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# Exploring the History Just Outside Your Door: Local History Resources at the Library of Congress

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## Local History: Exploring What's Just Outside Your Door

May 17, 2012 by [Danna Bell](#)

Have you ever explored the history that took place on your own doorstep?

I have a huge passion for local history. It started with hearing stories about my grandfather, who was the first African-American police officer on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. It continued to grow through college, graduate school and through one of my first archival positions where I helped preserve and provide access to several local history collections for the District of Columbia Public Library's Washingtoniana Division.



Group of school children in front of statue of George Washington, Washington, D.C.

Usually teachers in history and social studies classes focus on national or international events. But what about the history of the neighborhood where the students live? When teachers encourage students to learn about where they live and perhaps link their community to a larger event, they can see they are part of a larger story. Students can understand that they are a part of history and that they make history every day.

Start a local history lesson by finding a primary source from the Library of Congress that connects to a local event. [Chronicling America](#) and the [Prints and Photograph Online Catalog](#) are two great places to search. Use the [primary source analysis tool](#) for students to describe what they see from a picture or in a newspaper article, note anything that they recognize or other connections they make, and ask any questions they may have. Students can brainstorm where they can go to locate additional information that can answer their questions.

The Library of Congress has many other resources to help your students learn more about the history of their community.

- [Local History: Mapping My Spot](#) uses panoramic maps from the Library's collections to help students begin to





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Exhibition features suffragists from Seneca Falls to 19th Amendment.

5/5

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- [Historic Newspapers on Flickr](#) (part of the LC Flickr Commons photostream)
- [Beyond Words](#) (Help find pictures in historic newspapers!)

100 Years Ago Today: 2/11/1920 (118 issues)



[The Laurens advertiser.](#)  
(16pp.)  
Laurens, S.C.



[The Brattleboro daily reformer.](#) (8pp.)  
Brattleboro, Vt.



[The Breckenridge news.](#) (8pp.)  
Cloverport, Ky.

## Today in History - April 7

< April 7 >

Select date April 07  

Today's Stories: [Billie Holiday](#)

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### Billie Holiday

Jazz singer Billie Holiday was born on **April 7**, 1915, in Baltimore, Maryland. She made her professional singing debut in Harlem nightclubs in 1931 and her first recordings in 1933. Although she had no formal musical training, she became one of the greatest jazz singers of all time; her recordings are now regarded as masterpieces.

*Mama may have, Papa may have,  
But God bless the child that's got his own.*

Billie Holiday and Arthur Herzog, Jr., "God Bless the Child"



[Portrait of Billie Holiday, *Downbeat*, New York, N.Y., ca. Feb. 1947]. William P. Gottlieb, photographer. William P. Gottlieb Collection. Music Division

# Maryland Day

On **March 25**, 1634, the first group of settlers landed in what is now southern Maryland, an event commemorated each year on Maryland Day. The land was chartered by King Charles I of England to Cecil Calvert, the second Lord Baltimore. Named for the king's wife, [Queen Henrietta Maria](#), Maryland was the first proprietary colony in what was to become the United States. Lord Baltimore had almost absolute control over the colony in return for paying King Charles a share of all gold or silver discovered on the land.



Bird's Eye View of Cumberland, Maryland 1906. Morrisville, Pa., Fowler & Kelly, c1906.  
Panoramic Maps. Geography & Map Division

Maryland became a safe haven for Catholics escaping religious persecution in England. In 1649, Governor William Stone, under the direction of Lord Baltimore, passed an act ensuring religious liberty and justice to all who believed in Jesus Christ.

Annapolis was named the capital of Maryland in 1694 and is home to the nation's oldest statehouse. Built in 1772, the [Maryland State House](#) is still in use. Annapolis is also the home of the U.S. Naval Academy, founded in 1845. The city of [Baltimore](#), founded in 1729, remains one of the busiest [ports](#) in the nation with respect to handling foreign tonnage and the dollar amount of cargo handled.

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[Annapolis and the Naval Academy from the State House Dome](#). W.H. Wallace, c1911.  
[Panoramic Photographs](#). Prints & Photographs Division

Maryland entered the Union in 1788 as the seventh state to ratify the [U.S. Constitution](#). During the War of 1812, when British troops bombarded Baltimore's [Fort McHenry](#), one of the city's young lawyers, Francis Scott Key, witnessed the attack and penned the lyrics to "[The Star Spangled Banner](#)." Nearly fifty years later, when Americans fought the Civil War, Maryland saw one of the war's bloodiest battles on September 17, 1862, by [Antietam Creek](#) at Sharpsburg.

*...in this place on our b: Ladies day in lent, we first offered, erected a crosse, and with devotion tooke solemne possession of the Country...*

Father White (a priest who accompanied the Maryland colonists), "[A Briefe Relation of the Voyage Unto Maryland](#)." In [The Calvert Papers, Number Three](#). Baltimore: 1899, p. 39. [Capital and the Bay: Narratives of Washington and the Chesapeake Bay Region, 1600 to 1925](#). General Collections

## Learn More

- [Capital and the Bay: Narratives of Washington and the Chesapeake Bay Region, 1600 to 1925](#) captures a distinctive region as it developed between the onset of European settlement and the first quarter of the twentieth century.
- To view more maps of the state, search for *Maryland* in [Panoramic Maps](#) and in [General Maps](#). For more panoramic photographs, search for *Maryland* in [Panoramic Photographs](#).
- For a thorough introduction to the role religion played in the founding of the American colonies, visit the online exhibition [Religion and the Founding of the American Republic](#). More than 200 objects are highlighted, including early American books, manuscripts, letters, prints, paintings, artifacts, and music. Scroll to the middle of the [America as a Religious Refuge](#) section to find a richly illustrated history of Roman Catholics in Maryland.

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Frederick Douglass House, Washington, District of Columbia. ...



Liberty Fire House, Gold Hill, Nevada. Robert W. Kerrigan, 1937.



Chapline Street Row Historic District. Mark L. Hall and Ed ...



Beebe Windmill, Bridgehampton, New York. Jet Lowe, 1978.



San Xavier del Bac Mission, Tucson, Arizona. John P. O'Neill, ...



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The list of building types . . . should include public buildings, churches, residences, bridges, forts, barns, mills, shops, rural outbuildings, and any other kind of structure of which there are good specimens extant . . . Other

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PHOTOGRAPH,  
PRINT or DRAWING

PHOTO, PRINT, DRAWING

### Savage Mill, 8600 Foundry Street, Savage, Howard County, MD

Photo(s): 4 | Photo Caption Page(s): 1

**Contributor:** Historic American Buildings Survey



PHOTO, PRINT, DRAWING

### Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, Bollman Truss Bridge, Spanning Little Patuxent River, Savage, Howard County, MD

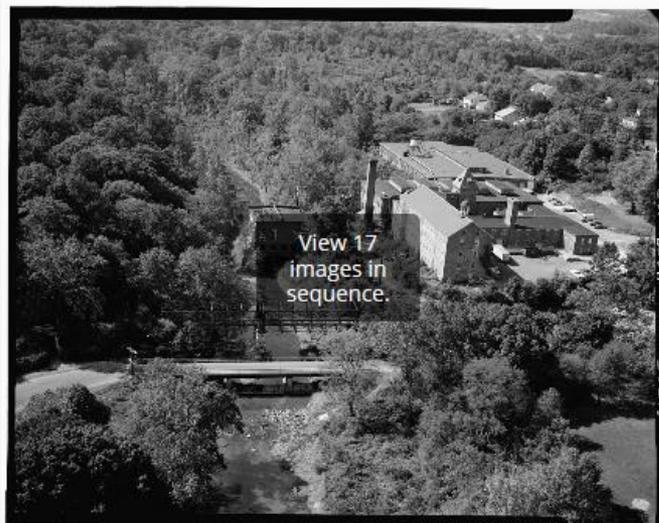
Photo(s): 20 | Color Transparencies: 4 | Measured Drawing(s): 7 | Data Page(s): 9 | Photo Caption Page(s): 5

**Contributor:** Bollman, Wendel Alan - Christianson, Justine - Historic American Engineering Record

**Resource:**

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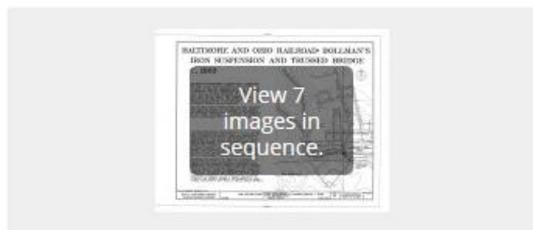
# Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, Bollman Truss Bridge, Spanning Little Patuxent River, Savage, Howard County, MD



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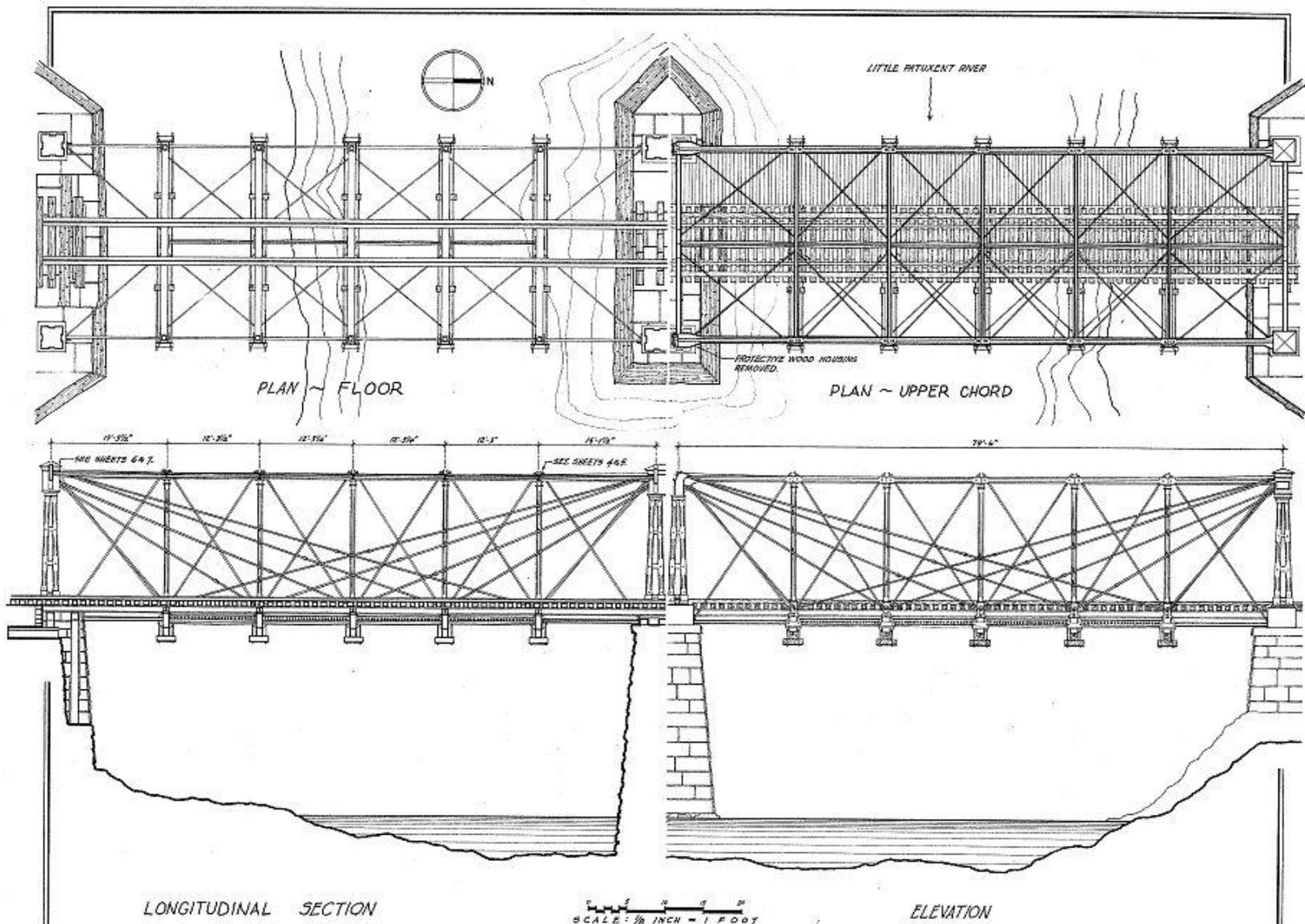
MANUSCRIPT &  
MIXED MATERIALS

[ Data Pages from Survey HAER MD-1 ]



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DRAWN BY: GREGORY BIEZENSKI and JEFFREY JENKINS - 1970

**B & O RAILROAD SURVEY**  
 UNDER DIRECTION OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE,  
 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

SAVAGE

NAME AND LOCATION OF STRUCTURE  
**B & O RR. BOLLMAN'S IRON SUSPENSION & TRUSSED BRIDGE, c. 1869**  
 LITTLE PATUXENT RIVER  
 HOWARD COUNTY  
 MARYLAND

RECORD NO.  
**MD**  
**1**

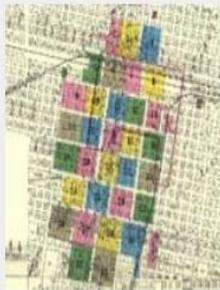
HISTORIC AMERICAN  
 ENGINEERING RECORD  
 SHEET 2 OF 7 SHEETS

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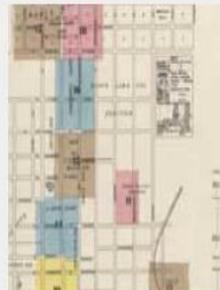
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Amarillo, Potter County, Texas.



San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas.



Springfield, Greene County, Missouri.



Anderson, Madison County, Indiana.



Hazleton, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania.



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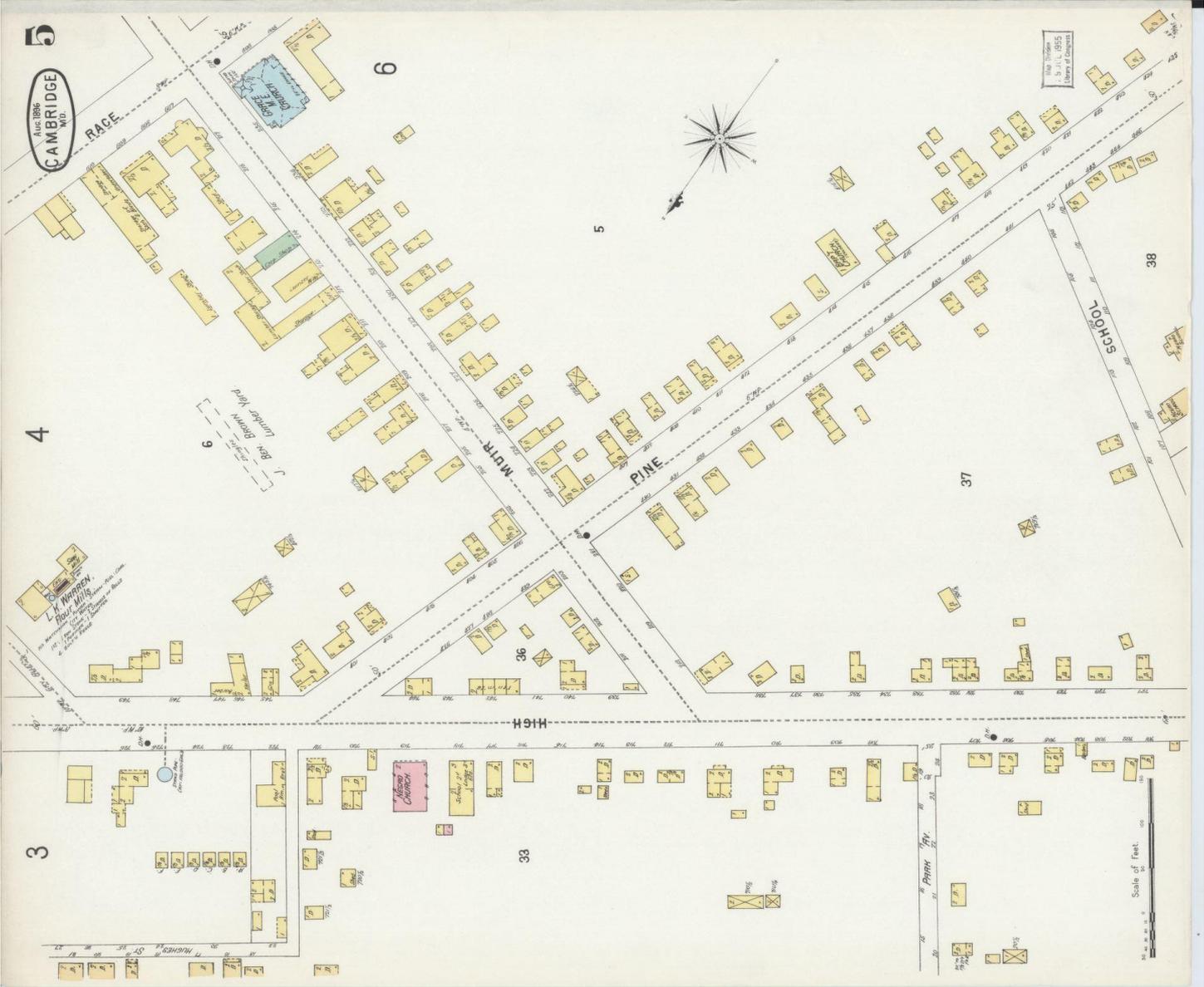
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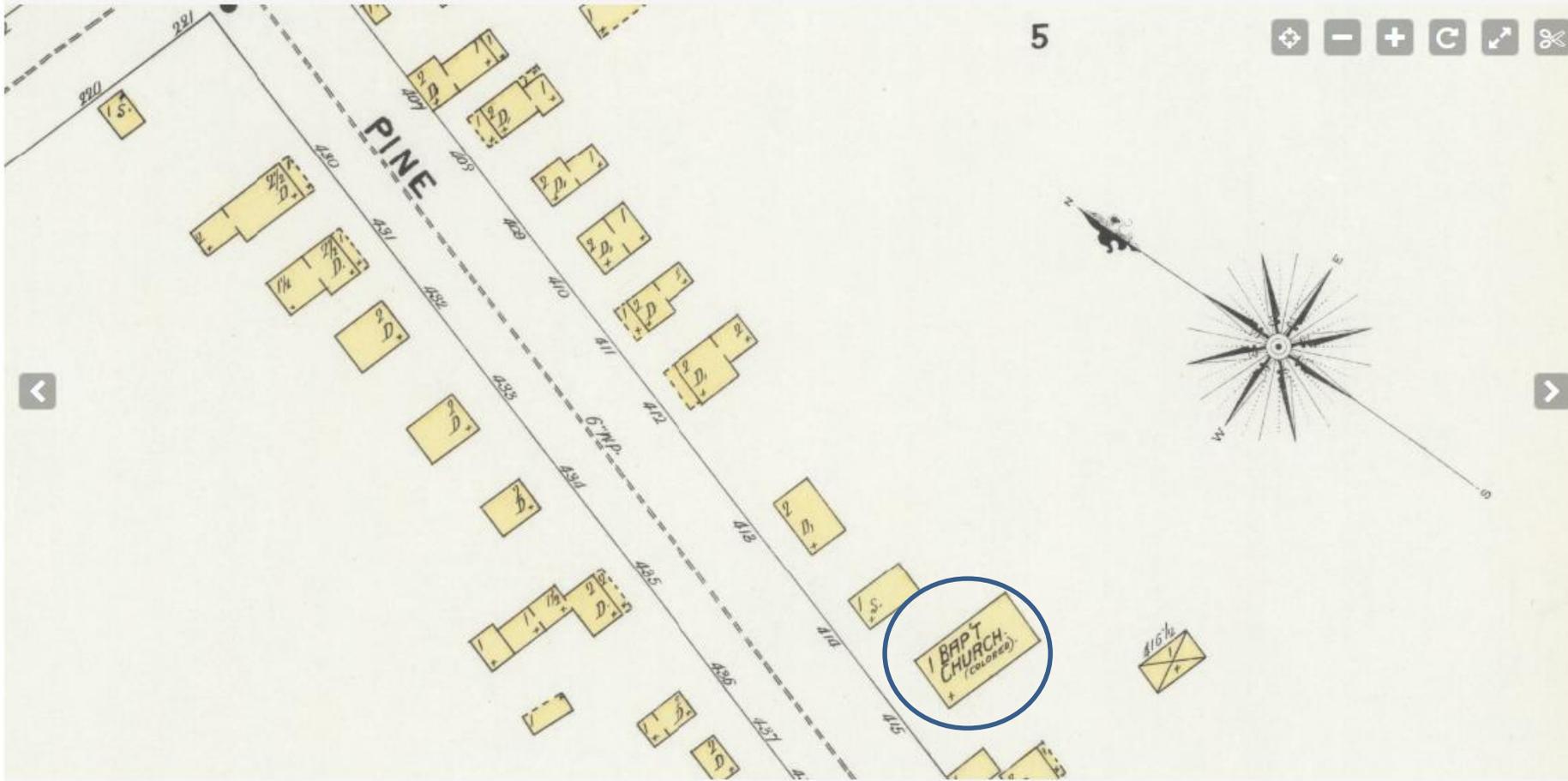
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## About this Collection

The Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps Online Checklist provides a searchable database of the fire insurance maps published by the Sanborn Map Company housed in the collections of the Geography and Map Division. The online checklist is based upon the Library's 1981 publication *Fire Insurance Maps in the Library of Congress* and will be continually updated to reflect new acquisitions.







### About this Item

**Title**  
Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Cambridge, Dorchester County, Maryland.

**Created / Published**  
Sanborn Map Company, Sep 1896

**Notes**  
- Sep 1896  
OF CONGRESS

**Part of**

- Geography and Maps Division (18,687)
- Sanborn Maps (18,695)
- American Memory (501,951)

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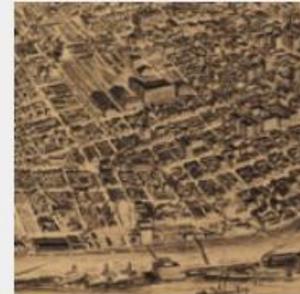
Aero view of Peekskill, New York 1911.



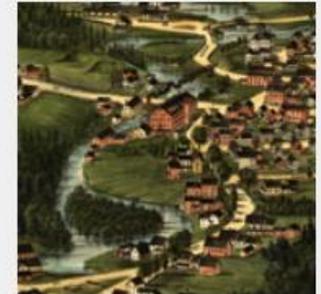
Madison, State capital of Wisconsin, county seat of Dane County ...



Clarion, Clarion County



The panorama of St. Louis.

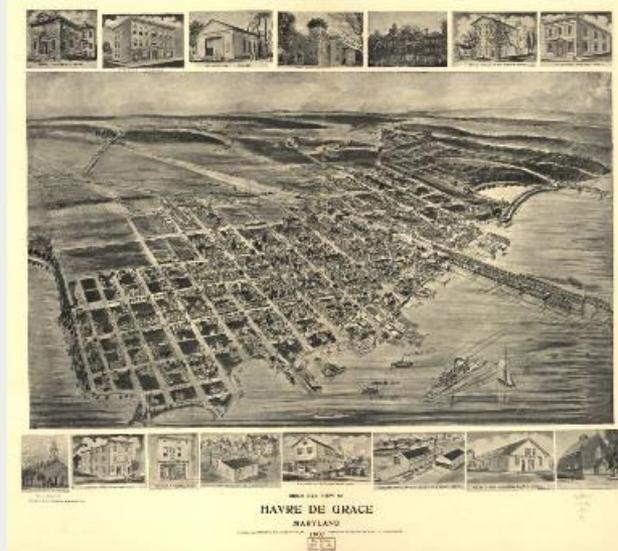


Bridgton, Maine, U.S.A. : 1888



MAP

# Birds eye view of Havre de Grace, Maryland 1907.



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## About this Item

### Title

Birds eye view of Havre de Grace, Maryland 1907.

### Contributor Names

Fowler, T. M. (Thaddeus Mortimer), 1842-1922.

Fowler & Kelly.

### Part of

[Panoramic Maps \(1,517\)](#)

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## Local History: Mapping My Spot

Lesson Overview

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### Lesson Overview

Students often think of history as tattered documents, worn photographs, and musty books, all of which have little or no relevance to their lives. Maps provide an often-overlooked source of information and a new and compelling perspective on the past. By revising the work of early twentieth century cartographers, and understanding the underlying motivation for their work, students can claim a historical spot of their own.

In an era of great mobility and immigration of families from other countries, students' homes are a haven and an anchor in a neighborhood. By learning about architectural styles and periods and identifying the best features of their homes, students begin to see their homes as places of value in relation to the broader community portrayed on the panoramic map of their town.

Students create their town's history for coming generations and place themselves on the map in a literal as well as figurative sense, by producing portions of an updated version of an early twentieth century panoramic map from the American Memory collections. To complete this project, they gather information from a variety of primary sources, including the early twentieth century map, photographs, drawings, and site visits. Each student contributes to the revised map by creating a contemporary map of her or his block.

### Objectives

Students will be able to:

- become familiar with panoramic and other kinds of maps as primary sources of historical information and become proficient at observing and interpreting maps;

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## Creating a Primary Source Archive: All History Is Local

Lesson Overview

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[\[Detail\] Panorama #1, Hot Springs, Ark, c1910](#)

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### Lesson Overview

The collection of an archive of primary source materials will be an exciting component of a year-long American Studies class focusing on historiography and the use of primary sources. Students collect primary source materials from their families or local communities. In analyzing these primary sources, students examine the interplay between national, state, local, and personal history. Over a period of several weeks, students may produce a digital collection modeled on the Library of Congress' [American Memory](#).

Teachers and students from other states and localities may easily follow this model to create local history Memory Projects of their own. Teachers may choose to limit the lesson to a single unit in which students build the archive of primary source materials, or may extend the lesson to a year-long project by including units in which students create Web pages and lesson plans based on their archives.

### Objectives

After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

- Identify and collect artifacts related to key themes or events in American history.
- Describe and analyze primary sources.
- Locate primary and secondary sources that are related to other primary sources.
- Compare/contrast materials to articulate relationships between artifacts and events or themes in national, state, and local history.

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## Oral History and Social History

Lesson Overview

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### Lesson Overview

This lesson presents social history content and topics through the voices of ordinary people. It draws on primary sources from the collection, [American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1940](#).

Using excerpts from the collection, students study social history topics through interviews that recount the lives of ordinary Americans. Based on these excerpts and further research in the collections, students develop their own research questions. They then plan and conduct oral history interviews with members of their communities.

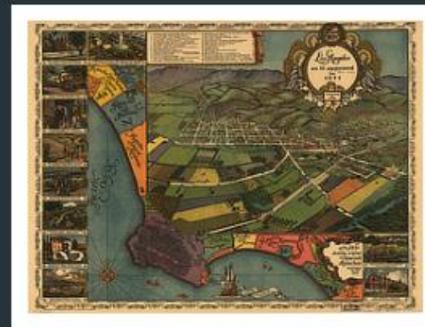
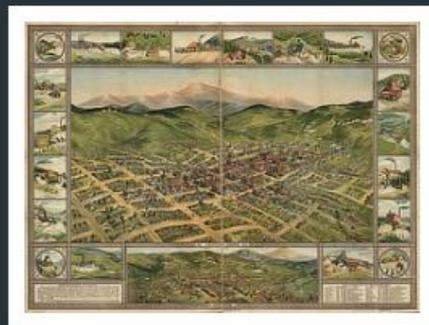
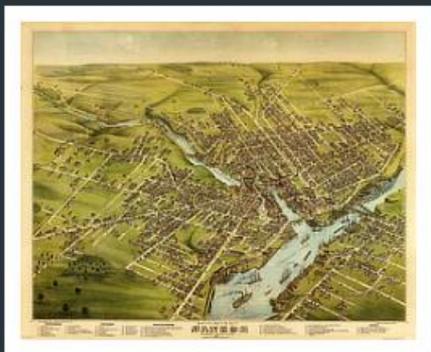
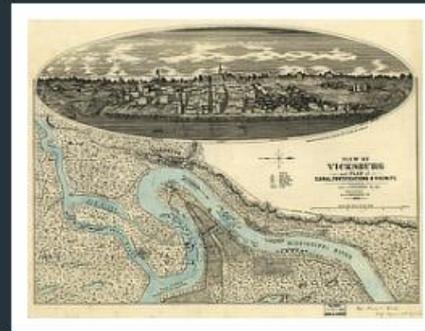
### Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Define social history and formulate questions about social history topics.
- Analyze, interpret, and conduct research using oral histories.
- Use oral history interview techniques to gather information about social history.
- Interpret recent changes social life in the United States using existing oral histories and by conducting original oral history interviews.

# Free to Use and Reuse: Maps of Cities

The Library's cartographic collections include a wide array of maps that depict everything from individual buildings to panoramic views of large urban areas. Among the featured maps this month are an 1884 map of the National Capital and an 1896 view of St. Louis, Missouri. Browse more [content that is free to use and reuse](#).



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