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## The University of Delaware SWAT Team Lends a Hand

About a dozen graduate students in UD's Museum Studies program, calling themselves a SWAT team, spent two weeks in January at the Society researching, cataloging and storing our textile collection. The team also entered the information into our collection management database, Past Perfect giving us the added benefit of being able to search on specific items and find their location.

The program, now in its seventh year, helps small museums manage their collections by donating hours of work, and it gives the students hands-on experience putting their skills into practice.

The students worked under the supervision of Katherine Grier, director of the Museum Studies program and professor of history. Cara Tortorice, a graduate student in fashion and apparel studies, helped with specialized knowledge about such topics as fabrics and styles. Sam Christensen, a history graduate student and Hagley Scholar valued the opportunity to apply what he has learned.



At the end of the two weeks the students had processed 537 pieces of textiles which is about 90% of the Society's collection.

**Volunteer!**  
**410-398-1790**

*Renew  
your  
membership  
today!*

# President's Corner

From the President:

Spring is a time for new growth and the dreaded house cleaning. The volunteers at the Society took a much needed break at Christmas, but we hit the ground running in January. As you will see in this issue, we have hosted multiple programs and our curatorial staff have been busy preparing for the opening of our newest exhibit "Do Your Bit: Cecil County and The Great War." The preparation for a new exhibit takes six months to do the research and then plan how to display everything. When we started this project none of us had any extensive knowledge of WW1, but we were up for the challenge. The old adage, "you are never too old to learn," was a lesson learned for our volunteers. The hardships of our servicemen and women were told to

us through their letters home, diaries and letters published in the newspapers. We appealed to the public for photos, memorabilia and correspondence from family members who served or had memories of WW1 and the response was overwhelming. By the end of this project, we all feel a connection to the men and women who served in WW1 and to those on the home front who gave their support in a multitude of ways. The desire to honor their loved ones gave people a reason to contact us at the Historical Society and share their story and thus we were able to introduce them to the

wonders of the Historical Society. Obviously, it takes money to create an exhibit and, again, we appealed to business and service organizations for sponsorship of the exhibit and, again, we were pleasantly surprised at the response and are grateful for the generous support for this project. We are anxiously awaiting the unveiling of the Society's new website. It is coming soon so watch for an e-mail blast to invite you to check it out.

Keeping History Alive,

*Paula Newton, President*

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- ◆ BETH MOORE—VICE PRESIDENT
- ◆ DEBBIE STORKE – TREASURER
- ◆ MIKE DIXON – HISTORIAN
- ◆ CAROL DONACHE – LIBRARIAN
- ◆ BETH MOORE – CORRESPONDING SECRETARY
- ◆ KAREN LOFTHOUSE – MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY
- ◆ LISA DOLOR – CO-CURATOR
- ◆ BRIAN MCCANDLESS – CO- CURATOR

**Do you want to get involved?  
Contact us!  
[remembrance@hsc.org](mailto:remembrance@hsc.org)**

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*INKWELL DESIGN BY FRAZIER WALKER*

**HSCC wants to email the Inkwell  
to as many  
members as possible!**

**Please submit to [kloft@udel.edu](mailto:kloft@udel.edu)**

## “For the Use of Colored Children” By Eric F. Mease

With the end of the Civil War, and the abolition of slavery, came the abolition of laws forbidding the education of African Americans. Slavery ended in Maryland with the state constitution of 1864, but public education for black students was another year away.

In the spring of 1865, the Maryland General Assembly passed what the *Cecil Whig* headlined, “The New School Law.” This law established the State Board of Education and authorized it to appoint and empower county Boards of School Commissioners. Among the responsibilities of the county School Commissioners was the power to levy taxes. According to *The Whig* article “the total amount of taxes paid for school purposes by the colored people of any county...shall be set aside for the purpose of founding a school for colored children....” But the Maryland legislature was not the only spoon in the education caldron. Responsibility for establishing an education system for black students in the former *Confederacy* fell to the Freeman’s Bureau. Since Maryland did not join the rebellious states, technically, the Bureau had no jurisdiction here. However, that did not mean it was not active in Maryland, especially when it came to public education for African American children, including Cecil County.

The basement of the National Archives in Washington, DC has, amongst its holdings, correspondence between freedman Bureau officers in Baltimore and field officers who visited areas of Cecil County to meet with both black and white residents to encourage them to agree



*Cedar Hill School*

on the location for and construction of schools for black children. They did so agree. Over the course of the next two decades, in accordance with the state’s education law, so called “colored schools” sprang up across the county. They came under the jurisdiction of the Cecil County School district and its governing board of commissioners. Under the Cecil County system, the black schools were operated by mini boards, their membership numbers varying. For example, according to the Board minutes of February 28<sup>th</sup>, 1871, “The following were appointed as the District School Board for Colored School #1 in (the) 4<sup>th</sup> district: Benjamin Griffith, Wm G. Valentine, (and)

David Henderson.” According to the 1870 Census, all of these individuals were men of means and African American. David Henderson was a 30 year old farmer who was married with 6 children living in Fair Hill. His real estate holdings were valued at \$500 and his personal property was worth \$250. His neighbor was Benjamin Griffith, a 61 year old bachelor farmer whose real estate was worth \$900 and personal property worth \$300. The third individual on the “mini board,” was (William) Gibson Valentine. He too was a farmer, who, at aged 46, was married with 3 children and possessed the





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greatest wealth of the three: \$2500 in land and \$400 in personal property value.

Benjamin Griffith, in addition to his service on the board, also donated the land upon which the school was constructed. In a deed dated February 11<sup>th</sup>, 1871, Griffith gave the land for “the use of colored children (to be) erected called the Cedar Hill School....” The Cedar Hill School served the black children of the area until the fall of 1885 when it was closed “for slight attendance.”

Unlike the Cedar Hill School, whose land was donated, land for many, but not all black schools, was purchased, buildings constructed, and the schools operated with tax dollars “paid for school purposes by the colored people

of any county,” as authorized in the 1865 State school law. However, it soon became apparent to the board that the limited tax base presented by black county residents would not suffice to fund the schools. So, on August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1871, the board passed a resolution stating that “Whereas the school fund arising from the tax on the property of colored persons in this county is entirely insufficient to defray the cost of the colored schools now in successful operation, therefore, resolved that the Commissioners be and hereby are authorized whenever in their judgment they shall deem it expedient to place the colored schools in this respective districts on the same footing with the white schools....” In other words, black and white tax payer funds were comingled to pay for both black and white schools. And in spite of the resolution saying that the black and white schools were “on the same footing,” they were anything but equal. For example, the black school in Cecilton was offered the used desks from the white school in Cecilton which was being closed and replaced. Some black schools were not school houses, but convened in churches. Such was the case in Cecilton, St. Augustine, and in Elkton where the Providence United Methodist Church served as a school for African American children during the week. By 1922, according to a list of black teachers instructing in Cecil County, there were 15 “colored schools” located in the county.

The system of separate black and white schools was challenged in the United States Supreme Court which ruled in 1954, that “separate but equal” was no longer constitutional in the United States and public schools must be desegregated. That desegregation order moved at a snail’s pace. In fact, it would be another decade before the last black school would close in Cecil County and the schools become fully integrated.



## *Time-Travel with Postcards*

*By Mike Dixon*

Almost everyone enjoys looking at old postcards from around Cecil County. Plying the trade that produced these tiny early 20<sup>th</sup> century time capsules were a number of regional or local itinerant photographers. The most prolific was Edward Herbner of Newark, DE.

The Newark Post said in 1910: “Mr. Herbner is one of the pioneers in the post card business. He not only furnishes views of Newark, but makes views for the trade from New York to North Carolina. He has built up quite a business in this line. He also makes fancy cards. And all this work is done in Newark. . . .”

The itinerant photographer, lugging his cumbersome camera, as he made his way around Cecil by train, on foot, or in a wagon, went to every town and virtually every corner of the county, seeking out popular images, which were sold to retailers. From Conowingo and Pilot Town to Warwick and Fredericktown and every point in between, his camera captured the everyday scenes of the time.

Herbner, whose business flourished during the height of the postcard craze, produced most of the County’s real photos postcards, and we are fortunate that he was such a productive artist. Around one hundred years old, these aging views provide a visual record of day-to-day life, solid visual evidence of the past. In that era, photographers were few and far between, and most people did not have a camera, so images weren’t as common as they are today.

In thumbing through his work, messages penned on the back, you see the towns, villages, buildings and streets from an earlier era. The views depict street scenes, railroads, prominent and not-so-prominent buildings, sporting events disasters, farms, and many other aspects of everyday life at the top of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The craze caught on in the nation and here around 1905 and soon Cecil Countains were sending short messages, the era’s equivalent of Twitter perhaps, and also collecting the pictures. “Post Card Socials” became the thing and in 1906 townspeople in Cecilton were invited to the Parish building for one of these get-togethers. The admission fee of ten centers included a free postcard – which you would exchange with others – and coffee and cake. The ice cream was for sale. There is no sure way of knowing how many local images were produced, but the Society has around a thousand



*Warwick, Maryland*



*Warwick, Maryland*



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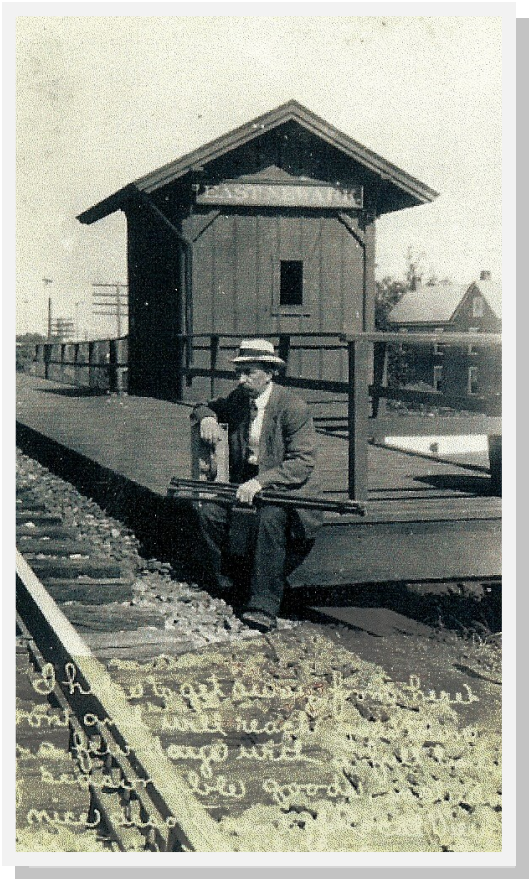
pictures in its collection. Of course, other postcard men recorded scenes in the county, the artists coming out of Baltimore, Wilmington, and Philadelphia but Herbner's are generally recognizable. One of the brands the Newark man used was the "Best Series Real Photos," and some of his products will have that watermark on the pictures.



*Pilot, Maryland*

Another way to recognize his work is that he didn't produce the number of copies of an item that a city company provided. Usually the major commercial operations printed their product on a press, producing much, much larger volumes and some of them used colors in that process. Herbener's were pictures printed on photographic paper, and thus the name the "Best Series Real Photos." The city printers couldn't make that claim.

Fifteen or twenty years ago, I met Mr. Herbner's grandson. He was a retired college professor, living in Michigan at the time. He gave me a copy of this card, an early selfie if you will. The self-portrait shows Edward Herbner at the East Newark Station on the B & O Line. The real photo card was an advertisement, which was mailed to alert customers that he would be in their area soon. It read: "I hope to get away from here soon and will be in your town in a few days with a full line of seasonable goods, including a nice assortment of local pictures."



*Edward Herbner, Newark, DE*

These tiny little pieces of pasteboard that have been passed down through the generations are a valuable window to the past and Herbner's work is responsible for a significant portion of the product.

## Welcome, New Members!

As of January 2017

Jeanne & Robert  
Minner  
Newark, DE

Ronald Taylor  
North East, MD

Patricia Ware  
Valley Head, WV

James Plummer  
Doylestown, PA

George & Marilyn  
Spence  
North East, MD

Sue Anne Grier  
North East, MD

Mary Sue McClure  
Greenville, SC

Jo Ann Williams  
Lawrence, KS

Becky Mercer  
Rio Rancho, NM

Ken & Martha  
Strausburgh  
London, OH

Pamela Risi  
Rio Rancho, NM

JoAnn Genera  
Colora, MD

Andrea Mahoney  
Rising Sun, MD

J. Kevin King  
Milton, DE

Kathy Lesley  
Portland, OR

David Manly  
Duxbury, MA

James Hartwell  
Elkton, MD

Gerry Scarfe  
Elkton, MD

Michael Harlan  
Kirkwood, PA

Don Shaffer  
Elkton, MD

Michael Gordon  
Elkton, MD

Jeannette Armour  
Elkton, MD

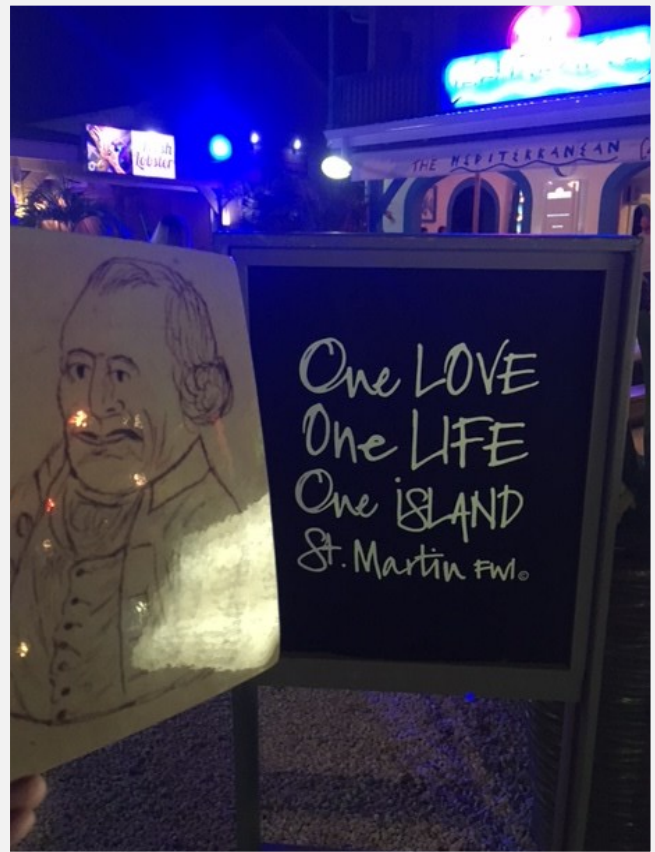
Amy Navarre  
Sykesville, MD

Mark Smith  
Port Deposit, MD



Mary & Jim Gibney  
Rising Sun, MD 21911

Peter Sudhup  
Lansdowne, PA



"Cecil" was with volunteers Jo Ann and Alan Gardner getting a tan in St. Martin.



Our newest historian, Charlotte Rose Humiston. Congratulations Travis and Shannon.

## ***2017 Accession Report By Carol Donache***

Peden, Henry: Softbound book: Harford County, Maryland Marriage references and family relationships 1825-1850. Gift from the author.

Jordan, Sara K.: Documents relating to donor's teaching career at Elkton Senior High School. Various receipts from local Elkton businesses.

King, Kevin and Mary Ellen: CD of copies of letters written by Samuel King during his service in World War I.

Wiggins, Kennard: Color photograph labeled "Elk Mills." Cecil County highway map dated 1964 from the Department of Transportation, State Highway Administration.

Folk, Dr. and Mrs. Edgar: Two antique medicine bottles. Various papers and ephemera from political campaigns. Programs from local organizations.

Williams, John M.: Collection of 35 mm slides and files regarding primarily the C & D Canal and its environmental issues, and the proposed deepening project from 1996-2006.

Cornett, Claude E., Sr.: Elkton High School yearbooks (The Antler): 1952 (2 copies), 1955, 1956. Cecil County Map, Topography and Election districts, 1950, revised 1958.

Ayers, Jerri and Bill: Book from the estate of Walter E. Lee: Young American Patriots, World War II: Maryland-Delaware. Pamphlets and booklets produced by the League of Women Voters.

Blake, Dixie: Photograph album and miscellaneous photographs that belonged to Clarence Roberts Perkins of Elkton, Md.

Jamar, Phyllis: Documents and photographs of the Jamar family of Elkton.

Women's Civic League of North East: Six large storage containers of all records of the Women's Civic League of North East, including photographs and files.

Gustafson, Terry Juergens: Cecil County Maryland Public Schools 1850-1958 by Ernest Howard

Funke, Sandra: Elkton High School yearbooks: The Antler for the years 1944, 1945, 1946, 1947, 1948, 1949

Marston, Christopher H: Book titled Covered Bridges and the Birth of American Engineering.

Gardner, JoAnn: Book titled Harford Homicides.

Crothers, James A.: Book that contains a collection of letters sent during the Vietnam War.

Dixon, Mike: Hardcover book "The Parker Sisters."

Maryland Historical Society: Hardcover book, Maryland Blood: An American Family in War and Peace: The Hambletons: 1657 to the Present

Cecil Whig: Town of Elkton information guide 2016.

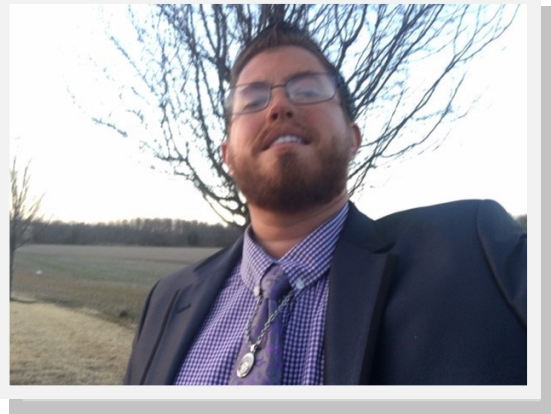
Meekins, Ronald: Small booklet for people working at Triumph Explosives, Inc.

Taylor, James R.: Photograph of naval seamen at the naval training center in Bainbridge, MD 1944.

Deal, Eleanor C.: A Boys+Girls 4-H Clubs record of meetings book for 1931-1932, The Hughes Genealogy book for the years 1936-1975, and a decorative marriage certificate for Campbell-Hitchcock.



# Volunteer Spotlight



## **Name and where you are from:**

*Gary W. Holmes, II. I was born in Wilmington, Delaware and have lived all my life in Cecil County, Maryland (North East & Elkton). I am a graduate of Elkton Christian, Cecil College & Wesley College.*

## **What did you or do you do in your working life:**

*I am the Supervisor of Land Records & Licensing Departments for the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cecil County, MD. (2003-Present).*

## **What is your job at the Historical Society:**

*Outreach Ambassador, sometimes mascot.*

## **What encouraged you to volunteer at the Historical Society:**

*I Love History. From a young age, I have traveled all over the United States visiting various historical sites with my parents. However, there is so much history right here in our own backyard — from George Washington & the Revolution to the Marriage Chapel Days. History is fascinating and the individual stories and lives of our neighbors, loved ones and friends who have lived and worked and passed through this area and touched some of the same door handles or sat under the same trees that we see today — that is very important and interesting to me. At the Historical Society, we have some fun events for all ages and interests. Come check us out!*

## **What are your interests or hobbies:**

*Traveling, photography, music, pets, church, gardening, nostalgia, trivia, TV, social media, writing and food.*

# Coming Soon!

Some exciting events are happening this spring at the Historical Society of Cecil County!

Be sure to stop by the historical society to see our World War I exhibit. In commemoration of the 100th Anniversary of the First World War, the Historical Society of Cecil County has opened a new exhibit titled, "Do Your Bit: Cecil County and the Great War". The exhibit honors the Cecil County soldiers who died while serving in WWI along with other WWI veterans. All are welcome to see the exhibit during our regular research library hours.

On Saturday, May 5, the historical society will present "Researching Your Ancestry Using DNA". Dr. Melvin Currie will present this fascinating program at 2 pm. Dr. Currie will discuss what you can learn about your ancestry (including the joys, the pitfalls, and possible ethical dilemmas) from the available direct-to-consumer genetic tests, such as Ancestry, 23andme and FTDNA: Y-chromosome, mtDNA, and autosomal (biogeographical percentage contributions).

Don't forget our First Friday History Happy Hours. Come in to celebrate and discuss history on the first Friday of each month from 5 – 8 pm.

Our research library is open every Monday and Thursday from 10 am until 4 pm and on the first Saturday of each month from 10 am until 2 pm.



## ***Renew your membership!***

**\$20 for an individual**

**\$25 per couple**

**\$10 for students.**

**There are additional levels of support from \$50-\$500.**

***Send to HSCC***

***135 East Main Street***

***Elkton, MD 21921***



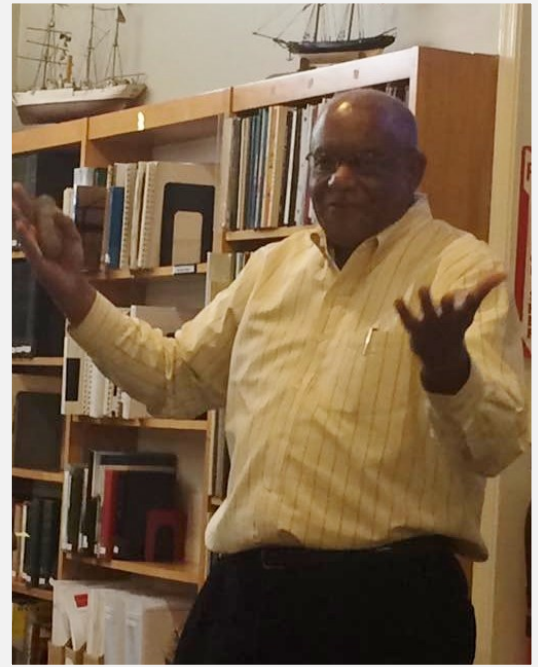
February's First Friday offered good discussions and great food.



Author Lauren Silberman talks with member Patricia Gibson at March's First Friday book signing.



Erika Quesenbery Sturgill presented "No Irish Need Apply" on March 4.



February's program "African-American Genealogy Research Strategies" was presented by Syl Woolford.



Thank you to the following for supporters for funding our new exhibit: "Do Your Bit, Cecil County and the Great War", opening on April 7, 2017.

- ◆ Phylis Kilby -\$100
- ◆ Goodchild Towing- \$200
- ◆ Williams Chevrolet - \$200
- ◆ Eder- George Post 85 - \$200
- ◆ Cecil County Memorial Post VFW Post 6027 -\$500
- ◆ Loyal Order of the Moose Elkton Lodge 851 - \$500

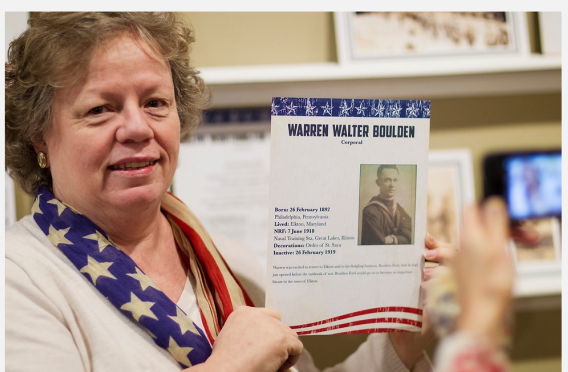




# Do Your Bit:

## *Cecil County and the Great War*


*Exhibit opened on Friday, April 7 at the Historical Society. A wreath laying ceremony preceded at the Doughboy statue in front of the Elkton Armory.*





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*join the history conversation*