

Rhythms of Growth

1745–1788

The second half of the eighteenth century saw a sudden take-off for Baltimore. From an insignificant way place of twenty-five wooden houses at midcentury, it grew to a brick-and-mortar town of thirty thousand inhabitants by 1800 and crystallized as the central place of Maryland. It became one of the most important nodes in the communication system of a new nation pushing its frontier inland, and it functioned as one of several dozen new pressure points in world trade. Most important, Baltimore came to define itself as a city.

Baltimore's rhythm of growth was determined by international war and peace. The town thrived on disorder and stagnated in years of calm. Its four major spurts occurred during the French and Indian War (1756 to 1763), the American Revolution (1775 to 1781), the wars of the French Revolution, Directory, and Convention (1789 to 1802), and the Napoleonic wars (1806 to 1815). Familiar to Americans only to the extent of their military participation, these were actually a long series of world wars of grand scope. Of great importance to Baltimore were the perennial naval warfare between England and France, which drove up flour prices, and the frequent changes of management in the sugar islands of the West Indies, major importers of wheat: Baltimore merchants profited from the interruption of European shipping and exploited the ups and downs of the price of flour.

The town received successive groups of refugees, including many daring, canny, and well-informed individuals. Repeated military threats stimulated a new civil organization for defense. The payoffs did not come until after 1800, but in this half century one can discern the development in Baltimore of a far-flung information network and a great flexibility and willingness to risk, to hustle, and to maneuver. Baltimore's magnificent little sailing vessels were symbolic of a new, truly Baltimorean style, distinct from what had gone before.

A Spirit of Fierceness

Between 1752 and 1774, the number of houses in Baltimore increased from 25 to 564. Much of this growth was compressed into the period of the Seven Years War (or French and Indian War) and its aftermath. Thomas W. Griffith claims, "the savages got within eighty or ninety miles of the town, in parties of plunder and murder."¹ Other writers comment that citizens of Baltimore were not enthusiastic about the war because of increased taxes but the

war promoted the growth of the wheat and iron economy of the piedmont and the growth of Baltimore.

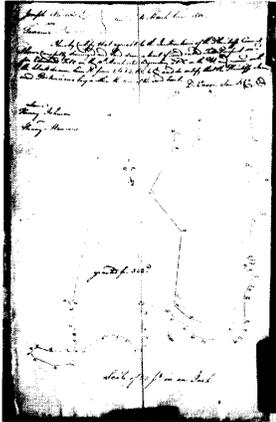
The demand for wheat and iron certainly increased because of the war. About 1761 the Ridgelys opened the Hampton, or Northampton, furnaces. The Mount Royal forge was developed on the Jones Falls, the Kingsbury furnace on Herring Run, Dorsey's forge at Avalon, and the furnaces in Frederick County at Catoctin and Tom's Creek.

Most famous of the successive groups of refugees who fostered the town's growth, were an estimated nine hundred Acadians, French-speaking Catholics expelled from Nova Scotia in 1756. They brought few resources with them, and survived by navigation, fishing, and picking oakum. They lived in huts in "French town" along the undeveloped waterfront of South Charles Street and formed the nucleus for the first Catholic parish, St. Peter's congregation. This was not an easy time for Catholics in Maryland, even for the earlier settlers with resources. War with the French encouraged anti-Catholic fanaticism, and with the need for revenues a double tax was laid on Catholics. Governor Horatio Sharpe apparently attempted to restrain the "indecent Reflections" of the assembly, but believed the Catholics should not appeal the double tax.²

Another small stream of wartime settlers was the Scots, who brought some capital for development. Among them were the Smiths, the Sterretts, the Spears, and the Buchanans, four Presbyterian families who had emigrated from Scotland to Ireland. In the late 1720s they had reemigrated from Ireland to Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, and prospered in flour milling. In 1750 they moved, together, to Carlisle, Pennsylvania, where they kept store and shipped wheat to Baltimore. Because the fighting was detrimental to business on that frontier, in 1759 they all moved to Baltimore, with considerable capital (\$40,000 in just one of the families), which they invested in slaves, ships, and waterfront property. The slaves built wharves extending a thousand feet—the only ones that reached as far as the ship channel. The Scottish families then shipped wheat to Europe and the West Indies. They built warehouses on the wharves, a bakery, a brew-house, and substantial dwellings and counting houses in the vicinity of Gay and Water streets, and, with others, a Presbyterian church. All of these families were to play major roles in the city's development over the next three generations. Their collective impact was unique, but in its elements their story is somewhat characteristic of a development pattern followed by hundreds of others: a close-knit intermarrying circle of people of high mobility and keen entrepreneurship, and a consistent and calculated strategy of seizing the advantages of location.

German settlers followed a similar path. They had moved into York and Lancaster counties, Pennsylvania, in the 1720s and '30s, and into Frederick County, Maryland, as tenants of Carroll and Dulany. They tended to compete in settlement with the Scotch-Irish and to locate in separate valleys and townships. Enterprising Germans began moving from these regions into Baltimore about 1748, and the trend accelerated in the 1760s.

The stimulus to milling and shipping wheat attracted English and Irish millers from Cecil County, Pennsylvania, and Delaware. Jesse Hollingsworth



Nearly 350 acres were surveyed in 1761 for Edward Fell. This plat was used as evidence in the lawsuit of *Joseph Alender's lessee v. Terrence Byrnes, amended Henry Johnson v. Henry Manson* (March 1812).

came from Elkton, from a family associated with milling, shipping, and ship-building interests in the Brandywine Valley. William Moore, also from the Brandywine, redeveloped Fell's mills on the Jones Falls; Joseph Ellicott and Hugh Burgess developed mills on the Jones Falls opposite the jail. This stream of settlers was identified with the eastward expansion of the town, and with new congregations formed in the early 1770s, including the Baptists and the Quakers, and the Methodists in Strawberry Alley and Lovely Lane.

The arrival of Quaker millers coincided with a consensus among Friends to free their slaves, which implied leaving tobacco planting and developing an alternative economy. John Woolman, on horseback and on foot, traveled through Maryland in 1746, 1757, 1766, and 1767, pleading with each Quaker meeting and each Quaker slave holder personally to rid himself of slavery. He was "bowed down to tears," feeling that over twenty years he had seen the "gold appear dim, and much fine gold changed," as he watched his hosts "living in fulness on the labours of the poor oppressed Negroes" and their children growing up "without much labour." He observed the appearance of "a spirit of fierceness and the love of dominion . . . and an inward desolation."³ Through Woolman's efforts some hundreds of slaves were freed, chiefly at the head of the Chesapeake.

The Quaker association of the Fells explains some of the choices of sites in Jones Town, Fells Point, and Fell's Addition. Toward the end of the war, Mr. William Fell, persuaded by Robert Long, laid off the town of Fells Point, corresponding, like the earlier townsites, with the lines of the waterfront—Philpot, Thames, and Fell streets. The plan had a wide respectable cross street (Bond), lesser lanes, and more or less square lots. Between 1765 and 1770, wharves, warehouses, and shipyards were erected on the Fells Point waterfront. Among the entrepreneurs, Captain Patton came from Ireland, and Nelson, Griest, and Vanbibber from Charlestown, Cecil County. These streams of migrants and the specific form of enterprise, based on access to deep water, set the pattern for development of the point over several generations.

Rivalry with Baltimore Town was immediate and persistent. "The first settlers were in fact at great loss to determine in which part to buy, as most likely to improve, and those who had sufficient means or enterprise, generally took lots both in town and point."⁴ At the beginning of the American rebellion, a quarter of the houses but only 14 percent of the people of Baltimore were on the point. It is likely that most of the houses there were smaller than those in the town, that there were fewer slaves and servants, and that members of some households may have been at sea. The houses on the point, with the exception of those of the "gentlemen," were generally frame houses with shingle roofs. In Baltimore Town, frame construction was outlawed, although the roofs were still shingled.

The most important development in the last few years before the Revolution was the effort to conquer the lowlands between town and point. This was a slow process. Promptly at the end of the French and Indian War, Thomas Harrison and others were instructed by the assembly to drain and reclaim their "large miry marsh" on account of "noxious effluvia," and the town was author-

ized to annex, wharf out, fill, and lay out the land into at least eight lots per acre. In 1768 and again in 1770 the assembly gave Harrison more time. In 1779 it authorized Harrison's marsh to be surveyed and "laid out anew." To these sections were added a hundred acres of Steiger's former marsh and Moale's lowland between town and point. On the south and west were added Cornelius Howard's thirty-five acres, including Conway and Barre streets.⁵ These additions represented the preparation of a large terrain for future expansion, but each was platted with no consideration for through traffic or any relation to other parts of the town.

The French and Indian War was the occasion for organizing the Ancient and Honorable Mechanical Company of Baltimore. Its early records, skimpy though unbroken, indicate that it existed as a club or society by 1763, and its earliest recorded functions were military drills for the defense of the town and turning out to fight fires and floods.⁶ For that reason, it seems to have been a remarkably democratic institution, including young men and old, tradesmen as well as doctors and prominent merchants, and the German residents recently come from Pennsylvania. Certainly the Mechanical Company differed from the formal commissions and councils of government, which were selected from among large landowners. It called a meeting whenever there was a matter of importance to discuss in town. In 1769 it raised the money to buy a little copper ship's pump, Baltimore's first fire-fighting engine, and it built a frame lodge and engine house in East Lane (later Chatham, then Fayette) near Calvert Street, with a bridge to get over the twelve-foot gully in front.

That very flexible, informal, and creative organization was all the more important because Baltimore lacked the formal institutions and powers of self-government, and its modest urban services were fragmented. The town was not represented in the assembly of the province, and it had no locally elected council. In 1768 the functions of the county—court sessions, jail, and land records—were brought to Baltimore from Joppa Town after much invective and "some violence and outrage." (Dissatisfied residents to the north promptly separated themselves and formed Harford County.) Poverty grew alongside wealth. In 1773 the assembly created Trustees for the Poor of Baltimore County and authorized them to levy a new tax and to build near the edge of the town an almshouse "for the reception of the poor" and a workhouse for "vagrants, beggars, vagabonds, and other offenders."⁷ The attempt to distinguish between the "deserving" and the "undeserving" poor was rooted in English practice and remained a permanent feature of public social services. In creating Trustees for the Poor the legislative assembly for the first time appointed representatives for the town separately from the rest of the county. The costs of the almshouse were to be shared in proportion to the numbers of poor sent from town or county. "An elevated and beautiful site" of twenty acres was purchased from one of the trustees.

Many elements combined to make the Revolution both popular and profitable in Baltimore.⁸ The rhythm of political protest kept time with the rhythm of the economy. Maryland was still subject to the whims of the tobacco

Revolution and
Opportunity

market, and the mercantile economy of Baltimore was vulnerable because of its dependence on credit from the mother country. For several years at a time (1759 to 1762 and 1768 to 1773) Maryland imported—on credit—much more than it exported. Each such boom was followed by a panic, when English creditors, responding to financial crisis at home, demanded their money. To pay such massive debts, imports were cut in half, and merchants and mechanics and the people who took in their washing all felt the squeeze. The merchants of Baltimore responded to restrictions on colonial trade with the same outrage as New England merchants. The wealthier planters, whose capital was invested in iron furnaces and wheat lands, resented British attempts to stifle manufacturing in the colony. They were also concerned to preserve their authority as an elite among the rest of the population. The relatively high quality of legal practice in Maryland contributed to the attachment to fundamental principles of English law and gave rise to a philosophy for the rebellion. The concentration of the web of communication and political organization in the general court system at Annapolis made possible a rather swift and decisive revolutionary effort, in spite of the economy of rural isolation. There were differences of class interest and of tactics between the networks of Baltimore and Annapolis. Ultimately the Revolution thrust the Baltimore economy well ahead of that of Annapolis.

In the early stages of the war, the Baltimore Mechanical Company seems to have played a great part. It operated the chain of correspondence with the Sons of Liberty in other cities, from 1776.⁹ The members constituted a Whig Club that met secretly. Governor Eden considered it the most rebellious and mischievous organization in the province. David Poe, the chairman, was subsequently quartermaster at Baltimore. Many Mechanical Company men, who were also members of the First Baptist congregation, followed Captain James Cox and distinguished themselves in the war. Quaker members, who would not bear arms, patrolled the town at night, maintained and worked the fire engine, and provided assistance to the poor. The Maryland Council of Safety, centered in Annapolis, was not always pleased by the zeal of the more radical and insubordinate Baltimore committee—as when Samuel Smith, son of a leading Baltimore merchant, led a party to prevent Governor Eden's sailing out of Annapolis.¹⁰ Samuel Smith also superintended recruiting in Baltimore for several years, commanded the town battalion of the Maryland militia, trained eight hundred men, and handled the investigation and arrest of Tories. His activities demonstrate how money was risked and made by the patriots. He participated in the ownership of perhaps a dozen privateers, of which five were lost. In addition to capturing enemy ships as prizes, his own ships carried cargoes of wheat or flour to be sold at wartime prices. He was engaged in the other most important wartime operation of Maryland—the state had undertaken to supply Spanish forces in the West Indies with wheat and flour. It financed shipments at 50 percent of the profits. Smith contracted as the state's exclusive agent for purchasing flour and wheat, on 5 percent commission. He also rented vessels and had a contract for fitting and repairing gunboats.

As naval warfare was almost entirely a private enterprise operation, and Baltimore sent out 250 privately armed vessels, Samuel Smith's case was merely

one among many. The privateers were owned by Baltimore merchants individually, in partnerships, or in shares, and the owners' names that appear in the letters of marque and reprisal—Sterrett, Yellott, Buchanan, Bowley, Jaffrey, Messonaire, Salmon, Zollickoffer, Ennels, Crookshanks, Pringle—also appeared in postwar newspaper ads for exports, imports, and shipping.¹¹

The Revolution also stimulated manufacturing. Obviously, flour milling expanded. The Ellicotts alone were delivering 100 barrels a week to Baltimore in 1774 from their mills on the Gwynns Falls. Removal of colonial restrictions was enough to unleash new types of enterprise, such as dyeing, wool carding, and linen manufacture, a bleach yard, a slitting mill, and two nail factories. Two papermills were built on the Great Gunpowder Falls; the more substantial one had two hundred workers and produced paper money for the Continental Congress.¹²

The Revolution allowed the Baltimore region to make the most of its natural advantages over Annapolis. The new mills were built along the falls in the stretches where they crossed the "fall line," or geologic zone of contact between piedmont rocks and the coastal plain sands and gravels.¹³ The state council explained to Robert Morris in 1782 its pessimism with respect to a tax levy to be paid in cash:

Our People are possessed of but very little Specie, and even that Little is chiefly confined to Baltimore Town, and the few upper Counties which are so situated as to have Intercourse with Baltimore or Philadelphia. The lower and most considerable Part of the State, has neither Specie nor the Means of getting it, for there is no Demand for any Thing the People make.¹⁴

Baltimore's social climate was as important in the development of manufactures as its physical setting. The limitations of the tobacco economy, and even of the prewar social environment of Baltimore Town, insofar as it resembled the old settled Maryland, lay in the attitude toward labor. When John Adams attended the Continental Congress in Baltimore in 1776, while Philadelphia was threatened, he found it "a very pretty town," "the dirtiest place in the world," and "full of good Whigs," but added, "They hold their Negroes and convicts, that is, all laboring people and tradesmen, in such contempt, that they think themselves a distinct order of beings."¹⁵ A steady influx, during and after the war, of German and Scotch-Irish settlers from Pennsylvania, and others directly from Ireland, Scotland, and France, was a counterforce essential to the development of the crafts and manufactures. Baltimore and the mill villages north and west offered niches for new populations. Skills were transferred from one mill to another, and Philadelphia capital and business experience were brought in.

During the Revolution, the generation that had founded the town of Baltimore died out, according to Griffith, and the generation of young men who rose to leadership in the army, privateering, and manufacturing constituted a new set of leaders who retained ever after a certain glamor, national idealism, and keen appreciation of risk. Among those who led the Maryland troops were young men from established planter families, notably John Eager Howard. Others, like Charles Carroll of Carrollton, risked their fortunes in the patriot

Mission and
Compromise

cause. As John Latrobe explained to Tocqueville years afterward, their daring reinforced their popularity with the people, including the members of the Mechanical Company in Baltimore, and made it possible for them to retain their leadership and a high degree of elite decision making for a generation after the war. They were involved in structuring the political institutions of the state as well as the new nation.

Maryland retained certain institutions virtually intact—the general assembly, the general court at Annapolis, the county courts, the use of ad hoc boards of commissioners for public enterprises, and the restrictions that reserved political participation and office holding to men of wealth. Two important changes were made in legal privilege—inheritance law and church “disestablishment.” Their impact was felt, not immediately, but over a generation.

Before the Revolution, the large planters had used the estate tail to keep land in the hands of a few. By a clause in his will, a landowner could define the succession indefinitely, limiting it to a son, grandson, etc., and restricting forever their right to will, sell, or subdivide it among their children. The new laws of inheritance virtually abolished the tail, thus reversing the trend toward concentration of fortunes.¹⁶

The zeal of the Church of England had never been great in Maryland. Effective “establishment” with a clerical presence had only lasted seventy-five or eighty years. In 1739 George Whitefield considered Maryland among “the dark corners of the earth . . . a place as yet unwatered with the true Gospel of Christ.”¹⁷ With the Revolution, the Episcopal Church lost even more of its clergy as well as the provincial tobacco tax for their support, although it retained its property.

Disestablishment was, however, a factor that released a surge of zeal among Catholics and Methodists. Religious impulses from France and England were transmitted to settlers on the American frontier through administrative networks centered in Baltimore. Catholics were assured full freedom of worship and could form corporations and schools; their “take-off” occurred in the 1790s (chapter 3), while a Methodist take-off began promptly after American independence was recognized. Early in 1784, John Wesley published his Deed of Declaration, reorganizing the 359 English Methodist chapels into a self-perpetuating annual conference independent of the Church of England. In the fall he decided to ordain and send ministers and a superintendent “to serve the desolate sheep in America.” These shepherds (Thomas Coke, Richard Whatcoat, and Thomas Vazey), together with Francis Asbury, who was already in Maryland, succeeded in calling together sixty Methodist preachers for a Christmas conference in Baltimore. They adopted Wesley’s articles, formed an annual conference, and ordained Asbury as superintendent. The superintendent had the power to lay out circuits and to deploy ministers and lay teachers on missions deep into Maryland and the Appalachian frontier. This organization, directed from Baltimore, kindled individual piety, and the Methodist “classes” were the buds of new congregations.

The Christmas Conference affirmed its opposition to slavery and resolved

to press all preachers and members of the Methodist communion to contract within one year to free their slaves.

We view it as contrary to the golden law of God on which hang all the laws and the prophets, and the unalienable rights of mankind, as well as every principle of the revolution to hold in the deepest abasement, in a more abject slavery than is perhaps to be found in any part of the world except America, so many souls that are all capable of the image of God.¹⁸

This position was strongly influenced by Asbury and, through his epistles, by John Wesley. Wesley, in turn, had been influenced by the writing of Anthony Benezet and John Woolman, Quakers from Pennsylvania. Methodists and Quakers, Brethren and Mennonites, were in close touch and in sympathy on a number of matters of religious feeling. Asbury traveled in the '70s and '80s through the same Maryland territory that John Woolman had visited, and he was impressed with the extent to which Quakers had freed their slaves.

Asbury immediately made a new circuit of the chapels to explain the resolution to rid the Methodist Church of slavery. But within six months he was obliged to "suspend the execution of the minute" of the Christmas Conference. This was the beginning for the Methodists of a slow backtracking and compromising on the issue of slavery. The ambivalence was associated with a high growth rate of the Methodist Church, an inability to assimilate such large numbers of slave holders, and a desire to evangelize the slaves. These goals could not be reconciled with a consistent mission to eradicate slavery. In these respects, the Quakers differed sharply with the Methodists in Maryland in the 1780s and 1790s.

When the Revolution was won, Baltimore became a community of immense self-confidence and creativity, in spite of the expected postwar depression of trade. Opportunity was eagerly sought—in trade, manufacturing, and transport, and in proselytizing and self-improvement. American trade was now free of the former restrictions of marketing through Britain. The French had participated in the American struggle. Both these factors favored the settlement in Baltimore of foreign merchants and gentlemen with capital. Zacharie and Pascault were among the French merchants; Mayer and Brantz were German Swiss from Zurich. The export of grain to the West Indies continued, and sugar refineries were built in Baltimore to process the return cargo. Robert Oliver was undertaking new ventures each year, among them the importing of linens from Ireland and the exporting of tobacco to the Orient. Samuel Smith bought a safe-conduct from the piratical Barbary Powers in order to trade safely in the Mediterranean. He was a subcontractor in a deal to supply the French national monopoly with Maryland tobacco. French and Dutch consuls were assigned here, as both nations were substantial buyers of Maryland tobacco, and Baltimore became the state's central tobacco market.

The first comers and the best situated of the several nationalities created a pattern of assistance to newcomers. As early as 1783 the German Society of Maryland was founded "for the protection of the redemptioners and destitute

Nation Building and City Building

immigrants who were sold into voluntary slavery."¹⁹ Shipmasters advertised for craftsmen, such as rope makers, shoemakers, blacksmiths, bricklayers, carpenters, butchers, hostlers, tailors, and papermakers, in addition to a larger number of house servants and farm laborers. By the 1780s the Germans were numerous enough and diverse enough to begin splitting and hiving off churches, a process characteristic of each immigrant group. They built a Calvinist church at the east end of Baltimore Street, and the Otterbein church on Conway Street. Nevertheless, participation in the German Society, on both the giving and receiving ends, cut across religious lines. By including Catholics, Jews, and Protestants (both Lutheran and Reformed), they set a pattern for Irish, French, and other organizations that followed.

In every form of enterprise, the need was felt for more efficient and reliable transport and communications. These areas had occasioned complaint and debate for a century, but they were brought into constructive focus by the nation-building spirit. Here, above all, the distinction between private and public enterprise was blurred. It was assumed that if the benefits outweighed the costs, a project was justified and a reasonable profit could be made. Men of wealth and property along the route initiated the petitions, ceded the land, and subscribed the capital. In 1784, Charles Carroll of Carrollton was among Baltimore property owners who raised £40,000 to improve navigation on the Susquehanna River by blasting rocks from the channel. Development of the Susquehanna region would offer great commercial opportunities to Baltimore. In 1785 the Potomac Navigation Company was chartered, and a sailing packet line was opened to Norfolk.

The conception of a road network for nation building and regional development was connected with a city-building goal. In 1784 petitions urged delegates to the legislature to build bridges, the lack of which had caused many accidents. The grand jury reported the state of the roads as a "public grievance," and a plan was proposed to designate certain roads as "state roads." They were essentially radial roads from Baltimore. "Roads and highways are to the community, what veins and arteries are in the natural body, the channels and sources of general circulation. As these all lead to and from the heart, so ought those all lead to and from the great seat of commerce in a state.—As Baltimore is."²⁰ The three major roads—to Frederick, Reisterstown, and York—were, in fact, "laid out anew." The county erected toll gates, and these routes became the important entrances to Baltimore City, determining its principal commercial arteries. Howard Street skirted Colonel Howard's estate, and became a favored location for flour and country produce stands. Reisterstown Road led into Pennsylvania Avenue. Frederick Road led into West Baltimore Street. Roads from York, Harford County, Bel Air, and Joppa led into Ensor Street, and thence into Gay Street. The old Philadelphia Road led into Baltimore Street. At Gay Street and at Baltimore Street were the two important bridges over the Jones Falls.

Built for Trade and Convenience

With such growth, Baltimore's appearance was changing. The most visible change was the cutting of the woods during the Revolution: "Most of the timber fell a prey to the wants of necessitous inhabitants during the cold winters of 1779 and 1783."²¹ For a generation afterward, travelers remarked



On G. G. Presbury's "New and Accurate Map of Baltimore Town" (1780), the harbor extends north to the present location of Lombard Street, and the Jones Falls flows as far west as Calvert Street.

on the barrenness of the surrounding countryside. Land was added to the town by an act of the assembly, upon request of landowners who wanted to subdivide into town lots. A number of additions were made during the Revolution: on the east, Roger's Addition, Parker's Haven, and Kemp's Addition; and on the west and south, Howard's Addition, Howard's Timber Neck, and Gist's Inspection. Construction reached a peak between 1783 and 1785. In 1783 some three hundred houses were said to have been built. A youthful visitor, Robert Hunter, commented in his diary for November 1785, "They are building away here in every corner of the town."²²

The several parts of the town were not yet fully integrated. Communication between Baltimore Town and Jones Town was relatively easy, but the distance between town and point was considerable. The road to the point crossed marshes at the mouth of the Jones Falls and Harford Run. For want of agreement on a single market site, the town created in 1784 three market houses, each convenient to the waterfront but on rising ground to permit drainage. Each became the kingpin of a local economic system, speculative building, and a residential neighborhood.

The first market house was the Centre or Marsh Market in Harrison Street, which was "intended for a canal or dock." By 1800 the market space itself had become the location for taverns, boardinghouses, and services to farmers. Night life and casual labor were concentrated in the vicinity. The creation of Centre Market was part of a rapid construction of a whole district from Water Street south to the water, and from the market space west to South Street. The owners of this property were the inner circle of merchants who had built the wharves and acquired capital during the Revolution. William Buchanan, for example, sold off lots along both sides of Water Street, between Frederick Street (Buchanan's wharf) and the new market space. West of Frederick Street, on higher ground, the same merchants associated their personal residences with their locales for wholesaling, shipping, and financial dealing. This was the nucleus for the modern banking district.

The second site was the Hanover or Camden Market on Howard's Hill.

(The Howards owned several hills.) It developed into a produce market, primarily wholesale, which was leveled in the 1970s. Two-story houses, both brick and frame, were advertised opposite the new market house and in Camden, Pratt, Sharp, and Walnut streets. Forty-seven lots (nineteen acres) were sold in Ridgely's Addition, and leaseholds were offered in Rusk's Meadows, between Ridgely's Addition and Howard's Hill. Speculation in this district was promoted by a scheme, never carried out, for digging a canal from the basin across the neck to the Spring Garden or cove at the foot of Fremont Avenue.

The third site was the Fells Point or Broadway Market. Fell had set aside the site for a market, but the street was not yet built up. Bond Street was the respectable, well built-up street toward the point, while wholesale commerce was found along the waterfront. Construction of the new market house defined Broadway as a commercial street, which would combine services to farmers and boatmen and ease the contacts between dealers with landward and seaward orientations. Like the other markets and the country routes into town, the Broadway Market was soon ringed with shops to serve countrymen and their horses: taverns, lodging houses, stables, blacksmiths, and harness makers.

In an effort to make the town look less like a village, a paving act was approved by the legislature, with a tax on vehicles and limits on the extent to which steps and cellarways could encroach on the public streets and walkways. There was no real progress toward paving, but there was considerable regrading and widening of the streets. As Griffith noted for 1783, "the defects of the original plan of the town now became more burthensome." This was the experience in each successive wave of growth as the caterpillar several times shed its skin. The straightening and widening of Hanover Lane, Holliday Street, East Lane (now Fayette Street), and Light Lane were critical.

Most intriguing was the series of projects undertaken to unplug Calvert Street at the bluff overlooking the Jones Falls, to open a northward route along the west side of the stream. In 1783 Leonard Harbaugh succeeded in underpinning the courthouse, so that the street could be run right through the building. This was a favorite novelty for tourists, and regrading cut down twenty feet from the courthouse square, leaving "a row of houses like scraggly soldiers stepping down Calvert street."²³ In 1789 Englehard Yeiser cut a new channel for the Jones Falls, from the lower mill at Bath Street across the meadow to Gay Street bridge, and the old course of the falls by the courthouse was gradually filled up, allowing the northward expansion of the town and unleashing a long dispute over the ownership of the ground. At the same time, Colonel John Eager Howard built his mansion, Belvedere, at an angle in the line of Calvert Street, between present-day Eager and Chase. This would constitute the next obstacle to the extension of Calvert Street, and might be regarded as the limit of the urban expectations of the revolutionary generation.

New public improvements demanded new financial tools. The method used for turnpike and navigation improvements was applied to town street improvements. The costs, including damages for private land taken or injured, were determined by a board of commissioners and distributed among the landowners who would benefit from the improvements. Since the property owners fronting

storms and freshets swept silt into the harbor, and the lack of tide insured that much of the deposit would remain. A letter from "a Humble Citizen" suggested dragging the lower falls, walling it in to prevent "washings and moulderings," altering its course to carry it clear of the range of hills, or creating a current in the basin by means of a canal to Spring Garden (Middle Branch).²⁵ The latter scheme was preferred, supported by the brickmakers and property owners of South Baltimore. Agitation continued as shipping increased and merchants complained of sandbars and mudflats. But the humble citizen must have been dismayed at the inaction. He had warned that "a season should not be wasted in contending which solution should be preferred." The contention continued for 125 years.

The problems of developing both dock (water) and wharf (land) space had initially been handled by the inducement to private initiative in making land. The new port wardens created a line beyond which wharves could not be extended. Supported by new wharfage and auction taxes, they began regular dredging to keep the basin nine feet deep. In 1783, that is, about twenty years after the important wharf construction of John Spear and others, John and Andrew Ellicott extended a wharf on Light Street and filled it, using a drag and team of horses, iron scoops, and a windlass. Ellicott's became the flour merchants' wharf. The construction of the market space also expanded the waterfront, and in 1785 most of the private wharves were extended on piles.

The need to recognize ownership of "made ground" was one reason for ordering the town surveyed. As land became more valuable, litigation over property increased. The town commissioners were continually occupied with resurveying property lines to settle disputes. Several technical reasons contributed to this situation. First, there were no generally agreed-upon reference points from which to begin any survey. The witness trees from original surveys had been cut, houses rebuilt, and piers washed out. The port wardens and the surveyors were instructed to set durable markers or boundary stones that could be used thereafter as reference points. Second, many of the original surveys were inaccurate or inconsistent. A source of inaccuracy was the failure to take note of compass declination.²⁶ Maryland rules made no reference to any standards for instruments, nor to any attempt to keep track of errors or control the outline rigidly. "You are upon all Surveys & Resurveys, to describe your Beginning as well and as full as the Thing will admit of and then only Courses and Distance to the last Course, which is always to be thus expressed 'then with a streight Line to the first Beginning.'"²⁷ They did try to insure that one man's courses would match another's, ordering resurveys to be run first according to the original language of "ancient metes and bounds," and that surveyors should "make the Line or Lines of one Tract the Line or Lines of another that no small Parcel or Spots of Vacant Land may be left out."²⁸

A further task assigned to the maker of the plot of the town was to try to integrate the numerous separate villages and additions that had been laid out independently. The surveyor was to function as a planner "authorized to make the streets correspond as nearly as may be." The survey was a corrective plan rather than a growth plan; it showed limited foresight and there was no real

Plaintiff's Table of Courses		Defendant's Table of Courses	
1794 #104	R	1794 #104	B
1794 #107	1	1794 #107	16
1794 #108	2	1794 #108	17
1794 #109	3	1794 #110	18
1794 #110	4	1794 #111	19
1794 #111	5	1794 #112	20
1794 #112	6	1794 #113	21
1794 #113	7	1794 #114	22
1794 #114	8	1794 #115	23
1794 #115	9	1794 #116	24
1794 #116	10	1794 #117	25
1794 #117	11	1794 #118	26
1794 #118	12	1794 #119	27
1794 #119	13	1794 #120	28
1794 #120	14	1794 #121	29
1794 #121	15	1794 #122	30
1794 #122	16	1794 #123	31
1794 #123	17	1794 #124	32
1794 #124	18	1794 #125	33
1794 #125	19	1794 #126	34
1794 #126	20	1794 #127	35
1794 #127	21	1794 #128	36
1794 #128	22	1794 #129	37
1794 #129	23	1794 #130	38
1794 #130	24	1794 #131	39
1794 #131	25	1794 #132	40
1794 #132	26	1794 #133	41
1794 #133	27	1794 #134	42
1794 #134	28	1794 #135	43
1794 #135	29	1794 #136	44
1794 #136	30	1794 #137	45
1794 #137	31	1794 #138	46
1794 #138	32	1794 #139	47
1794 #139	33	1794 #140	48
1794 #140	34	1794 #141	49
1794 #141	35	1794 #142	50
1794 #142	36	1794 #143	51
1794 #143	37	1794 #144	52
1794 #144	38	1794 #145	53
1794 #145	39	1794 #146	54
1794 #146	40	1794 #147	55
1794 #147	41	1794 #148	56
1794 #148	42	1794 #149	57
1794 #149	43	1794 #150	58
1794 #150	44	1794 #151	59
1794 #151	45	1794 #152	60
1794 #152	46	1794 #153	61
1794 #153	47	1794 #154	62
1794 #154	48	1794 #155	63
1794 #155	49	1794 #156	64
1794 #156	50	1794 #157	65
1794 #157	51	1794 #158	66
1794 #158	52	1794 #159	67
1794 #159	53	1794 #160	68
1794 #160	54	1794 #161	69
1794 #161	55	1794 #162	70
1794 #162	56	1794 #163	71
1794 #163	57	1794 #164	72
1794 #164	58	1794 #165	73
1794 #165	59	1794 #166	74
1794 #166	60	1794 #167	75
1794 #167	61	1794 #168	76
1794 #168	62	1794 #169	77
1794 #169	63	1794 #170	78
1794 #170	64	1794 #171	79
1794 #171	65	1794 #172	80
1794 #172	66	1794 #173	81
1794 #173	67	1794 #174	82
1794 #174	68	1794 #175	83
1794 #175	69	1794 #176	84
1794 #176	70	1794 #177	85
1794 #177	71	1794 #178	86
1794 #178	72	1794 #179	87
1794 #179	73	1794 #180	88
1794 #180	74	1794 #181	89
1794 #181	75	1794 #182	90
1794 #182	76	1794 #183	91
1794 #183	77	1794 #184	92
1794 #184	78	1794 #185	93
1794 #185	79	1794 #186	94
1794 #186	80	1794 #187	95
1794 #187	81	1794 #188	96
1794 #188	82	1794 #189	97
1794 #189	83	1794 #190	98
1794 #190	84	1794 #191	99
1794 #191	85	1794 #192	100

Rockland Manor in 1808

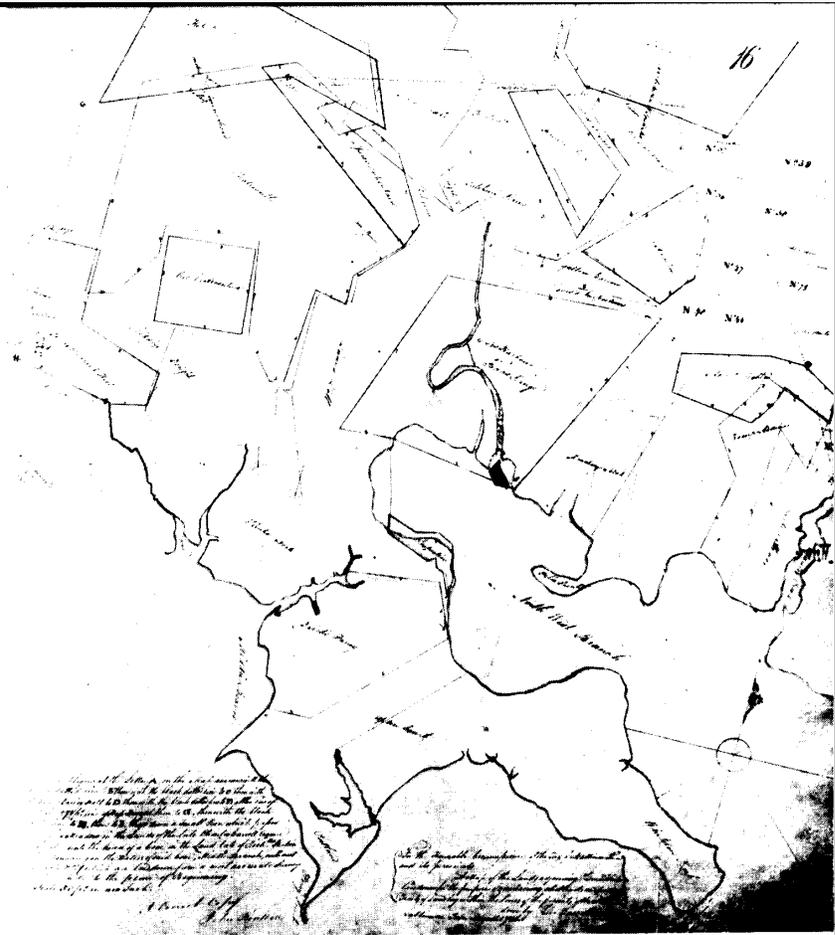


Defendant's Table of Courses	
1794 #104	B
1794 #107	16
1794 #108	17
1794 #110	18
1794 #111	19
1794 #112	20
1794 #113	21
1794 #114	22
1794 #115	23
1794 #116	24
1794 #117	25
1794 #118	26
1794 #119	27
1794 #120	28
1794 #121	29
1794 #122	30
1794 #123	31
1794 #124	32
1794 #125	33
1794 #126	34
1794 #127	35
1794 #128	36
1794 #129	37
1794 #130	38
1794 #131	39
1794 #132	40
1794 #133	41
1794 #134	42
1794 #135	43
1794 #136	44
1794 #137	45
1794 #138	46
1794 #139	47
1794 #140	48
1794 #141	49
1794 #142	50
1794 #143	51
1794 #144	52
1794 #145	53
1794 #146	54
1794 #147	55
1794 #148	56
1794 #149	57
1794 #150	58
1794 #151	59
1794 #152	60
1794 #153	61
1794 #154	62
1794 #155	63
1794 #156	64
1794 #157	65
1794 #158	66
1794 #159	67
1794 #160	68
1794 #161	69
1794 #162	70
1794 #163	71
1794 #164	72
1794 #165	73
1794 #166	74
1794 #167	75
1794 #168	76
1794 #169	77
1794 #170	78
1794 #171	79
1794 #172	80
1794 #173	81
1794 #174	82
1794 #175	83
1794 #176	84
1794 #177	85
1794 #178	86
1794 #179	87
1794 #180	88
1794 #181	89
1794 #182	90
1794 #183	91
1794 #184	92
1794 #185	93
1794 #186	94
1794 #187	95
1794 #188	96
1794 #189	97
1794 #190	98
1794 #191	99
1794 #192	100

mechanism of control. The extent to which it operated was probably a result of the continuing personal influence of G. G. Presbury as city surveyor and later as one of the commissioners. Even after the survey, the various defects of past practice gave rise to dozens of situations that had to be resolved by legal recognition of past errors.²⁰

The wave of building after 1747 was based on the ground rent, now rare in the United States but common in Baltimore. It was devised in Presbury's generation, when capital and hard currency were scarce and land was cheap. In order to give value to his town lots or to make his land produce some income, the landowner would contract to "rent" or "lease" the land, effectively forever, at a fixed annual sum, to someone who had the capital or the credit to build a house or warehouse on it, which he in turn rented or sold. "It became the practice to dispose of lots by leases, for long terms, mostly ninety-nine years renewable for ever." The leaseholder paid an annual ground rent to the original owner, his heirs, or buyers of the ground rent. This device was favorable to the upward spiral of rising population, rapid construction, and capital accumulation,

A plat of Rockland in 1808 shows the manor house tract with the additions of the 1760s and a section enclosed in 1787. It is an example of the litigation and difficulties of the survey. On the left is shown the plaintiff's table of courses, or compass indications, and on the right the defendant's table of courses. Witnesses were sworn at points A and B.



Thomas Maccubbin's map of 1786 shows the various original tracts of land lying within the precincts of Baltimore. Within the diamond shape of Coles Harbor/Todd's Range is the original bend of the Jones Falls, its cutoff, and the shoals or flats in its mouth.

but certain disadvantages were felt when the value of either land or money changed drastically. For example, from the middle of 1786 well into 1788 there was a postwar depression of trade. Flour and tobacco prices fell. British imports offered severe competition for the new domestic products. In Baltimore several substantial businessmen failed, notably the Purviance brothers. Others, among them William Patterson, sued their debtors. "The rents stipulated after the war were so high that, upon the depression which now took place, the lessees or tenants frequently abandoned the lots, and the town lost some valuable citizens who fled from persecution, though their only fault or error was an excess of enterprise."³⁰

Despite the hazards, enterprise was the watchword of Baltimore. Many new undertakings of the years 1785-89 failed because of the recession and the persistent scarcity of capital, but many such schemes were revived or developed in the next generation. The principal merchants, including James Calhoun, Alexander McKim, and Richard Caton, formed a joint stock company, the Baltimore Manufacturing Company, to make linens, cottons, and woollens, but without immediate result. Christopher Cruse and his son Englehard built an early steam-powered gristmill near Pratt Street, but failed for want of capital to perfect it (1789). An attempt to form a water company failed.

Having freed themselves from the trade and shipping restrictions of the mother country, Baltimore's merchants were not above using their new government to further their interests. Under the new constitution, seven hundred mechanics, tradesmen, and artisans of Baltimore petitioned Congress for tariffs to protect American manufactures, and the city's shipwrights petitioned for a

navigation act that would insure that American goods were carried in American ships.

The town was approaching 13,000 people, and a corporation or charter was several times proposed. A newspaper correspondent complained in 1784, "I know it may be said, that if the citizens at large are to be consulted about a corporation, they will never agree to one, so they ought not to be consulted. This way of reasoning . . . is very alarming."³¹ Under the normal practice of private charters in the state, the power would have remained in the hands of a self-perpetuating few, "leaving the citizens but little share in their own government."³² The nature of a "good corporation" was hotly debated, and basic issues of local government were aired in the newspapers of Baltimore (1784–87), somewhat in the manner of "the Federalist" papers, the articles that contemplated a new constitution for the Union. How would a town charter protect the general good in the face of private property interests? What checks could be devised for mob law? How could a balance be assured among the aldermen, between the rich and the poor? "The rich man should not lay at the mercy of the poor, nor the poor man at the mercy of the rich."³³ For want of a consensus, Baltimore remained unincorporated.

11. L. C. Gottschalk, "Effects of Soil Erosion on Navigation in Upper Chesapeake Bay," *Geographical Review* 35 (1945): 219-37; and idem, "Sedimentation in a Great Harbor," *Soil Conservation* 10, no. 1 (July 1944): 3-5, 11-12.

12. St. George L. Sioussat, "Highway Legislation in Maryland and Its Influences on the Economic Development of the State" (Ph.D. diss., The Johns Hopkins University, 1889), in *Maryland Geological Survey* 3 (1899): 105-89.

13. Scharf, *Chronicles of Baltimore*, p. 21.

14. Griffith, *Annals of Baltimore*, pp. 18-20, 101.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 28.

Rhythms of Growth

In addition to Thomas W. Griffith, *Annals of Baltimore*, 2d ed. (1824; Baltimore: W. Woody, 1833), sources used frequently are the *Maryland Gazette* or *Baltimore Daily Advertiser*, published in Baltimore between 1783 and 1786, and Frank A. Cassell, *Merchant Congressman in the Young Republic: Samuel Smith of Maryland, 1752-1839* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1971).

Conversations of Tocqueville with John Latrobe and other Baltimoreans, 29 October-5 November 1831, are found in Alexis de Tocqueville, *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. J.-P. Mayer, vol. 5, *Voyages en Sicile et aux Etats-Unis* (Paris: Gallimard, 1957), pp. 97, 108, 121, 185, 236, 242, 247.

Records of the City of Baltimore consist of several volumes compiled by Wilbur Coyle, City Librarian. For this period, see vol. 1, *First Records of Baltimore Town and Jones Town, 1729-1797* (Baltimore: King Bros., 1905).

1. Griffith, *Annals of Baltimore*, p. 35.

2. Governor Sharpe to Lord Calvert, 9 July 1755, *Archives of Maryland*, 1: 240; to John Sharpe, *ibid.*, 1: 497; to Lord Calvert, *ibid.*, 1: 512.

3. John Woolman, *The Journal and Major Essays of John Woolman*, ed. Phillips P. Moulton (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 64.

4. Griffith, *Annals of Baltimore*, p. 43. They also often held lots elsewhere in Baltimore County.

5. *Records of the City of Baltimore*, vol. 1.

6. Cassell, *Merchant Congressman*, and Everstine, *A History of the Ancient and Honorable Mechanical Company of Baltimore*.

7. Douglas Carroll, Jr., and Blanche D. Coll, "The Baltimore Almshouse: An Early History," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 66 (1971): 135-52. They ascribe the history to the same Thomas W. Griffith, ca. 1821.

8. For information on the Revolution, see Charles A. Barker, *The Background of the Revolution in Maryland*, Yale Historical Publications 38 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940); Ronald Hoffman, *A Spirit of Dissension: Economics, Politics, and the Revolution in Maryland* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974); and Thomas O'Brien Hanley, *Charles Carroll of Carrollton: The Making of a Revolutionary Gentleman* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1970).

9. On the activities of the Sons of Liberty, see Pauline Maier, *From Resistance to Revolution* (New York: Knopf, 1972), p. 109.

10. Cassell, *Merchant Congressman*.

11. *Archives of Maryland*, vol. 48, passim. I noted letters of marque and reprisal issued by the State Council of Maryland, as indexed from Baltimore, 1781-84.

12. Griffith, *Annals of Baltimore*, p. 80.

13. The lawsuit involving Oliver Evans, the Hollingsworths, and other Baltimore millers was reported in *Niles' Register*, annual addenda of March 1813 and March 1814. See also Silvio A. Bedini, *The Life of Benjamin Banneker* (New York: Scribner's, 1972).

14. State Council of Maryland to Honorable Robert Morris, Esq., *Archives of Maryland*, 48: 212 f.
15. John Adams, *The Works of John Adams*, 10 vols. (1856; reprint ed. New York: AMS Press, 1971), 3: 433, diary entry of 6 February 1777.
16. On the estate tail, see *Laws of Maryland*, Act of 1786, ch. 45, and Tocqueville's conversation with Latrobe, *Oeuvres*, 5: 108.
17. George Whitefield, *Journals, 1737-1741* (1905; reprint ed. Gainesville, Fla.: Scholars' Facsimile, 1969), p. 362.
18. Question 42, Proceedings of the Methodist Christmas Conference, in *Minutes of the Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, For the Years 1773-1828* (New York, 1840), 1: 20-21. See also Lucius Matlack, *The History of American Slavery and Methodism, From 1780 to 1849* (New York, 1849); H. Shelton Smith, *In His Image, But . . . : Racism in Southern Religion, 1780-1910* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1972); and Donald G. Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism: A Chapter in American Morality, 1780-1845* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965).
19. Dieter Cunz, *The Maryland Germans: A History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1948), pp. 179 ff. See also L. Hennighausen, "History of the German Society in Maryland," *Maryland Society for the History of the Germans in Maryland* 1 (1909).
20. *Maryland Gazette*, 6 December 1785.
21. Griffith, *Annals of Baltimore*, p. 55.
22. Robert Hunter, Jr., *Quebec to Carolina in 1785-1786*, ed. Louis B. Wright and Marion Tinling (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1943), p. 180.
23. John Pendleton Kennedy, in Edward Spencer, ed., *Celebration of the 150th Anniversary of the Settlement of Baltimore* (Baltimore, 1880).
24. Among the wharf owners and merchants who were port wardens were Samuel Purviance, Samuel Smith, John Sterrett, Daniel Bowley, Thomas Ellicott, and William Patterson.
25. *Maryland Gazette*, 27 August 1784.
26. Magnetic declination is the angle between the true north-south line and the magnetic north-south line as pointed out by a compass needle. Its secular variation was discovered in 1634, and the change varies in magnitude, at greatest about one degree in twenty years.
27. Rules and Orders for the Direction of Surveyors, 15 April 1782, *Archives of Maryland*, 48: 132.
28. Ibid. The Maryland rules were old-fashioned, in contrast with the federal orders for the Northwest Territory: "Geographers and Surveyors shall pay the utmost attention to the variation of the magnetic needle, and shall run and note all lines by the true meridian, certifying with every plat what was the variation at the time" (*Maryland Gazette*, 24 May 1785). A Baltimore surveyor, Robert Gibson, discusses variation in magnetic amplitude in *A Treatise on Practical Surveying*, 3d ed. rev. by John D. Craig (Baltimore: F. Lucas, 1822): "But a true meridian line is seldom to be met with."
29. An example of an error recognized is the Lancaster Alley case: *Records of the City of Baltimore*, vol. 1, 3 July 1788, p. 66.
30. Griffith, *Annals of Baltimore*, pp. 115-16, 150-51.
31. Letter of Civis, *Maryland Gazette*, 26 October 1784.
32. Griffith, *Annals of Baltimore*, p. 114.
33. Letter of Civis. See also *Maryland Gazette*, letters of 27 October 1784 and 6 February 1786.