



# Shoreline

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## Spotlight on Collections by Rebecca Miller

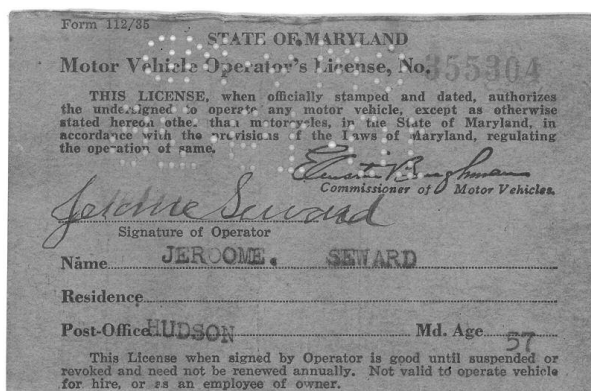
While volunteer Pat Taylor was inventorying several boxes of additional material recently donated by the daughter of the late Leslie Powell Dryden, Taylor brought two identical books to the attention of the director for identification and disposition. That began the research to identify the subject of one of the books, which would have been slated for

deaccession because there was no identifying information. These books are funeral books, of the type which typically repose on a stand at a funeral home for guests to sign when they attend viewing and funeral services of a deceased individual.

One of these two "Treasured Memories" funeral books from the Granville S. LeCompte Home for Funerals, Cambridge, MD, indicates the deceased was Jerome Seward, born Hills Point, April 19, 1869; died September 27, 1939, services held Spedden M.E. Church in Hudson on September 29, 1939. The other funeral book has no such identifying information. However, tucked within its pages was an original marriage license issued in Baltimore City on May 1, 1937 to Peter E. Buckheit, age 21, and Roxie I. Bennett, age 18, also of Baltimore, signed by officiating clergyman W.A. Melvin.

In the flowers sent section, other clues are: The deceased was the mother of Mr. & Mrs. Granville S. LeCompte [red herring-card was in the wrong slot]; the grandmother of Carlton, the grandmother of Roxy, the grandmother of Eugene, grandmother of Sidney, grandmother of Sylvia, grandmother of Inez, and sister of Susie and Maggie Bennett. In Jerome Seward's funeral book, several folks in the "friends who called" section are the same as the relatives in the unknown deceased's book, viz., Mrs. Amanda Rhea, Mrs. Clara Thomas, and Mr. and Mrs. Bennie Seward.

Hoping for a quick answer to our mystery, we



*Jerome Seward of Hudson, MD driver's license "good until suspended or revoked and need not be renewed annually"*

posted a query to the Lower Delmarva Roots list with the scant information in the book. Nabb member Lynne Rentschler responded with two critical pieces of information. The first was from the 1930 census, where Rentschler found the household of Eugene Bennett, age 40, with wife Margie E., age 37, and children, including a daughter Roxy I.

Bennett, age 7. Rentschler was also instrumental in locating the family, as she conducted a search which resulted in one of the names popping up, telephone number included.

Meanwhile, thinking it would be logical if spousal funeral books were together, we researched our massive Dorchester County obituary collection (168 binders), created by the late Dave Brooks of Cambridge, with donation to Nabb facilitated and delivered by member Jean Woolston of Cambridge. Thus, we were able to peruse and locate the obituary of Mrs. Jerome Seward, nee Mary Rhea, who died in 1948 at age 77. She had one daughter, Mrs. Eugene Bennett of Baltimore, and a grandchild, Mrs. Peter Buckheit of Baltimore. This information matched with the marriage license in the book and the census, effectively solving our mystery.

However, we are still mystified as to how these two funeral books came into the possession of Leslie Dryden, as the subjects are definitely unrelated to him or even his brother's wife, who was a native of Cambridge. Perhaps he purchased them at an auction or flea market. Nonetheless, these fine examples of funerary practice in 20th century Delmarva were rescued, researched, identified and now repose within the safe confines of the Nabb Research Center archives to be used in a future exhibit, as material culture research for students and perhaps someday to be joyfully discovered by descendants of Jerome and Mary Seward. ☺

# Salisbury UNIVERSITY

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**Closings!**  
The Nabb Center will be closed  
Monday, May 28, in observance  
of Memorial Day.


## *"We're History.. Without You "*

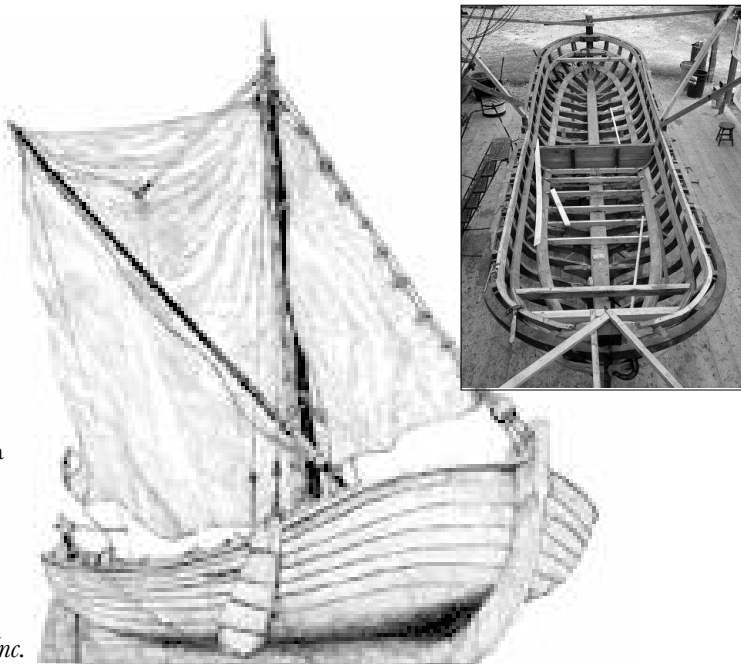
### **Sultana's Visit to Lower Shore**

In 1608, John Smith led two expeditions out of Jamestown to explore the Chesapeake Bay. He described these voyages in great detail in his *The General History of Virginia, New England, and the Summer Isles*, which the Nabb Center holds in its reference collection. It was during these trips that Smith created his famous map of the Chesapeake (a copy of it is currently on display in the Nabb Center.) The map includes many details such as Indian villages, the homes of the different chiefs and other valuable information about the region.

As part of the 400th anniversary celebration of Jamestown, Sultana Projects, Inc. has recreated the 30-foot open shallop John Smith used to explore the Chesapeake region. Sultana Projects, Inc. is a non-profit organization that seeks to promote stewardship of the bay through hands on educational experiences. By using John Smith's memoirs and his map, Sultana Projects plans to recreate the voyage of John Smith through the Chesapeake. The reconstructed shallop will retrace the route making over 20 stops up and down the bay, several of which will be in our area. Two stops are planned in Delaware: Phillips Landing (May 29) and Seaford/Blades (May 30); one in Virginia: Onancock (May 19 and 20); and one in Maryland: Vienna (June 2). The Nabb Center will be represented at Vienna that day. For more information about the voyage, you can visit the Sultana Projects, Inc. Web site at [www.johnsmith400.org/](http://www.johnsmith400.org/). 

### **Reminder**

Next month's issue of *Shoreline* is our scholarly edition. If you do not receive the June edition of *Shoreline*, this means our records indicate you have not yet renewed your membership for 2007. If you want to receive the June edition be sure to check your membership status. Just to let you know, if you have been receiving a monthly *Shoreline* that is not an indication that your membership is up to date. 



*Visualization of the Shallop as conceived by the Sultana Projects, Inc.*