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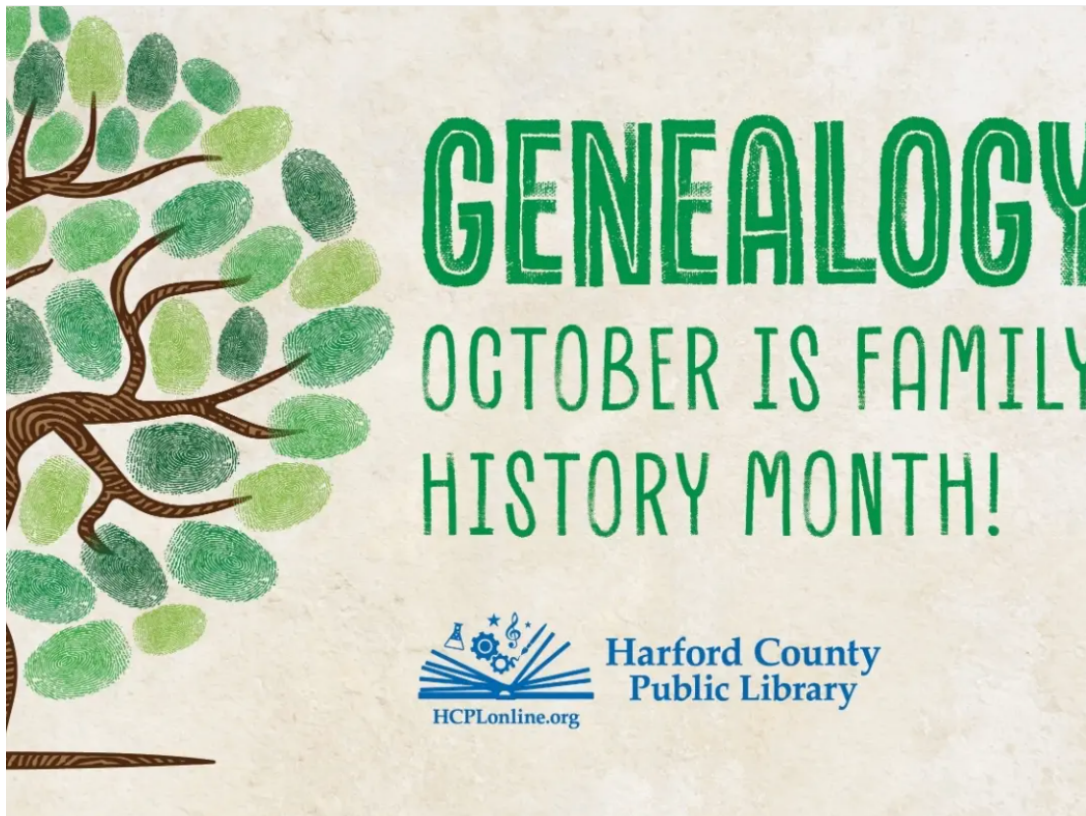
HCPL Celebrates Family History Month with Genealogy Programs

Several programs, virtual and in-person, take place throughout October and beyond.



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Harford County Public Library celebrates Family History Month by hosting several programs in October and beyond. (Harford County Public Library)

Harford County Public Library celebrates Family History Month by hosting several programs in October and beyond. The programs include:

“Family History Month! How to Read Old Handwriting” takes place virtually on October 1 from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Lisa Lisson, a leading genealogy expert, will provide participants with insights and practical strategies for deciphering ancestors’ records. From understanding the evolution of handwriting styles to employing innovative techniques for enhancing legibility, this talk promises to equip participants with the skills and confidence needed to navigate family history. Lisson is the founder of Are You My Cousin?, a comprehensive

online resource dedicated to empowering family history enthusiasts worldwide. She equips researchers with practical strategies and clear tutorials to navigate the world of genealogy and cultivate their family trees with confidence. To register, visit <https://programs.hcplonline.org/event/11238793>.

“Genealogy for Absolute Beginners” will be held October 5 from 1 to 2:30 p.m. at the Abingdon Library, 2510 Tollgate Road. This program will show where and how to begin researching genealogy and will include an introduction to all the Library's online resources. Register in advance starting September 21 at <https://programs.hcplonline.org/event/11187848>.

“Family History Month! Above the Fold: Newsworthy Ancestors” is a virtual program that takes place October 8 from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Join Jeanette Sheliga, president of the Virtual Genealogical Association, as she discusses how newspapers are a source of research leads, information and historical context for family history. This presentation will teach how to better search for ancestors in the news and how this process can help lead to answering genealogy research questions. To register, visit <https://programs.hcplonline.org/event/11238790>.

“Family History Month! German Research Online” is a virtual program on October 15 from 6:30 to 8 p.m. James M. Beidler, known internationally as one of the top leaders in the field of German genealogy, will share with participants tools and best websites to help trace German-speaking ancestors. Beidler writes “Roots & Branches,” a weekly newspaper column and blog, is a German Life magazine columnist and editor emeritus of Der Kurier, the quarterly journal of the Mid-Atlantic Germanic Society. To register for the event, visit <https://programs.hcplonline.org/event/11238800>.

“Genealogy After Hours” welcomes researchers to the Bel Air Library, 100 East Pennsylvania Avenue, on October 25 from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. Local genealogists gather to work independently on their research with input from fellow genealogists. Computers, printing, microfilm and the Maryland Room will be available for use and includes free genealogy printing. Participants must register in advance starting on October 11 at <https://programs.hcplonline.org/event/11169081>.

“Meet the Author: F. Kennerly Clay” takes place October 26 from 2 to 3 p.m. at the Bel Air Library. Clay, of Wayne, Pa., will be reading from her memoir, “Letters from East of Nowhere - Daddy’s Words to Live, Drink & Die By.” The book is about the consequences of a life free of commitments against a backdrop of wandering, music and overindulgence. Clay is the co-author of “Calling of Ancestors: Finding Forgotten Secrets in My DNA.” Copies of her memoir will be available to purchase at the program. For more information, visit <https://programs.hcplonline.org/event/11250645>.

“Save a Story! DIY Oral History” is the topic of a program on November 4 from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at the Bel Air Library. Debra Elfenbein from the Maryland State Library Resource Center will teach participants how to capture an oral history from start to finish, with hands-on practice using a Pratt Oral History Digital Audio Kit. For more information, visit <https://programs.hcplonline.org/event/11169018>.

Genealogy discussion groups meet at the Bel Air Library on October 7 (topic: Introduction to Genealogy) from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. and at the Jarrettsville Library, 3722 Norrisville Road, on October 24 from 6:15 to 7:45 p.m. Fellow researchers are invited to share and learn about techniques, tips and resources.

“Harford County Public Library offers many resources to genealogists all year, but this October we ramp up our offerings in honor of Family History Month,” said Mary Hastler, CEO of Harford County Public Library. “If you are just starting to research your family or have been doing it for a long while, the Library provides a wealth of databases, publications, programs and other resources to assist with your search. Researching family history can be fascinating, and the Library’s resources are only a click or a visit away.”

Harford County Public Library offers several genealogy databases, including Ancestry Library Edition, Heritage Quest Online, ProQuest Historical U.S. Newspapers and Fold 3. The Maryland Room at the Bel Air Library houses an array of genealogy and local research materials in addition to Harford County's Living Treasures Oral History Collection. The Bel Air Library is also an affiliate library for FamilySearch, a program with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints that houses a catalog of 2.4 million rolls of microfilmed genealogical resources worldwide and access to millions of digital records. For more information, visit <https://hcplonline.org/genealogy.php>.

Harford County Public Library also offers access to the Harford Heritage Digital Archives, containing hundreds of documents, images and Harford County local history resources at <https://hcplonline.org/localhistory.php>.

Harford County Public Library operates 11 branches located throughout Harford County offering access to ideas that inform, entertain and inspire. Last year the Library interacted with its residents more than 12 million times – borrowing free materials, visiting branches and the website, using free WiFi and attending classes and events. In 2023 Harford County Public Library received Graphic Design USA's American Inhouse Design Award™ for graphic excellence, the third time