On Thursday, May 31, at 6 pm, the Historical Society of Baltimore County will host a public screening of JOSIAH, a forty-minute documentary that traces Josiah Henson’s harrowing journey from slavery in Maryland and Kentucky to freedom in Canada.

Josiah Henson (1789-1883) spent forty-one years as a slave. He was a dynamic, driven man with unyielding principles who overcame incredible odds to escape his cruel masters and improve the lives of hundreds of freed people throughout his long life. Though immortalized by Harriet Beecher Stowe in her seminal, society-changing novel Uncle Tom’s Cabin and catapulted to international fame in 1852, his story has been largely lost to history. Until now.

Including interviews with leading experts and Henson descendants, JOSIAH is an essential documentary about one of history’s greatest lost figures and his agonizing journey through slavery to freedom.

To accompany the documentary, the filmmaker Jared A. Brock is also releasing the definitive biography of Josiah Henson’s life, The Road to Dawn: Josiah Henson and the Story That Sparked the Civil War (PublicAffairs, on sale May 15, 2018). Brock chronicles Henson’s forty-one years in bondage, his eventual escape to freedom, and his rise as a great preacher and orator who used his freedom to uplift his fellow man for the entirety of his life.

Tickets for the screening are $5 for members ($10 general admission) and can be purchased at:
https://historicalsocbaltoco.ticketspice.com/josiah-henson-screening
Doors open at 5:30. Light refreshments will be served.

We hope you can join us!
UPCOMING EVENTS

First Thursdays each month: June 7, July 5, August 2, Sept. 6, 10:00am-2:00pm @ 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, M.Ed. Walton-Raji is the author of Black Indian Genealogy Research: African American Ancestors Among the Five Civilized Tribes. The instructors have a wealth of general and niche genealogy knowledge, experience, and resources to share.

Sunday, May 20, 2018, 2:00-4:00pm @ HSBC Almshouse Headquarters
FERDINAND MAGELLAN, WORLD EXPLORER ($5.00, free for HSBC members; pre-registration at https://historicalsocbaltoco.ticketspice.com/magellan)

Speaker: Jerry Kahan
Ferdinand Magellan, a Portuguese nobleman determined to reach the Spice Islands by sailing west, is credited with being the first person to sail around the world. The westward voyage was filled with stories of cruelty, mutiny, wars, and discovery—and Magellan himself died in the Philippines. Join us as Jerry Kahan takes us on that fateful, famous journey and explores Magellan’s legacy.

Thursday, May 31, 2018, 6:00-7:30pm @ HSBC Almshouse Headquarters
DOCUMENTARY FILM SCREENING: JOSIAH ($10 general admission, $5 HSBC members) Please see cover feature for details...

Sunday, June 24, 2018, 1:00-4:00pm @ HSBC Almshouse Headquarters
SLAVERY IN BALTIMORE COUNTY (2:00pm, $5.00, free for HSBC members; pre-registration at https://historicalsocbaltoco.ticketspice.com/slavery-in-baltimore-county)

Speaker: Bill Barry
With one of the northernmost slave plantations at Hampton Mansion and the largest free black population of any city in the country, the history of slavery in the Baltimore area is complex, unique and historically important. This presentation will cover the history from the first slaves to emancipation in 1864, and will emphasize the different labor systems that slavery created. Mr. Barry will be joined by special guest Ranger A. Anokwale Anansesemfo of the National Park Service at Hampton Mansion, who will speak about the history of Hampton. Bill Barry is retired Director of Labor Studies at CCBC-Dundalk and teaches courses on the history of slavery in the US for CCBC and the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Towson University. Due to earlier meeting, doors will open to public at 1:45 pm.

Sunday, July 22, 2018, 2:00-4:00pm @ HSBC Almshouse Headquarters
LOST AFRICAN AMERICA: TOWNS OF BALTIMORE COUNTY ($5.00, free for HSBC members; pre-registration will open soon)

Speaker: Carolyn Adams
Details to follow in our next edition...

Sunday, August 19, 2018, 2:00-4:00pm @ HSBC Almshouse Headquarters
THE PHILADELPHIA, WILMINGTON AND BALTIMORE RAILROAD IN THE CIVIL WAR($5.00, free for HSBC members; pre-registration will open soon)

Speaker: Scott Mingus, Sr.
Details to follow in our next edition...
YOU MAY HAVE MISSED...

BOOK LAUNCH PARTY: JOHN W. MCGRAIN, 250 CANDLES FOR TOWSON: DOCUMENTS AND MEMOIRS—March 15, 2018
The release of John McGrain’s latest book, *250 Candles for Towson: Documents and Memoirs*, inspired HSBC to throw a book launch party. Mr. McGrain was in attendance and graciously signed books for all who asked. Guests enjoyed wine, cheese, and other light refreshments. Mr. McGrain very kindly donated nearly the entire printing of his new book to HSBC, so the sales proceeds go entirely to support the Historical Society’s programs and collections. A big thank you to John!

NEGRO LEAGUES BASEBALL: HISTORY & HIGHLIGHTS—March 18, 2018
HSBC was pleased to host a presentation by Ray Banks of the Hubert V. Simmons Museum of Negro Leagues Baseball in Owings Mills. (Those of you who have stopped by HSBC’s booth at the Maryland State Fair in recent years know that Mr. Banks puts on quite a display for his museum in an adjacent booth.) Mr. Banks filled the Galloway Room with evocative artifacts and photos from the museum’s collections. He shared stories about the personalities and talents of some of the top African American players—male and female—in the Negro Leagues. He also spoke about his own personal experiences working to commemorate the history of the Negro Leagues and establish the Simmons Museum. The audience, which included several baseball aficionados, had lots of questions and stories of their own for Mr. Banks.

OBLATE SISTERS OF PROVIDENCE—April 29, 2018
Willa Banks, historian and curator at the Benjamin Banneker Historical Park and Museum, traced the history of the Oblate Sisters of Providence, a truly remarkable order founded in 1829 in Baltimore. The Oblates were the first successful Roman Catholic sisterhood in the world established by women of African descent. They also made history by establishing St. Frances Academy, the oldest continuously operating school for black Catholic children in the United States. Despite the hostile climate of the 19th century for people of color and female aspirations to education, the Oblates developed a rigorous curriculum and kept their doors open even during the Civil War. Ms. Banks’s illustrated presentation inspired a lot of questions from the deeply engaged audience and we are delighted she was able to join us to share her knowledge.
WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

HSBC would like to thank all those who help sustain our collections and programs through memberships. Without our members, there would be no Historical Society! Here, we acknowledge and thank all those who have joined since last fall:

Richard Anderson
Sharon Andrulot
John Askew
John and Loretta Bartolomeo
Chris Burns
Dorothy Burns
Barry V. Chapman
Janet Marie Dawson
Kraig A. Dean
Meredith Fagan
William J. Feuer
Rudy Fischer
John and Debbie Folkerts
Washina Ford
Jerome J. Frank
Mary Jeanne Frank
Colleen Grammer
Ilka Gray
Betty Hearst
Sandra Herrera
Dianne M. Hoffman
Barbara Jones
Gerald Kahan
Anita S. Karpetsky
Sam Ketterman
Amanda Kilian
Rowland E. King
Robert Klein
Nancy Langston
Frances D. Lannon
Barry Larkin
Sidney M. Levy
Chris Lewis
Paul D. Lubell
Terry Luman
Lopez Matthews
John Merryman
T. Howard and Deborah M. Metzger
Jay and Paula Miller
Ethel Drennan Nickerson
Pamela Pease
James M. Poffel
Donald M. Powers
Stephanie Sabino
George Sharrer
Scott and Nancy Sheads
James Smith
Jane M. Smith
Loyd and Janice Smith
Albert Snellings
Rev. Ronald D. Standiford
Celia H. Taylor
Helen Terry
Eric Walker
Richard Walter
Richard and Gail Watson
Sherrilynn Wilmer

Thanks for joining!

HSBC MEMBERS, HAVE YOU RENEWED FOR 2018 YET?
We know life is busy and it's easy to set our renewal notice aside for later ... and then later comes and life is still just as busy! It only takes a few minutes to renew and its means a lot to us. Membership dues are a significant part of the income that supports our collections and programs. If you haven’t renewed, please visit www.hsobc.org/membership and do so now. Your dues really do make a difference. Thanks!
UPLAND HOME (AKA THE ALMSHOUSE)

By Pat Routson

We know some of you are already familiar with the history of the historic building that HSBC inhabits, but for those of you who are not, we offer this brief history of almshouses and the story of our own “Almshouse.”

Origins of “Almshouses”

Almshouses were charitable institutions chartered to support those who were incapable of providing for themselves: the elderly, sick, poor and mentally ill who lacked family able to care for them. Though their origins are in medieval Europe, almshouses in Maryland date to legislation passed in 1768. “An Act for the relief of the Poor within the several Counties therein mentioned” called for the provision of alms and the establishment of workhouses by counties around Maryland.

Baltimore County (which then included Baltimore City) passed its first act to establish an “Almshouse” in 1773. The first Baltimore almshouse was located on the western outskirts of the city and named Bay View (the precursor to what is now the Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center). In 1819, a second almshouse was opened at Calverton, a converted estate purchased from Baltimore banker Dennis Smith. In 1851 Baltimore City and Baltimore County separated and eventually Baltimore County decided to build a new almshouse further north.

“The Upland Home”

The County Commissioners purchased property in the village of Texas (part of today’s Cockeysville) from Dr. John Galloway in 1870. The purchase included a barn and small house, which were used to house some of the inmates during construction. The new almshouse opened officially on January 7, 1874, and given its commanding presence on top of a hill, was sometimes referred to as the “Upland Home.” The county’s outlay for the new facility was an estimated $60,000. According to the Baltimore Sun on January 8, 1874,

New County Almshouse – The new Baltimore county almshouse, a fine stone building, three stories high, with attic, situated five miles beyond Towson town, on the Northern Central railroad, has been fully completed. Yesterday the inmates of the old structure, seventy-two in number, comprising forty-four males, twenty-eight females and eighteen colored persons, were removed to the new building by A. Cole, of L, the superintendent of the institution. Several insane people of the county, from the State hospital at Catonsville are also to be placed in the new quarters shortly.

The new stone building housed the “inmates” along segregated lines: white men and women in the front wing, separated by floors, and African Americans in the back wing. The front wing’s first floor was reserved for the facility’s Superintendent and his family, with extra rooms if needed for physicians and other employees. The campus included an additional smaller building down the hill from the main structure, known as the “Pest House” (short for pestilence). This building’s intended purpose was to quarantine residents with communicable diseases; however, research suggests that it was more often used to provide segregated housing for African American males.

A Working Farm

With historic roots in workhouses, the Almshouse not surprisingly required inmates to work for (Continued on page 6)
their upkeep as much as they were able. County officials hoped the Almshouse would be as economically self-sustaining as possible through farming. Able-bodied residents labored on the Almshouse’s farm or worked inside the house, at tasks like cooking, sewing, and laundry.

The farm eventually grew to include several outbuildings, such as barns, livestock sheds, a smoke house to cure meats and a pump house to provide water to the main building (the original smoke house is still standing, near the main building). The livestock found on the property included cattle, pigs, goats, sheep, chickens and horses. There were also a variety of gardens and orchards, including cherry, pear, apple and chestnut trees. Vegetables produced included rhubarb, beans, peas, tomatoes, cabbages, carrots, beets, corn and potatoes. These crops and meats were used to feed the inmates and any surplus was sold to provide revenue for the Almshouse and the county.

**Fire and Closure**

On New Year’s Eve in 1919, the front wing of the Almshouse was utterly destroyed by a fire, the third and by far the worst in a series of blazes in the 1910s. When the county rebuilt the wing, it reduced the height to two floors and used concrete generously to reduce the building’s vulnerability to fires.

From 1874 to 1914, more than 10,000 people passed through the Almshouse’s doors as “inmates,” committed to public care for reasons ranging from disabilities to dementia to diseases like measles and tuberculosis. Eventually, however, the need for almshouses declined as more specialized facilities for the care of the elderly, indigent and mentally ill became more commonplace in the twentieth century. With few inmates left to justify the running costs, the Almshouse was officially closed in 1958 by county officials. In 1960, the Historical Society of Baltimore County moved in at the invitation of County Executive Christian H. Kahl. HSBC has called the Almshouse home ever since, sharing the building with county offices and other tenants.

**Sources:**


Various in Almshouse topic files, HSBC Collections.

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**WHAT IS IT? ANSWER**

This object from HSBC’s farm collections is a “breast drill,” which is best described on the Miller Falls website:

“Breast drills typically exceed fifteen inches in length and are topped by a concave plate that provides a surface for a user to lean against when drilling a hole. Sometimes referred to as ‘chest drills,’ ‘belly drills’ or ‘knee drills,’ these tools were indispensable in the construction industry, in blacksmith shops, in factories and in shops where rail cars were fabricated. Ruggedly built, the drills are useful for boring holes in iron, steel and extremely tough wood. Designed with the expectation that a worker would be putting a fair amount of body weight into a task, the drills are especially effective when used in a standing position, alongside the work piece.”

Millers Falls website: [http://oldtoolheaven.com/breast_drills/breast_drill.htm](http://oldtoolheaven.com/breast_drills/breast_drill.htm)
PROGRAM NOTES—SAVE THE DATE

We’ve got lots of exciting programs planned for the rest of 2018. Below are a few events in the coming months we want to share now, so you can mark your calendars:

TOUR OF THE BOYS’ LATIN CENTER FOR MILITARY HISTORY
Boys’ Latin School, 822 West Lake Avenue, Baltimore, Md. 21210
Saturday, August 4, 10:30 am—1:30 pm

Join us for a special tour of the Boys’ Latin Center for Military History led by Frederick C. Maisel III, the curator and co-owner. The Center, opened in 2017, houses an extensive private collection of military memorabilia from the Revolutionary War through the War on Terror. With more than twenty displays and exhibits, the museum features thousands of original and reproduction artifacts as well as documents, photos, diary accounts, military paperwork and manuals in print and digital formats.

Tour package includes a boxed lunch from Eddie’s of Roland Park. Registration will open soon…

FUN WITH MINIATURES!
HSBC Almshouse
Saturday, October 20, 11:00 am—4:00 p.m.
Sunday, October 21, 11:00 am—3:00 p.m.

Co-Sponsored by Maryland Miniatures Unlimited & the Historical Society of Baltimore County

Please plan to join us for this joint exhibition featuring dollhouse and other miniatures (including large and small dollhouses and room boxes), toy model trains, Lego creations, demonstrations, children’s activities, and more. A great event for the entire family!

Please note: In our January newsletter, we asked you to “save the date” for a special program we were planning, “From Falls to Faucet”: A Day of History on June 23. Unfortunately, we have had to cancel that program. Our apologies.
To ensure uninterrupted delivery of HSBC mailings, please let us know of address changes.

To find us on social media: