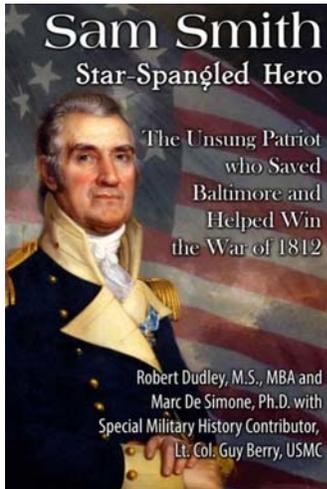




# NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2015

## ***SAM SMITH: STAR SPANGLED HERO***



Authors Robert Dudley and Marc De Simone are presenting their new book with a lecture, sale and signing on Sunday, May 31, 3:00 p.m., at our location. This event is open to the public with \$5 requested donation, or free to HSBC members. The new book is titled, *Sam Smith: Star Spangled Hero: The Unsung Patriot who Saved Baltimore and Helped Win the War of 1812*. (Note to members - this presentation directly follows our annual membership meeting scheduled at 2:00 p.m. earlier the same day. More details to follow.)

### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- *Sam Smith: Star Spangled Hero*
- *Woman's Club of Catonsville*
- *Upcoming Events*
- *History Trails Online*
- *You May Have Missed*
- *Just for Fun*
- *From our Blog*
- *Volunteer Corner*
- *Recent Donations*
- *What is it?*
- *Did You Know...?*

## **WOMAN'S CLUB OF CATONSVILLE COLLECTION**

The society accepted and accessioned a collection consisting of documentary materials related to the operations of the Woman's Club of Catonsville (WCC). The club operated from 1932 to 2012. At the height of its popularity the club had over 300 members and provided creative, philanthropic and civic opportunities to Catonsville women. In the 1950s and '60s the WCC partnered with community groups to start a library, an arts festival and senior citizen center in Catonsville. In 1959, the WCC constructed an impressive clubhouse at 10 St.



Timothy Lane from proceeds of The Swap Shop thrift store, donating the building to the Catonsville Community Foundation in 2013. The WCC's work was instrumental in Catonsville's urban revival efforts of both the 1960s and today. Their material could prove extremely valuable to planners or scholars interested in urban revival, women's history and Catonsville. We welcome the prospect of researchers and writers making use of these materials. The collection was extensively inventoried by U. Md. history graduate student Tyler S. Stump.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**First Thursdays: April 2, 2015; May 7, 2015; June 4, 2015; July 2, 2015**

**10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. @ HSBC Almshouse Headquarters**

### **GENEALOGY INSTRUCTION (Free to all)**

Free, monthly, genealogy instruction at the Historical Society of Baltimore County with local genealogist Noreen Goodson, and professional genealogist Angela Walton-Raji, BA, M.Ed.

**Sun., May 31, 2015; 2:00-3:00 p.m. @ HSBC Almshouse Headquarters**

### **ANNUAL MEETING - members only.**

Our annual membership meeting starts with a brief, members only business meeting including a state-of-society address and an election of new directors to the board. Refreshments follow. After the meeting there will be a presentation and book signing, which is open to the public (free to members or non-members \$5.00) by the authors of the new book, *Sam Smith, Star Spangled Hero*.

### **MORE EVENTS IN THE WORKS...**

We are in the process of planning more events, including: antiques appraisal roadshow, a fundraising concert at Sotir Farm, a booth at the Maryland State Fair (Aug. 28-Sept. 7), a guided bus tour through historic Catonsville (Oct. 10), a booth at the Montebello 100 anniversary event (Sept. 19), Baltimore City & County sewage history (Nov. 14), and a Miniatures & Dollhouses Exhibition (Nov. 21 and 22).



### **DATABASE RECORDS GOING ONLINE!**

Coming soon, as an added membership benefit, the society's board of trustees has authorized the staff and volunteers to place online upwards of 20,000 from our 30,000+ records database. Members will be able to search and browse through our historic photographs, library, maps, vertical file catalogues and select museum objects.

### ***History Trails* is Now Online!**

As a new member benefit, the society has placed the entirety of its *History Trails* public history journal online behind a password protected members-only website at [www.hsobc.org/members](http://www.hsobc.org/members). The journal, published since 1966, contains more than 145 articles and 800+ pages covering numerous topics related to the history and heritage of Baltimore County (and city). Members have already been e-mailed login information. Additionally, members are welcome to email or phone the society for any lost or forgotten passwords. Thank you for your support! Email [info@hsobc.org](mailto:info@hsobc.org) or call 410.666.1878 for your password.

## YOU MAY HAVE MISSED...



### HSBC USED BOOK SALE

Thanks to all who generously participated in our 2015 used book sale! That includes everyone who donated books, sorted books, volunteered on days the sale was held and patrons who visited. Leftover books were donated to The Book Thing of Baltimore, Inc., due to our own space constraints, and the wonderful service they provide—offering hundreds of thousands of books free of charge to schools, teachers and the public.

### GOSH BARN IT!

On March 14, more than 35 people attended the *Gosh Barn It!* event jointly sponsored by both us and the Preservation Alliance of Baltimore County at our farm exhibit & barn.

The featured speaker was Glenn James, owner of Cartwright Timber Frames. Mr. James has been building and restoring barns, homes, churches and more in Maryland for over 20 years. He was instrumental in the restoration of the barns at the Carroll County Farm Museum, and has won historic preservation awards for his work in other counties.

Accompanying his discussion of varying historic building techniques, Mr. James examined our barn and presented some of his findings. While the stone foundation predates the existing structure, he believes the present barn atop the foundation is modern because it's constructed with nails and metal joinery rather than mortise and tenon secured by a hardwood peg. The mortise and tenon method is known as timber framing and was more common in earlier barn construction than our barn suggests.

Mr. James' analysis squares (pun intended) with the historical research and documents discovered by society staff and volunteers. The documents suggested the barn's foundation predates 1866 when the property was listed for sale. Another source in 1899 documents the burning and rebuilding of the barn atop a foundation matching its dimensions, and there's evidence of yet another reconstruction in the 1970s.





## FROM OUR BLOG

### HIDDEN TREASURES: THE HSBC CEMETERY TRANSCRIPTION FILES-

In the 1970s, HSBC members undertook the project of locating every cemetery in Baltimore County and transcribing all of the headstones in those cemeteries. The results of this multi-year project now reside in the Cemetery Transcription Files at HSBC.

Headstones that may be illegible today were more clear 40 years ago and the transcriptions provide a wealth of family data for anyone tracing their family in Baltimore County. Early headstones recorded not only a person's name and dates of birth and death, but also names of parents, wife(s) and frequently heartfelt verses lamenting the loss of a loved one.

The transcriptions are recorded in the order in which the graves were located in the cemetery and there are often accompanying maps. Thus, one may be able to infer family relationships from the groupings of seemingly unrelated people.

Some transcriptions are handwritten; others have been typed. Many of the files include an index to the transcriptions, making it easy to locate a specific family or person.

But wait you may say, there is an online source for this same information—Find A Grave—why would I go to HSBC to look at these files? As someone who has made extensive use of all available genealogic resources, I can assure you that you often find much, much more info in these transcriptions. Let's use the transcription file for the Middletown Union Cemetery as an example.

The file begins with a typed index of family names included and respective page numbers. There is a short description noting when it was copied and the people who did it, with an overview of the cemetery's founding and condition. There is a map orienting the location of graves to the church and Freeland and Middletown Roads. 50 pages of typed transcriptions document more than 1,000 internments.

Let's look at the record for Sarah Akehurst. The transcription reads "Sarah/wife of/Charles Akehurst/formerly of/Peter Ruhl/Dec./died June 13, 1882/in the 63<sup>rd</sup> year of/her age" (/ indicates end of a line on the stone). The entry in Find A Grave for this same person reads gives only dates of birth and death. Thus, the HSBC record has provided twice as much information as Find A Grave.

I was looking for the burial place of my 2<sup>nd</sup> great grandfather, Caleb Lowe, who married Sophia Hoffman. He died in 1864 of tuberculosis contracted while a prisoner of war. I finally found him recorded in the 1971 transcription for the Hoffman/Gunpowder Family Burying Ground: row 1, position 1, wooden marker, partly illegible. In 1993, when the Daughters of the American Revolution erected the commemorative marker of those buried there, Caleb was not on it, because his wooden marker had disappeared. But the HSBC files documented his internment, thus solving a long-standing mystery.

Discover the HSBC Cemetery Transcription files—I promise you'll find something you didn't know.

*-Ann Blouse*

## VOLUNTEER CORNER

### Volunteers are still needed in these areas:

**Data Entry** – Volunteers familiar and comfortable with computers are needed for varying types of data entry and other tasks enabling us to build our ever-growing database. Much of this database will be going online in 2015 for members to search from the comfort of their own home.

**Research Center Assistants** – Do you like working with the public, learning about finding aides, performing computer searches through history databases and learning new things about places around you? You may be suited to assist our library patrons in their research by locating the books, files, maps, documents and other types of media.

**Programs Committee** – We are in need of new members and volunteers to work with our programs committee. Your task is to seek out and solicit entertaining and educational events and knowledgeable speakers for public programming.

## SPRING FUND DRIVE, A.K.A. THE ANNUAL APPEAL!

Every spring we conduct what we call our Annual Appeal and donation drive. Many organizations engage in soliciting donations two, three, four times per year or more. To date, we've only done it once per year so-as not to be a nuisance to you or your wallet. Please consider this when you receive your HSBC annual appeal in the mail in a few weeks. It is through membership dues and your generous tax-deductible donations that we are able to carry out our mission. Dues and donations comprise approximately 50% of our annual budget; thus, we truly could not do it without you!

## RECENT DONATIONS

### New Books & Computer

We have received the following newly cataloged additions in our library thanks to the generosity of members, friends and donors: *Volunteer for our Cause, The Lutherville Volunteer Fire Company 1909–2009*, *The Complete Book of Emigrants 1751-1776*, *The Complete Book of Emigrants in Bondage 1614-1775, Counties of Northern Maryland*, and *Sam Smith, Star Spangled Hero*. Thank you Robert Vaughan, Sally Riley, and Robert Dudley! Also, many thanks to Phyllis Bailey for a new (used) computer!

### DO YOU KNOW WHAT THIS IS?

See if you can guess what this object is and what it was used for. The answers will be in the next issue of this newsletter.



JUMBLE ANSWERS - #1 Patrick Henry (T,E) #2 Lord Baltimore(B,M) #3 Oregon Ridge (O,E) #4  
Hunt Valley (L,I) #5 North Avenue (O,N), Final Answer: Montebello

## DID YOU KNOW?

### That Woodlawn made a town disappear?

Today we know Woodlawn as a community, the national headquarters of the Social Security Administration and the previous location of the Gwynn Oak Amusement Park. But did you know that before 1902 there was no Woodlawn, but a mill and mill town called Powhatan?

From an original investment by John and E. Levering, the company of Baltimore Manufacturing at the Powhatan Cotton Works built a new mill on the Gwynn's Falls. The water driven mill began operations in 1811 and by 1813 it had 4,000 spindles in operation. In 1815 it was incorporated and called Powhatan Mfg. Co. The 1820 census indicated that there were 5,300 spindles, 45 power looms, 15 women, and 58 boys and girls in spinning plus 23 girls on power looms. Shortly after the Powhatan mill was established another mill was built nearby upstream called the Pocahontas. Over the years a mill town grew up around Powhatan and Pocahontas Mills. By 1881 the population was 300 and consisted of 63 houses, a general store, a post office, a school, and a Methodist Episcopal Church. The Powhatan Lodge no 23, Independent order of Asbestos Grange no. 172., and Patrons of Husbandry were organizations active in the Powhatan vicinity.



Powhatan Mill c. 1889

It is unknown why the mill was named after the Native Americans made famous by Pocahontas and the early English settlers in Virginia; according to the authors of *Woodlawn, Franklintown and Hebbville, Three Communities, Two Centuries*, there is no conclusive evidence of a permanent settlement of Native Americans in the area. It is more likely that it may have been part of a disputed zone between the Algonquian Nation (which included Powhatans) and the Susquehannocks in the north; there have been various Native American artifacts found by residents over the years.

The mill was relatively successful. It changed ownership over the years and produced cotton duck important for the use in sails, mail bags and tents important from the 1840s to 1890's. However, like many small mills in Maryland, it struggled with fires. The fire of Dec 7, 1895 was the final death toll for the Powhatan mill. It burned down completely, and was never rebuilt. The town buildings were not affected by the fire, but inhabitants gradually moved away since the Pocahontas Mill had already been abandoned. The property was sold, and in 1902, the Woodlawn Cemetery Company was formed as part of a need to provide larger public cemeteries.

Most of the town was razed to make way for the cemetery with several exceptions: the post office, a house, and the Powhatan Methodist Episcopal Church were moved across the river. In the winter of 1902 the frozen ice of the dammed river provided the means to move the Methodist church. The church was moved to 2119 Gwynn Oak Ave near to what we now know as downtown Woodlawn; the intersection of Windsor Mill and Gwynn Oak Aves. In 1930, the Powhatan Church congregation merged with St Luke's Methodist Church congregation and became St Luke's Methodist Episcopal Church. A new chapel was built in 1930 and the old Powhatan church building was moved behind the new one and used as a social hall and classrooms. It is still in use today and is on the Maryland Register of Historic Places (BA-2104).

One remaining building of Powhatan is visible today across the lake from the duck feeding area as a stone structure used by the Woodlawn cemetery company for storage. Other evidence of the town is the old Powhatan cemetery which is in the Wesley Section of Woodlawn Cemetery. The graves are identifiable as burials before 1904. (Our HSBC cemetery transcription files list the individual graves and shows the location of the section.)

In 1904 the cemetery company succeeded in changing the name of the town to Woodlawn. And so the entire area became known as Woodlawn thus erasing Powhatan from the map. — *M. Hendrickson*

Sources: Woodlawn History Committee, *Woodlawn, Franklintown and Hebbville, Three Communities, Two Centuries* (Woodlawn Rec. & Parks Council, 1977); John McGrain, *Molinography of Maryland, Mills of Baltimore County, City and neighboring Counties* (2007); Cemetery Transcription files at HSBC; photo: BCPL Legacy Web -contributor-Jeff Morgenstern, file #805-103 #1, c. 1889.

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Fridays - noon to 4 p.m.

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