



HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF BALTIMORE COUNTY



# NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2011

## MY VISION FOR THE “LOUIS S. DIGGS RESEARCH CENTER FOR AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY”

The “Pest House,” a 1,500 square foot building, which is on the property of the Baltimore County Historical Society (The Old Almshouse in Cockeysville), would make a wonderful Research Center for African American History in Baltimore County not only because there is no other such a structure in the County devoted to African American History, but it will form a close partnership with sharing the resources of the Historical Society of Baltimore County, and the Baltimore County Library, both in very close proximity of the Research Center, and with other organizations within the County that are involved with other phases of African American History, one is the Benjamin Banneker Museum and Historical Park in Oella, and the other is the impending Cherry Hill AUMP Structure in Granite, that is in the process of being converted to a mini-museum that will be used to house African American artifacts, photographs and other African American paraphernalia associated with life in Baltimore County.

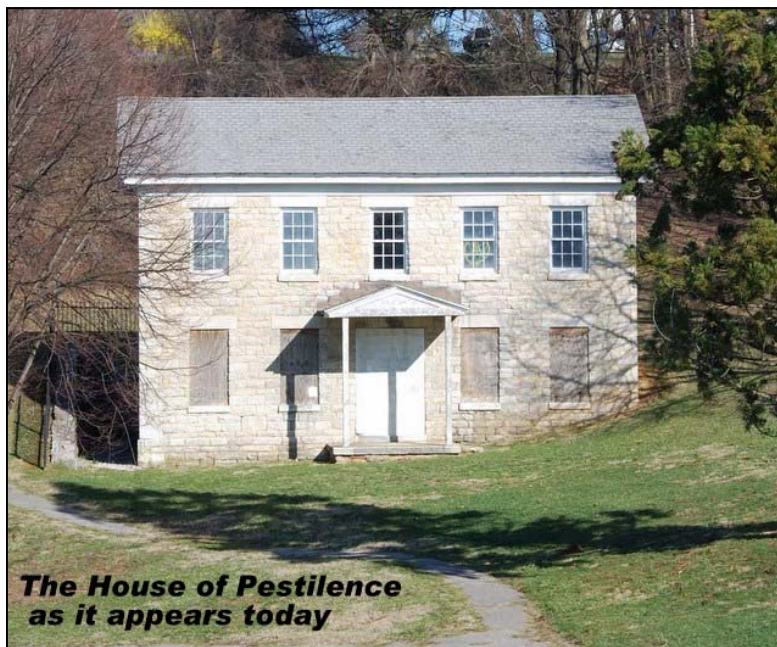
A 501(c)(3) organization, “The Louis S. Diggs Research Center for African American History, Inc.” has

been formed. All work performed on the building will be in accordance with the Secretary of Interior’s Standards since the building is historic (MD BA #73).

The Research Center will house a newly formed Baltimore County African American Genealogy Section, the ASALH (Association for the Study of African American Life and History) Branch that currently meet in Randallstown, and the Black Writers’ Guild of Maryland, Inc., in addition to its own use as a research center. The Center will be the research focal point for the African American Mini-Museum in Granite, primarily because of its very small size.

### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- *Louis S. Diggs’ vision*
- *New Members*
- *Donors*
- *Meeting Room Available*
- *Past Programs*
- *“Century Farm” award*
- *Volunteer News*
- *Calendar of Events*
- *Condolences*



**The House of Pestilence as it appears today**

Photo courtesy of Jim Long

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The Center will contain a library, a large meeting room, a research center equipped with a large, overhead computer projector for showing of PowerPoint Presentations, etc, computers, micro-film readers for research via Reports on micro-film, and other research resources.

The Center will also coordinate its efforts and resources with like organizations in Baltimore City and other counties throughout the State of Maryland.

Louis S. Diggs

## NEW MEMBERS

Joseph Hosky, Baltimore, MD

Stephanie Ireland, Owings Mills, MD

Thomas Nopperberger, Camp Hill, PA

David & Elaine Pardoe, Columbia, MD

Richard & Joyce Zahner, Baldwin, MD



## MEETING ROOM AVAILABLE FOR PRIVATE RENTAL

Planning a family event or a business meeting? Consider the recently renovated *Galloway Room* located on the first floor of the historic Almshouse. Wheelchair accessible and seating up to 75, the room boasts power screen, data projector, microphone, podium, tables, chairs, and a powered rolling stand. Please contact Barbara Yingling through HSBC at (410)666-1878.

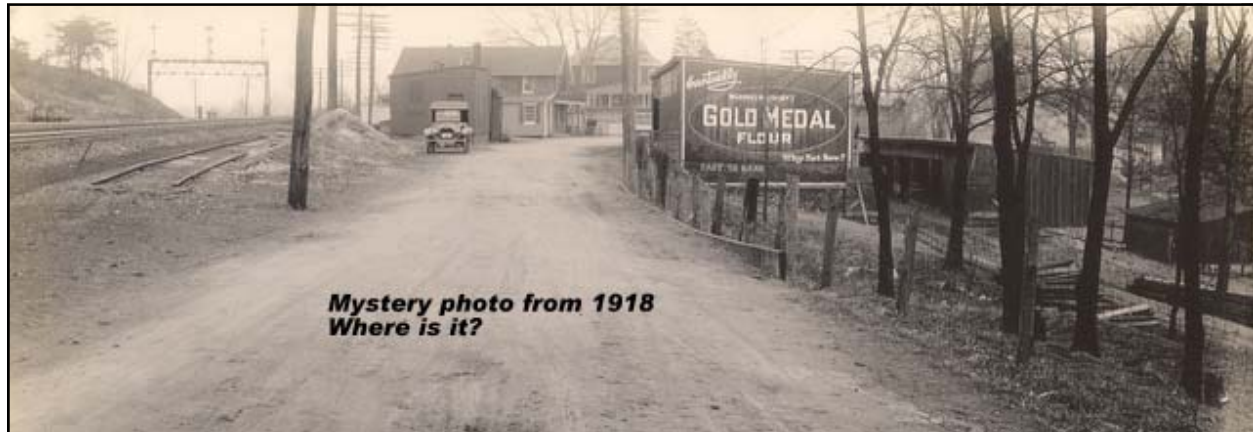
## THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING HSBC

- Barton and Elizabeth Cockey
- Evert F. Cornell
- An anonymous member who donated 50% of the cost of the new computer file server at HSBC.

## JANUARY AND FEBRUARY DONORS

- Mr. Armand Shank for his gift of the book by Stuart R. Bruchey and Eleanor S. Bruchey: *Money and Banking in Maryland: A brief History of Commercial Banking in the Old Line State* which also contains a catalog of Maryland's paper money from 1790-1865 written by Denwood N. Kelly, Armand M. Shank Jr. and Thomas S. Gordon with a foreward to the catalogue by Richard G. Doty.
- Johnna Suter donated the distinguished blue ribbon and memorabilia presented to Towson High School as a *Maryland Blue Ribbon School*. She created a shadow-box which is on display in the HSBC Library. The formal ceremony, conducted by Dr. Nancy Grasmick was held in the school on February 10, 2011.
- Dale Knapp donated her Towson High School Yearbook, *Sidelights 1962* and a 26" x 20" print of historic Rockland Village by Gordon Callison. She also provided custom handmade curtains for the purpose of darkening the HSBC microfilm room.

## BALTIMORE COUNTY MYSTERY PHOTO



## HSBC'S PROGRAMS OF THE RECENT PAST

**March 27, 2011:** A cooperative program consisting of “**Life in the Poor House: Memories of Growing Up in an Alms House,**” and “**The Historic Tale of Irish Immigrants: Starting in a New Land and Quarrying Marble.**”

In the first program of the day, HSBC past president **Dr. Glenn Johnston**, presented a pre-recorded interview of a child resident of the Almshouse, Rita Chilcoat. Born in 1933 on the second floor of the Almshouse, Rita’s parents were the caretakers of the property (her father was the warden). Mrs. Chilcoat told of her and her family’s experiences; walking to school to St. Josephs before it had indoor plumbing, riding her bike in the Almshouse hallways, roller skating in the basement, the slaughterhouse, canning veg-



Photo courtesy of Jim Long

etables and fruits in the summer heat and how her brother, Dick, when visiting shortly before his death last year, remembered everything as it was decades ago, right down to holes in certain walls. Surprisingly, sugar was available to the Almshouse inmates during WW II when it was cut off to everyone else.

Rita’s worst memories were that her parents could never go out together... they were both required to be on

duty. Rita’s aunt would come to relieve one parent for exceptionally important events. In fact, Rita’s wedding reception was held in the Almshouse.

**Dr. Stephen A. Brighton**, Assistant Professor of Anthropology, University of Maryland (College Park) conducted the latter program and he concentrated on the community of Texas, Md. It became Texas, Maryland at about the same time that Texas joined the United States in 1845, becoming our 28th state, spawning its name. Irish immigrants, many of whom landed in New York City and Baltimore’s Canton

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area, eager for a new start, moved to the area near the limestone mines of Baltimore County. There, they built homes and created a community of miners and merchants. The years of 1830-1846 saw the Irish community grow steadily. St Josephs Catholic church on Church Lane was built by the Irish immigrants and played a major role in the development of this microcosm.

Brighton and his students recently completed their archeological studies and dig. Brighton's laboratory contains thousands of unearthed artifacts that are being analyzed. Religious articles are the rarest of finds as few people discard them.

All that attended these presentations came away richer in their knowledge of the Almshouse and of Texas, Md. and their interrelations.

The refreshments, Texas genealogy and historical materials were provided by Cassie Thompson.

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## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR FUN ACTIVITIES

- Volunteers are needed (weekends only) for the **Maryland State Fair** at Timonium, August 26 through Labor Day in two hour shifts.
- Volunteers are needed (weekends only) for the **Reisterstown Festival**, September 10-11 in two hour shifts.

Please consider donating a small amount of your time to these community outreach programs. It is great fun and you will meet many nice people. Please RSVP by May 1, 2011 by e-mailing [info@hsobc.org](mailto:info@hsobc.org) or calling (410)666-1878.

- **"From Almshouse Hill History Tours."** choose tour themes such as church architecture, early industry, military campaigns and organizing and composing publicity. Volunteers are requested to help shape new vistas of our local history. Share your knowledge of Baltimore County. Join the fun! Please contact Donna Keuck, PhD, at (410) 628-6464 or [dkkeuck@gmail.com](mailto:dkkeuck@gmail.com).
  - Volunteer opportunities have opened within our museum to help photograph and investigate our **cultural collections** and to research historical events such as the War of 1812 and to research and develop our varying exhibits concerning the history of Baltimore County. Please fill out a volunteer application form available from our website [www.hsobc.org/Documents/HSBCVolunteerForm.pdf](http://www.hsobc.org/Documents/HSBCVolunteerForm.pdf) or call (410)666-1878.
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## SPEAKING OF VOLUNTEERS...

The next HSBC Newsletter (June, 2011), will tell the story of one of many HSBC's "works in progress" and of several dedicated volunteers and of their impressive contributions to HSBC that spanned from 2002 to the end of 2010.

Their work, sometimes dusty and hot (or bone-chilling cold), required that a plan be formulated to bring the institution up to professional museum standards. Then the Society's numerous collections in the Almshouse and Farm Museum had to be examined. The next steps were to analyze, inventory, catalog and photograph all objects on display or in storage. But it wasn't a walk in the park nor is it finished!

In the June issue we will read about how the plan came together and what has been done and what remains to be done to preserve our valuable collections for future generations.

## **MAKE A TWO-FOLD GIFT TO HSBC (RMDs)**

If you are required to take a minimum distribution from your IRA, you have an opportunity to make a twofold gift to the HSBC. The recent Tax Act extended your ability to donate all, or a portion of your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) to a charitable organization and avoid paying income tax on the distribution. The donation must be made directly to the charity.

By donating your RMD to the HSBC, your gift will have the two-fold benefit of: growing HSBC's endowment to support programs and reducing your income tax payments for 2010-2011. For further information about making a gift of your 2010-2011 RMD, please contact Adam Youssi at [info@hsobc.org](mailto:info@hsobc.org) or call (410)666-1878.

## **“CENTURY FARM” DESIGNATION AWARDED**

In 2006, the David and Nancy Greene Farm in White Hall was designated as a “Century Farm” meaning that the same family farmed the land for at least 100 years. The land was purchased in 1786 by David’s great, great, great grandfather, Robert Gillis, who fought in the Revolutionary War. Of Maryland’s 12,100 farms, only 1% qualify for this distinction.

## **HSBC MAILED 5,000 MEMBERSHIP SOLICITATIONS**

The society initiated its largest membership drive in many years. The first phase of the drive included sending membership solicitations to 5,000 Baltimore County households to notify them of who we are, what we have, and what we do. This drive may only be the first of many more to come. With that in mind, we apologize in advance if you, our members, should receive one of these letters and solicitations in your mailbox. However, if you do, please feel free to disregard it; or, better yet, share it with a friend or neighbor!

*Thank-you to all the volunteers who helped with this effort:*

Kathy Aspden  
Elizabeth Cockey  
Bud Cornell  
John Danz  
Nicolas Galiffa (intern)  
Linda Haynes

Martha Hendrickson  
Earl Hines  
Donna Keuck  
Dale Knapp  
Jim Knapp  
Joyce Layman

Tom Lonegro  
Jim Long  
Eileen Manchester  
Kathleen O’Brien  
Johnna Suter  
Barbara Yingling  
Adam Youssi (admin and taskmaster)

## **CHANGES TO OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

- Barbara Yingling to the office of Secretary
- Elizabeth Cockey and Cassie Kilroy Thompson to the Board of Directors

## **COMMUNITY OUTREACH NEWS**

Thursday evening, March 10th, Whitney Schubarth, Johnna Suter, Jim Long, and Bud Cornell attended the Cockeysville Recreation Showcase at the Cockeysville Middle School as part of the Society's "Outreach Program." If you know of other places where Society members might appear to help citizens know we exist and of our Mission, please let us know.

## COMING EVENTS

**April 16, 10:30 a.m.** A Call for HSBC Tour Volunteers. **“From Almshouse Hill History Tours”** will hold its inaugural meeting for volunteers at the Almshouse. We will begin working out the details for our autumn event, “The HSBC Legacy Tour.” There’s an activity to match every volunteer’s interests. Please consider donating a few hours to this fun and worthwhile activity. For more information, contact Donna Keuck through HSBC at (410) 628-6464, or e-mail [dkkeuck@gmail.com](mailto:dkkeuck@gmail.com).

**April 20, 6-8 p.m. “Documenting Your Historic Structure.”** Have you ever wondered who lived in your house before you or if anything historically significant happened in it? What did it look like when it was built? What type of work did the previous owners do? Teri Rising, Baltimore County Historic Preservation Planner, will put you on the right track to discovering some of the answers. Come listen to her speak about how to identify resources to assist property owners with finding information about their house and how to glean clues from tax records, deeds and other documents. She will be using a real life example of a house along with her discussion. A question and answer period will follow. (This event is a jointly sponsored program of the Baltimore County Historical Trust and the Historical Society of Baltimore County). Reservations required . Email [info@hsobc.org](mailto:info@hsobc.org) or call (410)666-1878. Donation of \$10/ person is requested.

**April 20-21, 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. “National Archives 7th Genealogy Fair: Become Your Family’s Detective.”** Held at the National Archives Research Center, 700 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC. Speakers will include professional genealogists, representatives from Ancestry.com, Footnote.com, many National Archives experts and a Harvard University Professor. They will instruct participants on the use of various databases in genealogical research. See [www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov) for holdings. For additional information, e-mail [KYR@nara.gov](mailto:KYR@nara.gov).

**April 30, 2 p.m. “An Introduction to Baltimore County During The War of 1812.”** at North Point State Park. Two authorities on Baltimore's role during the War of 1812, author and historian Christopher George as well as independent historian Robert Reyes, will address that topic during a one hour program in preparation for Baltimore County's bicentennial celebration of that war in 2012. George, author of *Terror on the Chesapeake: The War of 1812 on the Bay*, and co-editor of the *Journal of the War of 1812*, has spoken widely regarding the topic while Reyes has researched the role of North Point and its inhabitants during the war. Together, their program will certainly prove to be a memorable kick-off to the region's bicentennial celebrations. No fee.

**May 7, 14, 21 & 28, 9:30-11:30** (rain or shine) Four guided tours of historic Green Mount Cemetery conducted by Baltimore historian and educator, Mr. Wayne Schaumburg. Opened in 1839, Green Mount is the resting place of Johns Hopkins, Enoch Pratt, William and Henry Walters, Mary Eliz. Garrett, Betsy Patterson, John Wilkes Booth, Walter Lord and many other famous Marylanders. Cost: \$15/ person. Reservations required. Please contact Wayne at [wayne.schaumburg@gmail.com](mailto:wayne.schaumburg@gmail.com) or 410-256-2180.

To learn more about this venerable place go here <http://www.greenmountcemetery.com>.

**May 15, 2011, 1 p.m.** Annual Membership Meeting in the Galloway Room. Hors d'oeuvres, wine and conversation will follow. Open to all members, so mark your calendars.



Northpointstatepark.net

## CONDOLENCES

**Mary Katherine Scheeler**, HSBC Board Member, died on March 31, 2011. She is survived by her husband, Charles, 3 sons, eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. A celebration of her life will be held at Haebler Chapel at Goucher College on April 9 at 11:00 a.m.

**Domenico Giovanni Staita** died suddenly on March 7, 2011. He was a public history student at Stevenson University, who graduated in May 2010, and performed as an intern at HSBC from 2009 to 2010. He presented the Civil Defense program at the Almshouse.

**Carroll Edward Long**, 86 of Lutherville, died on January 28, 2011. He was a life member of the Lutherville Volunteer Fire Co., and life supporter of the Chestnut Ridge Volunteer Fire Company. A WW II vet, he served in the U.S. Army Air Corps, 8th Air Force.

**The Historical Society of Baltimore County expresses condolences to their families.**

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## SUBMITTED BY A YOUNG MEMBER

Photos of Farm Life in Baltimore County  
Your comments on this exhibit are greatly appreciated



Lauren

3/11/11

I love your pictures,  
they are so interesting.

I love this place!  
I'm eight, 8.



HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF  
BALTIMORE COUNTY

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STEWARDS OF THE PAST FOR THE  
PRESENT AND FUTURE

## HSBC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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John Gasparini  
Jeffrey Higdon  
Larry Leone  
James Lillie  
Jane Michael  
Shirley Tepper  
Cassie Kilroy Thompson  
Jackie Wilson



### **Hours of Operation:**

Fridays from noon to 4 p.m.  
Saturdays 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
2nd Wednesdays 7 p.m. to  
8:30 p.m.

**Newsletter Editor:**  
Jim Knapp