



NEWSLETTER

of the

HARFORD COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

143 N. MAIN ST, BEL AIR, MD 21014-3539

March 2009

NOTICE OF NEXT MEETING

Date: **Sunday, March 15, 2009** Time: **2:00 PM**

Place: **Historical Society of Harford County, Headquarters**
143 N. Main St; Bel Air, MD 21014

Program: **Plats using Maryland's Digital Imaging System.**

Our speakers, members of our own society, Douglas Washburn and Richard Appel, will demonstrate using **Maryland's Digital Image Reference System for Land Survey, Subdivision, and Condominium Plats** to obtain diagrams of land parcels, warrants, and patents.

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2009 MEMBERSHIP DUES

Enclosed is our 2009 Membership Application and Renewal form for the convenience of those who have not yet paid. Payment is requested immediately.

The free-to-members Special Publications are back from the printer and will be distributed to paid members during the March meeting. Paid 2009 members not normally attending our meetings will receive a copy by mail. This year our Special Publication is No. 40, "Older Churches and Forgotten Families," that contains brief histories and tombstone transcriptions for eleven early Harford County Churches. As a bonus, 2009 members will also receive Special Publication No. 39, "J.C. Taylor Marble Co. Ledgers Vol 3."

We are always interested in speakers, program topics, and May off-site Meeting venues. Please jot down your ideas in the COMMENTS section.

DIRECTORY

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MEETING SCHEDULE: March, May, July, September, & November

We hold five meetings per year, usually on the 3rd Sunday of the month. The March, July, September and November meetings begin at 2:00 PM at The Historical Society of Harford County Inc., 143 North Main Street, Bel Air, MD 21014. The May meeting is a box lunch held at various historical locations in the county.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

The first few months of each year is that time when HCGS memberships are renewed and we encourage each of you to seek-out and bring new faces into our fold. As our treasurer tabulates the numbers, I find myself asking ‘how well are we serving our members and the family history interests of the community’. 2009 is a benchmark year for the Harford County Genealogical Society – our 30th Anniversary, the span of a generation, and time for a party! Over that short period of time Harford County has experienced radical demographic changes. The population has doubled, in large part from in migration of new residents; has become much younger, and measurably more diverse.

By definition, our mission is to “facilitate the preservation and dissemination of information on the history and genealogy of families of Harford County Maryland and its immediate vicinity”. Review of a number of our recent programs reflects an additional focus on contemporary family history research technologies and modes of inquiry. Our Society provides a rich environment in which to learn about the families who make our respective communities what they have become, as well as sharpening skills for navigating the nuances of ‘digging for evidence’.

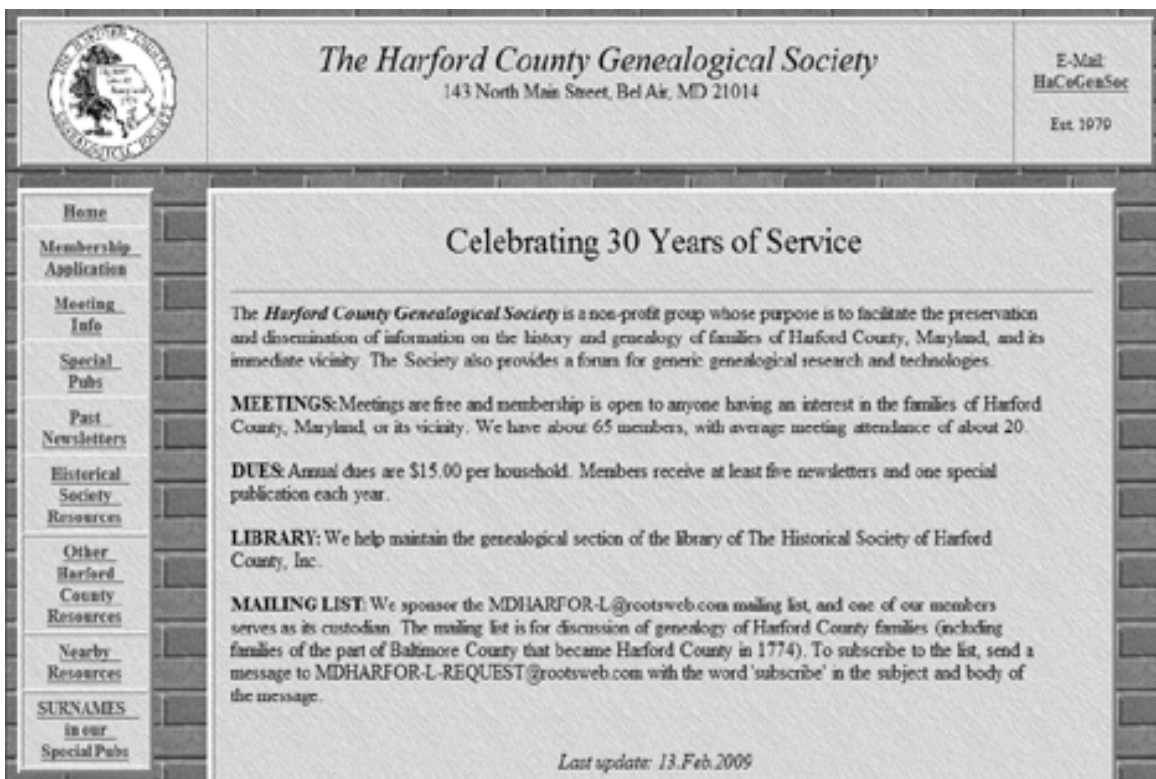
The needs and interests of the next generation will be different from those of us who are on the wane. It is time to bring the baby-boomers on board! Invite your recent-comer neighbors to share our programs and activities – we will learn from them as they share with us. Together we will shape the future of the Society. That is the destiny of the Harford County Genealogical Society.

...Arch

HCGS WEB SITE

Checkout out our Society’s recently reformatted website at www.rtis.com/reg/md/org/hcgs/

Surname Indices from recent HCGS Special Publications have been added, plus our **2009 Membership Application** has been added for your convenience. Thank you Doug Washburn for your hard work.



GENEALOGY FEATURE

Finding and Using Church Records

by Bob Brooke Published in *AntiqueWeek* May 29, 2000

Church records are made for ecclesiastical reasons, not to provide genealogists with answers to their questions. They were, and still are, made to report to church authorities the functional success of a church in the community. But genealogists have discovered that church records are a prime source of information.

Unfortunately, a researcher cannot assume that church records are available for all the places people settled. Where they are located and when did they begin are the two basic questions that must be answered before church records can be used.

During the 1930s, the Works Projects Administration (WPA) planned an inventory of all U.S. church records. Because too many churches would not cooperate and because the amount of material was too voluminous, it was never finished. The WPA did manage to publish many volumes, listing churches of the same denomination, giving the name, location, brief notes concerning the history of the congregation, its dates of founding and of combining with other churches, and the location of the records as of the 1930s. Usually, these can be found in libraries. Naturally, the data giving the location of the church records may now be inaccurate. Some denominations, realizing the genealogical and historical value of keeping church records, have set up central depositories where local churches can send their records for preservation and research.

In determining what churches existed at the time and place being researched, a genealogist should consult the county, state and local histories that proliferated in the 1870s and 1880s, which often included at least one chapter on church history. Local historians gave a surprising amount of information about the churches and in some cases were foresighted enough to include a transcript of at least part, and sometimes all, of the vital records of the leading or earliest church in their town.

If it is necessary for a researcher to write a church for a record, it should be brief, asking for a copy of a specific record and inclosing a return, self-addressed, stamped envelope and a small donation check. But often researchers never receive a reply. Some churches have no staff to do any searching in their non-indexed volumes, and some have no one who can read the old-fashioned script. The minister himself may be irked by the number of letters he receives and therefore refuse to answer any. There are even places where the pastor or the clerk in the church office does not know the location of the old records. This is especially true if the records were kept in a foreign language.

One of the best sources for locating records today is E. Kay Kirkham's *A Survey of American Church Records for the Period Before the Civil War East of the Mississippi River Volume 1: Major Denominations*, published by Everton Publishers, Inc., Logan, Utah {used books available from Amazon.com associates for ~\$12.00 inc S/H}. Included are most of the church records accumulated by the Genealogical Society in Salt Lake City covering the major denominations before 1860. This basic reference covers all the states east of the Mississippi before 1860. {Kay Kirkham has published several of these American Church Survey type books.}

Once having discovered where the records are kept, a researcher should consider the church's denomination - Baptist, Roman Catholic, Methodist, Presbyterian, etc. - since each denomination's records contain details important to that specific church. Some church records will show baptisms or christenings of infants; others, only baptisms of adults, marriages of members, and perhaps burials, along with officers of the church. Thus in Baptist records, few if any baptisms of infants will be found because candidates for baptism are usually 14 years or older.

There is also the question of accuracy. Records of marriages and baptisms were not always made on the day the event took place but were entered following the event from notes the minister had made. For instance, records for a baptism may give a month and a year, but no day and often with the child unnamed.

In marriage records, the groom's full name may be stated, but only the first name of the bride, or vice versa. If the person who made the record in the church book was not familiar with the family names, they may be spelled phonetically. If an entry states that, a baptized child is "of Mrs. Jones," or that the baptism of a child was performed "for Mrs. Jones," it does not necessarily mean that the father was deceased or the child illegitimate: It may simply mean that, while Mrs. Jones was a member of that church, Mr. Jones was not.

Lastly, not all records are in separate categories in church record books. Many may be found in the meeting records of the ruling body of the church - the Session Records of the Presbyterians; the Official Board records of the Methodists; and the Monthly Meetings of Quakers.

GENEALOGY HAPPENINGS

2009 Mid-Atlantic Germanic Society -Spring Conference

Date: **April 18, 2009** (Sat) 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM

Place: Plaza Hotel, 1718 Underpass Way, Halfway Blvd, **Hagerstown, MD**

For Details: www.magsgen.com/ or registration@magsgen.com
or Diane Kuster 252-373-1684

The program is titled **Exploring New Record Groups in Germany & the USA**, and consists of three lectures by **Kenneth Heger**, plus one lecture **Finding Place of Birth in Federal Records** by **Susannah Brooks**.

2009 National Genealogical Society -Conference

Date: **May 13-16, 2009** (Wed-Sat)

Place: Raleigh Convention Center, **Raleigh, NC**

For Details: http://www.ngsgenealogy.org/cs/register_online for brochure
or contact: **Rochelle Compton 1- 800-473-0060** rcompton@ngsgenealogy.org

The program is titled **The Building of America, from Roanoke to the West**, and consists of lectures, workshops, exhibits, tours, with over 45 speakers.

Genealogy Conference at Kutztown University

Date: **September 12, 2009** (Sat) 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM

Place: McFarland Student Union Building, Kutztown University, **Kutztown, PA**

For Details: go online to: <http://www.kutztown.edu/hcl> or
<http://www.kutztown.edu/community/pgchc/library/2009%20genealogy%20conference.html/>

For additional information and a registration form contact: Lucy Kern, Librarian
484-646-4165 or pagermanlibrary@kutztown.edu

There will be three sequential seminars. A Fee applies.

- **The role of religion in the lives of 18th and 19th century PA German Emigrants.** Don Yoder
- **PA land and the opportunity for 18th century immigrant ownership.** Rosalind Beiler
- **PA Germans: creating ethnic identity through architecture and artifacts.** Cynthia Falk

There will also be an associated narrated bus tour of **Historic Oley Valley** with several stops, on Friday, September 11, 2009. -Preregistration and fee required.

The Heritage Center Library is open M-F 10 AM-12 PM; & 1 PM-4 PM. Fee is \$5.

MAY MEETING

Our **Sunday, May 17, 2009 Off-Site Picnic** Society meeting will be held at **St Mary's Episcopal Church**, 1 St Marys Church Rd, Abingdon, MD 21009 at **2:00 PM**. Look for details in the May 2009 issue of the NEWSLETTER. A **LUNCH RESERVATION form is attached** to this Newsletter.

Please, mark your calendars for our July 19th Society meeting and 30th Anniversary Celebration to be held at the Historical Society of Harford County Headquarters. Complete the attached reservation form and lunch order, and then mail it before May 6th.
