

# MARYLAND HISTORY AND CULTURE NEWS

/// SPRING 2024 ///



CAPITOL ACHIEVEMENTS IN HISTORY

THE PAINTED SCREEN SOCIETY OF BALTIMORE

COLLECTING HISTORIES: HOW COMMUNITY  
AND TRADITIONAL ARCHIVES WORK TOGETHER

# SUMMER SAIL SERIES WITH LIVING CLASSROOMS

Presented by the Maryland Center for History and Culture (MCHC) Maritime Committee

All aboard! Join MCHC and Living Classrooms this summer for two-hour evening sails around Baltimore's Inner Harbor. Each sail trip includes a lecture by a guest speaker, refreshments, and demonstrations on sailing techniques. Refreshments and activities are included in the ticket price. *Space is limited.*

Registration is required at [mdhistory.org/events](https://mdhistory.org/events).



## /// Summer Sail: Rum Tasting and Sea Shanties Sail on the Skipjack *SIGSBEE*

Wednesday, July 10 | 6–8 pm

\$20 Members / \$30 Non-members

Learn about the historic processes of rum distilling through a tasting of local spirits, and enjoy a performance of sea shanties while sailing aboard the Skipjack *SIGSBEE*.

## /// Summer Sail: Crab Industry Lecture and Sail on the Skipjack *SIGSBEE*

Wednesday, July 24 | 6 pm–8 pm

\$20 Members / \$30 Non-members

Chesapeake writer and educator **Kate Livie** comes aboard a sail on the Skipjack *SIGSBEE* to share the fascinating history of the crab industry through the stories of enslaved cooks and watermen, immigrant spice merchants, Black entrepreneurs, and migrant pickers who helped make crabs iconic in Maryland.

## /// Summer Sail: A Visit to Mr. Trash Wheel

Wednesday, August 7 | 6 pm–8 pm

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Sail aboard the buyboat *MILDRED BELLE* and stop by the Inner Harbor Water Wheel, affectionately dubbed "Mr. Trash Wheel," in honor of its tenth anniversary.

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Wednesday, August 21 | 6 pm–8 pm

\$20 Members / \$30 Non-members

Enjoy an evening sail aboard the buyboat *MILDRED BELLE* with local educators, historians, and maritime workers. Attendees will learn about the past, present, and future of the maritime world.

## MARYLAND HISTORY AND CULTURE NEWS

A publication of the Maryland Center for History and Culture published semiannually

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Red Bungalow, William Oktavec (1885-1956), Baltimore, Maryland, circa 1922-1956.  
Maryland Center for History and Culture, 1972.79.1.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT



**IN MANY WAYS**, the Maryland Center for History and Culture (MCHC) follows the rhythms of a school year. We mark our progress by fiscal year which concludes on June 30, 2024. Spring is filled with activity as we launch new exhibitions, welcome our final K-12 field trips, and, though we thankfully do not have final exams, already begin to think of all the promise that lies ahead.

As I look back at the trends and initiatives of this year, I am struck by the importance of partnerships. I truly believe in the Core Values of MCHC statement that “history and culture can create, strengthen, and bridge communities” and see this in action every day. Meaningful collaborations with peer organizations, historians, and civic leaders elevate our work, enhance interpretation, and make positive change for our larger history sector possible.

Whether detailing our burgeoning venture with the Painted Screen Society of Baltimore or showing the power of collective advocacy behind a reinvigorated Museum Assistance Program, this issue of *Maryland History and Culture News* is filled with stories that demonstrate the power of “teaming up.” These joint efforts are just the beginning as we commit to sustained work that will lift up the importance of Maryland history and make the collections and resources at MCHC more accessible and responsive to groups throughout the state.

That idea extends beyond our partnerships with peer museums, humanities organizations, and preservation groups to the notion of MCHC as a membership organization. The 350,000 objects and artworks and seven million archival works stewarded in the collections endure and inspire because of a community that chooses to share their time, talent, and treasure towards a greater cause. In the context of our increasingly busy lives and endless options, the fact that you choose to engage with MCHC, either as a member, volunteer, or even a casual visitor, is meaningful. Our vision is to “realize the potential of our museum and library collection to illuminate our world” and this is only possible with you on our team. Thank you for your continued support.

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Katie Caljean". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized 'C' at the end.

**KATIE CALJEAN,**  
PRESIDENT & CEO

# CAPITOL ACHIEVEMENTS IN HISTORY

By David Belew, Vice President of External Affairs

The statewide mission of the Maryland Center for History and Culture (MCHC) extends beyond our collections, educational services, and programs. Through our targeted advocacy work in Annapolis, MCHC advances initiatives that uplift Maryland's broader network of heritage museums, scholars, and public history practitioners.

During the 2024 legislative session, working with organizational partners such as Preservation Maryland and the Maryland Museum Association, MCHC supported a variety of bills and outreach efforts that will build the capacity of cultural stewards and raise the visibility of Maryland history for years to come.

► Many artworks from the collections at MCHC grace the halls of the State House and other government facilities thanks to an enduring partnership with the Maryland State Archives. President & CEO Katie Caljean and Maryland State Archivist Elaine Rice Bachmann are pictured here in the Senate Lounge where model ships from our maritime collection are being prepared for display on the senate rostrums.

"Each legislative session we look forward to meeting with legislators to educate on and advocate for bills that will create a better Maryland," said Nicholas Redding, President & CEO of Preservation Maryland. "Partnering with MCHC to highlight the diverse impact history, heritage, and preservation have on Maryland communities made our advocacy efforts even stronger. Together, our organizations were able to drive significant policy advancements."



PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID BELEW.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR.



◀ On May 9, 2024, Governor Wes Moore, Senate President Bill Ferguson, and House Speaker Adrienne Jones signed the bill *Historical and Cultural Museum Assistance Program—Funding* (Senate Bill 616 and House Bill 688) into law. Advocates for the bill pictured include from left to right: MCHC President and CEO Katie Caljean, MCHC trustee and Secretary and retired judge the Honorable Wanda Heard, CEO of the Baltimore National Heritage Area Shauntee Daniels, Assistant Vice President of Cornerstone Government Affairs Christopher Dews, MCHC trustee and Vice Chair Eleanor Carey, MCHC Board Chair John Baner, Chair of the Maryland Museum Association Meagan Baco, and Assistant Division Chief of the Maryland National-Capital Parks Planning Commission Kevin Carbrera.

PHOTOGRAPH IS COURTESY OF PRESERVATION MARYLAND.



◀ In addition to our advocacy, the team at MCHC found time for some hands-on work to preserve historic resources in Annapolis. To recognize Maryland Day on March 25, several team members joined Historic Annapolis for a Cemetery Preservation Workshop led by Preservation Maryland. MCHC President & CEO Katie Caljean and Preservation Maryland President & CEO Nicholas Redding are pictured here cleaning the tombstones at St. Anne's Cemetery which serves as the resting place for some of Annapolis' oldest families.

## HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL MUSEUM ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SENATE BILL 616 AND HOUSE BILL 688)

Thanks to the combined efforts of Howard County's Senator Guy Guzzone, Chair of the Budget and Taxation Committee, and Prince George's County Delegate Ben Barnes, Chair of the Appropriations Committee, new legislation advanced authorizing Governor Wes Moore to include \$5M in funding for the Museum Assistance Program in 2026. Administered by the Maryland Historical Trust, this program provided grants and technical support to our state's 400+ history museums and societies before the appropriation was eliminated in 2011. "Support for Maryland's history museums and collections needs to grow so much to compare to the resources and funding available in other states, bringing dollars back to the Museum Assistance Program is a major victory for our whole sector. We can't wait to see what museums are able to achieve with the potential revitalization of this program," said Meagan Baco, Chair of the Maryland Museum Association which spearheaded advocacy for this bill in partnership with MCHC.

## FALL IN LOVE WITH HISTORY

On February 14, staff at MCHC joined our colleagues at Preservation Maryland for a day of outreach and connection at the American Institute of Architects' Maryland Chapter offices in Annapolis. In lieu of a traditional Valentine's Day card, the "Fall in Love with History" program was an opportunity to share the importance and impact of historic preservation and history education in Maryland. Partners discussed a variety of initiatives, such as bills to fund preservation of Maryland's maritime heritage and stewardship of properties maintained by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). "These opportunities to connect with peers and collaborate behind efforts that build the capacity of our whole sector are so critically important. A rising tide lifts all ships," said Katie Caljean, President and CEO at MCHC.

## MORE TO COME

As we approach the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution in 2026, expect more news on the statewide programming and advocacy efforts of MCHC as we work with the state commission and seek to realize the great potential of this commemoration for Maryland history. ▲

# AT THE INTERSECTION OF ART, HISTORY, AND COMMUNITY

## WITH THE PAINTED SCREEN SOCIETY OF BALTIMORE

By David Belew, Vice President of External Affairs

As the result of a new partnership with the Painted Screen Society of Baltimore and Dr. Elaine Eff, the Maryland Center for History and Culture (MCHC) will become the largest repository of painted screens and a learning hub that continues this unique form of urban folk art. This landmark acquisition celebrates generations of self-taught artists and entrepreneurs who developed a medium that brought color to the

streets of Baltimore and so strongly conveys the rowhouse culture of the city. MCHC and the Painted Screen Society will utilize as many as 300 painted screens as a living artistic resource with ongoing displays at peer museums and institutions throughout the region. Workshops and scholarship will safeguard this tradition and help inspire a new generation to appreciate, make, and collect Baltimore's beloved painted screens.



▲ Dr. Elaine Eff peers through a treasured painted screen.

◀ Painted Screen, Charles Bowman, Baltimore, Maryland, ca. 1950s. Maryland Center for History and Culture, 1996.80



## THE ORIGINS OF PAINTED SCREENS

Painted screens are quintessentially Baltimore, functional works of art that beautified city streets and provided privacy without sacrificing airflow. Green hills, white swans, and a red roofed cottage, from the 1910s and 20s to the present day, scores of painted window screens in East Baltimore have been adorned with variations of this same pastoral scene. Replicating a common vista readily available on mass market postcards of the day, this scene is affectionately called “the Red Bungalow” or “RB” for short. This prototypical image set the stage for a form that evolved with each new artist that projected the wishes of clients and their own vision on to a mesh canvas.

While the first painted screens date back to 1700s London and outlying examples of the form can be found on storefronts and homes throughout the United States, no where has the form flourished as in Baltimore where, each spring, continuous blocks of neighborhoods like Canton, Highlandtown, and Fells Point became outdoor galleries displaying dozens of works. Painted screens are a living tradition born from the Czech, Polish, and Italian communities who shaped East Baltimore during an era of mass immigration. For some, painted screens join marble steps, Arabber carts, and Formstone as signifiers that capture the essence of Charm City.

William Oktavec (1885 – 1956), a first-generation immigrant from the Czech Republic, is credited with

inventing the Baltimore painted screen tradition in 1913. Residents that lived in tightly knit rowhouse communities were delighted by the illusion and saw the benefit of a screen that allowed them to look out while preventing others from looking in. It was not long before others learned to replicate Oktavec’s techniques. Spreading from Oktavec’s grocery store in Little Bohemia, screen painters set up shop in their own neighborhoods while closely guarding their trade secrets, competing to offer the best price, and depicting everything from the ever popular “Red Bungalow,” to Baltimore landmarks, and pop culture icons like Elvis Presley.

Painted screens became woven into the cultural fabric of Baltimore even as the proliferation of air conditioning and popularity of plantation style shutters undermined their initial community need for privacy and comfort. Descendants of original artists and new aficionados safeguarded their folk art tradition even as the form was largely ignored by museums and folk art researchers.

## DR. ELAINE EFF SAFEGUARDS A BALTIMORE TRADITION

In 1972, Richard Oktavec, William Oktavec’s son and himself a screen painter, donated a pristine example of his father’s “RB” form, a sales sample that originally sold for \$10, to the Maryland Center for History and Culture. Two years later, in 1974, Dr. Elaine Eff began her research on painted screens,



▶ Painted Screen, Dee Herget, Baltimore, Maryland, 20th Century. Painted Screen Society Collection, PSS.DH.16

▶ Painted Screen, Alonzo Parks (c. 1900-1963), 1952, Baltimore, Maryland. Maryland Center for History and Culture, 1987.61.4. Gift of Jeff Jolliffe, Sr.



## SIP AND PAINT—Baltimore Screen Painting Summer Workshops with Michael Seipp

The Maryland Center for History and Culture (MHC) is the place to be on Thursday nights this summer! Join a drop-in sip and paint workshop with Michael Seipp, a Baltimore-native and self-taught artist practicing the tradition of screen painting. Baltimore painted screens are a beloved homegrown art form where the exterior sides of window screens are painted with murals or portraits, offering both a creative flair and affordable alternative for privacy. Museum admission is free all day on Free First Thursdays.

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED AT [MDHISTORY.ORG/EVENTS](https://mdhistory.org/events).

/// June 6

/// July 11

/// August 1

Thursday

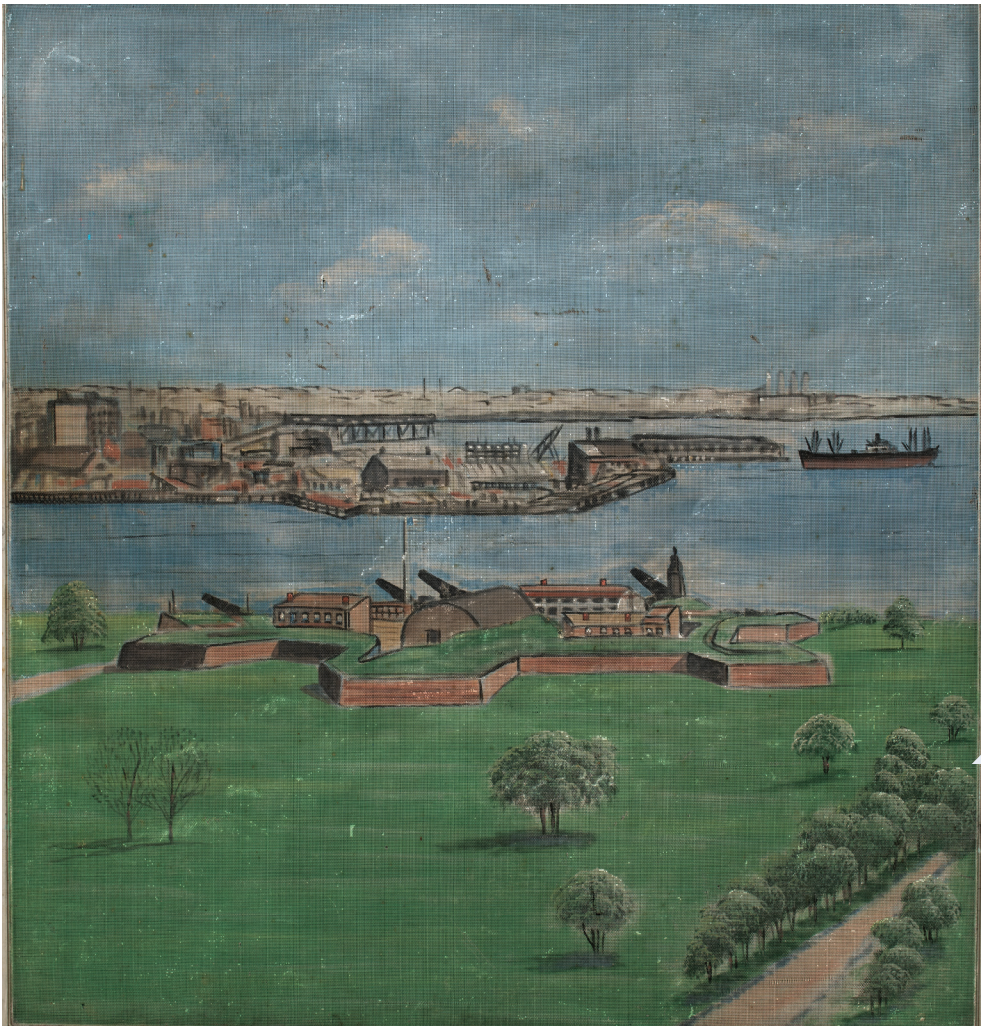
5:30–7:30 pm

\$25 Members/\$30 Non-members



◀ Red Bungalow, William Oktavec (1885-1956), Baltimore, Maryland, circa 1922-1956. Maryland Center for History and Culture, 1972.79.1.

▶ Painted Screen depicting Fort McHenry, Al Oktavec, Baltimore, Maryland, ca. 1990. Painted Screen Society Collection, 1987.61.4, PSS.AO.03, Gift of Jeff Jolliffe, Sr.



taking a hands-on approach to documenting and connecting the city's surviving screen painters. While growing up in a Jewish household in a Mount Washington enclave she describes as "the opposite of painted screens territory," Eff chose painted screens as her subject while studying to become a folklorist at the prestigious Cooperstown Graduate Program. She quickly became enmeshed in the local scene. Drawing connections between early extant examples of ca. 1800s painted screens in the collections of the Fenimore Art Museum with the vibrant living tradition in Baltimore, Eff found screen painters and residents to be eager participants in her research: "All I needed to do was stand long enough for someone to walk out and say, do you like those? I did those, you know."

An early meeting with Richard Oktavec that resulted in her first two acquisitions, a bikini-clad "bathing beauty" and an iteration of the "Red Bungalow" tightly rolled up, matured into an intimate understanding of Baltimore's network

of painted screen makers. Makers like Johnny Eck and Tom Lipka formed a community that worked largely in isolation and still sometimes sold their wares for just a few dollars—limiting opportunities for collaboration while making representative works easy to collect. According to Eff, "[painters] were very curious about their roots, but it was a highly secretive and competitive art form at the time, and everybody had their own channels for getting business and advertising and word of mouth or going door to door...So they were not sharing anything."

Over the years, living and studying within Baltimore's painted screen neighborhoods like Canton and Highlandtown, Eff worked to elevate the public's understanding and celebration of painted screens serving as Baltimore City's first official folklorist and taking on curatorial assignments and speaking opportunities at venues ranging from the Smithsonian's Renwick Gallery to Winterthur. In 1985, sensing that the tradition of

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF DR. ELAINE EFF.



painted screens was in danger of being forgotten, Eff and the screen painter Dee Herget formed the Painted Screen Society of Baltimore. Initially conceived as a guild for painters, interest in painted screens grew through outreach and, notably, production of a documentary film in 1988.

"At that point where everybody wanted to be a member, everybody. So we said maybe we're not just a guild. Maybe we need to incorporate because this is the definition of a community art form," said Eff. The Painted Screen Society welcomed 500 members in its first year offering everything from beginners' classes to opportunities to purchase from masters of the craft. In just a few short years, the city's community of painted screen makers evolved from a group of secretive competitors to an organized club highly aware of the special place their work held in Baltimore and dedicated to passing the tradition down. This work continues on, whether through do-it-yourself workshops held at local hardware stores or the 2013 publication of *The Painted Screens of Baltimore: An Urban Folk Art Revealed*, Eff's comprehensive study of the form. For Eff, 2024 marks 50 years of painted screens scholarship and outreach as well as a new chapter for MCHC and the Painted Screen Society.

◀ In the 1970s, then Director of the American Folk Art Museum, Bruce Johnson (1949 – 1976) sits on the stoop of prolific screen painter Frank Deomes with neighborhood children and a painted screen in the background.

▼ Dr. Elaine Eff in 1974 is pictured here in Mount Washington with her mother and Volkswagen van as she prepares for her trip to the Cooperstown Graduate Program.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF DR. ELAINE EFF.

## A FOREVER HOME FOR PAINTED SCREENS

For several years, Eff considered how to best find a permanent repository for the Painted Screen Society's collection and sustain the volunteer-run organization into the future. Funding from the Baltimore National Heritage Area, the France-Merrick Foundation, and other sources is supporting administrative work and comprehensive cataloging of the collection, but a desire to keep the collection intact and develop a pathway to retain the Society's distinct identity made it imperative to find the right fit.

"I knew that MCHC was the right home for the collection the moment I learned of Elaine's search. This collection is a product of her love for Baltimore and it so perfectly marries our focus on the intersections of art and history. We jumped at the opportunity to meet this community need."

The partnership between MCHC and the Painted Screen Society and acquisition of the collection supports the utilitarian roots of the tradition as well as its evolving role in the community. Due to conservation concerns and space, most museums only display a small percentage of their collections at any given time, but painted screens were designed for their durability to the elements. "If you use the



▲ Painted Screen of Red Bungalow Spire, Tom Lipka after Albert Oktavec, 1985, Baltimore, Maryland, Painted Screen Society Collection, PSS.TL.09

right paint, you know, it will last for forever” says Eff. “We are envisioning a special object classification for many pieces within this acquisition that will empower us to treat it like the living collection it is—on display in the field throughout our community,” said Vice President of Collections and Chief Curator Catherine Arthur.

This innovative classification will enable MCHC to display and share the painted screens as they were intended, as versatile enhancements to the fabric of every day life. Potential installation sites include the new Penn Station re-development and other less traditional hosting partners. The medium of painted screens also empowers our curatorial staff to activate the connecting staircase of the Carey Center for Maryland Life, a grand

gallery space on the MCHC campus designed by Ziger/Snead architects that, due to light exposure concerns, has yet to host a museum show. “We have dreamed of utilizing this space for so long. It is an elevated setting for painted screens that will really create a transportive experience for visitors as they move throughout the museum,” said Arthur. Funding for this proposed permanent installation remains in progress.

In the meantime, visitors to MCHC can experience a sampling of the painted screens collection creatively exhibited throughout the Richard & Beverly Tilghman and Henry & Judy Stansbury pavilion when they check in at our Visitor Services desk. Just like the tradition of screen painting, the partnership between MCHC



▲ Dr. Elaine Eff holds a painted screen by Frank Deomes depicting the common "Red Bungalow" motif with a personal style.

and the Painted Screen Society and will evolve for years to come. Eff hopes that this new home for painted screens helps establish a greater understanding of connoisseurship for the form and the talent and innovation of those who developed it. As to what the original painters would think of their work being exhibited at Maryland's oldest continuously operating cultural institution, "I think the screen painters, especially Ben Richardson, would be tickled. We used to meet up at Flower Mart and he had a real great sense of the landmarks of the city and what was important. And I think every one of them would, first of all, I think they'd be honored to know that the screens are valued enough to be saved."

Stay tuned for more details on the developing permanent installation and related public programming. ▲



◀ Painted Screen of Rowhomes and Scrubbing of Marble Steps, by Dee Herget, date unknown, Baltimore, Maryland, Painted Screen Society Collection, PSS.DH.23



## IN MEMORY OF DEE HERGET 1935 ~ 2024

"We are diminished by one colorful, whimsical, screen adoring soul. She might have once said 'Painted Screens are life.' How she will be missed by the thousands of people whose lives she touched."

- Elaine Eff



◀ The exterior of the Gaithersburg Community Museum, housed in an 1884 freight house for the B&O Railroad, belies the growing stories it holds for an evolving community in Montgomery County.

## MILLER HISTORY FUND SPOTLIGHT: THE GAITHERSBURG HISTORY PROJECT

By Karen Gasior, Grants Officer

This year, the Thomas V. "Mike" Miller Jr. History Fund celebrates its fifth anniversary of supporting vital projects at museums, historical societies, libraries, and other cultural repositories throughout the state of Maryland. After five consecutive years, the Miller History Fund has awarded \$1 million to over 50 organizations across Maryland. The cumulative work of each grantees' project constitutes a major positive impact on our state's public history sector and cultural collections. This issue of *Maryland History and Culture News*, we are taking a deep dive into the Miller History Fund's first grantee project focused on our state's growing Latino history and communities.

The Gaithersburg Community Museum relies on just one, full-time staff member for day-to-day operations: Museum Director and Community Facility Manager Cynthia Cowan. With about a dozen part-time staffers that assist her with everything from project management to visitor experience, the museum serves as a hub for Montgomery County residents to immerse themselves in history, as well as science, technology,

engineering, and mathematics (STEM) activities, and cultural exploration. The Gaithersburg History Project is the perfect intersection of the museum's multifaceted programming and outreach.

"In about 2020 or 2021, museum staff were really coming to grips with the fact that the histories that had been written of Gaithersburg, both in the 1800s and 1900s, were still these very traditional, very white, settler-centric histories that didn't reflect the incredible diversity of our community here," Cowan says of the project's inception. "The city has repeatedly been recognized as the most diverse city of its size in the country, which is really cool, but unless we are really honoring that diversity in the work that we do, it is kind of an empty statistic...If we have this incredibly rich, diverse community from so many different places, all of whom have come together here to contribute to what makes the city great, we owe it to our community to represent that appropriately in the history of Gaithersburg."

Phase one of the project focused on researching, collecting, and uplifting stories of Gaithersburg's



◀ This ofrenda from a recent Latino-centered community event held by the Gaithersburg Community Museum is the beginning of new types of outreach and dialogue supported by their Miller History Fund grant. Ofrendas are home altars dedicated to deceased loved ones that are a major part of the traditional “Día de los Muertos” or “Day of the Dead” festival.

Black community. Researchers recorded the oral histories of community members and continue to seek donations of artifacts like photographs, manuscripts, and historic records to provide a fuller, more accurate picture of the city’s Black residents. Phase two of this project, beginning this spring, follows this project model. Working with Montgomery College anthropology professor Dr. Maria Sprehn-Malagon, this phase elevates the histories of Gaithersburg’s Latino community.

“One of the features we’re especially excited about with this project is that the Miller History Fund has given us the ability to fund student interns, who are drawn from Montgomery College, a Hispanic-Serving Institution [HSI]...It’s a great opportunity to really bring up scholars in the community who can carry forward this work,” says Cowan.

Dr. Sprehn-Malagon will hire and train student interns to conduct oral history interviews with community members, transcribe interviews in both English and Spanish, and write research articles based on their findings. Interviews are intended to focus on capturing stories of recent immigration, including responses to gang violence

and presences within the Latino community. This project phase will also focus on creating online video packages that capture cultural heritage artifacts beyond oral histories, including processes of foodways productions (such as *empanadas* or *pupusas*), cultural arts performances, and religious expressions (like sermons or *ofrenda* construction).

“We’re excited ... to really capture the full diversity of how the Latino community in Gaithersburg is contributing to this community, is celebrating itself within this community, and how we can record that and make that part of the historical record so that it is written right into the fabric of the community’s history the way it has always deserved to be,” Cowan said.

The Gaithersburg Community Museum’s ongoing commitment to exploring and honoring the varied experiences of the city’s residents will culminate in a public Gaithersburg History Fair, with the inaugural program set for June 2024. The Miller History Fund is exceptionally proud to support and highlight this important work that will benefit Marylanders in Gaithersburg, Montgomery County, and the state’s public history community at large. ▲



# FY 2024 MILLER HISTORY FUND AWARDEES LIST

## **Accokeek Foundation (Prince George's County)**

### **- Piscataway Voices: Where the Waters Blend**

The Accokeek Foundation's "Accokeek Reimagined" vision in Piscataway Park is a collaboration with Piscataway tribal leadership, citizens, and other community stakeholders to emphasize Black and Indigenous voices in interpretation and education programming, and to apply Indigenous values-based stewardship plans to restore a healthy environment for people, plants, and animals.

## **Afro Charities, Inc. (Baltimore City) - Behind the Scenes in the AFRO Archives**

In partnership with Wide Angle Youth Media, Afro Charities, Inc. will produce a video-based marketing campaign designed to highlight the *AFRO American Newspapers* Archives, their work to maintain them, and the history of both the *AFRO* and Afro Charities.

## **Field of Firsts Foundation, on behalf of the College Park Aviation Museum (Prince George's County) - The College Park Aviation Museum Collections Stewardship Project**

The Field of Firsts Foundation will hire a part-time cataloguer to support the College Park Aviation Museum curator. By performing this inventory, the collection will be more accessible to staff to craft relevant exhibits catered to their diverse, local community.

## **Gaithersburg Parks, Arts, and Recreation Corporation, on behalf of the Gaithersburg Community Museum (Montgomery County) - The Gaithersburg History Project**

In order to better understand and represent the history of the diverse cultural groups that make up the City of Gaithersburg, the Museum launched the Gaithersburg History Project. The grant supports the second phase of the project delving into the history of Latino Gaithersburg, a demographic that presently accounts for approximately 29 percent of the City's population.

## **Havre de Grace Maritime Museum (Harford County) - Exhibit Development: *Untold Stories of the Conowingo Dam & Petroglyphs of the Susquehanna River***

*Untold Stories of the Conowingo Dam* will present a more comprehensive history of the impact of the dam. The separate but related *Petroglyphs of the Susquehanna River* exhibition will be revised to include more details about the Bald Friar rock artifacts. They will create a companion booklet containing information from the exhibit. This innovative project complements their Native American heritage exhibit.

## **Lakeland Community Heritage Project**

### **(Prince George's County) - Learning to Love Metadata: Making the Lakeland Digital Archive Accessible to Multiple Audiences**

Since 2005, the Lakeland Community Heritage Project has built a 6,000+ item digital archive that documents the historic African American community of Lakeland and College Park. Their project will build LCHP's capacity by leveraging the expertise of the LDA team to fund summer apprenticeships that prepare community members and students to enter metadata into the collection's customized Airtable database.

## **National Capital Trolley Museum (Montgomery County) - Collection to Connection**

This project's goals are twofold: To improve the overall health of their collection practices and set a standard for future efforts and to develop and support an annual schedule of small exhibitions which tell nuanced, inclusive stories of local streetcar history.

## **National Electronics Museum (Baltimore County) - Gallery Enhancements at New Location**

National Electronics Museum is establishing gallery space at its new location to enhance the showcasing of artifacts and hands-on STEM demos to create an aesthetically pleasing artifact-safe environment conducive to immersive learning. Their grant supports gallery enhancement plans and aids in reinstating its archival material exhibits for public education and research.

## **Natural History Society of Maryland (Baltimore County) - NHSM Collections Management Standardization**

As the Natural History Society of Maryland approaches its 100th anniversary, they are strengthening their capacity to professionally manage their collections. A grant from the Miller Fund is supporting a new, part-time Collections Manager to work with the support of their curatorial volunteers, ensuring that the entire collection is documented by museum standards.

## **Washington County Historical Society - WCHS Collection Cataloging and Curation Project**

The WCHS Collection Cataloging and Curation project seeks funding to conduct a total collection inventory and catalog of the 10,000+ artifacts, and additional archival collection, while also organizing and storing the collection in accordance with professional guidelines.

# COLLECTING MARYLAND

ART | ARTIFACTS | COMMUNITY

**JOIN US** on June 12, 2024, for the opening of a new exhibition celebrating the depth and breadth of the permanent collection at the Maryland Center for History and Culture (MCHC).

The 350,000 objects, artworks, and artifacts within the museum collections of MCHC tell the stories of our state's interconnected communities. *Collecting Maryland: Art, Artifacts, Community* returns important works of fine and decorative arts to public view.

Vignettes highlighting major collecting themes are organized to provide an introspective look at our institution and dive into the depth and breadth of our collections assembled over our the 180-year history of MCHC. Through the lens of "We Are. . ." our core values of Community, Authenticity, Dialogue, and Discovery are echoed in objects, ideas, and stories throughout the galleries.

*Collecting Maryland* is designed as a flexible space for our curatorial team to experiment with new ideas.

We invite our members and larger community to come and learn something new with each visit.



▲ *Self-Portrait*, oil on canvas painting by Sarah Miriam Peale (1800-1885), ca. 1830, Maryland Center for History and Culture, BCLM-MA.8137

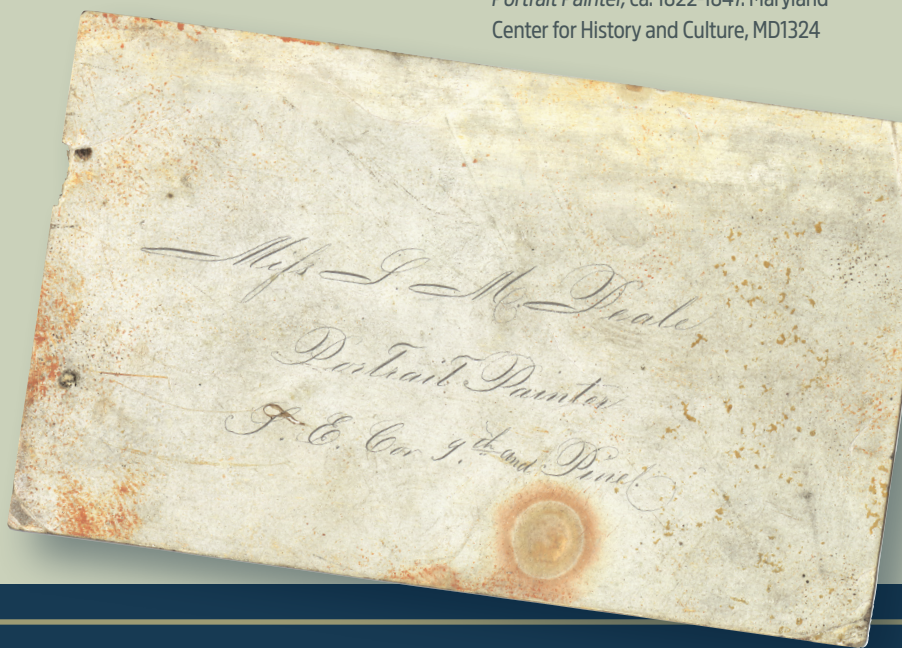
▶ *Still life with watermelon and grapes*, oil on canvas painting by Sarah Miriam Peale (1800-1885), 1820, Maryland Center for History and Culture, 1958.52.4

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THE 350,000 OBJECTS,  
ARTWORKS, AND  
ARTIFACTS WITHIN THE  
MUSEUM COLLECTIONS  
OF MCHC TELL THE  
STORIES OF OUR STATE'S  
INTERCONNECTED  
COMMUNITIES.

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▼ Business card of Sarah Miriam Peale,  
Portrait Painter, ca. 1822-1847. Maryland  
Center for History and Culture, MD1324



# NEWLY ACQUIRED

By Catherine Rogers Arthur, Vice President of Collections and Chief Curator and Special Collections Archivists, Mallory Harwerth and Sandra Glascock

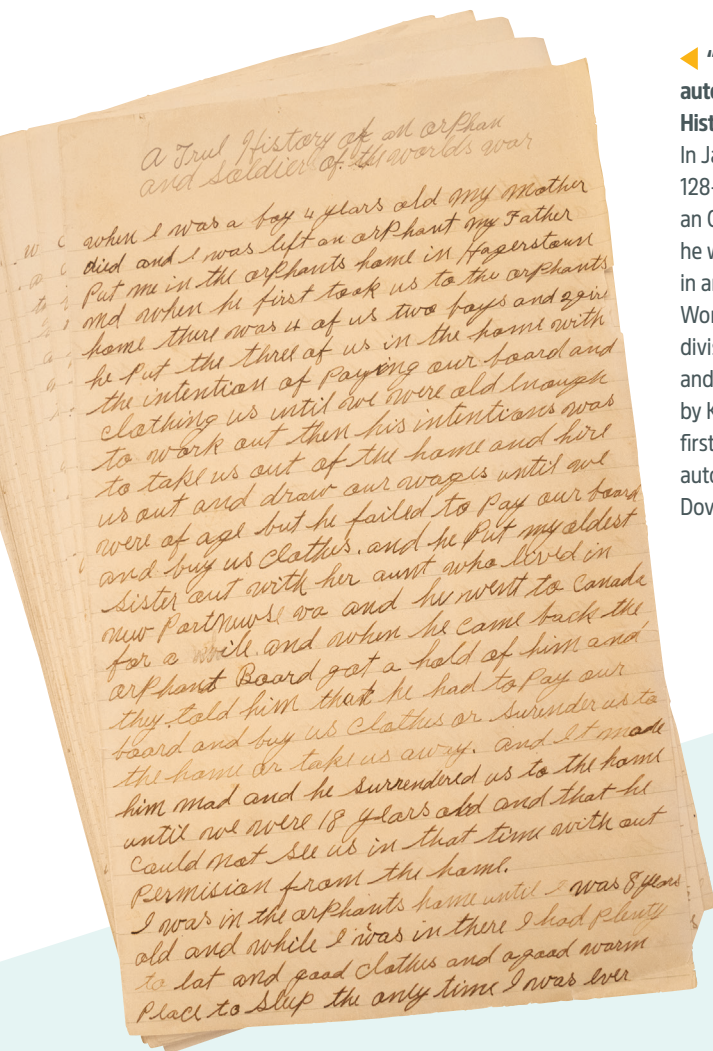
After 180 years of collecting, one might think that by now, the Museum and Library collections would have it all. What never ceases to amaze us is how many items “shake loose” and are offered as donations or come to the market, either filling gaps or sparking new conversations and comparisons between items in our collections. New acquisitions keep things fresh with dialogue and discovery. The work of growing and refining a collection is never done and this sampling of recent acquisitions connect to other important items and individuals in the history of the Maryland Center for History and Culture (MHC). Many new acquisitions are already on view and library collections featured here are processed and now available to researchers on our premises.

Learn more about donating to our collection at [mdhistory.org/donate/item-donations](https://mdhistory.org/donate/item-donations).



◀ **Wilhelmina Niemann Vordemberge and Wilhelm Vordemberge ambrotypes, unidentified photographer, circa 1857. Maryland Center for History and Culture, H. Furlong Baldwin Library, Cased Photograph Collection, CSPH 667 and CSPH 668**

These two ambrotypes of Wilhelm and Wilhelmina Vordemberge were created during their engagement circa 1857. Both Wilhelm (1829–1896) and Wilhelmina (1835–1912) immigrated from their native Germany with their families in the early 1850s and settled in Baltimore, where—after their marriage—they opened a grocery store located on 230 Hanover Street. The Vordemberges had six children, and the family continued to be active members in Baltimore’s German-immigrant community throughout the 1900s. These two ambrotypes were donated by Wilhelm and Wilhelmina’s great-great grandson, Gordon Brawner Scaggs, in October 2023. The objects were added to the Cased Photograph Collection and are available for research by Special Collections appointment.



◀ **"A True History of an Orphan and Soldier of the World War,"** autobiography by Harry H. Knight, undated. Maryland Center for History and Culture, H. Furlong Baldwin Library, Manuscript Vertical File

In January 2023, the H. Furlong Baldwin Library acquired a handwritten 128-page autobiography by Harry H. Knight entitled "A True History of an Orphan and Soldier of the War." After the death of his mother when he was four years old, Harry Hamilton Knight (1897–1979) was placed in an orphanage in Hagerstown, Maryland. Upon America's entry into World War I in 1917, he enlisted in Company B, 115th Infantry. Knight's division participated in the Meuse–Argonne offensive in October 1918, and he was honorably discharged in June 1919. This manuscript, written by Knight at an unspecified date in his older age, represents a valuable first-person perspective of a Marylander's role in World War I. The autobiography was donated by Harry Knight's granddaughter, Diane Dove, and is available for research by Special Collections appointment.



◀ **This Week in Baltimore: The Playboy Magazine** Collection. Maryland Center for History and Culture, H. Furlong Baldwin Library, MS 3282

Not connected to the more internationally known *Playboy* magazine, *This Week in Baltimore: The Playboy Magazine* was published by Bernie Lit from circa 1941 to 1974. Promoted as the "complete and official after-dark leisure time guide," this magazine was an events calendar that included advertisements and listings for nightclubs and lounges, restaurants and bars, burlesque and cabaret shows, as well as musical acts, theatres, and motion pictures. Some of the notable establishments and performers featured in the various issues include Jimmy Wu's New China Inn located on the 2400 block of North Charles Street and advertised as "Maryland's Only Chinese Restaurant," The Jolly Jax, credited as "Baltimore's Top Sepia Musiguys," and the Bettye Mills Nite-Club, "the First Lady of Baltimore Nite-Life, with her Sexiest All-Girlie Show in Town!" Donated by Nancy Eichelman Handy, this collection of seven issues is available for research by Special Collections appointment.



▶ **Black Panthers Meeting at the War Memorial, May 1 '69**  
 Pen and ink on paper  
 Aaron Sopher (1905–1972)  
 Baltimore, Maryland  
 Maryland Center for History and Culture, Gift of Dr. Sheldon Lerman, 2024.2

Aaron Sopher was born in East Baltimore, to Samuel Soper who owned a small cigar factory near the Inner Harbor. He attended the Maryland Institute of Art but did not graduate because of his frequent absences. He worked as a freelance illustrator for *The Baltimore Sun* where his drawings appeared frequently. Working in New York City between 1929–31, his cartoons appeared in *The New Yorker*. Returning to Baltimore, he became known as a keen observer of everyday life. Soper's work is characterized by a quickness and energy that effectively convey a scene and mood. His sketches hint at his support for civil rights and a sense of social responsibility.

This sketch captures the late 1960s passion behind the civil rights movement in Baltimore.

▶ **Bolton, the Estate of George Grundy, distant view from the south**  
 Oil on canvas  
 By Francis Guy (1760–1820)  
 Baltimore, Maryland  
 ca. 1800  
 Maryland Center for History and Culture, 2024.9.1a,b

Perhaps more than any other Baltimore artist, Francis Guy, a prolific and accomplished landscape painter, created the most comprehensive depiction of the city and its surrounding environs in the first two decades of the 1800s. This view of Bolton is one of a rare series of three views of the "country seat" of George Grundy. Bolton, which lends its name to nearby Bolton Hill, was demolished in the beginning of the 1900s and the 5th Regiment Armory was built on its site. This view from the south is taken from the approximate location of MCHC. Another closer view was a gift to MCHC in 1902 and the third remains in the family. Such views capture extraordinary detail of gardens, landscape, architecture, costume, transportation, and individuals. Historically such paintings have been interpreted as peaceful and bucolic settings. New scholarship at the American Folk Art Museum and other institutions has challenged the field to see, and seek to know the "Unnamed Figures" in such paintings, those like the wagon driver enslaved by Grundy. What was his lived experience? Even if definitive answers may elude us, it is important to look for and lift up evidence of Black experience in early Maryland.

(Three views of Perry Hall by Guy are also in our collection and were prominently featured and interpreted in *Unnamed Figures: Black Presence and Absence in the Early American North* at The American Folk Art Museum, NYC.)



### ◀ High Chest

Mahogany; yellow pine, oak

Baltimore, Maryland

ca. 1770

Labeled by Gerrard Hopkins (1742–1800), carving attributed to William Brampton Maryland Center for History and Culture, 2024.11

This high chest is the only known labeled work of Gerrard Hopkins who was born in Anne Arundel County Maryland to a prominent Quaker family. He first advertised as Cabinet and Chair-Maker, "at the Sign of the Tea-Table and Chair, in Gay Street, Baltimore-Town" in the *Maryland Gazette* (Annapolis) April 9, 1767 making this high chest the earliest if not only pre-Revolutionary labeled piece of Baltimore furniture. While the upper section is an early 1900s recreation of the now-missing original upper case, all other attributions to Hopkins are based upon construction and stylistic details of the labeled lower section. The label is affixed to the top-drawer interior of the lower section.

The carver may be William Brampton, who is identified in the ledger of James Brice as receiving payment for carving a virtually identical shell on the chimneypiece in the northwest room of the James Brice House in Annapolis, and who has been identified as working in collaboration with Hopkins on several pieces of furniture.

Hopkins' business was successful and long-lived, sizeable enough that most of his advertisements also mention the availability of mahogany in either "the Logs or Plank." True to his Quaker affiliation, by 1789, he is listed as a member of the *Maryland Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery*, and as a member of the "Electing Committee." After his death in 1800, his "small Country Retreat," of about four acres within one mile of the city is listed for sale. His son Henry Hopkins continues his father's business in partnership with William Harris, which Gerrard Hopkins had established in 1793. ▲



# CONNECTIONS TO COLLECTION: A MARYLAND DAY INITIATIVE

By Abby Doran, Assistant Curator; Micah Connor, Library Associate and Student Research Coordinator; Katie Caljean, President and CEO; and Chloe Green, Public Programs and Outreach Manager

Each year, the team at the Maryland Center for History and Culture (MCHC) recognizes Maryland Day with a giving drive to support a special project or our general operations. This year, we inspired support with a social media series celebrating our varied staff members and the deep connections they forge with the collections at MCHC. The initiative was so well received, we wanted to share a few highlights in print!

“ **MY NAME IS ABBY DORAN,** and I am the Assistant Curator at MCHC. This portrait of Anna Ella Carroll is my favorite object at MCHC because it prompts conversations about the complex narratives that are present in Maryland history.

Carroll was a lobbyist, activist, writer, and 'secret' advisor to President Lincoln who often was not paid nor given credit for her contributions. However, this Marylander also mirrors the state's complicated position during the Civil War because, in order to be consistent with the Union cause, she first had to free the twenty enslaved people she inherited as a member of the Carroll family, one of the largest slave-holding families in the state.

As a historian, I appreciate this story as one of many opportunities to view history through multiple lenses.



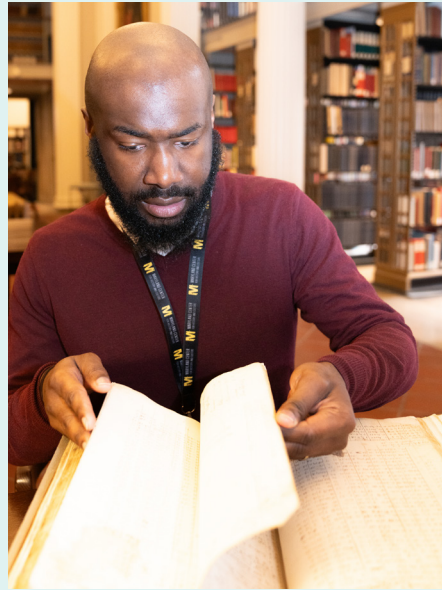
► Assistant Curator Abby Doran  
Portrait of Anna Ella Carroll,  
painted by S.B. Peacock, 1891.  
MCHC, Bequest of Miss Nellie  
Carroll, 1961.103.1



“ **HELLO! MY NAME IS MICAH CONNOR** and I am the Library Associate and Student Research Coordinator at the Maryland Center for History and Culture’s H. Furlong Baldwin Library. I help Library patrons with their research, namely genealogy and Revolutionary War-related inquiries. One of my favorite items in our Library is MS 2700, Benjamin Banneker’s astronomical journal. Although I’ve worked with this item many times, I am always taken aback by Banneker’s beautiful handwriting, and his meticulous, detailed notes on topics ranging from celestial events to a brood of 17-year cicadas and even his dreams. For anyone who grew up learning about Banneker, his journal is an important resource.

► **Library Associate Micah Connor**

Astronomical Journal, written by Benjamin Banneker (1731 - 1896), 1790 -1892. MCHC, H. Furlong Baldwin Library, Gift of Dorothea West (Mrs. Robert T.) Fitzhugh in memory of her husband Robert Tyson Fitzhugh, MS 2700



“ **MY NAME IS KATIE CALJEAN**, President and CEO of MCHC. One of the items in our vast Library collection that captures my historical imagination is the Declaration of Independence printed by Baltimore’s own Mary Katharine Goddard, first female postmaster of the United States. Although she is not a signer of the document, Goddard was an official printer to the Continental Congress, which had relocated to Baltimore in December 1776. The imprint at the bottom clearly identifies the city in which the document was printed and her full name: ‘Baltimore, in Maryland: Printed by Mary Katharine Goddard.’ A bold and brave move!

◀ **President and CEO Katie Caljean**

Broadside of Declaration of Independence, printed by Mary Katherine Goddard, 1777. MCHC, H. Furlong Baldwin Library, Prints and Broadside, Q050073268

“ **HELLO, CHLOE GREEN HERE!** I am the Public Programs & Outreach Manager for MCHC, I work to produce and facilitate a wide variety of programs inspired by our exhibitions, partnerships, and local or regional happenings. The Toy Butcher Shop won me over as my favorite museum object with its crafty, quirky nature and attention to details. I love that this toy shop allows you to playfully (and safely) engage with an occupation that is uncommon yet vital in most areas of the world, and I imagine that it was made to inspire more people to enter into the profession. Just playing with it is an act of open-minded curiosity, and learning through play is a value that heavily informs my programming work.

► **Public Programs and Outreach Manager Chloe Green**

Toy Butcher Shop, Unknown Maker, circa. 1900. MCHC, Gift of Mr. George Needham, 1968.60.8



# 2024 IS A YEAR OF CIVIL RIGHTS IN MARYLAND

By David Armenti, Vice President of Education

Maryland and its residents have not always received their proper due for significant contributions to the civil rights movement. The state government made sure not to miss the opportunity to shine a brighter light on that profound impact when Governor Wes Moore declared 2024 Maryland's "Year of Civil Rights." The initiative is led in collaboration with the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture, as well as the state's Banneker-Douglass-Tubman Museum. Announcements reference the 60th anniversary of the signing of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964, but there is so much more to celebrate considering the accomplishments of local luminaries such as Verda Freedom Welcome, Thurgood Marshall, Gloria Richardson, Judge Robert M. Bell, and many others.

The Maryland Center for History and Culture (MHC) is proud to support this effort and

encourages the public to take advantage of the great range of learning resources available. Maryland's Year of Civil Rights emphasizes the need to empower students and teachers in the K-12 educational realm with tools to effectively unpack this complex story. That process begins with primary source materials. We are fortunate to house valuable collections ranging from oral histories, photographs to organizational pamphlets that provide eye-opening perspectives. The H. Furlong Baldwin Library stewards several specific collections integral to this curation process. The McKeldin-Jackson Project Oral History Collection is a particularly rich resource that lets students and educators hear the civil rights story in the voices of those who lived it. 87 interviews conducted during the 1970s capture the perspectives of a wide range of movement participants including lesser known leaders like



## WILLIAM LLOYD “LITTLE WILLIE” ADAMS

William L. Adams migrated to Baltimore from North Carolina as a teenager. Referred to by some as “Little Willie,” Adams built his wealth by managing a number running, lottery operation in the city. He would apply that financial support liberally to the Black business community as well as to civil rights causes, aligning with organizations such as the Baltimore Urban League. ▲

► Group portrait of unidentified men with William Adams, A.K.A. Little Willie, far right. Photograph by Paul Henderson, circa 1948. Maryland Center for History and Culture, H. Furlong Baldwin Library, Baltimore City Life Museum Collection, Paul S. Henderson Photograph Collection, HEN.01.06-017



Enolia McMillan, Silas Craft, and William L. Adams. Almost all of the audio is digitized for public accessibility, along with transcripts for many. The Paul Henderson Photograph Collection with its nearly 7,000 images inspires much of the civil rights programming, exhibitions, and outreach at MCHC. The photographer documented not only the burgeoning civil rights movement of the 1930s to early 1950s in Maryland, but also everyday life in the Black community.

Maryland is home to many other incredible repositories that enliven interpretation and instructional resources. At the top of that list is the archives of the *AFRO American Newspapers*. Afro Charities has generously collaborated with MCHC staff to incorporate article images and content from the nation’s longest-run, family-owned newspaper. All of these primary source materials contributed to

the development of the *Passion and Purpose: Voices of Maryland’s Civil Rights Activists* exhibition which opened at MCHC in 2022. The gallery invites visitors of all ages to learn and draw inspiration from the lived experiences of local activists, while recognizing the continuing fight for equal rights. Middle and high school audiences make up a large percentage of that visitation. Schools can schedule the “Civil Rights in Maryland” tour during which students interact with the exhibition, discussing the strategies and experiences detailed by movement participants. Primary source research sessions and virtual field trips can also be facilitated by staff on these topics.

MCHC encourages all communities in our state to take inspiration from Governor Moore’s message. There are so many opportunities to learn and connect with Maryland’s rich civil rights history during this anniversary year. ▲

# VERDA MAE FREEDOM WELCOME

Born in North Carolina, Welcome moved to Baltimore to continue her education at Morgan State University. She taught public school for 11 years before her election to the Maryland House of Delegates (1959), then Maryland State Senate (1962), becoming the first Black woman in the United States to be elected to such a position. She led legislative victories in fair housing, same-sex marriages, and equal pay during over two decades of public service. Welcome was instrumental in the establishment of the Maryland Commission of African American History and Culture which today operates the Banneker-Douglass-Tubman Museum, grant programs, and many other cultural initiatives. ▲



► Portrait of Verda Welcome, photograph by Paul Henderson, 1950. Maryland Center for History and Culture, H. Furlong Baldwin Library, Baltimore City Life Museum Collection, Paul S. Henderson Photograph Collection, HEN.00.B1-054



MARYLAND COMMISSION ON AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE PRESENTS

## 2024 MARYLAND'S YEAR OF CIVIL RIGHTS

JANUARY 1 - DECEMBER 31, 2024

► To learn more about the state's programs and partnerships, visit <https://bdmuseum.maryland.gov/marylands-year-of-civil-rights/>

▼ [Pictured] Eva Scott, the first Black teacher at Western High School in Baltimore City. On May 9, MCHC hosted "The Legacy of Brown v. Board: Community Mingle" to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court decision that prohibited racial segregation in public schools. We thank the Western High School Foundation for its support and collaboration. Ms. Scott's incredible story of perseverance and accomplishment provided a powerful starting point for the community conversation.



# IN DIALOGUE

## WITH KEIFFER MITCHELL

Interviewed by David Belew, Vice President of External Affairs

**T**he Maryland Center for History and Culture (MCHC) is supported by a dedicated group of 35 leaders, specialists, and connectors who make up our Board of Trustees. Trustees represent diverse regions throughout Maryland as well as varied content expertise and sectors including museum studies, law, government affairs, archives, finances and many more. We took some time to connect with Keiffer Mitchell, a board member since 2018, whose career and interests brought him from his roots in Baltimore City's historic Marble Hill neighborhood, to Emory University, to the halls of Annapolis and Washington, DC. A grounding in the proud civil rights legacy of his family and a love of history guided Mitchell throughout his career.

### **Tell us a bit about your background and career path:**

I was born and raised in Baltimore. I went to high school at Boys Latin and then attended Emory University in Atlanta before completing three years at the District of Columbia School of Law. Right after law school, I jumped into politics and ran for the Baltimore City Council, way back in 1995 at the age of 28 years old. I served 12 years on the City Council before deciding to run for mayor. While I lost, it was a great experience learning about the city. Later, I ran and won a seat on the Maryland House of Delegates and represented the West Baltimore area in the old 44th district for four years.

In 2015, this led to an opportunity to work with the new administration under Governor Larry Hogan as he worked to build a bipartisan team. I served 7 1/2 years during both terms as a Senior Advisor and then Chief Legislative Officer before briefly serving as Chief of Staff.

Now, I serve as a Vice President at BGR Group, a bipartisan, nationwide federal affairs lobbying practice based in Washington, DC.



▲ Headshot of Keiffer Mitchell. Used with the permission of BGR Group.

### **Tell us about when you first became interested in history:**

Growing up, I was always fascinated with history. I come from a family that are historical trail blazers. My grandmother, Juanita Mitchell, was a constitutional lawyer. She was the first African American woman to practice law in the state of Maryland. My uncle, Parren Mitchell, was the first Black member of Congress from Maryland and was an original member of the Congressional Black Caucus. My grandfather Clarence Mitchell was the director of the Washington Bureau of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) during the civil rights era and helped shape landmark legislation—the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1960. I really caught the history bug through experiences

at Boys Latin School—both as a student and later as a teacher. I took as many history classes as I could from U.S. history to military history. Teachers like Mr. Blinky and Mr. Maisel left a big impression on me. Later on, I had the opportunity to work as a history teacher at Boys Latin and developed some close relationships with mentors such as Ed Papenfuse, who was then the State Archivist. Going through professional development opportunities at the Maryland State Archives, we learned to teach from real historical documents instead of the traditional text books. I was able to hone in on the craft of analyzing letters, diaries, maps, and other primary sources.

### Can you describe your first experiences with the Maryland Center for History and Culture?

My earliest memories are related to the civil rights oral histories in the library. I can remember sitting in the living room of my grandmother and great grandmother. I would say I was either seven or eight years old. And this gentleman came by sitting with my grandmother with this big old tape recorder. She is talking to the microphone and he is asking her questions about where she was born. You know, where does she grow up? Talking about all of her

work with the NAACP, protests and marches, and that sort of thing. And I would sit there and listen.

Later on, my grandmother would take us on a Saturday down to the [then] Maryland Historical Society to look at the exhibits. I vividly remember coming down one Saturday morning to the library and she pulled the recordings of those oral histories. I harken back to that day, those Saturday mornings sitting there listening to that with her. I have come back down to the library to listen those recordings and hear her voice again.

### How would you describe the value of an organization like the Maryland Center for History and Culture?

It is incredible that history allows us not to repeat the mistakes of the past. In our society where everyone wants things instantaneously and they want to act instantaneously, I always remind folks, especially in the field I'm in, in terms of government affairs: here is why this legislation was passed. Here is what was happening at that moment. I am always a firm believer of doing the research and getting at least the context of a policy or issue and why it needed to be changed. Institutions like MCHC make that research and understanding possible. ▲

► Jackson and Mitchell family portrait featuring many of Keiffer Mitchell Jr.'s family members and his grandmother Juanita Jackson Mitchell seated third from left, photograph by Paul S. Henderson, Baltimore, Maryland, circa 1945. Maryland Center for History and Culture, H. Furlong Baldwin Library, Special Collections, Paul S. Henderson Photograph Collection, HEN.00.B1-052





◀ This glimpse of the “We are...Proud” vignette showcases a variety of costumes, artworks, and other ephemera that document Maryland’s diverse LGBTQ+ community.

## WE ARE... PROUD

By Abby Doran, Assistant Curator

This vignette, part of the larger exhibition *Collecting Maryland: Art, Artifacts, Community*, celebrates the growing LGBTQ+ collections in the Maryland Center for History and Culture’s (MCHC) museum and library through both a state-wide and local lens. From nightlife in Baltimore’s Mount Vernon – a longstanding safe haven for the LGBTQ+ community – to the struggle for marriage equality, Maryland’s LGBTQ+ history holds powerful stories for all visitors to remember and discover.

Our LGBTQ+ museum collection started growing exponentially between 2015 and 2021 as many local individuals donated their personal belongings to represent their lived experiences that are deeply connected to Maryland. Our library has housed important documents about marriage equality and civil rights since the 2000s, and also holds the Joseph Kohl Photograph Collection, which documents candid moments from Pride parades, nightlife, and activism from the 1980s to 2000s. “We Are... Proud” includes many of

these items, in addition to other objects and photographs about the artistic tradition of drag performance, activism through the AIDS epidemic, the iconic impact of Club Hippo, and legendary creatives like John Waters and Divine.

MCHC hopes to further engage with LGBTQ+ Marylanders to expand our collection and authentically represent our community through this vignette. Our collection offers a small yet powerful look into milestones and moments of joy in our recent past that continue to prompt new avenues for progress.

As we anticipate Pride Month celebrations in 2024, we are excited to take part in uplifting those who have fought for the right to be who they are and love who they want. MCHC is committed to proudly sharing these stories as represented by material culture not just in June, but all year round. Be sure to visit “We Are... Proud” and the H. Furlong Baldwin Library to discover this essential piece of Maryland history. ▲



◀ Participants of the Making History workshop in 2023 show off items made at the library using graphics from archival materials in RI LGBTQ+ Community Archives and Wanderground Lesbian Archive. RI LGBTQ+ Community Archives, Providence Public Library

## COLLECTING HISTORIES: HOW COMMUNITY AND TRADITIONAL ARCHIVES WORK TOGETHER

By David Belew, Vice President of External Affairs; Martina Kado, Vice President of Research and France-Merrick Director of the H. Furlong Baldwin Library; and Caitlin Lerch, Research Fellow

With thanks to: Dr. Ashley Minner Jones, Krystal L. Tribbett, Kate Wells, and Audra Eagle Yun

**T**he Maryland Center for History and Culture (MCHC) is a dynamic center for research. Both staff and external scholars use the collections every day to uncover new perspectives of our past. From the longstanding Lord Baltimore Fellowship to the more recently established Ashby M. Larmore Fellowship, the openings for paid and supported research projects at MCHC are continuously growing. Some of our research projects provide opportunities to advance museum and library practices in the field at large.

This past year, with support from the Society of American Archivists Foundation, a special fellowship studied sharing practices and collaborative experience between community archives and institutional partners such as public libraries, colleges and universities, as well as historical and culture organizations. Covering partnerships within our region as well as throughout the United States, this important work emphasizes the inclusive mission of MCHC and a desire to understand how community archives can be better supported, accessed, and sustained by way of collaboration with institutions.

Community archiving has evolved considerably over the last several decades and does not have a single definition. Typically, these archives are built by communities, defined by shared cultural, social, and historical heritage that are historically underrepresented by traditional archives. The term “participatory archiving” is becoming more popular as new approaches seek to empower and give autonomy to the communities, rather than the partnering institutions.



▲ A photograph of customers celebrating New Years Eve in 1980 at Kings & Queens, a gay bar open in Woonsocket, Rhode Island from 1977-2002. Kim Deacon Collection, RI LGBTQ+ Community Archives, Providence Public Library



## COMMUNITY COLLECTIONS AND COLLABORATIONS

MCHC received grant funding from the Society of American Archivists Foundation to research recent developments in how traditional institutions such as libraries, universities, and societies collaborate with community archives. Our research fellow interviewed representatives of eight community archiving initiatives and created a select list of community archiving resources available online and in print. The final result of the project is a research paper which will soon be available on our website and will be shared widely throughout the field.

### WE THANK THE REPRESENTATIVES OF COMMUNITY ARCHIVING PROJECTS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THIS PROJECT:

Baltimore Reservation Project: Dr. Ashley Minner Jones

Chesapeake Heartland: An African American Humanities Project: Carolyn Brooks, Adam Goodheart, Airlee Johnson

Mass. Memories Road Show: Dr. Carolyn Goldstein

Plateau Peoples' Web Portal: Michael Wynne

Preserve the Baltimore Uprising Archive Project: Dr. Denise Meringolo

Rhode Island LGBTQ+ Community Archive: Kate Wells

Rooted: A Community Archive Project: Sola Olosunde, Dr. Kishauna Soljour

The Southeast Asian Archive, University of California, Irvine: Audra Eagle Yun

## SPOTLIGHT: RHODE ISLAND LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY ARCHIVE

Initiated by the Providence Public Library, the Rhode Island LGBTQ+ Community Archive focuses on the "social, cultural & political history of RI LGBTQ+ people and organizations" across the state of Rhode Island. The archive provides digital access to its collections as well as an onsite exhibition open to the public, including publications, archival materials, oral histories and ephemera.

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**More at: [provlib.org/research-collections/community-archives/lgbtq](https://provlib.org/research-collections/community-archives/lgbtq)**



◀ Photograph of an unidentified man at the beach wearing a homemade dress made of kelp, circa 1927. Vacation album of unidentified gay man. RI LGBTQ+ Community Archives, Providence Public Library

## COMMUNITY COLLECTIONS AND COLLABORATIONS RESEARCH FELLOW: CAITLIN LERCH

Lerch's background includes an undergraduate degree in anthropology and fine art with a focus on printmaking, a graduate education in forensics, and a ten-year career in criminal investigation and legal advocacy. She has held a lifetime love for museums, cultural immersion, and travel, serving with the Peace Corps in Ukraine and hopping on a plane or train whenever possible. Caitlin joined MCHC as our Community Collections and Collaborations Fellow while she works toward a graduate degree in Museum Studies at the Johns Hopkins University.

## SPOTLIGHT: SOUTHEAST ASIAN ARCHIVE AT UC IRVINE

The Southeast Asian Archive, created in 1987 by librarian Anne Frank at the University of California, Irvine (UCI), seeks to locate unarchived historical documentation of "the social, cultural, religious, political, and economic life of members of the Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian, and Vietnamese diaspora" in Orange County and throughout California. In addition to documenting the social, cultural, religious, political, and economic life of the community, this archive actively seeks non-custodial, equitable partnerships toward preservation and access of items beyond UCI collections. Their new Curator for the Southeast Asian Archive, Julia Huỳnh, starts in summer 2024.

More at [seaa.lib.uci.edu](http://seaa.lib.uci.edu)



▲ "Vietnamese Prom, Huntington Beach, California" flyer, 1987. Southeast Asian Archive vertical file collection. MS-SEA020. Southeast Asian Archive, The UC Irvine Libraries, Irvine, California



▲ "Happy New Year 1993, Miss Hmong USA Pageant" brochure, 1993. Southeast Asian Archive Vertical File Collection. MS-SEA020. Southeast Asian Archive, The UC Irvine Libraries, Irvine, California

# SPOTLIGHT:

## BALTIMORE RESERVATION PROJECT

The Baltimore Reservation Project archives the history of East Baltimore's historic American Indian "Reservation" (the term is used affectionately as there was no actual reservation in Baltimore), with a look at significant sites and landscapes that have disappeared from documented history via a beautiful collection of photographs, a downloadable walking tour mobile application, and a print brochure and map. The digital archive was brought to life in 2021 by local artist Ashley Minner Jones (Lumbee), in partnership with the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC).



▲ Carl Harding (Lumbee), Jessica Locklear (Lumbee), Francesca Basso-Landsteiner (UMBC), photograph by Bill Shewbridge, BAIC, April 6, 2024. Used with permission

More at [baltimorereservation.com](http://baltimorereservation.com)

Between November 2023 and March 2024, MCHC's research fellow Caitlin Lerch interviewed community members and institutional partners at eight community archives. These archives sought to document and preserve the past—and present—of a diverse range of communities, including the American Indian community in Baltimore, the African American community on Maryland's Eastern Shore, members of the LGBTQ+ community in Rhode Island, the Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian, and Vietnamese diaspora in California, and photographic contributors to the Baltimore Uprising of 2015, among others. What we learned was that the selected archives achieved remarkable success with institutional collaboration and can serve as examples to others.

Many of the archives we interviewed had a community member who also worked for the collaborating institution: this rapport was vital in building trust and making sure that the community's stories were told with respect and sensitivity. Most archives held community events and meetings to engage members of the community being represented. Other ways of centering communities in decision-making included

creating fair and accessible custody agreements as well as having advisory boards where members of the community had an active voice in the maintenance and content of the archive. The main challenges for most community archives that participated in our project were financial sustainability and staff turnover. These common ailments emphasized the need for further and stronger collaboration where traditional archiving institutions can support community archiving initiatives by providing archiving and digitization services, physical or web hosting, outreach networks, and training.

Though there is still work to be done in relation to community archiving and institutional partnership, MCHC's research project pointed to a high level of success and sustainability when these relationships are fostered. Leaning toward a participatory model of archiving, which gives autonomy to the members of the community, has opened the door toward repairing historical archival failings and strengthened community bonds with the respective institutions. We look forward to the future of community archiving, and the continued growth between the archive and the institution. ▲

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The Maryland Center for History and Culture collects, preserves, and interprets the history, art, and culture of Maryland. By exploring multiple perspectives and sharing national stories through the lens of Maryland, MCHC inspires critical thinking, creativity, and community.

**OUR CORE VALUES**

Understanding history and culture is integral to MCHC's fulfillment of its mission. Our core values of Community, Authenticity, Dialogue, and Discovery help frame our activities and realize the potential of history and culture as a positive force for Marylanders and all the people we serve.

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