



NEWSLETTER

of the

HARFORD COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

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

March 2010

NOTICE OF NEXT MEETING

Date: **Sunday, March 21, 2010** Time: **2:00 PM**
Place: **Historical Society of Harford County, 143 N Main St, Bel Air, MD 21014-3539**
Program: **GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH DAY**

Gather your notes, thoughts, and sticking points. Start preparing by reviewing your genealogical data for brick walls and un-resolved clues, and then update your research schedules. Genealogy help will be available, and **Historical Society of Harford County** research experts in Family History, Research Library, Court Records, Artifacts, Photographs, and Archives collections will be on-hand to assist with manual and PastPerfect™ database searches. History and Genealogy buffs interested in Harford County and surrounding areas are welcome to come and learn.

After a brief orientation with highlights of collections added over the past two years, everyone will be free to ask for help, ask questions, or start searching. Every Historical Society department will be open at the same time, without charge, and staffed with a knowledgeable Historical Society volunteer. Your specific written research objectives will be a big help to the experts, as well as you.

Light refreshments will be available at no charge in the lobby, especially for those whose head is starting to spin or going into overload. You might even strike-up a conversation with someone who can help with your research.

***** OUR SOCIETY'S WEBSITE HAS A NEW ADDRESS *****

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

Fortuitous happenings do occur. One of those is the coincidental publication of the most recent Harford Historical Bulletin and our upcoming March 2010 meeting of the Harford County Genealogical Society. The publication "An Anecdotal History of The Historical Society of Harford County" written by Dr. David Hodge, recounts in detail the somewhat turbulent and often haphazard evolution of the Society into its current, much expanded and well organized facility. After 125 years, The Historical Society of Harford County, the oldest county historical society in Maryland, is surely becoming one of the best.

As family history aficionados, we members of the Genealogical Society are indeed fortunate to have the extraordinary range of intact resources under one roof, well preserved well catalogued, and readily accessible for our research – be it the research library and family history collection, court records, archives or collections of artifacts. Several long-time members of the HCGS played significant roles in bringing these collections together: Jon Livezey is a past president of the Historical Society and early editor of Harford Historical Bulletin. He contributed quantities of materials from his own collections as well as procured many documents that would have otherwise been destroyed. Doris Barben and Peggy Bishop spent untold hours clipping, collecting and organizing family history files – and continue to do so to this day. Claire Blackmer chairs the Court Records section and Henry Peden, Genealogy.

As I read the Bulletin, I was again struck by the extent to which the historical and the genealogical societies have both a complimentary and symbiotic relationship. The majority of the visitors to The Historical Society headquarters are pursuing genealogical research. Were it not for the unyielding struggles and foresight of our predecessors, and the continuing dogged persistence of members of the society to preserve and conserve historical sites, documents, archives and artifacts, family research would indeed be an empty set.

It has been nearly three years since the HCGS as organized a program billed as a work session. March 21st provides a rare opportunity for our members to explore the full range of resources available for family research under one roof at the same time. (Normally, researchers do not have access to all collections on the same day.) This is also the first such session since the substantial expansion of technological search assistance and many recent acquisitions. Documents, records, and artifacts of all sorts continue to make their way into the collections. Bring your questions and your queries – a full range of volunteer staff members will be on hand to assist us and answer our questions. Personally, I never visit the Historical Society that I do not find some new resource or avenue for inquiry. Be assured that you will leave this session with a newfound appreciation for the breadth and depth of resources right here in one spot, as well as perhaps learn a new strategy or two for navigating other genealogical research venues. And, I urge you to read [An Anecdotal History of The Historical Society of Harford County](#).

Hope to see you all on March 21st. *Arch*

GENEALOGY TIDBITS

Baltimore Sun Archives

I wish to clarify the access and fees that were mentioned in the January 2010 Newsletter.

Prices for at home access and downloads of archived data that were listed in the Genealogy Feature article, Baltimore Sun Archives, were only for **ProQuest Archiver** users. ProQuest Archiver accounts do not use the same login information as the Baltimore Sun, or Library websites.

The Baltimore Sun archived newspaper images and articles are also accessible at all Pratt Library Locations, and from home, without cost when using an Enoch Pratt Library card. Cards are free to all Maryland residents. As expected, libraries charge for all in-library paper copies.

Harford Community College Library Card holders as well have access to this data. HCC Library cards are free to enrolled students and all Harford County residents. HCC faculty and enrolled students have free access to databases from home, but other cardholders are limited to in-library access. *Rich Appel*

Isaac Taylor McComas Diaries

Seventy diaries of Isaac Taylor McComas are available for free searching online at www.ITMcComas.com. McComas (1830-1923) spent most of his 93 years in Frederick, & Carroll Counties, and Baltimore City, with eleven of those years in California as a 49er. Each Diary volume has a search engine and a list of individuals who are named in that volume. *Courtesy-* Charles McComas Robb (descendent).

Methodist Church Records

BROADWAY Methodist Episcopal Church, Baltimore, MD records spanning 1864-1977 are now available on one DVD that contains images of handwritten records, therefore not indexed.

EAST BALTIMORE STATION Methodist Episcopal Church, Baltimore MD, records spanning the periods 1801-1885; 1886-1908; and 1907-1958 on a set of three CD's.

Contact Wanda Hall, **Lovely Lane (Methodist) Museum and Archives** archivist at lovlnmus@cavtel.net or 410-889-4458 for more details and pricing.

GENEALOGY FEATURE

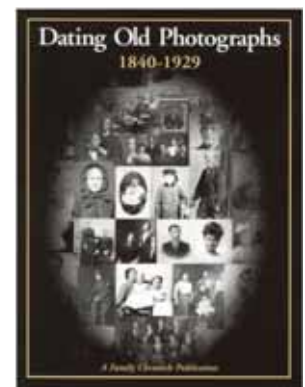
Dating Old Photographs

Family Chronicle Magazine's special publication **Dating Old Photographs 1840-1929**, Heritage Books, 2000, oversized soft cover, 96pp, ISBN: 0968507638, has proved to be very popular. Many of you have photographs that are undated, but in past articles it has been shown that it is often possible to establish the date by carefully comparing with other pictures of known date. Thanks to the goodwill of Family Chronicle's readers over 650 photographs were collected of known date for this book.

We thought it might be interesting to show in detail how a photograph can be dated with a considerable degree of precision. The photo selected is of the Walter John Harwood family and was taken around 1890.

Even though the date is known, you may wish to work your way through the pointers which confirm this date. No photographs can be described as "typical" and this example is no exception. The father provides few clues but the mother and children have several distinctive pointers.

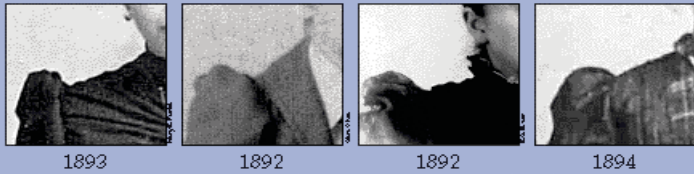
Not everything that may be used as a pointer has been described. For example, the background is clearly a painted canvas indicating a studio shot. Although painted backdrops were common for decades, the drapes and woodwork of the stairs may contain clues. The dress worn by the young lady standing in the middle and the outfits of the younger children could also be compared. No single clue is likely to provide a date but considering all the evidence it can be said that this photograph had to be taken in 1890 — plus or minus a couple of years.



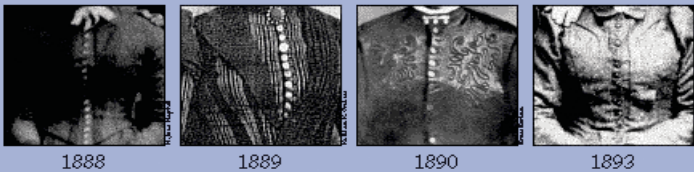
The Walter John Harwood family. From left to right: Sarah, mother Thea, Helga (standing), Maudie, Walter John with young Walter on his lap and Harold.
Photograph courtesy of Ehyllis Libby Glynn.

Women's fashions are the first things to check when trying to establish the date of a photograph. Fashions changed as often as they do today and they are an excellent indicator of the date.

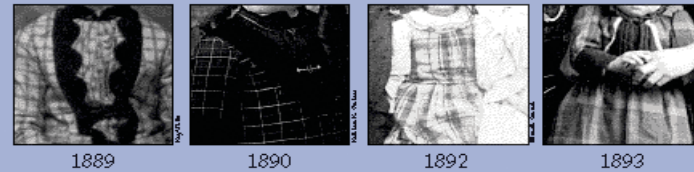
In the example on the right, the prominent top of the sleeve on the young lady's dress are very helpful. This style was only common from about 1890 to 1898 — other examples are shown here.



Some aspects of fashion fell in and out of popularity. For example, very wide, loose sleeves on women's dresses were common in the mid-1860s, fell out of fashion for a time and are then seen again about 10 years later. Even a quick examination of old photographs demonstrates that there were a number of different styles popular at any given time. You cannot state that such and such was the fashion in a particular year — you can state that it was a fashion of the period.



There are other clues in the picture. The closely-spaced buttons on both ladies' bodices are found from 1870 to 1900 — a rather broad period. However, the young girl on the left is wearing a check patterned dress; this design was popular for young girls between 1889 and 1893. A further clue is the pleated top of the skirt on the woman seated — this is only found on another photograph dated 1893.



Common Myths

A common myth is that fashions in rural areas lagged those in the cities by some years. Anyone who has looked at the advertisements in 19th-century newspapers will have noticed the number of merchants claiming they have “the latest fashions from New York and London”.

Having your photograph taken was an event and involved much more than the command “Smile” Women, especially, would not be caught dead being photographed in an out-of-date outfit. Men too would dress up a bit but there are plenty of examples where we can see they could not be bothered.

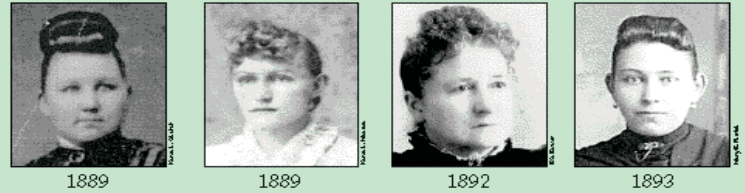
There is also the myth about long exposure times. It is true that the very first photographs - in the late 1830s in Europe and 1840 in North America - did require several minutes of exposure. However, this problem was overcome in the early months of 1840. Exposure times were far slower than those of today but they were measured in seconds, not minutes. Anyone needing proof of this can see that children, far too young to understand the necessity to keep still, were common subjects even in the 1850s.

Even though most photographs can be dated by comparing these to known examples, some can be very difficult, even impossible. Head-and-shoulders pictures of men sometimes contain no clues. Photographs showing the subjects wearing traditional costumes are very difficult to date and brides and bridesmaids often wear dresses that bear little relationship to current fashions.

 Article courtesy of Family Chronicle Magazine.
 This book is available at Bel Air & Whiteford HCPL branches and from several retailers for less than \$25.

Women's hairstyles can provide useful clues for dating photographs but they do not help in our example. The seated lady has a center parting with her hair tied back. This was practically the *only* way that women wore their hair before 1870 and this style remained common until well into the 20th century. Moreover, the young lady standing at the center has bangs. This is rare at this time (except on very young children). Bangs did become popular in the 1910s.

Common hairstyles contemporary with our picture are shown below.

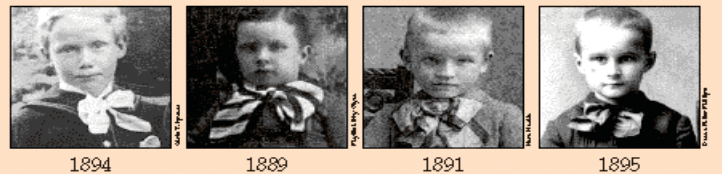


Men's hairstyles found in pictures are rarely useful for dating. The styles on our subject on the left would not be regarded as out of place even today.

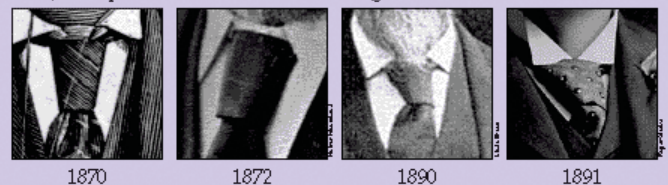
This also applies to beards; however, unkempt beards (such as the one on Charles Darwin on the right) were reasonably common during the 19th century but are rare after 1900.



Although the neckwear on the young boy on the right is partially hidden, it is very distinctive. This style for boys was fairly common from 1884 to 1894.



The man's suit and shirt do not help us in this example — this style lasted from the 1870s until well into the 20th century. The necktie does give us some clues: the knot is very large by modern standards. When ties first became common in the 1870s, the knots were huge (the two illustrations on the left below). Compare these to the two on the right from 1890 and 1891.



GENEALOGY HAPPENINGS

Conference on Computerized Family History & Genealogy

Date: **March 12–13, 2010** (Fri-Sat)

Place: **Brigham Young University**, Salt Lake City, Utah

Registration: General Registration Fee \$120, for BYU Credit add \$50

online registration closes March 11, 2010 see <http://ce.byu.edu/cw/cwcompu/>

Program: **Building a Lasting Legacy** -This conference is designed to be a how-to guide for everyone—beginning, intermediate, and advanced researchers. The focus of the conference is to help everyone learn how new computer programs and advancements in existing programs can improve family history and genealogy work.

Going Beyond the Basics: An Intermediate Class in African-American Genealogy

Date: **March 13, 2010** (Sat) 10:30 am -

Place: **Reginald F. Lewis Museum**, Baltimore, MD

Registration: call 443-263-1816 to register. Fee for non-members \$8.00

Program is hosted by the Reginald F. Lewis Museum. Noted genealogist Char McCargo Bah will cover identifying enslaved and free blacks from the antebellum era through the 1880's using records from the federal government, state archives, and local historical societies.

The Maryland Historical Society – Workshop Series

Date: continuing **April 3, 2010** (Sat) 9:30 am – 3:30 pm

Place: **The Maryland Historical Society**, Baltimore City, MD

Registration: non-members \$65 per session, Pre-registration is required. Discounts apply for MHS members. Fee includes snacks & boxed lunch. Obtain registration form at <http://www.mdhs.org>

Program: **Family History Workshop Series**. This series is hosted by Robert Barnes.

April 3rd **Census, Church, & Vital Records**; June 6th **Land, Court, & Probate Records**; and October 2nd **Immigration & Naturalization Records**.

Mid-Atlantic German Society - Spring Meeting

Date: **10 April** (Wed-Sat) 8:30 am – 4:00 pm

Place: **Comfort Inn Conference Center**, Bowie, MD

Registration: Fee is \$45 for non-members, with pre-registration ending March 31, 2010 after April 1st Fee is \$50. Members receive a \$5 discount.

See <http://www.magsgen.com> for more information, flyer, & registration form..

Program: **Exploring Additional German Resources** by Kory L. Meyerink, BS, MLS, FUGA, AG. –His four 50 minute lecture titles are: **Gazetteers of Germany: Getting the Most from Meyers** and other German Geographic Tools, **Internet Sources for German Research**, Family Search: **The Basic German Toolbox**, & **German Resources in the Family History Library**.

Lest We Forget: The Passage from Africa to Slavery and Emancipation

Date: **April 14** (Wed) **1:00 pm AND 7:00 pm**

Place: **Harford Community College, Student Center Room 243**, Bel Air, MD

Reception/Book signing following 7:00 PM presentation.

Registration: Not Required. No Fees. Call 443 412-2224 for more information.

Velma Maia Thomas is the author of several books including the award-winning Lest We Forget: The Passage from Africa to Slavery and Emancipation, and Freedom's Children, A Passage from Emancipation to the Great Migration. A public historian, sought after speaker, and the creator of the nationally acclaimed Black Holocaust Exhibit in Atlanta, Georgia, she is noted for her ability to make history come alive. Ms. Thomas has received awards from several professional organizations including the American Library Association.

Discover Your Ancestors, Discover Yourself... One, Two, Three!

Date: **April 14, 21, & May 5** (Wed) 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm

Place: **Roland Park Country School**, Baltimore, MD

Registration: call **Kaleidoscope Lifelong Learning** at 410-323-5500, ext 3091 for additional information.

Fee is \$115 for all three sessions.

See http://www.rpcs.org/Kaleidoscope/pdfs/Spring10_final.pdf for more information.

Program extends over three sessions and is hosted by **Kaleidoscope Lifelong Learning** at Roland Park Country School. The speaker is the popular genealogical lecturer, **John Colletta**, Ph.D.

This course sets you on the journey of a lifetime, a journey of self-discovery. It leads you through the process of conducting genealogical research to discover your family's real history. Session One will cover fundamentals of history research. Session Two will cover mining the library, and Session Three, venturing into archives.

2010 NGS Family History Conference

Date: **28 April–1 May 2010** (Wed-Sat)

Place: **Salt Palace Convention Center**, Salt Lake City, Utah

Registration: Online registration begins 01 November 2009

See http://www.ngsgenealogy.org/cs/conference_info for more information.

Program: **Follow Your Ancestral Trail** -Whether your family helped settle the nation, migrated across the country, stayed in the same place, or recently arrived in America, this conference has much to offer. The family history resources in Salt Lake City, Utah, will provide a depth and breadth to your research. The Family History Library has an extensive collection of international records. A major focus of the conference will be increasing research skills in foreign countries.

2010 Dues Reminder

If we have not yet processed your membership renewal, we have enclosed our 2010 Membership Application and Renewal form for your convenience. Payment is requested immediately. We are always interested in speakers, program topics, and off-site venues for our May meetings. Please jot down your ideas in the COMMENTS section.

Your support allows the Society to provide interesting speakers at our general meetings, publish research works, and this Newsletter. Two \$12 publications will be presented free to members again this year at our March meeting. For those 2010 members not able to pick-up these publications at one of our general meetings this year, we accept requests that they be sent by mail.

MARCH MEETING

Our **Sunday, May 16, 2010** Genealogical Society off-site meeting and picnic will be held in Jarrettsville at **2:00 PM**.

The program consists of a docent-guided tour of **Old Brick Primitive Baptist Church**, followed by a brief tour of the **Jarrettsville United Methodist Church** sanctuary, then an indoor luncheon. See the enclosed LUNCH RESERVATION form plus the May 2010 issue of the NEWSLETTER for more details. Remember to make your reservations early!