City 21218

Moderator: Jean Baker, renowned historian, author of *Sisters: The Lives of America's Suffragists*
and editor of *Votes for Women: The Struggle for Suffrage Revisited*

Presenters: Kacy Rohn, creator of “Maryland Historical Trust: Maryland Women's Fight for the Vote”
a story map highlighting people and places of the Maryland women's suffrage movement, and

Diane Weaver, author of *Maryland Women and the Transformation of Politics, 1890s-1930*

This is a free public program with light refreshments.

A municipal surface lot with metered parking is half a block from the library at Barclay St. between 32nd St. & 33rd Streets.

Contact: Joe Stewart • (410) 243-4418 • joestewart31947@comcast.net

BCHS MEMBERSHIP

We hope you will want to support the BCBS by becoming a member. It's easy!
The following are our membership options:

Yearly Membership Options

Student/Senior (65+): \$20.00
Individual: \$25.00

Patron or Family/Household: \$40.00
Contributor: \$100.00

Benefactor: \$250.00
Corporate Sponsorship: \$500

You may also join as a Joint Member with the *Maryland Historical Society*!

Joint Membership-Individual: \$60.00 **Joint Membership-Household:** \$90.00

NOTE: If you are already a member of the *Maryland Historical Society*, the above discounted dues will be applied to your next MdHS membership year. (*Annual membership is from January to December.*)

How to Join

You may join BCBS online using PayPal on our website at www.baltimorecityhistoricalsociety.org/subscribe-1.

Prefer to use the U.S. Postal Service? Please provide the following information and mail to the address below:

Name, Mailing Address, Home Phone, Work/Cell Phone, E-mail, Membership Option, and Total Amount Enclosed.
Please make checks payable to *Baltimore City Historical Society*.

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