



Maryland Genealogical Society: The First Fifty Years

By Allender Sybert

Attempting to recount in a brief essay a half-century in the life of an organization as vibrant as the Maryland Genealogical Society is a daunting task. Instead, I have chosen to highlight some of the more significant events and to focus on the early years and on the principal activities in which the Society is engaged, its programs and publications. My sources have included the Society's publications, minutes of the Executive Board meetings, conversations with a few of the long-time members, and my own experience as an officer for the last ten years.¹ It would be impossible for me to give due credit to the many dedicated members whose efforts have been responsible for the Society's success. Readers can find the names of many of them in the accompanying lists of past presidents, editors, fellows and recipients of the Society's awards. I wish to acknowledge with thanks the assistance of Patricia O'Brien Shawker, a member of the Executive Board, who aided in reviewing the Society's publications and in compiling the lists of awardees.

The Formative Years

The Maryland Genealogical Society had its origins in an adult education course in beginning genealogy which was held at the Dundalk Y.M.C.A. in Baltimore County in 1959. When the course ended, the ten persons who had attended it decided to continue to meet. At their meeting in July 1959 they elected the following officers: J. Harrison Daniels, President; Carl H. Stewart, Jr., Vice President; Dorothy Duffy, Corresponding Secretary; Phyllis D. Allen, Recording Secretary. Notices of the Society's founding were placed in Baltimore area newspapers, on bulletin boards in Baltimore City public libraries, and in the quarterly genealogical magazine *The Maryland and Delaware Genealogist*.² Soon a group of about 25 persons began having meetings on the second Wednesday night of each month at the Enoch Pratt Free Library, 400 Cathedral Street in Baltimore. Speakers were invited to come and address the group. The first speaker, in October 1959, was Henry Warner Austin, who spoke on his experience in genealogical research in England.³ The Society held its first dinner meeting in December of that year at the Brentwood Restaurant in Dundalk.

The members soon set about the task of establishing a more formal organizational structure. A charter and by-laws were prepared and voted upon. Committees were appointed to gather and keep bible records, church records and cemetery records. Membership dues were established as follows: Life membership: \$50.00; Sustaining: \$5.00 per year; Annual, single: \$2.00, double: \$3.00. The Society was incorporated as a non-profit corporation under the laws of the State of Maryland on 8 October 1962.⁴

The objectives of the Society were stated in Article II of its By-Laws as follows:

1. To preserve and perpetuate the records of our ancestors;
2. To locate, preserve, index and publish public and private genealogical records;
3. To acquire a collection of genealogical and historical material for our library;
4. To encourage and instruct members in the art and practice of genealogical research and compilation;



5. To maintain and elevate genealogical standards.

Members were encouraged to complete and submit their lineage charts to the Society, where volunteers transcribed the names of ancestors from the charts to index cards and added them to a card file. Members were also invited to submit index cards containing information on their Maryland ancestors for the Maryland Pioneer Index. The files were used to help members make contact with others who were researching the same ancestral families. Both of these card files and the lineage charts are now housed in the Maryland Historical Society Library, where they are available to researchers. Members' ancestor charts are also now available online as part of our Members' Ancestry Project.

Membership in the Society grew rapidly in its early years, a period in which interest in genealogy as an avocation was increasing. By October 1962, slightly more than two years after its founding, the Society had 141 members from 31 states; 49% of members lived outside of Maryland.⁵ Genealogical societies from Tennessee to Oregon were on the *Bulletin* mailing list. The *Bulletin* was mailed to other genealogical societies and family history societies in exchange for their periodicals.

In January 1962 the Society undertook the project of indexing the 1800 census of Maryland.⁶ Each county's 1800 census was published individually in paper-bound booklets, offset printed, with the names listed alphabetically. The first to be published was Calvert County, in May 1965, which sold for \$2.75.⁷ Other counties appeared at intervals over the succeeding years.

As the Society celebrated the tenth anniversary of its founding in 1969, solid foundations had been put into place. The Society had been constituted as a non-profit corporation, with an efficient workable structure of officers and committees, a core group of dedicated workers collected genealogical data, helped members with their genealogical research and published a quarterly publication of more than 100 pages per year. A membership directory in November 1969 listed 313 individual members (64 per cent of whom lived outside Maryland), 16 member organizations, and 82 other organizations with which the Society exchanged publications. As of 31 August 1969, the society's bank accounts held \$3,372.38.⁸

In 1971 the Society instituted a series of awards to recognize persons who made significant contributions to Maryland genealogy and to the MGS: Fellow, Award of Merit and Certificate of Merit. The first recipients were named at the annual dinner meeting in December 1971.⁹

In November 1972 the By-Laws were revised, changing the term of officers from one year on a calendar year basis to a two-year term beginning in June.¹⁰ (Officers elected in December 1972 served terms of two years, five months, from January 1973 through May 1975)¹¹.

The Society undertook a number of projects to preserve genealogical records and make them available to researchers. In addition to the publication of source materials in the *Bulletin* and the transcription and publication of the 1800 Census of Maryland, records of Woodlawn Cemetery, Lorraine Cemetery, Holy Cross Cemetery and St. Peter the Apostle Catholic



Maryland Genealogical Society 50th Anniversary

Church were microfilmed and the films were donated to the MHS Library and the Maryland Hall of Records.¹²

In 1977 the Society instituted a genealogical inquiry service to provide brief research for members and non-members, under the direction of Miss Margaret Neal.¹³ She continued in the role of principal researcher for more than 25 years. She had previously served the Society as Publicity Chairman, Corresponding Secretary and Records Chairman.

Relationship with the Maryland Historical Society

The Maryland Genealogical Society has had a long and mutually-advantageous association with the Maryland Historical Society. In January 1961, MGS announced the establishment of a cooperative arrangement with the Maryland Historical Society, under which MGS would deposit its genealogical records in the historical society's library and would provide assistance to library patrons with their genealogical research. A joint membership in the two societies was offered at \$8.00 per year, a saving of \$2.00 as compared with the separate membership dues.¹⁴ The cooperation between the two societies continued through the subsequent years, and in 1969 a room at the MHS was made available in which the MGS could house its records and files, and where members and guests could visit to do research in the MGS papers.¹⁵

For several years, the Society had put aside funds in a savings account toward the purchase of a permanent headquarters. In 1973, after careful consideration, that plan was abandoned in favor of accepting an offer from the MHS to make a room available in the Enoch Pratt House at MHS for the Society's headquarters in exchange for a contribution of \$1,000 per year.¹⁶ The agreement with the MHS replaced the earlier agreement from 1961 by which space was provided to MGS in exchange for either an annual payment of \$1,000 or an equivalent donation of volunteer hours by MGS members to the MHS Library. At that earlier stage in its development, MGS had found it difficult to fulfill its obligation to MHS. By 1973, the financial condition of MGS enabled it to provide the annual donation to MHS. As a result of that decision, the savings account was redesignated as an Endowment Fund, dedicated to financing the publication of the *Bulletin*. By the end of 1973, the Endowment Fund stood at \$4,470, and the Society's membership had reached 698, the highest to that point.¹⁷ At the same time, annual MGS dues were increased to \$7.00 for individuals, \$10.50 for husband and wife. By early 1979 the Society had moved its headquarters from a basement room to a larger room on the second floor of the Pratt house.¹⁸

In 1999 Dennis Fiori, then Director of MHS, proposed a new relationship between the two societies. Under the proposal, MGS members, with the exception of Senior members over age 70 and organizational members, would be required to be joint members of both societies, MHS would manage the joint membership list and renewals, and would provide office space, telephone, Internet services and meeting space to MGS. The proposal was put to a vote of the MGS membership and was approved by a margin of more than five to one. The agreement was implemented in January 2000.¹⁹ The President of MGS became a member *ex officio* of the Maryland Historical Society Board of Trustees. In September 2000 the Society's office was moved from the Pratt house to newly-renovated space in the former Greyhound building on the MHS campus, where it remained until October 2006 when an



office was made available on the second floor of the Thomas and Hugg Building, near the Library.

MGS has supported the MHS Library in both tangible and intangible ways. MGS members have contributed their services as library volunteers, assisting patrons with their genealogical research and helping the staff with administrative tasks. Over the years MGS has donated hundreds of review books received from genealogical book publishers and individual authors to the MHS Library, and has purchased many other books for the Library. During the 1990s, MGS donated to the Library several dozen reels of microfilmed Catholic parish registers from the Archdiocese of Baltimore, and eleven reels of Catholic parish registers from the Diocese of Wilmington.²⁰ This project was dedicated to the memory of Edna A. Kanely, who had served as the MGS Librarian from 1981 to 1991 and had made many noteworthy contributions to Maryland genealogy as an author and volunteer. More recently, in 2000 MGS gave \$1,000 to the MHS Library for the purchase of books and equipment in honor of two of the society's most dedicated volunteers, Ella Rowe and Margaret Neal.²¹ In 2001 a microfilm copying machine was donated for the use of Library patrons, and in 2002 and 2003 MGS added to the Library's collection of microfilm copies of *The Baltimore Sun* newspaper by purchasing 25 reels covering the years 1886 through 1893.²²

Other Recent Developments

The Society's membership grew steadily through the 1970s, and by 1985 had reached 1,500, a level which was maintained for several years.²³ Since then, membership has declined somewhat, but has remained above 1,000. MGS donated two microfilm readers to the Maryland State Archives in December 2000. In 2001 the Genealogical Council of Maryland was dissolved, and its assets were transferred to the Maryland Genealogical Society.

Although the Society's By-Laws had been amended several times, by 2003 several of the provisions had become outdated, and it became clear that further revisions were necessary. The By-Laws Committee, chaired by Jon Harlan Livezey, drafted a revision of the By-Laws designed to bring them into conformity with Maryland corporate law, reflect the Society's current practices, and provide guidance and flexibility to the Executive Board. The revised By-Laws were approved by the Executive Board in November 2004 and by a vote of the membership in 2005.

Genealogical Programs

Genealogical education has always been one of the Society's primary objectives, and the practice of bringing distinguished speakers before its members was established early. In its early years the Society met on the second Wednesday of each month, except July and August, in a meeting room, and later in the Wheeler Auditorium, of the Enoch Pratt Free Library on Cathedral Street in Baltimore. The business meeting was followed by either a lecture or a workshop on genealogical sources and methodology. Among the many notable speakers in the early years were P. William Filby, then Assistant Director of the Peabody Institute in Baltimore, later Director of the Maryland Historical Society; Raymond B. Clark, Jr., editor and publisher of *The Maryland and Delaware Genealogist*; J. Frederick Dorman, editor and publisher of *The Virginia Genealogist*; and Milton Rubincam, editor of the *National Genealogical Society Quarterly*. Other speakers came from the National Archives, the Library of



Maryland Genealogical Society 50th Anniversary

Congress, the Maryland Hall of Records and the Maryland State Library to inform members about genealogical resources available in their institutions.²⁴ In 1963 the Society began meeting in the Education Building of the Northwood Appold United Methodist Church, and later met at the Maryland Historical Society.

The December meeting each year was a dinner meeting held at a hotel or restaurant, with a speaker and the election of officers for the succeeding year. The December 1962 dinner meeting at the Park Plaza Hotel in Baltimore featured P. William Filby as speaker. The cost was \$3.50 per person, with a choice of steak or seafood; 25 members and guests attended.²⁵ In December 1965 the dinner meeting was held at the Stafford Hotel on Mount Vernon Place in Baltimore, with 41 in attendance, at a cost of \$3.50 per person, including tax and gratuity. The speaker, J. Frederick Dorman, editor and publisher of *The Virginia Genealogist*, gave an entertaining talk on amusing incidents recorded in the court records of Westmoreland County, Virginia.²⁶

In 1971 the Society organized a series of tours for members and guests. Destinations included the Genealogical Publishing Company in Baltimore, the Hall of Records in Annapolis, and historic sites in Talbot County.²⁷ Tours were continued in 1972, with trips to Hyattsville, Westminster and to Taylor's Chapel in Baltimore, and included a reception for new members combined with a tour of the Carroll Mansion and gardens in Baltimore.²⁸ The Society held a joint meeting with the Maryland State Society, Daughters of the American Revolution in April 1972, and a two-day seminar in genealogical research in conjunction with the MHS and the MSSDAR in September of that year.²⁹ In October 1975 the Society inaugurated a series of bus trips to Washington, D.C., transporting researchers to the DAR Library, National Archives and Library of Congress. The Society continued to sponsor the popular trips until 1992, when the Baltimore County Genealogical Society became the sponsor.³⁰ In July 1976 the Society joined with other genealogical societies in sponsoring a lecture by the noted British genealogist Cecil R. Humphery-Smith, which was attended by about 300 persons.³¹

In March 1981 the Society held its most ambitious event to that point, a genealogical seminar in cooperation with the genealogical societies of Anne Arundel, Howard and Prince George's counties at the Ramada Inn in Calverton, Maryland, attended by 330 people.³² Another seminar was held the following year at Montgomery College in Rockville, with even more sponsoring societies and 530 in attendance, and a third seminar was held in 1983.³³ The founding and growth of many county genealogical societies throughout Maryland, with their many meetings and speakers, led the MGS to decide in 1982 to discontinue its monthly meetings.³⁴ MGS continued scheduling a few meetings with speakers during the year, as well as seminars, bus trips and an annual December dinner or luncheon meeting. In the late 1980s the Society co-sponsored several seminars in the Baltimore area with the Maryland Historical Society and the Genealogical Council of Maryland. MGS sponsored very successful two-day seminars in 1992, 1994 and 1996 at Western Maryland College in Westminster. In June 1993 about 2,000 people attended the National Genealogical Society annual conference, which was held at the Baltimore Convention Center. The Maryland Genealogical Society and other genealogical societies in Maryland were local sponsors and assisted with registration and in other capacities.³⁵



The Society extended its outreach and fostered cooperation with county genealogical societies by co-sponsoring a series of two-day seminars throughout Maryland. In 1997 MGS co-sponsored the seminar “Meet Me in St. Mary’s” in St. Mary’s County with the St. Mary’s County Genealogical Society, attended by 121 persons.³⁶ In 1999 the seminar, “Head of Chesapeake Revisited,” in Aberdeen was co-sponsored with the genealogical and historical societies of Harford and Cecil counties, and attracted more than 150.³⁷ The Society continued its participation with neighboring genealogical societies at seminars in Annapolis in 2000, in cooperation with the Anne Arundel Genealogical Society; in Hagerstown in 2001, with the participation of the Frederick County Genealogical Society and the Washington County Historical Society; in Salisbury in 2002, hosted by the Lower Delmarva Genealogical Society and the Nabb Research Center; and in Frederick in 2005, in partnership with the Frederick County Genealogical Society and the Virginia Genealogical Society. In 2009, MGS scheduled a one-day seminar, “Destination Delmarva,” in Chestertown in cooperation with the Delaware Genealogical Society.

MGS has also brought genealogical speakers of national and even international stature to Maryland audiences. A two-day seminar in Westminster in 1998, featuring the well-known British author Peter Wilson Coldham, attracted 240 persons.³⁸ In September 2004, nationally-known speaker Helen Leary gave a full day of lectures in Westminster. Two years later, British genealogists Paul Blake and Maggie Loughran presented an extensive two-day course on British and Irish genealogy. Other recent seminars helped acquaint researchers with technological advances in genealogy. In 2007 Claire Bettag and Patricia O’Brien Shawker discussed resources available on the Internet, and in 2008 several lecturers spoke at a seminar on “DNA and Family History.”

In designing its educational programs, the Society has sought to offer a variety of topics and formats to meet the needs of both beginning and advanced family historians. Most recently, the “Basics +” workshops, which present a half-day of lectures on key genealogical resources, were enthusiastically received by audiences in 2008 and 2009.

The Bulletin

In April 1960 the Society issued its first publication, titled *Bulletin of the Maryland Genealogical Society*, consisting of eight mimeographed pages of 8½ by 11 inches, and edited by Mary K. Meyer (Figure 1). The premier issue listed seven officers and thirty-two members, and included genealogical news, solicitation of genealogical materials for the Society’s collections, queries, and a Family Exchange containing surnames which members were

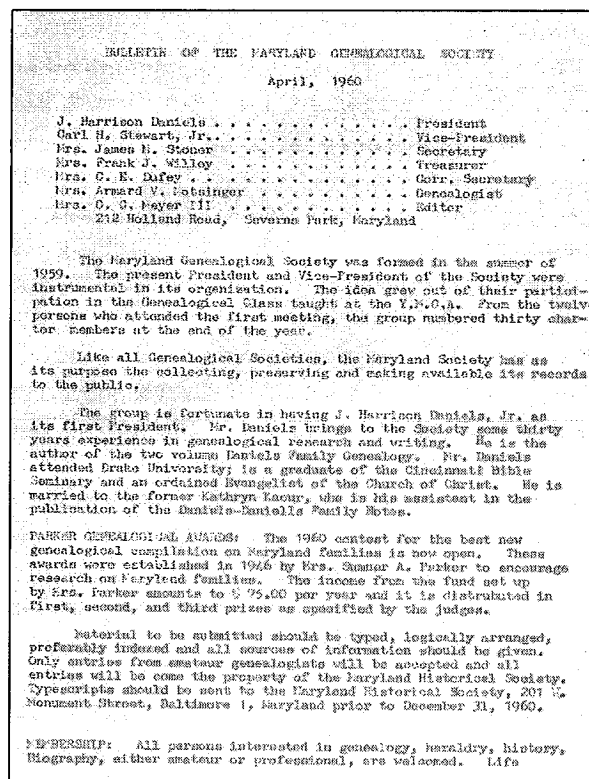


Figure 1. *Bulletin of the Maryland Genealogical Society*, Volume 1, Number 1, April 1960

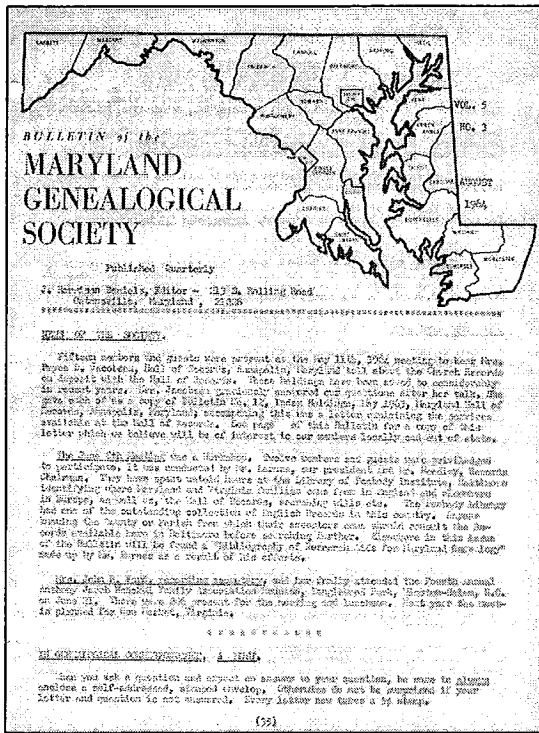


Figure 2 *Bulletin of the Maryland Genealogical Society*, Volume 5, Number 3, August 1964.

Exchange.

With the publication of Volume 4 in 1963, J. Harrison Daniels, one of the Society's founders and its first president, assumed the editorship. In the following year the publication months were changed to February, May, August and November. Soon articles containing genealogical source material began to appear. Family bible records, tombstone inscriptions, and a list of Maryland Revolutionary War pensioners were published. The first family genealogy article to appear was "The Sellman Family of Anne Arundel County, Maryland," by Robert W. Barnes, in the May 1964 issue. Mr. Barnes later contributed many other family genealogies, articles on genealogical sources and a long series of articles on Maryland heraldry. The volume of source material continued to increase through the 1960s, but issues of the *Bulletin* were still devoted primarily to reports of Society meetings, news from other societies, notices and reviews of genealogical books, and a lengthy section of queries and answers to

researching. A second issue containing four pages was published in October 1960. Thereafter the *Bulletin* was published quarterly, generally in January, April, July and October. In its early years the *Bulletin* retained the same format, mimeographed, 8½ by 11 inches, stapled and mailed without covers. There were no illustrations, except for a hand-drawn map of Maryland showing the dates of formation of the counties which graced the October 1962 issue to begin a series of articles on the formation of the counties. As the Society's only regular communication with its nationwide membership, it combined the functions which are today fulfilled by the *Journal*, the *Newsletter* and the website. Issues contained news of the Society, including reports of meetings, elections of officers, actions of the Executive Board, information on membership and lists of new members. In addition, there were summaries of lectures given by speakers at the Society's meetings, book reviews and notices of newly-published books, queries and the annual Family

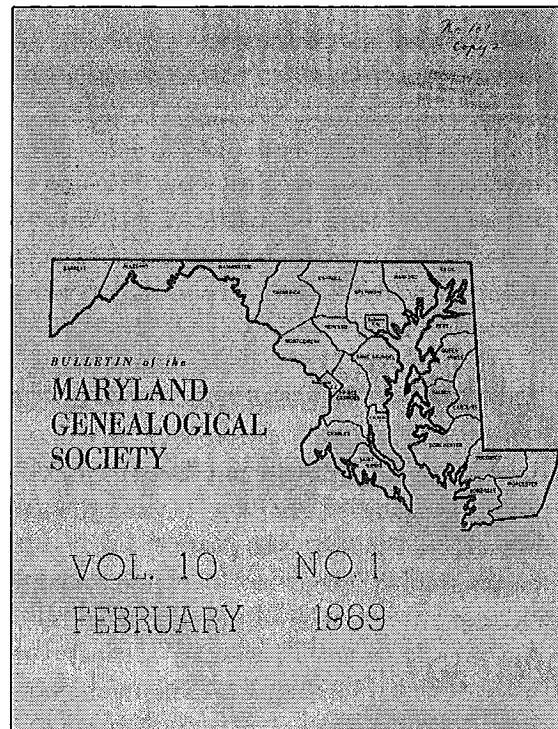


Figure 3. *Bulletin of the Maryland Genealogical Society*, Volume 10, Number 1, February 1969.



queries. The number of pages had been increasing as well, reaching a total of 86 pages for the four issues of Volume 5 in 1964, and 118 pages for Volume 7 in 1966. Advertising first appeared in the *Bulletin* in 1965; the advertising rate was \$1.00 per column inch per issue. Among the first advertisers were Genealogical Book Company (now Genealogical Publishing Company) of Baltimore and Goodspeed's Book Shop of Boston.

The *Bulletin*, still in mimeographed form, took on a slightly more formal appearance in August 1964 when the first page featured the *Bulletin* name in large bold lettering, accompanied by an attractive outline map of Maryland with each county labeled with its name (Figure 2). This heading remained on the first page until 1969, when the *Bulletin* was first bound in orange covers and those elements were placed on the front cover (Figure 3). As photocopiers became more widely available in the 1960s, the *Bulletin* began to publish occasional illustrations, such as maps, pages from handwritten records, and copies of newspaper articles of genealogical interest.

The most extensive changes to the *Bulletin* since its founding took place in 1973, with respect to both its appearance and its content. In that year Robert M. Bartram became editor, succeeding J. Harrison Daniels, who had served in that position for ten years. With the publication of the first issue of Volume 14 in February 1973 (Figure 4), (1) The title of the publication was changed from *Bulletin of the Maryland Genealogical Society* to *Maryland Genealogical Society Bulletin*; (2) The size was reduced from 8½ by 11 inches to 6¾ by 9¾ inches (which was further reduced the following year to 5¾ by 8½ inches); (3) The color of the cover was changed from orange to pale green; (4) The outline map of Maryland, which had adorned the cover since 1969, was replaced by the Society's newly-designed logo, consisting of a leafless tree and the state's outline contained within a circular border inscribed with the words "Maryland Genealogical Society" and the founding year "1959", which was designed by Bertha Kidd Stiner;³⁹ (5) The *Bulletin* was printed by the offset process rather than by mimeograph. Once those changes were in place, the appearance of the cover remained virtually unchanged through the final issue of the *Bulletin* in 2007.

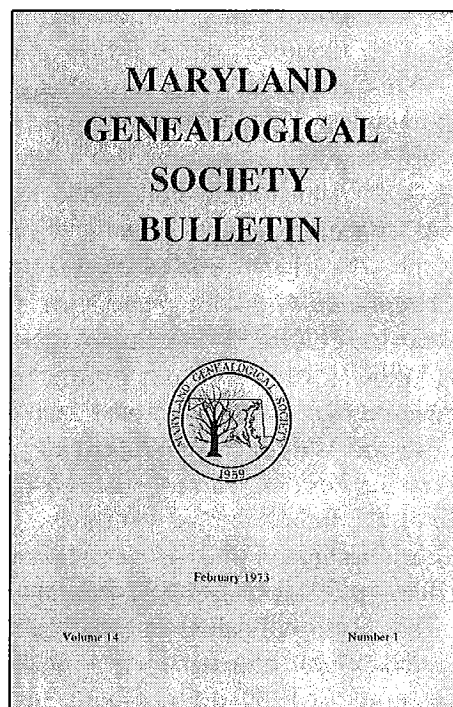


Figure 4. *Maryland Genealogical Society Bulletin*, Volume 14, Number 1, February 1973.

At the same time that the *Bulletin* underwent its marked physical redesign, its content also changed. Gone were the Society's news, reports of meetings, notices of upcoming programs and lists of new members. Those items found a new home in the Society's second quarterly publication, the *Newsletter*. Henceforth, the *Bulletin* was devoted to articles on genealogical source records, family histories, book reviews and queries. Offset printing made for a neater, more legible product, and typographical errors decreased markedly. As a result, it took on the look and tone of a scholarly periodical, and signaled that the Society had reached a new level of maturity.



Maryland Genealogical Society 50th Anniversary

The redesigned and enhanced *Bulletin* quickly received a favorable response, not only from MGS members, but also from the wider world. The publication *Library Journal* commented in December 1973:

This *Bulletin* was first published in 1960, and for 13 volumes it has remained a comparatively undistinguished, not too well produced mimeo, stapled patchwork. Contents were always good, but editorials and general makeup left much to be desired. With Vol. 14, February 1973, a completely new format, with attractive cover, typeset with good design, has occurred. At once this has leapt into high position among the genealogical journals, and it is confidently recommended for genealogical collections, especially with anyone needing information on Maryland and peripheral states.⁴⁰

The *Bulletin* had the benefit of a multitude of contributing authors and a succession of capable editors. Following Robert M. Bartram's editorship, John J. Brinkley and Thomas L. Hollowak each served a term as editor in the late 1970s. The next three editorial regimes were remarkable in that each lasted more than eight years: Eva Slezak from 1980 to 1988, F. Edward Wright from 1989 to 1997, and finally Martha and Bill Reamy, the *Bulletin's* longest-serving editors, who together co-edited a total of 42 issues from 1997 through 2007.

Early issues of the *Bulletin* were unindexed. As the volume of genealogical source material being published in the *Bulletin* increased, the value of having an index became apparent. In 1972 MGS published an index to the first five volumes of the *Bulletin*. Thereafter, individual indexes to Volumes 6 through 27 were compiled and offered for sale. Beginning in the summer of 1989, each issue of the *Bulletin* included an index. In 1998, the Society contracted with a commercial publisher to produce and market a compact disk containing electronic images of Volumes 1 through 38 of the *Bulletin*.⁴¹

The *Journal*

With the arrival of the new millennium, the Society's Publications Committee began discussing a redesign of the venerable *Bulletin*, with an updated appearance, enhanced content, and possibly a new name. The committee, chaired by Jon Harlan Livezey, sought to design a publication which would adhere to the highest standards of genealogical scholarship, with a pleasing appearance and an abundance of interesting, useful features. What emerged from the committee's deliberations was the *Maryland Genealogical Society Journal*. Published three times per year, in April, August and December, the *Journal* has a slightly larger format than the *Bulletin*, at 6 by 9 inches, and features a completely restyled multi-color glossy-finished cover, incorporating the colors of the Maryland state flag. The cover design and our new Society logo were created by Phil Wolfe Graphic Designs

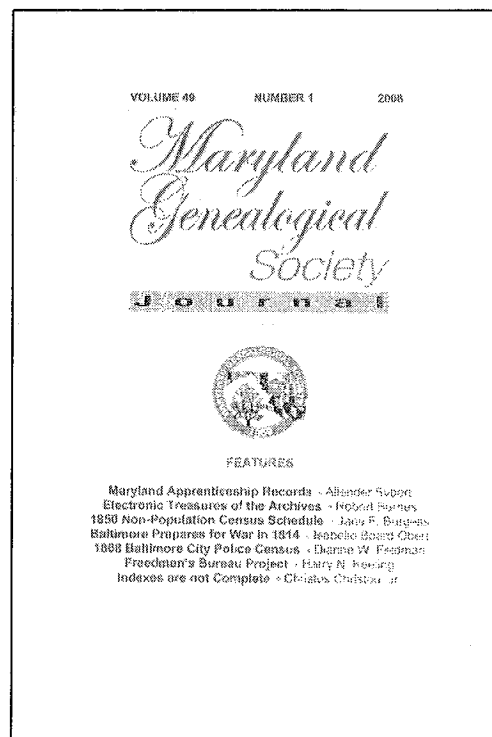


Figure 5. *Maryland Genealogical Society Journal*, volume 49, number 1, 2008.



(Figure 5). Inside, consistent formats and fonts give the pages a clean, professional look and improved legibility. A number of new features have been introduced, including Maryland Found Photos, a genealogy quiz, and a Genealogy Technology column. The first issue of the *Journal* was published in April 2008 under managing editors Ronald J. Leach and Gary B. Ruppert. Martha and Bill Reamy continue to serve as composition editors.

The Newsletter

The premier issue of the *Newsletter of the Maryland Genealogical Society* was published in January 1973, with an Editor's Note stating: "The newsletter will appear from time to time as the need arises." The format was eight mimeographed pages, 8½ by 11 inches, stapled and folded for mailing. Articles in the first issue included the President's Message, a report of the By-Law Revision Committee, results of the December 1972 election of officers, final report of the outgoing president, Raymond B. Clark, Jr., a list of new members, and other news. Over the next several years, the *Newsletter* was published sporadically, usually two or three times per year, and usually containing eight mimeographed pages. In 1979 the *Newsletter* adopted a page size of 8½ by 14 inches, but in September 1984 reverted to its original 8½ by 11 inch format.

From its inception in 1973 until early 1979, the *Newsletter* was edited by the *Bulletin* Editor, Robert M. Bartram from 1973 to 1975, and John J. Winterbottom from 1975 to 1979. In June 1979 the two editing roles were separated, and Ella Rowe assumed the editorship of the *Newsletter*, a position which she held for the next 28 years. During most of that time both the appearance and the content of the *Newsletter* remained relatively unchanged. In 1981 the *Newsletter* adopted a regular quarterly publication schedule. Through the 1980s, the *Newsletter*, usually containing six to eight pages, continued to be typed and photocopied. In September 1989 the Editor converted to using a computer word processor to compose the *Newsletter*.⁴² The content consisted of news of the MGS and the Maryland Historical Society, notices of upcoming seminars and conferences of the MGS and other organizations, news from genealogical archives and libraries, announcements of newly-published books, research tips, and lists of new members. Occasionally a newspaper article on Maryland history was reprinted.

In 2000, Jane Thursby lent her computer skills to effect a redesign of the *Newsletter*, which for the first time featured a two-column layout with a larger, bolder title and a more modern typeface. Two years later, in July 2002, the *Newsletter* underwent another redesign, and by January 2003 it had assumed a format which has remained virtually unchanged to the present time. During this period Mary Warfield assisted in composing and formatting the *Newsletter*. A message "From the President's Desk" was established as a regular feature on the front page by President Gary B. Ruppert in October 2005. After Ella Rowe's death in April 2007, Mary Warfield served as editor for one year. In 2008, Ronald J. Leach was appointed editor, and has worked to continue providing readers with timely, informative news and features.

The Website

The Maryland Genealogical Society established a modest one-page presence on the World Wide Web with the creation of the Society's first web page. Carol Hepburn, who was active in the USGenWeb Project, was the webmaster. In June 2000, Gary B. Ruppert was



Maryland Genealogical Society 50th Anniversary

appointed webmaster, and set about creating a revised website, which was launched in May 2001. Ten separate pages contained information on the Society and its officers, contact information, membership benefits, instructions for submitting articles for the *Bulletin*, and news of upcoming MGS events. In addition, there were links to other genealogical and historical societies and to the personal web pages of members. Queries submitted to the *Bulletin* were also posted on the website. A list of the back issues of the *Bulletin* available for sale was posted, along with the table of contents of recent issues.⁴³ Additionally, other items were made available for sale, including the Society's lapel pin. For the first time, the MGS website acquired its own domain name and web address: www.mdgensoc.org.

In later years, additional features have been added to the website, further enhancing its value to members and the genealogical community. Several databases containing vital records from Baltimore church registers were posted. In 2002, upon the suggestion of Isabelle Board Obert, the Maryland Members' Ancestry Project (Md-MAP) was launched. An ongoing project, it is a searchable database of information transcribed by a team of Society volunteers from the ancestral pedigree charts which MGS members had submitted since the 1970s. Newer members were encouraged to contribute electronic files of their ancestral records for inclusion in the database.⁴⁴

Ronald J. Leach became webmaster in 2009, and has made a number of technical improvements to enhance website security. The website has already proven to be an important means of outreach for the Society in the age of electronic communications, and additional features are being developed to expand its utility even further.

Looking Ahead

The advent of the personal computer and the Internet has brought about a revolution in the practice of genealogy. The new technology enabled genealogists to organize and store their data more efficiently, compose and publish their family histories more easily, establish their own websites, join Internet interest groups, gather and exchange information through cyberspace, and communicate with one another instantly by e-mail. Genealogical societies have felt the impact of those changes. Researchers who once sought information by visiting archives and libraries, reading periodicals and attending lectures now have many new options in the electronic media. Genealogical societies have had to consider how they can remain relevant and useful, and the successful societies have adapted to meet the needs of today's genealogists.

The Maryland Genealogical Society has always had as one of its primary objectives the education of genealogists and the promotion of high standards of genealogical scholarship, and its principal efforts have always been directed toward those objectives. Its flagship publication, the *Bulletin*, grew and matured into a highly-regarded genealogical periodical, and now the *Journal* gives its readers a fresh and exciting new product dedicated to the highest standards. The society's educational programs, with a broad diversity of subjects, have been offered in locations across Maryland and have featured leading speakers from the local genealogical community, as well as others of national, and even international, stature. The website continues to grow and to offer new features, and holds much promise and opportunity for the future. The challenge to the next generation of the MGS will be to



maintain and build on the strengths which have been forged over the past fifty years, and to be prepared to adapt to changing circumstances in the decades ahead.

The success of the Maryland Genealogical Society over the past half century has come from several sources. It began with the remarkable vision, enthusiasm, skill and effort of its founders and pioneer members, who started with a concept and built a solid foundation based on a flexible organizational structure, sound financial practices and programs of practical value to genealogists. It was nurtured by the dedicated efforts of a core group of hard-working volunteers, some of whom labored for decades, motivated by their love for genealogy and their spirit of service to others. It continues today because of the loyalty of its members and the willingness of those who have taken on the tasks of keeping the society moving forward. Those of us who have gained knowledge and enjoyment from our association with the MGS owe a debt of gratitude to those, living and dead, who have made it possible. Thank you.

Maryland Genealogical Society Presidents

1959-1961	J. Harrison Daniels *
1962-1963	Robert H. Cree
1964	Robert W. Barnes
1965-1966	T. Harvey Jones, Jr. *
1967-1968	Herman J. Heiger *
1969-1970	Robert M. Bartram
1971-1972	Raymond B. Clark, Jr. *
1973-1975	Henry R. Kelly *
1975-1977	Ella Rowe *
1977-1979	John H. Diuguid *
1979-1981	Mary Virginia Slaughter *
1981-1983	Freeman E. Morgan, Jr. *
1983-1985	Mary Virginia Slaughter *
1985-1987	Mary Rose Isenock
1987-1989	William E. Miller, Jr.
1989-1991	Jean K. Brandau
1991-1993	S. Eugene Clements *
1993-1995	Henry C. Peden, Jr.
1995-1997	Vernon L. Skinner, Jr.
1997-1999	Jon Harlan Livezey
1999-2001	Laura K. Koblisch
2001-2003	Jerry M. Hynson
2003-2005	Isabelle B. Obert
2005-2007	Gary B. Ruppert
2007-2009	Isabelle B. Obert
2009-	Druscilla J. Null

* Deceased



Maryland Genealogical Society 50th Anniversary

Bulletin Editors

1960-1962	Vols. 1-3	Mary K. Meyer
1963-1972	Vols. 4-13	J. Harrison Daniels
1973-1975	Vols. 14(1)-16(2)	Robert M. Bartram
1975-1979	Vols. 16(3)-20(2)	John J. Brinkley/Winterbottom
1979-1980	Vols. 20(3)-21(3)	Thomas L. Hollowak
1980-1988	Vols. 21(4)-29(4)	Eva Slezak
1989-1997	Vols. 30(1)-38(2)	F. Edward Wright
1997-2007	Vols. 38(3)-48(4)	Martha and Bill Reamy

Journal Editors

2008-	Vols. 49 (1)-	Ronald J. Leach & Gary B. Ruppert
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Newsletter Editors

1973-1975	Robert M. Bartram
1975-1979	John J. Brinkley/Winterbottom
1979-2007	Ella Rowe
2007-2008	Mary Warfield
2008-	Ronald J. Leach

Fellows of the Maryland Genealogical Society

Fellowships, the Society's highest honor, are limited to members of the Society who have distinguished themselves by their outstanding genealogical scholarship and contributions to the Society and to the genealogical community

1971	J. Harrison Daniels
1971	Amy Chase Loftin
1971	Raymond B. Clark, Jr.
1972	Charles Francis Stein
1973	Robert W. Barnes
1974	Henry R. Kelly
1976	P. William Filby
1985	Freeman E. Morgan, Jr.
1985	Ella Rowe
1989	Ruth C. Naylor
1989	Edna Agatha Kanely
1989	Mary Margaret Neal
1991	F. Edward Wright
1995	Henry C. Peden, Jr.
1999	Jon Harlan Livezey
1999	Vernon L. Skinner, Jr.
2004	Jerry M. Hynson



Awards of Merit

Awarded to members of the Society for significant service to the Maryland Genealogical Society or to the Maryland genealogical community

1971	Ella Rowe, Kathryn K. Daniels, Georgia Hubbard
1972	Robert M. Bartram, Esther B. Anderton, Dorothy Duffy
1973	Herman J. Heiger, Anna M. Cartlidge, Ruth C. Naylor
1974	Mae Marsh Dietrich, Claudia Shramek, Margaret Neal
1975	Bettie Stirling Carothers, Willis Clayton Tull, Jr.
1976	Mary P. W. Kendall, John H. Diuguid
1977	John J. Brinkley
1979	Margaret G. Coyne
1980	Mary Virginia Slaughter
1981	Hilda Chance
1982	Freeman E. Morgan, Jr., Eva Slezak, Edna A. Kanely, Elizabeth C. Smith
1987	Mary Rose Isennoek
1989	William E. Miller, Jr.
1991	Jean Brandau
1994	Donna J. Williams
2002	Laura K. Koblisch

Certificates of Merit

Awarded to individuals and organizations for meritorious services contributing to the advancement of the Society and its objectives.

1971	Nellie M. Marshall, Phebe Jacobsen, Mrs. Lewis O. Bowman, Sr.
1972	Helen W. Brown, Harry Wright Newman, Frank White
1973	Mary K. Meyer, Sara Seth Clark, Louise Joyner Heinton
1974	Mary Elizabeth Mann Starin
1975	Betty Worthington Briscoe, Eleanor McConkey Callahan
1976	Edwin Beitzel, Mrs. J. Sinclair Marks
1977	A. Russell Slagle, John J. Winterbottom
1978	Mary Gordon Malloy, Helen Seubold, Daniel B. Lloyd
1979	James McAllister, Frederick S. Weiser, F. Garner Ranney
1980	Mrs. Kenelm Dallam, Prince George's County Genealogical Society
1981	Sister M. Virginia Geiger, Richard J. Cox, Hilda Chance, Bayly Ellen Marks
1988	Carroll County Genealogical Society
1999	Genealogical Societies of Harford and Cecil Counties
2000	Francis P. O'Neill, Carrie Kiewitt
2002	Nabb Research Center, Lower Delmarva Genealogical Society

Special Certificate of Merit

1971	Genealogical Publishing Company
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Maryland Genealogical Society Hall of Fame

1974	Winifred Mitchell Harris, Louise Magruder
1975	Charles A. Earp
1976	J. Seegar Kerns, Gordon Malvern Fair Stick
1977	Mrs. Wilson K. Barnes
1978	Marguerite du Pont de Villiers-Ortiz Boden
1979	Judge Wilson King Barnes
1980	Mrs. Harold Chait, Mrs. Presley S. Shingleton

Honorary Life Members

1968	P. William Filby
1969	William B. Marye
1983	Anna M. Cartlidge
1984	Kathryn K. Daniels
2001	Jean K. Brandau

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- ¹¹ *NL* 3 (1) (January 1975): 1.
- ¹² "President's Message." *NL* 3 (2) (July 1975): 2; 3 (3) (October 1975): 2.
- ¹³ "President's Message." *NL* 5 (1) (May 1977): 2; *NL* 6 (2) (May 1978): 2; *NL* 7 (3) (December 1979): 1.
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