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F. B. Mayer

F. B. Mayer

THE BALTIMORE NEWS, SATURDAY, MARCH 2, 1895.

MR. MAYER AND HIS WORK

A PAINTER OF SCENES IN THE HISTORY OF MARYLAND.

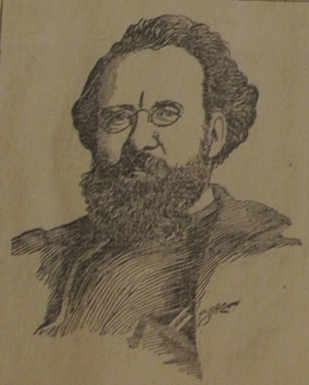
Life and Labors of the Artist Who Won the Medal and Diploma of the Centennial of 1876 for Figure Painting—Passing Through the German Lines During the Investment of Paris—Mr. Mayer's Annapolis Studio.

Although Maryland has given birth to numerous painters who have devoted their talent either to portraits, still life or landscapes she has produced but one portrayer of her rich and varied historical life and scenes. For many years Mr. Frank B. Mayer has sought by means of his art to rouse the appreciation of the people of his State in these subjects, and he has succeeded in many instances. No one has depicted colonial life with truer sympathy or approached the task more fully prepared. His intimate knowledge of both the artistic and the practical sides of colonial life constitutes him an authority of recognized worth.

A Native of Baltimore.

Mr. Mayer was born in Baltimore of parentage combining the traits of the South of Germany and the North of Ireland, people, who from their first residence, took a solid and recognized standing in the commercial life of the city. He early showed a keen perception of color and form and a quick sense of the ridiculous. A love for mechanics developed with the study of art, but the latter obtained the mastery under the tuition of Alfred J. Miller, whose prominence as an artist, and kindly qualities, had grouped around him a number of devoted pupils. Mr. Miller's training in the French school of 1830 and his subsequent experience as artist of the expedition of Sir W. C. Stuart in the then "Far West," gave him great advantages as a teacher and leader in historical art. He was succeeded as teacher by Ernst Fischer, a thoroughly educated artist of the Antwerp and Dresden schools, who, during his residence in Baltimore, gave instruction to numerous students.

Of these Mr. Mayer was one and while acting as librarian of the Maryland Historical Society, he made the illustrations for the works of his uncle, Col. Brantz Mayer, on Mexico and for the "Twenty Years of an African Slaver." The result of his labor enabled him to accomplish the cherished wish of actual acquaintance with our aborigines and as a traveler to know his own country. A summer spent among the Dakota Indians as one of the party accompanying the Commissioners of the Government who were to make the treaties which created the State of Minnesota and the Dakotas afforded a rare opportunity to observe ceremonies and scenes which ordinarily took place only at long intervals and to see many types of the Indian collected in an importe council. The artist, with ever-busy pencil, filled sketchbook and journal, which are already valuable as unique records of a rapidly disappearing race. "The Feast of Mondawmin" and "The Thunder Dance," two pictures founded on these drawings, have been engraved for the United States Government. After attending the treaties of Traverse des Sioux and Mendota, which preluded the departure of the last red man from the banks of the Mississippi (Meschasibi), an extended tour, including the Mammoth Cave and Mackinaw, followed, and proved an object lesson in home scenery and humanity.



Mr. F. B. Mayer.

As a Portrait Painter.

In the interval between the instructions of Miller and Fischer Mr. Mayer was employed by a Philadelphia publisher in drawings on wood illustrative of scenes in the then recent war with Mexico, attention having been drawn to his work by a lithographic composition of the charge of "Captain May at the battle of Resaca de la Palme." While at work in Philadelphia he passed his evenings in the life-school of the Pennsylvania Academy of Arts in acquiring a knowledge of the human form and action. He now resumed the use of the crayon in making portraits, notably those of Chief Justice Taney, Chief Justice Legrand of Maryland, McMahon, W. H. Collins and others, and began the practice of oil in pictures of cabinet size either as scenes of familiar life or in subjects of historic tendency clothed in the picturesque dress of the last century, an anticipation of the present interest in our colonial life. Of these the picture in the Corcoran Gallery, "Doing and Dreaming," "Independence," "The Violinist," "Plato," Henry Clay as "The Mill Boy of the Slashes," and "The Open Gate," are examples. In the direction of historic illustration the artist found not only a congenial field, but his true work subsequently developed in more important works executed either in Paris or in his present studio in Annapolis.

Voyage on the Casilda.

The cabin of the ship Casilda of Baltimore, at sea, during a voyage from this port to Rotterdam, furnished Mr. Mayer with a subject for one of his pictures as well as nautical scenes, such as "The Lookout" and "Splicing a Hawser;" the result of material gathered at sea while a passenger on the Casilda in 1862. His first acquaintance with Europe was made in the quaint old sea port of Helvoetsluis in Holland, which town is interesting because of its association with the reliable records of the Baron Munchausen. The artist profited by the opportunities afforded by his captain's familiarity with the Hollanders, for the Staffords, father, son and grandson, had sailed ships from Baltimore in that trade and were in a measure adopted citizens of Batavia. The success of the artist's commercial venture in the way of tobacco was no hindrance to his enjoyment of the galleries of Rotterdam, Amsterdam and Hague, nor of the hospitality of the consignees of the Casilda. The marked peculiarities of Holland and the riches of her art treasures were calculated to make a deep impression. Antwerp proved not less interesting and Lille was so attractive that the artist remained there for a while, but soon pushed on to Paris, where, suddenly, he came into a world of different character and essentially modern.

His Work in Paris.

In Paris Mr. Mayer entered the atelier of Gleyre, the foremost exponent of classic purity and precision, and found a friend and adviser in Brion, the Alsatian artist, noted for his fullness of design, richness of color and effect and sincerity of purpose and sentiment. The facilities which Paris afford for the execution of works of art and the liberalizing influence which the exhibition of every style of excellence produces incited the exertions of the artist and resulted in the favorable reception at the annual salons of Mr. Mayer's work, figure subjects, in treatment based on the style of Meissonier, but varied in their selection, as shown in "Pascal," "The Attic Philosopher," "The Jester," "The Nineteenth Century," "The Boar's Head," "The Savoy Tailor," etc. Several summers and parts of winters were passed by Mr. Mayer in the beautiful and picturesque region of Savoy in the higher Alpine villages. A visit also to relatives in Wurtemberg, whose dwelling lay within the shadow of one of Germany's greatest cathedrals, surrounded by mediæval gables, was enjoyed as a realization of romance. The last days of the Empire were seen in the spectacular glory of the exhibition of 1867, with the sovereigns of Europe as the guests of France, followed by its downfall in the surrender of Sedan in 1870.

The artist shared the privations and anxieties incident to life in a besieged city encircled by perpetual combats and the certain doom of eventual conquest. Reduced to a small allowance of food per day, augmented by occasional supplements of horse flesh, disguised or embellished with artistic cooking; without communication with the outer world, the routine of a non-combattant varied by witnessing the cannonades and combats from the walls of Paris, he availed himself of the last opportunity afforded by diplomatic negotiation to leave the beleaguered city in company with a brother artist, a Herald correspondent and two friends.

Through the German Lines.

They had purchased a laudau and two horses and joined the procession of Americans and Russians who entered the German lines and, diverging at Versailles, sought different routes to their destinations. Under safe conduct the party of the landau were directed to reach Belgium by passing from post to post of the invading army.

This journey amid the realities of war, but through a picturesque country, was replete with incident, though not devoid of danger, the party being exposed on one occasion to the fire of a French battery and again menaced by the dangers of lawless "franctireurs" or freebooters. Sedan and its battlefield, the ancient cities of Rethel and Rheims and, after passing into Belgium, the Forest of Ardennes and the old castle of Godfrey de Bouillon, were visited. Through Dinant and Namur the party reached Brussels and thence, after a stay in Antwerp, renewing former pleasant impressions of the City of Rubens and Van Dyke, the artist reached London.

Since his return from Europe Mr. Mayer has resided chiefly in Annapolis, where one of its old houses serves him as a workroom, and from its many windows commands on all sides the ever-varying views of cloud, city and water, an advantage and luxury unattainable in the midst of our commercial metropolis and dear to the artist as a constant school of instruction.

Historical Paintings.

His aim has been the illustration of Maryland life and history, and he has used brush, pencil and pen in contributions to magazines and in the paintings which he has produced. Of these the more important are "The Lady's Visit," or "Annapolis 1750," "The Founders of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad," in the directors' hall of the company; "The Planting of the Colony of Maryland," recently purchased by the State, and numerous smaller works of familiar interest. A large number of his works, both portraits and figures, have been engraved. Mr. Mayer received the medal and diploma of the Centennial of 1876 for figure painting.

As a valuable record of the sesqui-centennial of his native city the artist illustrated the memorial volume with 16 outline designs, giving the prominent features of the great procession. Among his portraits are those of Cecilius Calvert, presented by J. H. Rieman, Esq., to the Cincinnati Museum; Mayor Latrobe, in the City Hall, and Dr. James Hall, Governor of Liberia, which was sent to Africa. Mr. Mayer painted the coat-of-arms of Maryland which hangs in the hall of the Corn and Flour Exchange, and also made the designs for the proposed further decoration of the hall. One of the artist's most popular paintings is "Seventy-six," or "The Continentals," which is known the length and breadth of the country. It has been reproduced in many forms and is considered one of the representative pictures of the period of which it treats. At present the artist is engaged on a historical subject that when finished will be sure to interest every one conversant with Maryland history. "The Burning of the Peggy Stewart" is the subject, and some fine work may be looked for on its appearance.

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PAINTING OF ST. TAMANY.

One of Mr. F. B. Mayer's Best Works Received by the Crescent Club.

1897.

"St. Tamany Addressing the Council" is the name of a beautiful painting which was yesterday hung in one of the sitting-rooms of the Crescent Club, Paca street, near Saratoga. The canvas, which is from the brush of Mr. F. B. Mayer, of Annapolis, and which is pronounced by critics a fine piece of art, is 3 feet 4 inches high by 4 feet 10 inches long. The scene of the picture is a rocky gorge of the Alleghanies, and the mist of the mountains mingles with the smoke of the council fire, around which are assembled the braves, who listen to the words of Tamina, as he was called, whose gestures indicate an appeal for calmness, rather than surrender to the passions which seem expressed in the most prominent figures. One is already lighting the pipe of peace, and others apparently agree, while the group behind the speaker brood over the wrongs their enemies have inflicted. Most of the figures are from sketches of life made among the Dakotas, who, as they are regarded as the finest type of our aborigines, may well serve as the best models at our command of the departed Delawares. The brooding brethren under the rock were, in reality, the victims of a war party of Chippewas, who had murdered their families in their absence, and they came before the officials of the camp as mourners, imploring redress.

The draperies are such as result from the peculiar manner in which the Indian envelopes himself and handles his robe. The following is taken from Thatcher's "Indian Biography": "Among the ancient Delaware worthies, whose career is too imperfectly known to us to be the subject of distinct sketches, we shall mention only the name of the illustrations. Tamenend. This individual stands foremost in the list of all the great men of his nation. He was a mighty warrior, an accomplished statesman, and a pure and high-minded patriot. In private life he was still more distinguished for his virtues than in public for his talents. His countrymen could only account for the perfections they ascribed to him by supposing him to be favored with special communications of the Great Spirit. Ages have elapsed since his death, but his memory was so fresh among the Delawares of the last century that when Col. Morgan, of New Jersey, was sent as an agent among them by Congress during the Revolution, they conferred on him the title of Tamenend as the greatest mark of respect they could show the manners and characters of that gentleman."

May 14. 1874.

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SUBURBS AND COUNTY.

Catonsville's New Casino.

A crowd of Baltimore society people went to Catonsville Saturday to attend the house-warming reception in the new Casino given by the Country Club of that suburban section. A special train at 4 o'clock and all of the regular afternoon trains carried the guests from Baltimore and from the railroad stations near Catonsville. The girls wore bright summer toilets, and as they strolled over the green lawns of the club grounds or rested on the broad piazzas of the picturesque Casino they made a pretty scene. Among the decorations of the building were banners displaying coats of arms appropriate to the counties of Baltimore, Howard, Anne Arundel and Carroll, hung in the banqueting hall. They were designed and painted by Mr. F. B. Mayer, of Annapolis, in accordance with a plan to obtain the adoption of appropriate seals and flags for each county of Maryland.

ends March 15.

Legislative Notes.

Senator Hubner's insane asylum bill was amended and passed by the House. It came back to the Senate and was passed tonight. The amendment strikes out the clause requiring the institution to be located on the Eastern Shore, and reduces the number of acres to be bought from 500 to 250.

The Baltimore sewer bill has been passed by the House and was referred to the city Senators tonight.

The bill authorizing the board of public works to purchase the picture by Frank B. Mayer, representing the planting of the first colony in Maryland, has passed both Houses and goes to the Governor. The price placed on the painting by the artist is $4,000. The bill authorizes the board of public works to investigate the worth of the picture and to purchase it if in their judgment it is of sufficient historic value.

1874.

THE SENATE CHAMBER.

Order Looking to the Restoration of Historic Features.

[Special Dispatch to the Baltimore Sun.]

ANNAPOLIS, MD., Feb. 21.—Senator Hayes took the first step toward the restoration of the historic features of the Senate Chamber, which were removed by Governor Carroll. He offered an order, which was unanimously adopted, requesting Mr. J. Appleton Wilson, of Baltimore, and Mr. Frank B. Mayer, of Annapolis, to make a report upon the feasibility of the restoration and the probable cost. It is hoped that these gentlemen will make the report as speedily as possible. If their estimate of the cost is not too large an appropriation will probably be made and the work ordered to be done after the adjournment of the present session.

To restore the Senate chamber to its original appearance would not be a difficult or expensive matter, as those who assisted in its demolition and know the details as well as the general disposition of its architectural feature are yet living. The windows and doors remain; the niche behind the speaker's chair and the cornice is the original one. It would be necessary to restore the gallery, the materials for which are preserved, to replace the woodwork around the niche, if possible to rebuild the chimney-stack and its wide fire-place and mantel, and put back the window seats and perhaps the small panes of the sash. The gallery and the niche are the most important features, while the chimney jamb could be deferred until later.

To complete the work would involve the replacing of the old furniture, the chandeliers and whatever relics could be collected to grace the chamber. Were Bartholomew's Washington, now exposed to destruction in Druid Hill Park, or a copy in bronze of Houdon's Washington placed as a central figure it would be most appropriate.

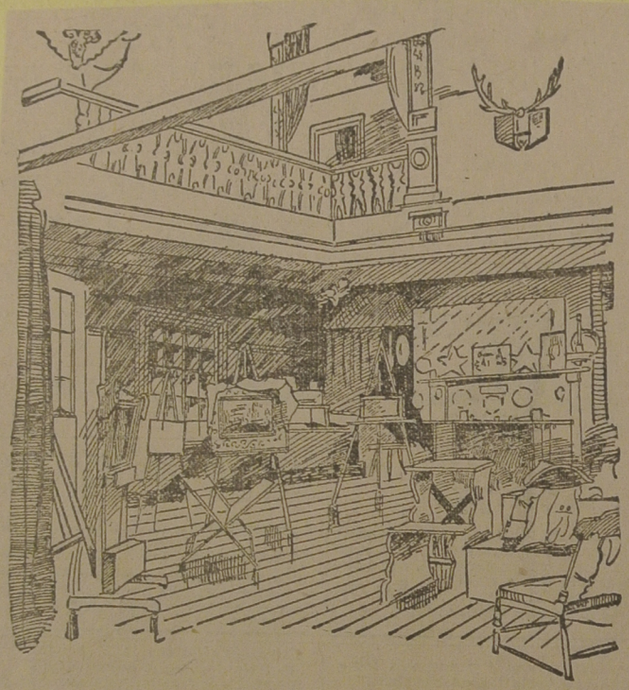
Archives and Ancient Documents.

The Maryland Historical Society, custodian under the act of 1882 of the archives and ancient documents of the Province and State of Maryland, has reported to the Legislature the progress of the work entrusted to it. The report, which is required by law, is signed by Mr. S. Teackle Wallis, president of the society. It was referred to the committee on public records. It states that two additional volumes have been published and distributed as provided by the act of Assembly. These are the "Journal of the Maryland Convention" of July and August, 1775, and the "Journal and Correspondence of the Council of Safety," the permanent executive body of the convention, from August 29, 1775, to the end of 1776. Neither of these has been before published. They contain minute accounts of the successive steps that the people of Maryland took in the direction of liberty, from the organization of the militia and of Maryland's contingent in the continental forces known as the Maryland Line. It also contains the Declaration of Independence, and recounts the military operations on the Chesapeake, the defense of Baltimore, the extraordinary energy displayed by the council of safety in creating means of defense and the patriotic zeal of the citizens in seconding the council's exertions. This correspondence also throws interesting light on events outside the State, as in the case of the remarkable letter of Colonel (afterward General) Smallwood giving an account of the battle of Long Island. The names of thousands of Marylanders who took part in the great contest were recorded in the books.

"Maryland is especially fortunate in the preservation of her ancient colonial records," the report states. "Although these have suffered grievously in the past by accident, neglect and depredation, she still possesses a mass of original historical material which, in extent and completeness, is scarcely rivaled in any State of the Union, and extends from 1633, the year of the sailing of the Ark and Dove, down to the present time. At the same time great and irreparable losses of original documents have occurred, and damps and the ravages of insects were destroying the most ancient manuscripts when, in 1882, the General Assembly placed them in the safekeeping of the Maryland Historical Society, and with an enlightened liberality made provision for their publication.

"Under the repeated appropriations of the Legislature twelve thick quarto volumes have been given to the world, containing the acts and proceedings of the Colonial Assembly from 1633 to 1683, the proceedings of the council from 1636 to 1693, the records of the Provincial Court from 1637 to 1657, the correspondence of Governor Sharpe, 1753-1761, and the two volumes of which mention has been made. The great historical value of this work has been widely recognized."

1874.



FRANCIS MAYER'S STUDIO.

the painting to the state, and another resolution for its purchase may be introduced two years hence.

In Mr. Mayer's studio, which is one of the most quaintly original places ever chosen by an artist for a residence, are several other canvases, the most notable now being "The Heraldic Painter," a piece that has been highly praised by all who have seen it. He has, besides, a great number of photographs of his many works, including a large and handsome reproduction by the camera of the "Planting of the Colony." This was done by the orthochromatic process, the result being that the color values are most faithfully given. This photograph is on plain silver paper, and looks much like an engraving.

The Artist's Quaint Studio.

Although the artist's productions are the chief subjects of interest, and he never tires of showing them to a visitor who finds pleasure in such matters, the studio where he weaves and executes his plots in oil and color is not to be passed by with merely a passing allusion. It is in a house which was built more than 150 years ago, one of those charming colonial structures, with quaint half-doors and picturesque porches and gables. The dwelling was built long before Annapolis had its streets laid out as they now are, and the growth of the town has turned the house around, one might say, so that the back is now the front.

It is on Prince George street, not quite a block and a half from Maryland avenue, which, as any Annapolitan will tell you, is the main thoroughfare to the Naval Academy. Arriving at the gate before Mr. Mayer's artistic home, one looks down a comfortable little alley-way leading up to a cozy porch, ex-

it, tokens of a love for ceramics in the occupant. There is also a pipe, a knife, a tankard, an owl, a sword, some plaster casts and other objects that artists love, strewn about. On several easels are pictures.

All this you take in at a rapid glance, but, casting your eyes above, toward

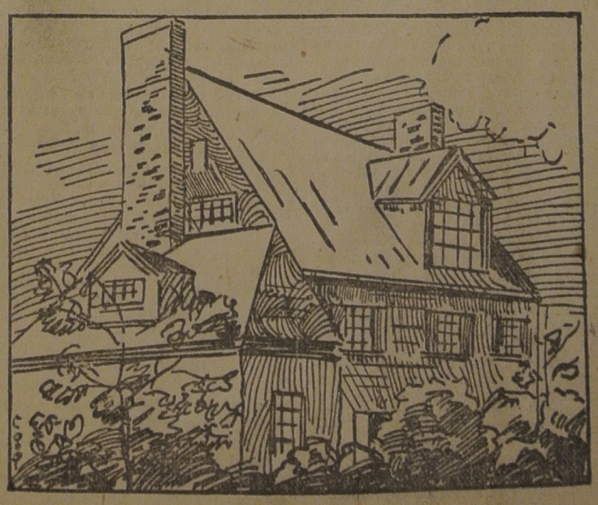
Maryland, had a letter of introduction from Cecilius Calvert, uncle of the reigning baron. It was also the birthplace of the Rev. Henry Slicer, a famous presiding elder, who was sometimes called "the Methodist Pope."

Some of Mr. Mayer's Works.

In this place Mr. Mayer has done a deal of his important work. He has painted the Maryland pictures which now hang in Independence Hall, at Philadelphia; the coat-of-arms of Maryland, which is also there; a number of canvases in the Peabody Institute, of this city, besides a large number of varied paintings belonging to private persons. He also painted two pictures for the United States Government of scenes of life among the Western Indians, among whom he spent much time studying their habits, customs and rites, from an artistic point of view. One of these represents a ceremony which the Sioux tribes perform. On the reverse of the photograph of this work the painter has inscribed: "At the Feast of Mondowmin (the spirit grain) the Indian returns thanks to the Master of Life for the gift of maize. This custom recalls the feast of first fruits of the Jews (Leviticus xxiii., 1), and is celebrated in the council lodge, when the green corn is ripe. A priest, crowned with corn leaves, distributes a portion of the boiled grain to each father of a family, returning thanks to the Great Spirit as he gives it. In retiring, their faces remain fixed on the priest. The personages are portraits of the Kapoosia band of Dakotahs." Mr. Mayer says that he found other customs of the red men which recalled those of the ancient Hebrews.

Sketch of the Artist's Life.

Mr. Mayer, who is devoted to Maryland historic subjects, is a sturdy man of about 60 years of age. His father was Charles F. Mayer, an uncle of the gentleman now bearing that name, and his grandfather was Christian Mayer, Consul-general of Wurtemberg. The artist's father was a lawyer, who once represented Baltimore in the Maryland Senate. Young Mayer early displayed taste for



A HOUSE WITH MANY GABLES.

the skylight, which illumines the room, you are made aware of the surprising fact that there are two levels, a floor above, in addition to that on which you

both art and mechanics, but finally chose to wield the brush instead of the hammer. He was a pupil of Alfred J. Miller and Ernest Fischer, after which

THE SUNDAY HERALD, BALTIMORE, APRIL 5, 1896

A MARYLAND ARTIST'S STUDIO.

Frank B. Mayer Painting the Burning of the Peggy Stewart.

Interesting Nook in Annapolis—Quaint Structure in Which the Painter Does His Work—Curios and Antiquities of Colonial Days All Around Him—Description of the Picture on Which He Is Engaged.

Back in a quiet, retired courtyard at Annapolis, within a stone's throw of the harbor, is situated the picturesque studio of Maryland's historical painter, Frank B. Mayer, one of whose latest works was recently hung in the hall of the House of Delegates.

In this sequestered nook, away from the distractions of a busy world, Mr. Mayer passes most of his time, planning and designing, for he is never at ease unless he has some work on hand which daily grows beneath the inspired touch of his skillful brush. Just now he is engaged in painting an important scene in the history of this state, the burning of the brig Peggy Stewart, a tea-laden vessel, owned by Antony Stewart, a merchant of Annapolis, in the last century, whose former residence, near the Naval Academy, is now being remodeled and renovated for a late purchaser.

As in the "Planting of the Colony," Mr. Mayer has in this picture paid careful attention to detail. The vessel is shown with a list to starboard, as she was run upon Windmill Point. On her deck stands her owner, with a torch in his right hand, for it was he who, to appease the popular wrath, applied the flame to the craft so that her offensive cargo might be consumed. In the background, on the left, is the fire spreading through the doomed brig, and leaping with forked tongue into the rigging. In the foreground is a skiff with half a dozen men in her, the central figure, who is standing, being Dr. Warfield, of Howard county. With him is one of his friends, the two having been members of a Whig club, which removed to the state capital, where it became a military company. In the stern is a friend of Stewart's, while the other three represent the popular element of the colony, one being a blacksmith and the others workingmen of different types.

The canvas is large, 73½ by 53 inches, and it is surrounded by a massive frame, suitable for a painting of its size. Mr. Mayer says it has cost him more work than the other subject, for in painting a vessel of the middle of the last century care had to be taken in order to have it absolutely correct. Diligent attention was paid to details, after authorities were consulted with reference to the structure of the craft. The costumes of the figures also were designed with due regard to accuracy, though the artist's familiarity with colonial dress rendered little study necessary.

Though "The Burning of the Peggy Stewart" is framed, it is not wholly finished. Some details are still to be brought out, and it will soon be completed. It was seen by a number of members of the General Assembly, and a joint resolution was introduced about two weeks ago for the state to buy the work, but the measure failed to make any progress beyond a second reading, owing to the hurry and bustle of the end of the session. Mr. Mayer will offer tending from a door of hospitable proportions. Above, in an odd gable, is a large starfish, which seems to be a distinctive feature of the place, for Mr. Mayer has two more of these creatures standing upon the mantel in the room where he wields his brushes. On entering the house a quiet stairway leads you to a landing, on one side of which is the door to the studio. Here one must be prepared for a surprise. It is a spacious apartment, though the house is not so very large, and around it are strewn various articles in truly artistic disorder. An old cocked hat and a continental coat lie upon the model's throne. A chair of colonial type stands nearby, while a comfortable rocker of modern, yet by no means recent type, invites you to be seated and take your ease.

Curios All About.

On the old black mantel, between two starfish, is a terrapin shell, a true type of the delicious "bird" for which Maryland has a world-wide fame, and than which there is no finer nor more costly food. Two tiny old plates swing beside the wood, evidently with a penknife. The soldiers had probably cut them in the wood during idle hours, while they lounged about the cozy fire, and told stories in some interval of the Revolutionary hostilities. The old mantel now forms a sort of inferior window to a small room which overlooks the studio.

It is a strange fact that this old house, which Mr. Mayer purchased about 20 years ago, once belonged to Benjamin Tasker, president of the State Council, during the rule of Frederick VI, and last Lord Baltimore, and to whom Christopher B. Mayer, the first of the Mayer family to come from Europe to stand, the second extending like a gallery above your head. It is easy to see that there are other inviting things to be found above, and, if you will follow the footsteps of the kindly artist, he will lead you to the realm o'erhead by means of a winding stairway, hiding in a corner behind a picturesque old archway. These ancient steps penetrate an antiquated apartment, which you cross, and, passing beneath a lintel hung with portieres, you emerge upon the gallery of the studio.

FRANCIS MAYER.

Recalls the Revolution.

Here, in a gabled window, Mr. Mayer has a desk of his own design, at which he writes or sketches, as fancy may incline. At the other end of the gallery is another curious thing—a venerable wooden mantel that once spanned a fireplace in the old Annapolis Coffee-house. The artist had this interesting relic scraped down, and, when the paint was removed, there were discovered the names of several French officers cut into the wood, evidently with a penknife. The soldiers had probably cut them in the wood during idle hours, while they lounged about the cozy fire, and told stories in some interval of the Revolutionary hostilities. The old mantel now forms a sort of inferior window to a small room which overlooks the studio.

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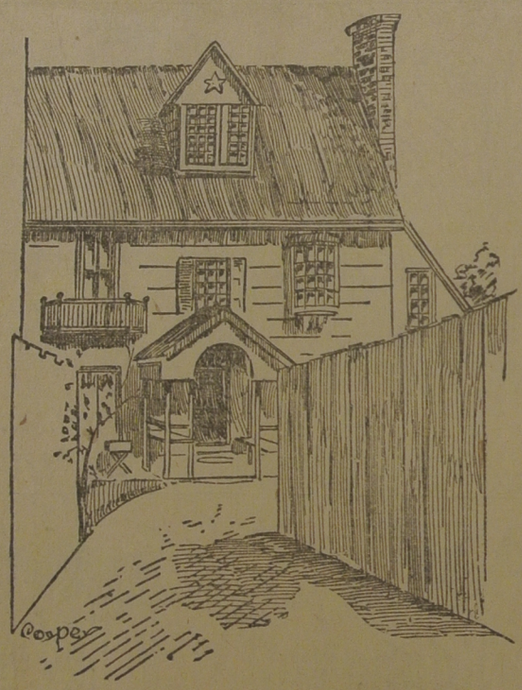
Believes in American Art.

A distinctively American type of art is what Mr. Mayer hopes to see established firmly before the world. "If you go to France," said he, "you see paintings of French subjects; in Germany, of German scenes. Why should it not be so of America?" He is particularly impressed by the artistic value of many occurrences in Maryland history, and thinks that the people in this part of the country have neglected to educate and immortalize the glory of their past as they should have done. Considering the ancient city from an artistic standpoint, he laments the modernizing of Annapolis, but still finds a great deal to cheer and delight him in the various excellent specimens of colonial residences which still exist within its precincts. They have furnished him material for various pictures and he is never more pleased than when reproducing some scene of the old times when the town was gay with belles and beaux, the seat of commerce and the fashionable metropolis.



THE EXTERIOR OF THE STUDIO

Cont. on Left.

A Maryland Painting.

Mr. Frank B. Mayer had his great historical picture of the landing of Calvert and the original colonists of Maryland mounted in one of the large rooms of the library annex, where it was viewed by the Senators, Delegates, judges of the Court of Appeals, the Governor, secretary of State and many others. The painting is a decorative panel for some large apartment. It is handsomely framed and is shown where it has a good light upon it. Judge Roberts, who saw it, bestowed very great praise upon the work. Others expressed very high opinion of its merit, and Mr. Mayer regards it as his master-piece and the chief work of his life.

12 Jan. 1894.

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amendments were adopted and the order passed.

Senator Hayes offered an order that J. Appleton Wilson, of Baltimore, and Frank B. Mayer, of Annapolis, be requested to investigate and report as to the feasibility of restoring the Senate chamber to its original condition and the probable cost, provided they are willing to do so without compensation. It was adopted.

Lucentown News
2 Dec. 1893.

A Historical Painting.

Mr. F. B. Mayer, artist of Annapolis, has nearly completed a painting eight feet and four inches one way and five feet nine the other, of the planting of the cross by the Pilgrim Fathers of Maryland on the Island of St. Clements, now Blackstone Island, in the Potomac River, on March 24, 1634. The painting represents the planting of the first cross within the present limits of the United States. It is a faithful symbol of the religious liberty of the new colony, an act of common belief of the colonists in the one faith and one baptism. All classes and all creeds took part in the great act of religion—here were the cavalier and the Catholic, the mechanic, the soldier, the sailor, the courtier, the priest, the governor and the Indians in their birch bark canoe, half hidden in the rushes of the shore. Six cross-bearers carry the forest made cross and under the waving branches of the greenwood, backed by the blue waves of the Potomac, the sign of common faith and religious liberty was planted. The coloring is fine, the wood, the picturesque garb of colonists, Indians, priests and soldiers, with river beyond, gave the opportunity for picturesque effect and brilliant contrast. These he has taken advantage of, yet with a harmony of color that makes the picture a worthy representation of one of the events of the continent, an act that symbolized the religious toleration of the Maryland colony, which was the keynote of American civil and religious liberty. Sixty figures appear in the painting, the leading ones being splendid portraits of the people of the times, among them are several well-known historical characters.

A SCENE FROM HISTORY.

Washington's Resignation of His Commission at Annapolis.

APPEARANCE OF THE OLD CHAMBER.

Mr. Frank B. Mayer's Description of the Room as It Was in 1783—Simplicity of the Ceremony—The Gallery, the Niche and the Fireplace.

Mr. Frank B. Mayer, one of the committee to estimate the cost of restoring the old Senate Chamber at Annapolis to its former appearance and to report suggestions for the restoration, said yesterday:

"The ceremony of Washington's resignation of his commission as commander-in-chief of the Continental armies, which took place in the State House at Annapolis in 1783, was conducted with all the decorum and dignity peculiar to the time and befitting so grand an example of patriotic duty. It had been arranged by Congress that he should enter the hall accompanied by his aides, who were to remain standing beside him during the ceremony, but the repugnance to personal pomp on the part of Washington seems to have dispensed with this, as well as other proposed ceremonies. He simply entered the hall accompanied by the secretary of the Senate.

"The president of the Senate and all the members of Congress were seated with their hats on 'as representatives of the sovereignty of the Union.' All other spectators were standing and uncovered. The ladies occupied the gallery overlooking the same. When the General arose to deliver his address he bowed to Congress and also when he retired, 'which they returned by uncovering without bowing.'

"The Legislature of Maryland being then in session, there were present besides Congress the Governor of Maryland and his council, also several general officers, the consul-general of France and many distinguished citizens. It is to be presumed that the General and the military men present wore the Continental uniform, while the ladies and the rest of the audience wore the somewhat formal though picturesque dress of the eighteenth century, as yet untouched by the influences which the French revolution soon after introduced.

"The hall in which this event took place was a stately chamber, credited as is the State House to the design of Sir Christopher Wren, but in all likelihood the work of an able artist of his school. A niche and pediment were over the Speaker's chair and facing the entrance beneath a rich gallery. Windows, with small panes and ample window seats, filled two sides, and on the other was a spacious fireplace, with its elaborate and high mantel. Large fire-dogs, a brass chandelier for lamps or candles and sconces or brackets completed the fittings of the room.

"Over the mantel hung the picture of Chatham standing by the altar of liberty, an early work of Charles Wilson Peale, painted in England during his pupilage under Benjamin West, and presented by the artist to his native State in recognition of the many kindnesses extended to him by citizens of Annapolis. The original still hangs in the State House and a mezzotint engraving from it by Peale is probably one of the earliest prints from the hand of an American artist.

"It is to be deeply regretted that in repairs to the building made in 1876 the original appearance of this room was not preserved or restored. The form of the room and the rich cornice alone remain to present to us an impression of the locality where this great event occurred, as well as the ratification of the treaty of peace with Great Britain, the reception of Lafayette and other notable scenes."

Annapolis Evening Capitol
31 July 1899

FROM THE STATE CAPITAL.

A Picture of Historical Interest—Treasurer Owens Holds On.

(Special to The American.) 1893

ANNAPOLIS, November 28.—Mr. F. B. Mayer, artist, of this city, has nearly completed a painting eight feet and four inches one way and five feet nine the other, of the planting of the cross by the Pilgrim Fathers of Maryland on the Island of St. Clements, now Blackstone Island, in the Potomac River, March 24, 1634. It is a beautiful symbol of the religious liberty of the new colony, an act of common belief of the colonists in the one faith and one baptism. All classes and creeds took part in this great act of religion. Here was the cavalier, the Catholic, the mechanic, the soldier, the sailor, the courtier, the priest, the governor, the women, and some Indian maidens in their birch bark canoe, half hidden in the rushes along the shore. Six cross-bearers carry the fresh-made cross, and under the waving branches of the greenwood, backed by the blue waves of the Potomac, the sign of common faith and religious liberty was planted. The coloring is fine; the wood, the picturesque garb of colonists, Indians, priests and soldiers, with river beyond, gave the opportunity for picturesque effect and brilliant contrast. These he has taken advantage of, yet with a harmony of color that makes the picture a worthy representation of one of the events of the continent—an act that symbolized the religious toleration of the Maryland colony, which was the keynote of America's civil and religious liberty. Sixty figures appear in the painting, the leading ones being splendid portraits of the people of the times. Among them are several well-known historical characters.

The three Young Men's Christian Associations of the Naval Academy, Annapolis, and St. John's College will hold a union meeting here Sunday, December 17th. The theme will be "Christian Unity." James R. Primrose will deliver an address on that subject.

Mrs. Basil Kramer, wife of J. Frank Kramer, late treasurer of Annapolis, died here today.

Governor Brown arrived here today, with the secretary of state and his private secretary. The whole force went busily to work, and at noon the Governor was still clearing away his desk to get down to work, part of which was the issuing of some belated commissions. In reply to a question, the Governor said that the Charles county certificates would not be issued today. Governor Brown remained here tonight with Secretary Brantly and Private Secretary Bowerman, and is busily engaged on his message.

DEATH OF JOHN SARTAIN

An Eminent Artist And Engraver Expires In Philadelphia At The Age Of 89 Years.

PHILADELPHIA, PA., Oct. 25.—John Sartain, an eminent artist and engraver, died this morning at the home of his daughter here. Yesterday was his eighty-ninth birthday, and, although nearly every member of the family came to the city to call on him, the customary formal celebration of the event was omitted owing to the aged artist's condition.

Mr. Sartain was born in London in 1808. When twelve years old he began to earn his own living working about the Covent Garden Theatre. At fourteen years of age he was apprenticed to a writer and engraver. In 1828, when twenty years old, he devoted himself to the mezzotint as the more effective method of engraving. His fame and fortune have been based upon it.

In 1830 he came to Philadelphia. He became proprietor and editor of Campbell's Foreign Semi-Monthly Magazine, and Sartain's Magazine was started in 1848.

For twenty-four years he had been a director of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. He received medals and honors from every quarter of the globe, among them being the title of cavalier from the King of Italy. Mr. Sartain was chief of the art department of the Centennial Exposition in 1876, and of the American Exposition held in London in 1887. He was the designer of several public monuments.

While Mr. Sartain was an engraver, he also engaged professionally in painting in oils, in water colors and in miniature on ivory. Prominent among his works are "Christ Rejected," after West; "The Ironworker and King Solomon," after Schussele; "Civil War in Missouri," after Bingham; "Homestead of Henry Clay," after Hamilton; "John Knox and Mary Queen of Scots," after Leutze; "Men of Progress, American Inventors," after Schussele; "The County Election in Missouri," after Bingham; "Zeisberger Preaching to the Indians at Gosgoshunk," after Schussele, and "The Battle of Gettysburg," after Rothermel.

Mr. Sartain's children are remarkably talented. William Sartain, one of his sons, is an associate in the National Academy of Design, has been president of the New York Art Club and was one of the founders of the New York Society of American Artists.

THE LATE FRANK B. MAYER.

By the death of the venerable artist, Frank B. Mayer, of Annapolis, the people of Maryland have lost a valuable and lovable man from their midst. Mr. Mayer, who was in the 72d year of his age, had won a deserved reputation as a painter of historical subjects, to the portrayal of which he devoted much careful study and painstaking work. He was a diligent and well-posted student of local history, especially concerning colonial times. Hence the Ancient City possessed strong attractions for him, so that he took up his residence here a number of years ago. The State of Maryland purchased two of Mr. Mayer's works, and they now adorn the State House. One is "The Planting of the Colony," which represents the first landing of the settlers in Maryland, and the other commemorates "The Burning of the Peggy Stewart," the tea-laden ship which was set on fire in Annapolis harbor by her owner to satisfy the demands of an indignant populace soon after the passage of the notorious stamp act. The artist was particularly proud of these two products of his brush, which he plied with effectionate industry whenever it was employed in the delineation of scenes from Maryland history.

Although Mr. Mayer did not achieve wide fame his failure to do so was doubtless due more to his modesty than to lack of ability in the arena of art. He did, however, win an enviable position as a knight of the easel by the production of paintings of purely artistic merit. At the Paris Salon, where he exhibited when abroad, his work received flattering praise from eminent critics; but, instead of endeavoring to cater to the then prevailing demand for foreign subjects, he chose to pursue his natural bent toward the execution of purely American works. Many of his pictures are now the valued property of various individuals and or-[illegible] in different parts of this coun-

The Washington Statue in the Park.

It is to be regretted that the admirable statue of Washington, by Bartholomew, cannot be rescued from the destruction which certainly awaits it if it be allowed to remain exposed to the weather. Its delicate execution has already suffered and it is only a question of time as to its gradual degradation and ultimate destruction. So refined and valuable a work would gain in dignity and its careful modelling be better appreciated in the more subdued light of an interior if properly placed than exposed to the outdoor glare, while its preservation from the action of our variable climate would be secured. Like many other statues, it is lost in the vastness of our park and would be far more effective as an adornment of some prominent building. Perhaps in our new courthouse a suitable location could be arranged for it, or, as a central object, in the beautiful rotunda of the present custom-house, which, it is to be hoped, may be restored to its original spaciousness and retained in the new building which is proposed. Within the base of the Washington monument or in the City Hall a place might be found, though, unfortunately, little provision has been made for such embellishment.

It would be useless to suggest that this work would most appropriately and worthily fill the niche behind the President's chair in the Senate chamber, at Annapolis, where Washington resigned his commission, should that room become a consecrated memorial, as it should be, of the great event. It seems admirably adapted to this destination and, perhaps, a copy could be had failing, to obtain the original for the purpose.

Fully appreciating Mr. Pratt's generous interest in the great sculptor's work, would it not be well to consider the permanent preservation of the work certainly exposed to destruction if it remains unsheltered?

F. B. M.

Mar. 1. 1895.

See back

SUN, BALTIMORE, SATURDAY MORNING, JULY 29, 1899.

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DEATH OF F. B. MAYER

A Maryland Artist And Painter Of Historical Pictures.

DIED AT HIS ANNAPOLIS HOME

A List Of His Principal Works Of Art—His Life And His Family—Devoted To Maryland History.

[Special Dispatch to the Baltimore Sun.]

ANNAPOLIS, MD., July 28.—After a lingering illness from eczema and kidney trouble, which developed into dropsy, Mr. Frank B. Mayer, the well-known artist, died in Annapolis, this morning, at his residence, on Market street. Mr. Mayer was first taken sick last December. He recovered partly and was able to go out for a few weeks. His fatal illness began about a month ago, since which time he has never left the house.

Mr. Mayer was the son of the late Charles Frederick Mayer, a shining light of the Maryland bar of his day. Mr. Frank B. Mayer was born in Baltimore city, December 27, 1827. His parents were born in Baltimore, of South German and North Irish descent, respectively. His father was the son of Christian Mayer, who emigrated to Baltimore in 1782, and who was senior partner of the firm of Mayer & Brantz, one of the leading German houses trading with Europe, India and China. He was Consul-General of Wurtemburg, and first president of the German Society of Maryland.

Inheriting from his mother particularly a taste for art, but having a strong propensity for mechanics and architecture, Frank B. Mayer's first master was that talented Baltimore artist, Alfred J. Miller, whose records of Indian life and other works of merit have a national value. Subsequently the young artist became a pupil of Ernest Fischer, of Dresden, then residing in Baltimore, and during a residence of eight years in Paris enjoyed the guidance of Messrs. Brion and Gleyne.

Art based upon home surroundings and local history was his aim, though often diverted from that direction by compliance with the necessity which the prevailing taste for foreign subjects exacted.

What he did of value, considered as historic record, are many portraits in crayon and oil; magazine articles, with illustrative drawings, referring to Maryland life and history; designs representing the procession, etc., in connection with the Sesqui-Centennial Anniversary of Baltimore; paintings, giving scenes or incidents of colonial life; a large decorative panel, grouping the men most prominent in the advancement of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad previous to 1880; a portrait of Cecil Calvert, in the Cincinnati Museum; the treaty of Traverse des Sioux, Minnesota, 1851, with a journal, and many drawings of Indian character, ceremonies, etc., at that period. Among his works may be enumerated "The Feast of Mondawmin and the Thunder Dance;" "Te Deum Laudamus, or the Landing of Leonard Calvert, March 24, 1634;" "The Nineteenth Century;" "The Mill Boy of the Slashes" (Henry Clay); "Benjamin Franklin;" "Seventy-six;" "John Owens as Dr. Ollapod," in the Players' Club, New York; "The charge of Captain May;" illustrations of "Captain Canot, or Twenty Years of a Slaver," and of "Mexico, Historical and Descriptive," by Brantz Mayer; "Doings and Dreamings," in the Corcoran Gallery.

Of works resting on their artistic merits the following may be mentioned: "The Violinist," "The Open Gate," "The Attic Philosopher," "Independence," "The Lost Letter," "A Cavalier," "The Jester," "The Lookout," "The Rose," "The Marine Painter," "The Haberdasher," "Savoy, 1500," "The Tapsters and Mine Host," "Waiting Orders," "The Bride of Savoy," "Talking Business," "The World to Come," "At Sea—Cabin of the Ship Caslida," decorative panels, illustrating "Music," several landscapes, architectural drawings and innumerable studies. The total up to December, 1892, was about 100 portraits and 95 pictures.

Mr. Mayer procured for the State of Maryland the portrait of George, First Lord Baltimore, and obtained the substitution of the admirable statue of De Kalb, by Keyser, in place of an ordinary memorial. In both these efforts he took great pleasure, and would have been glad if he had been allowed to secure other desirable historical works for the State. On this subject he said:

"I should like to see the history of Maryland illustrated by the State's artists, of whom we have produced and exiled an unusual number."

Besides several medals from the Maryland Institute, Mr. Mayer received the medal and diploma of the Exposition of 1876 and exhibited from 1864 to 1869 at the Paris "Salon."

While his historical picture of the landing of Calvert was yet on the easel, he said: "My remaining ambition is to finish the Leonard Calvert picture and to arrange the collection of old letters I have from about 1760 to our time, together with my reminiscences, jokes and incidents, characters and customs, as I can recall them with an artist's accuracy and the deep impressions of an observant child."

While acting as assistant librarian of the Maryland Historical Society Mr. Mayer made the drawings on wood to illustrate his uncle's works on Mexico and with the pay was enabled to make a tour through the then "Western country" (as his father had in 1818 visited the then West as far as Tennessee), joining the Governor of the Territory of Minnesota, Alexander Ramsey, and Luke Lea, Esq., the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, in an expedition among the Dakota Indians, which resulted in the treaty for the purchase of the present State of Minnesota, July, 1851. This gave him exceptional opportunities to make sketches from life and a journal of experiences and observations of the Indian. He afterward visited Florida and the South and in Europe saw Holland, France, Belgium, South Germany, Switzerland, England and Ireland. Of his Indian journal Mr. Mayer said: "I believe this Indian journal with the sketches to be of sufficient value to be preserved. Beyond a study for a large picture of the 'Treaty of Traverno des Sioux,' I have not been able to get the State of Minnesota to have painted the actual scene of their beginning as a State." While in Paris during the siege of 1870 and passing through the German armies to Sedan he had a chance to get a sense of the realities and barbarities of actual warfare. Two of Mr. Mayer's recent paintings, namely, "The Planting of the Colony" and "The Burning of the Peggy Stewart," were purchased by the State of Maryland and hang in the Statehouse at Annapolis.

Mr. Mayer married in 1883 Mrs. Ellen Brewer, widow of Charles B. Brewer, of Annapolis, who survives him.

During his residence in Annapolis Mr. Mayer was deeply interested in improving the town, and offered many suggestions to restore old residences to their original colonial state.

Mr. Mayer was very popular with those engaged in art studies, and often received visits and entertained members of the Charcoal and other clubs when they came to Annapolis. His funeral will take place Sunday, July 30, at 5 P. M.

SUNDAY HERALD, BALTIMORE, JULY 30, 1899.

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Mr. Mayer was a familiar figure in Annapolis, where he was known to everybody, and he also had a wide acquaintance in this, his native city, which he occasionally visited. He will long be held in fond remembrance by all who knew him.

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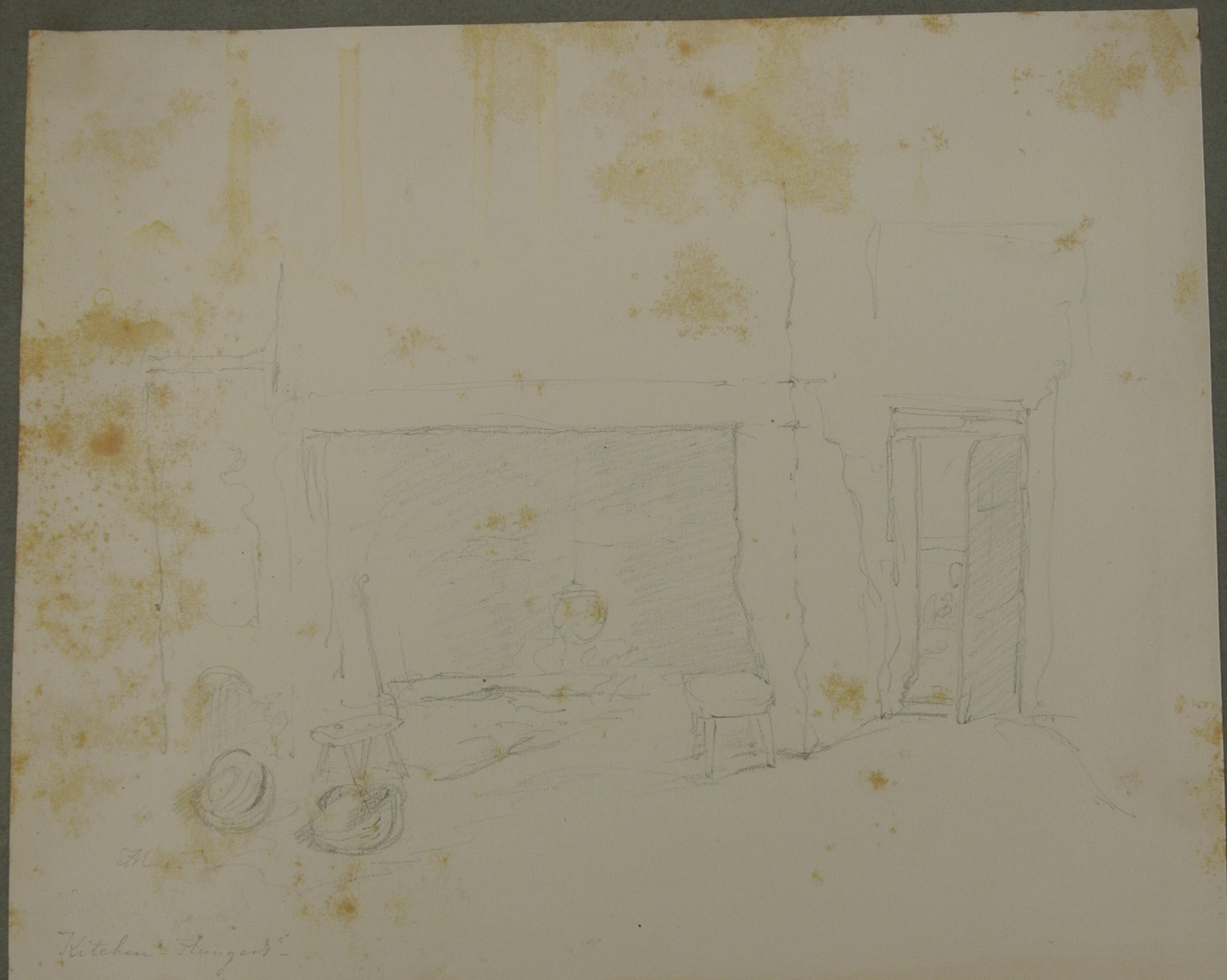
Hunger's – Northampton Co. Va. – May 28th 1872 –

Built – AD. 1740 –



Kitchen at Hungerford

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