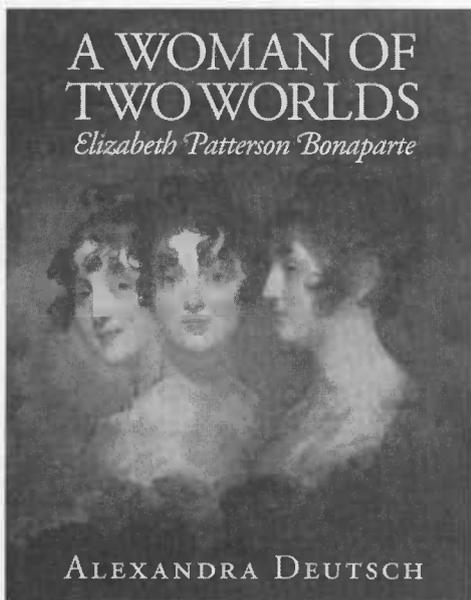


Winter 2015

MARYLAND  
*Historical Magazine*



# Friends of the Press of the Maryland Historical Society



The Maryland Historical Society continues its commitment to publish the finest new work in Maryland history. Next year, 2017, marks twelve years since the Publications Committee, with the advice and support of the development staff, launched the Friends of the Press, an effort dedicated to raising money to be used solely for bringing new titles into print. The society is particularly grateful to H. Thomas Howell, past committee chair, for his unwavering support of our work and for his exemplary generosity. The committee is pleased to announce the following new title, funded in part through the Friends of the Press.

In our latest offering, *A Woman of Two Worlds: Elizabeth Patterson Bonaparte*, Curator Alexandra Deutsch literally “unpacks” Elizabeth Patterson Bonaparte’s personal belongings in this intuitively sophisticated material culture biography of the woman whose seductive beauty and tragic marriage repeatedly pulls us back for another look and, ideally, a deeper understanding of the person behind the celebrity. This work expands Elizabeth Patterson Bonaparte’s story and reveals the complex life of a romantic and rebellious young woman whose deep hurt drove her to the courts of Europe and who ultimately found comfort and satisfaction in her hard-won financial independence.

The Press’s titles continue the mission first set forth in 1844, of discovering and publishing Maryland history. We invite you to become a supporter and help us fill in the unknown pages of Maryland history. If you would like to make a tax deductible gift to the Friends of the Press, please direct your donation to Development, Maryland Historical Society, 201 West Monument Street, Baltimore, MD 21201. For additional information on MdHS publications, contact Patricia Dockman Anderson, Director of Publications and Library Services, 410-685-3750 x317 or [panderson@mdhs.org](mailto:panderson@mdhs.org).

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# MARYLAND

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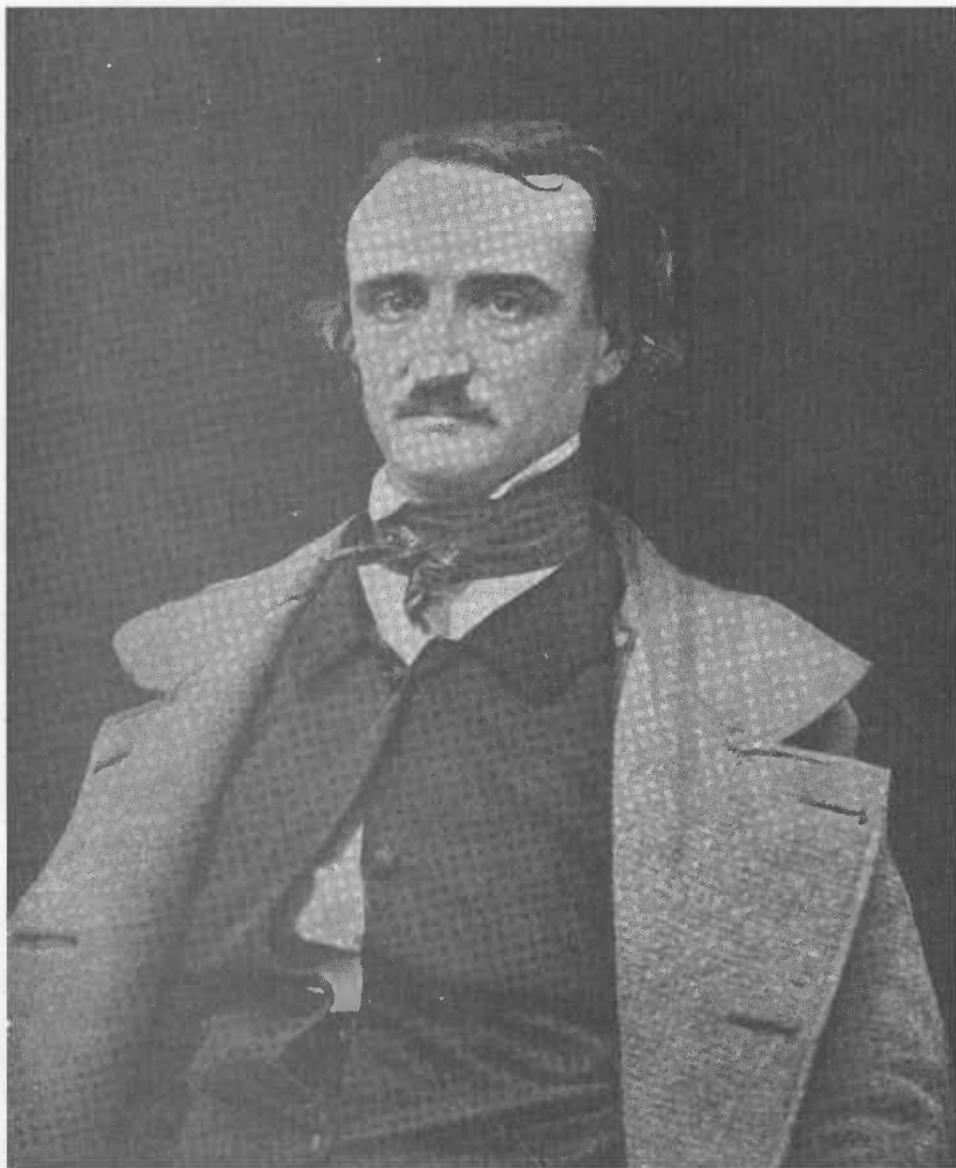
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Cover: Shuffle Along promotional poster featuring Noble Sissle and Chorus, 1921.

James Hubert (Eubie) Blake was born in Baltimore on February 7, 1887, and died in Brooklyn, New York, on February 12, 1983, a few days before his ninety-sixth birthday. Composer, lyricist, and pianist, he was a major figure in the revival of ragtime and early jazz, returning them to prominence as true American musical genres. Blake was playing piano professionally and composing by the age of sixteen. His career began to take shape when he met fellow musician Noble Sissle in 1915. Together, the pair wrote hundreds of songs, many of which became major hits. Blake and Sissle also collaborated on writing the musical play *Shuffle Along*, which featured classic songs such as "I'm Just Wild About Harry." Blake and Sissle's most famous work, was significant not only for reviving the black musical genre, but also for helping launch influential young performers and composers who went on to their own successful careers. Among them were Josephine Baker, Florence Mills, Paul Robeson, and William Grant Still. Many songs from *Shuffle Along* became hits and were recorded dozens of times. Blake gave talks and performed well into his nineties. The musical *Eubie!*, based on his songs, appeared in 1978 and became a major Broadway hit. Blake was a frequent guest on the *Tonight Show* during the 1970s, and among his many awards was the Presidential Medal of Honor. To recognize his approaching hundredth birthday, the Kennedy Center presented the televised *Eubie Blake: A Century of Music*, which won an Emmy Award in 1983. (Maryland Historical Society, gift of the estate of Eubie Blake.)

—Michael Mark

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*Edgar Allan Poe's tale, "MS. Found in a Bottle," won the Baltimore Visitor writing contest, but the work's complexity prompted the paper's editor to commission a response. (Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore City Life Museum Collection.)*

# Edgar Allan Poe, Uncle Ben, and the 1833 *Baltimore Saturday Visiter* Contest

PETER MOLIN

While living in Baltimore after his dismissal in 1831 from West Point, Edgar Allan Poe began writing stories that featured learned prose saturated with extravagant literary effects. His Baltimore stories promoted the idea that literature was a cultivated affair more concerned with refined pleasure than with morality and utility. Poe had like-minded friends and allies in the local literary sphere, but Baltimore was also home to young writers who believed that fiction should teach and reinforce orthodox virtues and salutary behavior. The fiction written by members of this cohort was, compared to Poe's, simplistic and didactic. Crafting and selling stories in the period of American literary history when short fiction's aesthetic and formal qualities were first taking form and becoming popular—a process that would essentially result in boundaries between “serious” and “light” literature—the two camps wrote tales representing aesthetic philosophies and ethical stances. The conflict between what may be called Baltimore's literary aesthetes and its literary moralists played out in a fertile publishing milieu that saw a number of periodicals devoted to literature attempted between 1827 and 1833. The increasingly commercial status of magazine publishing made the differences dividing the aesthetes and the moralists stark: at stake were the preferences of Baltimore readers.

The conflict over the uses of literature culminated in a series of stories, poems, and events associated with a famous fiction and poetry contest sponsored by the *Baltimore Saturday Visiter* in 1833. As Poe scholars and buffs know, Poe's “MS. Found in a Bottle,” a sensational tale about an alienated aristocrat's strange trip aboard two ships in the South Seas, won the fiction portion of the contest. Not so well known is evidence that indicates that the victory prompted a quick backlash within Baltimore's print community. While Poe's victory was being publically fêted, privately some of his peers were concerned by what the victory signified. Especially interesting in this regard is a piece entitled “Genius and Application” that appeared embedded in a column called “My Fireside, No. 11” in the *Saturday Visiter* a week after the paper published “MS. Found in a Bottle” in its October 19, 1833 edition. Written by a pseudonymous

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author known as "Uncle Ben," "Genius and Application" is a didactic tale about the life courses of two young men who separately exemplify the traits named in the title. A reworking of the tortoise-and-hare fable, the story's conclusion depicts the triumph of one persistent protagonist and the sad demise of a second, more talented protagonist who unfortunately lacks "application." Placed directly below and then continuing in the columns adjacent to "The Coliseum," a poem that Poe had entered in the poetry portion of the *Saturday Visiter* contest, the visual impression is that Uncle Ben's tale brackets and contains Poe's verse, and by implication comments upon Poe's victory and even Poe himself. The impression is enhanced by the fact that "Genius and Application" contains odd but undeniable references to Edgar Poe and his brother Henry, a Baltimore resident until his death in 1831. In Uncle Ben's fable, the two protagonists are named "Allen" and "Henry" and are given the same Boston birthplace as Edgar Allan and Henry Poe. The tale also describes events known to have occurred in Henry's life, such as a trip to South America, and ends with its own Henry dying of the same consumption that killed Henry Poe.

The confluence of facts and hints suggests that *Saturday Visiter* owners Charles Cloud and William Pouder, in conjunction with editor John Hewitt, commissioned the unknown Uncle Ben to write "Genius and Application" to shape the reception of "MS. Found in a Bottle." Within the story, the "Allen" character represents "application," while "Henry" is the tragic "genius." In this light, "Genius and Application" celebrates Edgar Allan's triumph in the contest, suggests that it is the just reward for his hard work and perseverance, and predicts more accomplishments to come as he begins his career in letters. But a deeper understanding of the literary war between Baltimore's literary aesthetes and literary moralists suggests that "MS. Found in a Bottle" and "Genius and Application" represented opposing sets of thematic priorities and stylistic signatures possible in short fiction. Feeling the need to mediate or respond to the literary decision of the judges they themselves had recruited, the *Saturday Visiter* mavens placed "Genius and Application" in the October 26 "My Fireside" where readers, Poe among them, would surely read it and recognize its relevance. Why? It is likely that Cloud, Pouder, and Hewitt mistrusted Poe's story and feared that it would also be misunderstood and disliked by their readers.

Carefully reading "MS. Found in a Bottle" and "Genius and Application" side-by-side uncovers a lost chapter in the story of Poe's relatively unknown Baltimore years, but the benefits of such a study extend beyond the biographical. Taken together, as the two tales surely were meant to be taken, "MS. Found in a Bottle" and "Genius and Application" represent sculpted statements offered for the consideration of *Saturday Visiter* readers. In the local magazine ventures that followed upon the *Saturday Visiter* contest, the competition of story styles, subjects, and themes would be repeated many times, while a broader version of the battle played out in other magazines nationwide. The prizes were readership and other forms of approval, such as republication, new commissions, and increased influence within the community

of magazine insiders. Eventually, the cultivated sensationalism of "MS. Found in a Bottle" would linger longer in the literary sensibility of the nation's intelligentsia, and Poe would succeed (probably beyond his wildest dreams) in making his literary aesthetics highly influential among the scholars, teachers, and authors of short fiction who followed him. But his victory was pyrrhic, for the moralistic and earnest "Genius and Application" more accurately previewed the emerging preferences of everyday Baltimore readers and a favored American fiction style that distrusted complexity and density while giving preference to a more accessible prose style and less thematic depth.

DUBBED BY CONTEMPORARIES the "Golden Age of Periodicals," the years between 1825 and 1850 saw between four and five thousand magazine ventures attempted in the young republic.<sup>1</sup> The readership of any one periodical might be small—Ralph Waldo Emerson's *Dial* never attained a circulation over three hundred, for example—but not necessarily so. Subscriptions to a popular Philadelphia woman's magazine, *Godey's Lady's Book*, the nation's largest circulation monthly, numbered 25,000 in 1839 and reached the 150,000 mark before the Civil War.<sup>2</sup> The largest magazines were associated with major publishing centers such as New York, Boston, and Philadelphia, but subscribers were dispersed across the nation. Emerson himself was well aware of just how many readers magazines might touch, for in an 1843 journal entry he wrote that newspaper publisher Horace Greeley "tells me that *Graham's Magazine* has seventy thousand subscribers, and I may write a lecture, if I will, to seventy thousand readers."<sup>3</sup> If anything, Emerson underestimated the number of potential readers, for a growing network of magazine libraries and reading rooms and a habit of sharing ensured that most periodicals were perused by more than one reader. The numbers attesting to magazine popularity are reinforced in spirit by a famous pronouncement Poe made in 1848: "The whole tendency of the age is Magazine-ward." Poe's comment was self-interested, since he dreamed of being a successful magazine editor and proprietor as well as an author, but he was not wrong.<sup>4</sup>

In smaller American cities and towns, periodical entrepreneurs attempted to emulate big city rivals and to provide outlets for regional writers. In Baltimore, authors keenly sensed the excitement and aggressively participated in the national mania. John Stuart Skinner's *American Farmer* (1819) and *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine* (1829), for example, were two of America's first successful "niche" periodicals, crafted and marketed to suit the interests of particular audiences within the reading public. So was Benjamin Lundy's *The Genius of Universal Emancipation*. In 1824, Lundy moved the nation's first important abolitionist journal to Baltimore and in 1829 recruited William Lloyd Garrison to join him there. Lundy and Garrison did not long stay in a town hostile to abolition, but their politically inflected intersection of race and print was an early sign of the approaching tide of periodicals.

The vibrancy of Baltimore's periodical scene was also reflected in the comments

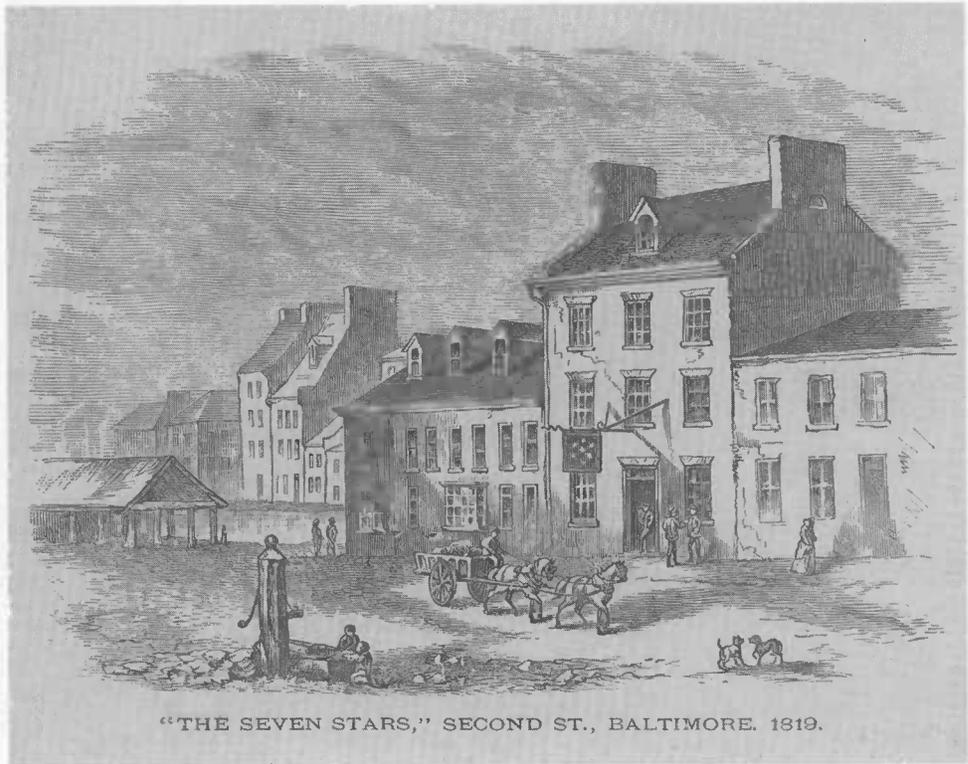


Timothy Shay Arthur (1809–1885), prolific and popular American author, member of the Seven Stars, and possibly “Uncle Ben.” (Ellis Paxson Oberholtzer, *The Literary History of Philadelphia* [Philadelphia: George W. Jacobs & Co., 1906].)

of its participants. “Our book tables are crowded with the best and most spirited periodicals of this and other countries,” sang out a Baltimore weekly called the *Young Men’s Paper*.<sup>5</sup> According to John Hewitt, who edited several local magazines in the 1830s, “every Saturday night” the city’s “periodical stores” were “crowded with people hungry for literature.”<sup>6</sup> Another scene participant, Nathan Brooks, corroborated these impressions. “The astonishing number of Quarterlies and Monthlies, Weeklies and Dailies,” Brooks wrote in his magazine the *American Museum*, “which pour in upon our table, from every city and almost every village in the land, present the most certain evidences of the thirst for information, which characterizes our people.”<sup>7</sup> Rallying his peers to compete with national rivals, Brooks urged, “Speed the Baltimore press!”<sup>8</sup>

Poe’s biographers have never quite captured the spirit of his immersion in Baltimore’s periodical scene or suggested that it might have constituted a positive enticement that attracted Poe to the city.<sup>9</sup> Poe first came to Baltimore in 1827 after a brief, tumultuous stay at the University of Virginia. In Baltimore, he associated primarily with his brother Henry and Lambert Wilmer, both mainstays of a short-lived magazine called the *North American, a Weekly Journal of Politics, Science, and Literature* (not to be confused with the much more famous and prestigious Boston quarterly, the *North American Review*). Poe stayed only a few months in Baltimore on his first visit before joining the army, but, after purchasing his discharge in 1829, he returned to the city and lived there for over a year before entering West Point in the summer of 1830.

Back in Baltimore, Poe joined, or rejoined, a group of young men, all lovers of



*The Seven Stars Tavern, Baltimore, 1819, gathering place for the city's young writers. Some, including Poe, formed the Seven Stars writing group. (Maryland Historical Society.)*

literature, who called themselves the Seven Stars in honor of the tavern in which they met. Weekly, the Seven Stars gathered to read each other their works in progress, socialize, and plot their rises in the print world. Besides the Poe brothers, the core Seven Stars included Nathan Brooks, Timothy Shay (T. S.) Arthur, John McJilton, John Lofland, William Carpenter, and Brantz Mayer. Others who attended the gatherings were Wilmer, Hewitt (who like Poe briefly attended West Point before turning to letters), and a Harvard drop-out named Rufus Dawes. The Seven Stars started a number of magazines in the wake of the *North American's* demise. The first was Rufus Dawes's *Emerald*, begun in 1828. Soon after came John Hewitt's *Minerva*, and in 1829 Dawes and Hewitt merged their magazines to form the *Emerald and Minerva*, with Hewitt as editor and Dawes as a primary contributor. Other magazines of the period include the *Wreath and Literary Shamrock*, the *Baltimore Times*, and two journals edited by women, the *Young Ladies Journal* and the *National Magazine*. Four or eight-page weeklies, or longer monthlies, the early Baltimore magazines were dense with short tales, poetry, reviews, and literary chit-chat, much of it composed personally by overburdened publisher-editor-authors and their friends among the Seven Stars.<sup>10</sup>



*Brantz Mayer (1809–1879), attorney, secretary of legation, and author. (Maryland Historical Society, estate of Mrs. Brantz Mayer Roszel.)*

Not clearly evident in the beginning was a general division of the Seven Stars into two camps based on class background and literary sensibility. Edgar Poe, Dawes, Lofland, and Hewitt had all attended college or came from families of some privilege. In their imaginative works and literary essays they liked to include learned references and heightened vocabulary, and they infused their stories and poems with satirical and defiant accents. Although not salacious or subversive, they were ambivalent about the idea that literature should be overtly moralistic or utilitarian. Brooks, McJilton, and Arthur, on the other hand, were pious and sober. Each gravitated to literary endeavor because it offered escape from humdrum daily life, but the three also believed that literature might usefully teach salutary lessons and inculcate moral behavior. Their perspectives were linked to their backgrounds and stations in life. Brooks had attended college, but McJilton and Arthur were sons of working men and each had served an apprenticeship—McJilton to a cabinet maker, Arthur to a tailor. Both had used autodidactic study regimens to nourish their love of literature and launch their careers in print. Now, as young men, Brooks and McJilton taught in the Baltimore school system, while Arthur worked first as a clerk in a warehouse and then as an agent for an investment firm.

By 1830, most of the other Seven Stars had begun writing short stories and poetry for one another's magazines but not Poe, who abstained from writing fiction while crafting the poetry that eventually appeared in 1829's *Al Aaraaf* and 1831's *Poems*. A negative review of *Al Aaraaf* in Hewitt and Dawes's *Minerva and Emerald* that called it "a literary curiosity, full of burning thoughts, which so charm the reader, that he forgets he is traveling over a pile of brick-bats," caused Poe to nurse grudges against both for years.<sup>11</sup> Only after returning to Baltimore following a short period

of attendance at West Point in 1830 and a stopover in New York in the first part of 1831 to arrange the publication of *Poems* did Poe turn to fiction. Quickly making up time, by late 1831 he had completed a collection of eleven stories titled *Tales of the Folio Club*. This collection never appeared in the hardcover volume Poe envisioned, but the tales were linked. Each was narrated in the style of a recognizable literary personage, and to be fully appreciated the pieces should not be read piecemeal in assorted ephemeral publications. The tales themselves blended a defiant, mocking spirit with cultivated mannerisms Poe might have learned from popular British authors such as Edward Bulwer-Lytton and Benjamin Disraeli, or the German author of supernatural romances, E. T. A. Hoffmann. The opening lines of the collection's proposed introduction illustrate the convergence of impudence and learnedness: "The Folio Club is, I am sorry to say, a mere Junto of *Dunderheadism*. I think too the members are quite as ill-looking as they are stupid."<sup>12</sup>

Late in 1831, Poe entered several Folio Club stories in a contest sponsored by the Philadelphia *Saturday Courier*. He did not win the hundred-dollar first prize, but in 1832 the *Saturday Courier* anonymously published five Poe tales, the first known appearances of his fiction in print. The first, "Metzengerstein," is macabre, while the others—"The Duc de l'Omelette," "A Tale of Jerusalem," "A Decided Loss," and "The Bargain Lost"—are comic.<sup>13</sup> Forgoing thematic seriousness and moral earnestness, Poe narrated these stories in a gleefully manic prose voice full of exotic language, striking images, and extravagant literary effects, such as allusions, snippets of foreign language, and outlandish punctuation. All contain sensational elements, including strange locales, odd protagonists, and bizarre, sometimes gruesome or other-worldly events. The opening lines of "The Duc de l'Omelette," a tale about an aristocrat who first chokes to death on an avian delicacy called the ortolan and then beats the devil in a game of cards, illustrate.

Keats fell by a criticism. Who was it died of "The *Andromache*"? Ignoble souls!  
— De L'Omelette perished of an ortolan. *L'histoire en est brève*. Assist me, Spirit  
of Apicius!

A golden cage bore the little winged wanderer, enamored, melting, indolent,  
to the *Chaussee D'Antin*, from its home in far Peru. From its queenly possessor  
La Bellissima, to the Duc De L'Omelette, six peers of the empire conveyed the  
happy bird.<sup>14</sup>

Other stories also contain many passages portraying urban anarchy and hybrid blends of man and beast. In "King Pest," for example, besotted survivors of a plague make merry in a desolated London, while "Epimanes (Four Beasts in One)" portrays the chaos that ensues when "wild animals domesticated" in the ancient Syrian city of Antioch revert to feral behavior after seeing the city-state's monarch dressed in the costume of a camel.<sup>15</sup> Reveling in insubordinate and violent behavior, stories such

as "King Pest" and "Epimanes" portray events that would be terrifying to experience in actuality.

The Folio Club tales were written and published during a period in which little is known about Poe's activities. Though by now his break with his foster father John Allan was complete, it is unclear exactly how he survived in the years after he returned from West Point. While sharing a bedroom with Henry in his aunt's house, Poe would have observed the decline and death of Henry in 1831 from the combined effects of debauchery and disease. That he was able to write at all is astonishing, but the Folio Club tales redirect what must have been his personal agony during their writing into a fantastical vision of escape from an unhappy family life, poverty, and the pain of watching Henry succumb. Whether for this reason or by the mere bent of Poe's genius, by defying seriousness and prudence the stories free themselves from civic and moral purposefulness. Through extravagantly imaginative story-telling, they seem to be saying, one might surmount personal limitations, familial expectations, economic oppressiveness, the cumulative weight of history and tradition, and any other factors that might impinge on individual and creative autonomy and idiosyncrasy.

The Folio Club tales exposed latent fissures within the Seven Stars between those who believed fiction served entertainment ends first and those who believed stories should be utilitarian and moralistic. The split between aesthetes and moralists revolved around basic questions: Was literature meant to be useful or entertaining? If pleasurable, wherein lay its pleasing elements? If instructive, then how? Even more simply: what did audiences want, and for what were they willing to pay? Poe and a fellow Seven Star, Nathan Brooks, took up the issue in editorial pronouncements published in 1830 and 1831. Their viewpoints diametrically opposed one another's, and each seemed to have had the other in mind when they wrote.

Brooks's statement appears in a gift book he edited and published in 1830 called *The Amethyst*. As he compiled material, Brooks obtained submissions from fellow Seven Stars such as John Hewitt, T. S. Arthur, John McJilton, and Brantz Mayer.<sup>16</sup> Brooks's preface to *The Amethyst* articulated his vision:

The literary articles which are submitted to the public, are all original—the production of writers of our own city, in the selection of which [the editor] has been careful to admit only such as might be, at once, interesting, innocent, and subservient to morality.

*The Amethyst* stories and poems indeed were "innocent" and "subservient to morality," as the titles of several of Brooks' contributions illustrate: "Hopes," "Romance," "Friendship," "Pity," and "Virtue." Several stories and poems were fond remembrances of dead or dying loved ones. A poem of this type was "A"'s "My Birthplace."<sup>17</sup> The final stanza reads:

To slumber with the wakeless dead;  
 Snatched off in childhood's bloom,  
 And "hurried to the tomb."  
 To the full heart,  
 It would impart,  
 A sweet consoling balm;  
 That "joy of grief,"  
 Would bring relief,  
 And every struggle calm.

Placid and decorous, they exerted a steady pressure on readers to think conventionally and behave ethically and prudently.

Though Brooks asked Poe to contribute to *The Amethyst*, the published volume contained no Poe poems or stories.<sup>18</sup> Poe was at West Point while Brooks made his final selections, which may be the reason he did not contribute, but more to the point Poe famously rejected the idea that literature served morality. In "Letter to B—" published by Poe in 1831's *Poems* ("B—" may well have been Brooks), Poe declared that a poem has "for its immediate object, pleasure not truth."<sup>19</sup> Writing of Wordsworth, whose poetry he disliked, Poe proclaimed:

He [Wordsworth] seems to think that the end of poetry is, or should be, instruction—yet it is a truism that the end of our existence is happiness; if so, the end of every separate part of our existence—everything connected with our existence should be still happiness. Therefore the end of instruction should be happiness; and happiness is another name for pleasure;—therefore the end of instruction should be pleasure: yet we see the above mentioned opinion implies precisely the reverse.<sup>20</sup>

Poe suggested that all life's endeavors, including the writing of poetry, should aim to provide pleasure. To that end, instructive elements in literature were necessary only to the extent that they contributed to an overall experience of delight. Poe was not naïve, for he recognized that learning can be pleasurable and that usefulness could be "happiness," but utilitarianism is not paramount as Wordsworth would have it. Rather, literature best communicates instruction indirectly. Poe also addressed the subject of popularity in "Letter to B—," or what he called the "world's good opinion."<sup>21</sup> He proposed that Shakespeare is an author admired by practicing poets and "the world," but quickly asserted that Shakespeare's example was misleading. To Poe, the average reader who admired Shakespeare was a "fool" with no opinions of literary merit of his or her own devising.<sup>22</sup> Instead, mass audiences obtained their ideas and preferences from learned superiors "a step higher on the Andes of the mind."<sup>23</sup> In contrast to Brooks's appeal to an indiscriminate, monolithic reading audience ("the public"), Poe asserted that only a "few gifted individuals" can discern greatness.<sup>24</sup>

Thus, by 1831, the lines in Baltimore's literary sands had been drawn. Two years later, the notions of aesthetics and audience rehearsed by Brooks and Poe received even more striking articulation in the stories and events associated with the 1833 *Saturday Visiter* contest. Founded in 1832 by Charles Cloud and William Poudet, the *Saturday Visiter* billed itself as "[a] family newspaper devoted to literature, science, the useful arts, general intelligence, and amusement."<sup>25</sup> Though Poudet's biography is obscure, Cloud was a newspaper publisher from Elkton, Maryland, who later would become Baltimore's sheriff and school commissioner. The owners' four-page, five-column weekly resembled a newspaper more than a magazine, and within its pages fiction and poetry appeared beside miscellaneous bits of information; ship, stage, and rail schedules; and dozens of advertisements for commercial products and services, including many by slave dealers.

The imaginative literature in the *Saturday Visiter* did not forgo sensational styles, subjects, and themes, but such fare was now subordinate to domestic material closer to the interests of Baltimore readers. By and large, stories were undemanding and practical, often filled with asides that gratuitously offered chunks of nominally useful information. Readers apparently liked the format, for the *Saturday Visiter* soon claimed the largest circulation of any Maryland paper.<sup>26</sup> According to its first editor, Lambert Wilmer, "At the end of six months, it was firmly established; and not only paid all its expenses but began to yield some profit to its conductors."<sup>27</sup>

In Wilmer, owners Cloud and Poudet had hired the most accomplished of the writers associated with the Seven Stars. Already a newspaper veteran when he and Henry Poe contributed tales, poems, and verse-drama to the *North American* in 1827, by 1830 Wilmer was frequently appearing in various magazines and papers in both Baltimore and Philadelphia. Firmly in the camp of Poe regarding aesthetics, Wilmer's definitive statement would come in a June 1840 essay published in *Godey's Lady's Book* called "Some Thoughts on Works of Fiction." "We know that few persons take up a novel for the purpose of receiving instruction of any kind from its pages," Wilmer would write, "amusement is all that is sought by the reader and (generally speaking) all that is intended by the writer." Continuing, Wilmer declared, "If people are to be cheated into instruction, it must be done cautiously. The medicine must be well disguised; for if once detected, it becomes more distasteful than if offered in its original purity." Poe considered Wilmer a friend and an ally, and Wilmer published in the *Saturday Visiter* a glowing notice of Poe's tales in progress:

Mr. Edgar A. Poe has favored us with the perusal of some manuscript tales written by him. If we were merely to say that we had read them, it would be a compliment, for manuscripts of this kind are very seldom read by anyone but the author. But we may further say that we have read these tales' every syllable, with the greatest pleasure, and for originality, richness of imagery and purity of the style, few American authors in our opinion have produced anything

superior. With Mr. Poe's permission, we may hereafter lay one or two of the tales before our readers.<sup>28</sup>

Though he presided over the *Saturday Visiter's* initial popularity, Wilmer's reign as editor was short. His literary philosophy probably made him suspect in the eyes of Cloud and Pouder, but it was his penchant for late night carousing that caused the owners to fire him in the summer of 1832. Cloud and Pouder explained in a short notice that too many stints burning the "midnight oil" in activities not associated with the magazine had marred Wilmer's job performance: "The undersigned can assure the public that Wilmer is not the persecuted being he would represent himself to be. He had every chance to advance himself in *gentility*, 'a consummation devoutly to be wished;' had he but the disposition."<sup>29</sup>

Wilmer's replacement was none other than Poe's nemesis within the Seven Stars, John Hewitt. Poe must have remembered Hewitt's negative review of *Al Aaraaf* in the *Minerva and Emerald*, and Hewitt, for his part, seems to have published nothing by Poe in the year after taking over from Wilmer. A cryptic note in an October 6, 1832 column written by Hewitt in which he rendered terse verdicts on submissions for publication even suggests that Hewitt went out of his way to slur Poe. It reads, "'The Bride's Death'—by E.A.—is used for kindling." The reference may or may not refer to one of Poe's morbid matrimonial poems or stories, but more to the point, Poe could not have been impressed by the *Saturday Visiter's* claim that it was "inferior to no paper of its size in the country, in any point of view."<sup>30</sup> A devoted fan of British journals such as *Blackwood's*, Poe would later write that American periodicals were a "department in which, generally, the English as far excel us as Hyperion a Satyr."<sup>31</sup> To Poe, the *Saturday Visiter*, run by the hated Hewitt, must have been a most negligible, trifling Satyr. Rejecting local publication and periodical publication in general, Poe tried unsuccessfully to interest publishers in Philadelphia and elsewhere in a collected edition of his tales.

While Poe held out, the *Saturday Visiter* began running "My Fireside," the column written by a pseudonymous author named "Uncle Ben." Homely and solicitous, the "My Fireside" columns exemplified the *Saturday Visiter's* family sensibility. First appearing in February 1833, Uncle Ben described himself as a "tedious and loquacious odd fellow."<sup>32</sup> The self-effacing patriarch then explained that he was the guardian of his three marriage-aged nieces, Susan, Ellen, and Mary. The fate of the girls' parents was unexplained and Uncle Ben's wife never made an appearance, but Uncle Ben's atypical family circle was nonetheless happy and cozy. From Uncle Ben's hearth, Susan, Ellen, and Mary ventured forth to activities that brought them in contact with Baltimore residents of all ranks and stations. Columns described the tiny mishaps and small pleasures of the sisters as they attended recitals and parties, visited the bedside of impoverished strangers, and were courted by eligible bachelors; instead of stressing the dangers of metropolitan life, "My Fireside" pointed out its modestly



John Nelson McJilton (1806–1875), clergyman, educator, and author. (Library of Congress.)

exciting possibilities. Taking greater pleasure in listening to his nieces' exploits than in correcting their behavior, Uncle Ben was neither judgmental nor sanctimonious. Instead, he rendered the impression that he had seen and experienced much and consequently grown tolerant of human foibles:

And now dear readers if from what you have seen of my family circle you are desirous to continue your visits, I will promise to exert all my feeble powers to amuse and profit you—but if you are already tired of us, and think me a tedious and loquacious odd fellow, and my nieces uninteresting company, why here is my hand in a hearty good bye.<sup>33</sup>

If the letters and editorial comments praising Uncle Ben that appeared in the *Saturday Visiter* may be trusted, "My Fireside" was very popular. Editor John Hewitt once apologized when "our highly favoured correspondent 'Uncle Ben'" fell sick and his columns could not appear.<sup>34</sup> Hewitt also published a bit of doggerel sent in by Uncle Ben's female fans. The short verse began, "O uncle ben O uncle ben, / Where art thou stray'd away to."<sup>35</sup> Following a two-year run in the *Saturday Visiter*, the column continued for another year in a second magazine, the *Young Men's Paper*.<sup>36</sup> That weekly periodical was published by T. S. Arthur and John McJilton, and it is easy to speculate one of them might have been "Uncle Ben," for both tended to write

moralistic and simplistic didactic tales. Later in life, Arthur published a collection of stories titled *Uncle Ben's New Year's Gift* (1864), which further points to him as the author of "My Fireside." But others, such as John Hewitt himself, might also have been Uncle Ben, and conclusive identification awaits discovery in the archives.

On June 15, 1833, four months after the first "My Fireside" appeared, the *Saturday Visiter* announced the short story and poetry contest that launched Poe's career. At a time when laborers made one dollar a day and magazine authors were rarely paid for their contributions, the fifty-dollar prize for best story and twenty-five dollar prize for best poem were generous. Cloud, Pouder, and Hewitt must have believed the contest would attract entries from talented Baltimore authors, and may well have staged the contest specifically to draw Poe out of hiding. Poe's six tales and one poem were among approximately one hundred stories and eighty poems entered by the October 1 deadline. The names of Poe's other entries are not precisely known, but the presumption is that they were drawn from the stories that Poe hoped to publish in *Tales of the Folio Club*. Though Poe and Hewitt disliked each other, and Poe could not possibly have valued the *Saturday Visiter's* literary taste, he was poor, eager to impress the local eminences who would serve as judges, and probably contemptuous of local competition.

Impressed by Poe's tales and forced to choose one as the prize-winner, judges John Pendleton Kennedy, Joseph Miller, and John H. B. Latrobe decided upon "MS. Found in a Bottle." They also initially awarded Poe's poem "The Coliseum"—a moody meditation on the crumbled Roman arena—first place in the poetry contest but after learning the author's identity reduced it to runner-up status so as to not award the top prize in both contests to the same author. Ironically, the author of the new prize-winning poem was *Saturday Visiter* editor John Hewitt, who had not scrupled from entering his own magazine's contest under a pseudonym. According to Hewitt's own account, shortly after the contest an angry Poe confronted him on a Baltimore street for accepting the poetry prize in a contest sponsored by his own paper.<sup>37</sup>

We may also wonder if Poe objected to his and his brother's portrait in "Genius and Application," but be that as it may, after summoning Poe to the house of John Latrobe to receive the cash award, the *Saturday Visiter* proprietors announced the winners in the October 12, 1833 issue. The paper then bannered the prize-winning story and poem across several columns of the front page of its October 19 edition. In the notice announcing Poe's victory, the contest judges wrote that Poe's tales were "eminently distinguished by a wild, vigorous, and poetical imagination—a rich style—a fertile invention—and varied and curious learning."<sup>38</sup> The *Saturday Visiter* judges undoubtedly appreciated Poe's ability to infuse a familiar conceit—that of the message-in-a-bottle—with intensity and expressiveness.<sup>39</sup> Poe's tight cinching of form and content reflected by the image of the note inside a rigid glass container remains impressive today, as do the subtextual indices that suggest the narrator's journey into oblivion is as much psychological as physical. A week later, however,

in the October 26 issue, the *Saturday Visiter* published "The Coliseum," again on its front page. Next to "The Coliseum" ran Uncle Ben's "My Fireside, No. 11" column, which contained the embedded story "Genius and Application." Rejecting the grandiose tropes of doomed ghost ships and crumbling antique edifices, "Genius and Application" instead depicts familiar forms of public endeavor while promoting practical and conventional strategies for success. It is not hard at all to imagine that "Genius and Application" was deliberately placed in its position to comment directly to Poe and other Baltimore literary insiders and obliquely to history. But what were the issues and what were the messages?

"MS. Found in a Bottle" is an intimidating piece, whose theme, image, and style together generate a rich but agitating resonance. Unlike other tales published in the *Saturday Visiter*, it is grim and unrelenting, a virtual cry-from-the-heart from an author whose own sense of hopelessness might well have inspired that of the story's first-person narrator. Brimming with nervous energy and refusing to make its intentions clear, the tale radically deviates from the domestic, sentimental, and inoffensive norm established by "My Fireside." Though catholic early antebellum magazine readers might have enjoyed or learned from each tale, the differences between "MS. Found in a Bottle" and "Genius and Application" are profound: each reflects distinct story-telling styles that themselves point to disagreements about the nature of fiction and the uses that it should serve. The fact that "Genius and Application" was apparently written to order and placed next to "The Coliseum," a poem that literally invokes an ancient sporting arena as a prompt for reflection on fate, history, and contestation, suggests that the *Saturday Visiter* mavens intended it to engage "MS. Found in a Bottle" on the aesthetic and ethical battlefield of the page. Invoking details of Poe's life and distinguishing itself conspicuously from previous Uncle Ben columns, "Genius and Application" appears to have been a commentary on Poe and his prize-winning story. At the level of subject, theme, and style, Uncle Ben, on behalf of Baltimore's literary moralists, challenged Poe's aesthetically oriented philosophy and practice.

To establish this claim, we must examine each story in detail. To begin with the more familiar, "MS. Found in a Bottle" opens in the even-handed register that, using a term Poe often employed, may be called the "verisimilar."<sup>40</sup> The narrator is an alienated aesthete who wanders the world at will, but the opening lines, in which he recounts boarding a commercial freighter in the Sumatran seaport of Batavia, are understated and calm. An example of this matter-of-fact cadence is a description of the first freighter on which the narrator sails: "Our vessel was a beautiful ship of about four hundred tons, copper-fastened, and built at Bombay of Malabar teak."<sup>41</sup> Though the verbiage immediately invokes the foreign and extravagant, the plain-spoken description and circumstantial details convey the impression that the narrator is, as he says, the least liable "to be led away from the severe precincts of truth."<sup>42</sup>

After the quiet beginning, foreboding changes in the weather "beguile the mo-

notony" of the voyage, and soon a huge wave swamps the vessel and kills all aboard except the narrator and an aged Swede with whom the narrator can barely speak above the roar of a tremendous storm.<sup>43</sup> The two hold on for days until once again their ship is swamped, this time by a giant vessel that kills the Swede and catapults the narrator into its rigging. The narrator discovers that he is invisible to the new ship's crew and that its captain is a doddering patriarch who rummages absent-mindedly among obsolete charts and broken navigational instruments. To the narrator, the ship appears too antiquated to sail for profit or exploration, but somehow it also seems a swelling, bloated organism that grows "in bulk like the living body of the seaman."<sup>44</sup> With such descriptions, Poe moves the tale toward a supernatural and symbolic "precinct" that clearly demarcates its difference from everyday reality.

Soon, little doubt remains that the tale is exactly what the narrator claims it is not: the "ravings of a crude imagination."<sup>45</sup> To accompany the narrator's mental deterioration, the language shifts to a more intense register, as in the narrator's description of a pitch dark night: "All around were horror, and thick gloom, and a black sweltering desert of ebony."<sup>46</sup> Here night is imbued with sensational qualities of "horror" and "gloom," and portrayed in terms of a "desert of ebony," a quasi-material locale that seems uncannily apt. Other descriptions are even more abstract and reflexive, as when the narrator speaks of the "hopelessness of hope" or when he compares the height of a wave to that of an albatross's flight—a clear signal that the text has entered a rarified realm of intertextual cross-reference.<sup>47</sup>

The voyage continues to the environs of Antarctica, where the ship is sucked between huge walls of ice toward a giant whirlpool. A fine example of how the narrator's tone and diction have intensified occurs here when the narrator describes "stupendous ramparts of ice, towering away into the desolate sky, and looking like the walls of the universe."<sup>48</sup> This description is laden with literary effects, most specifically the comparison to something—"the walls of the universe"—that has no physical actuality. As the ship teeters on the brink of the vortex, the narrator manages to scribble his last words on a piece of parchment and place the account in a sealed bottle. As ship and narrator slip into the whirlpool, the story sputters to a close in a burst of sensational prose: "The ship is quivering—oh God! and—going down!"<sup>49</sup>

The word Poe used to describe the effects-drenched style that dominates "MS. Found in a Bottle" and other early stories such as "The Duc De l'Omelette" was "arabesque." The term is well known from Poe's use of it in the title of his first volume of stories, *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*, published in 1840.<sup>50</sup> Using a phrase from "MS. Found in a Bottle," the arabesque was an "eloquent madness" that incessantly called attention to itself as an imaginative creation.<sup>51</sup> Appealing to the emotions, senses, and imagination in addition to the intellect, arabesque style could be turgid, indulgent, and border on hysteria and self-parody.

Poe accepted these risks to obtain the arabesque's literary resources. Arabesque mannerisms include archaic diction, bizarre and foreign words, repetitions of the

same word or words in close proximity, the use of words for the sake of their sound, inversions of normal word orders and syntactical units, and above-normal quantities of parenthetical or qualifying expressions. Other stylistic tics include florid or extravagant figures of speech and obscure literary, scriptural, and historical allusions. These expressive features required erudition to appreciate, but their appeal was more sensuous than academic. Many traits were derived from the eighteenth-century neoclassical tradition, but neoclassical prose stylists used elevated literary language to signal cultivation and mental equanimity. In Poe's hands, conversely, florid prose did not mark rational precision and orderliness. Instead, it suggested the fragile emotional and psychical health of his narrators, particularly their tendency to over-imaginatively comprehend experience and sensation.

Arabesque habits of mind tended to complicate, mystify, and ultimately negate rational coherency in the name of imaginative or sensational effect. Inviting contemplation and interpretation, they open themselves for alternative and symbolic understandings. For example, the last scene of "MS. Found in a Bottle" recalls other Poe stories that end with whirling vortexes such as "Descent into the Maelstrom" and "King Pest." In these tales, swirling whirlpools signify the loss of consciousness, the collapse of order, and the descent into oblivion. In "MS. Found in a Bottle," the deadly vortex not only annihilates the narrator, it also stands as the figural correlative of the swirl of story styles Poe employs. The narrator's sensational death, it then might be said, signals the pyrrhic victory of the language of the arabesque over that of objective verisimilitude—stylistic extravagance renders reality and the artistic depiction of it, in Poe's words, a "dead letter and a nullity."<sup>52</sup> Poe's tale goads readers to respect its consummate literary display. Offered for consumption by everyday readers, and banking on its sensational qualities to attract attention, it nonetheless asserts that stories should be works of art, wrought by literary masters for appreciation by discerning readers.

While "MS. Found in a Bottle" is exotic in subject, arabesque in style, and nihilistic in theme, "Genius and Application," on the other hand, is familiar, colloquial, and reassuring. Its spirit of uplift contrasts with the downward trajectory of "MS. Found in a Bottle"; its faith in the character of its protagonist to make good stands in contrast to the inexplicable, undeserved series of events that befall Poe's narrator. "Genius and Application" proceeds by announcing its moral and using its dramatic elements to unequivocally illustrate its theme. Bandyng its forthrightness as a virtue, "Genius and Application" like "MS. Found in a Bottle" addresses themes of ambition, competition, success, and failure. By eschewing cryptic, suggestive, allegorical, and ambiguous elements, "Genius and Application" addresses and attempts to refute the enigmatic and brooding strains of Poe's tale. Its interest in relevance to the lives of readers being outwardly manifest, "Genius and Application" promulgates the idea that stories serve utilitarian, educational ends. To aid comprehension and insure relevance, it realistically portrays reasonably familiar scenes of antebellum public

and private life. Because stories should be improving, it subordinates stylistic elements to beneficial messages.

To guide readers' entrance into the story proper, Uncle Ben employs a series of framing devices. The first is a subtitle reading "Knowledge and Power." The phrase refers to British essayist Thomas De Quincey's nostrum that literature take one of two forms: either that of knowledge—informational, didactic, and improving—or that of power—emotionally and intellectually inspiring.<sup>53</sup> Following the subtitle is a paragraph-long preamble in which Uncle Ben explains that he had once been a writer of magazine tales, one of which he has just rediscovered and proposes to read. The column then offers a second subtitle, "Genius and Application," followed by a 14,000-word third-person narrative. The dual diptychs of knowledge and power and genius and application move the reader's attention from the familiar periphery of the "My Fireside" imprimatur to the central territory inhabited by the story proper. Along with Uncle Ben's prelude, they establish a mounting sense of seriousness that demarcates "My Fireside, No. 11" from other Uncle Ben columns. Though what follows is meant to entertain, to some degree, in the manner of previous "My Fireside" columns, the instrumental function of "Genius and Application" is evident.

Once through the interpretive gates, the reader confronts a long, episodic tale that works hard to portray the truth of two very orthodox homilies: one must be prepared to work diligently and purposefully in order to succeed, and personal happiness depends on serving others. The two young protagonists are friends who, at the tale's beginning, are studying medicine in Boston. Allen Wilson is a dutiful plodder who studies long into the night to master his lessons. Often he despairs at his slow progress, but always manages to gather himself and recommit himself to his studies:

There was little striking or interesting in his appearance, and his dull grey eye gave no token of strong feelings or intelligence. . . . He was engaged in study; and though he applied himself close and untiringly, yet his conceptions of his subject were slow, for he frequently turned back upon what he had read as in doubt of its meaning, and often ere passing over a paragraph would recline back in his chair as if pondering on the meaning of what was before him.

. . . once or twice he struck his hand hard upon his brow, exclaiming, "I always was and always will be a dull fool!" But he never seemed weary, or inclined to give up, returning immediately to the page he was studying and perusing it with more intense assiduity.

Allen's "bosom friend" Henry Morrison is far more talented. "Beloved and respected by all who knew him" and "enthusiastic and conscious of strong mental energies," Henry possesses a "strong and capacious mind." He is also ambitious, declaring, "I will be great among my fellows" [and] "earth's highest pinnacle shall be

the rock on which I will build! There is a giant within me, I can do all things!" But Henry sometimes becomes the "victim of supineness" and allows a dreary "despondency to creep over him." As a consequence, his "airy schemes for . . . future greatness" do not match his ability to "bend . . . his energies to the gradual accomplishment of them." Eager for recognition but unable to apply himself, Henry's life is one of false starts and unfulfilled potential.

In an effective early scene, Allen and Henry converse late at night in Allen's tenement study. Compared to virtually any passage of Poe's, the dialogue is jejune, the friends' words oddly stylized. Lurching between lofty and simple registers, they still serve well to render the unique personalities and close friendship of the two medical students:

Henry: "I have been on my flying steed again. I have been up among the stars, and looked down upon the earth as nothing. I felt as though at a stride I could reach its highest eminence, and wield with my single arm and single intellect the destinies of nations. I am sure that within this little dwelling of clay is a mind capacious almost to infinity" [ . . . ]

Allen: "Cherish such thoughts, and trust to application, and I hope one day to hear your name on every tongue; though I fear that it will be at the loss of a very dear friend, for I never expect to get even a distant view of the elevation to which you will rise" [ . . . ]

Henry: "When I forget you, Wilson, may my right hand forget its cunning. But you say *application*, and perhaps you are right, though I have no friendship for the word."

The midnight conversation is a private prolepsis to the many scenes of public speech that occur later as Henry and Allen try to establish communion with the world. Henry soon abandons medicine for law, and after trying a series of famous cases wins election to Congress. But he is turned out of government because he insists on voting his conscience rather than obeying the dictates of his constituency. Henry then becomes a popular author, but is ruined when he becomes a victim of partisan literary battles. His steely independence proving to be a liability in politics and literature, Henry next travels to South America, from whence rumors filter back that he has become a leader of revolutionary armies. Eventually, Henry returns to Boston. Sick and dying as a result of consumption, he reunites with Allen, who after a successful medical career has also become an author and now, at the close of the story, celebrates with friends his own election to Congress. While Henry admits to the disastrous consequences of his lack of persistence, an adoring crowd cheers Allen's victory in the streets outside the hotel where they meet. As Henry dies, the narrator concludes, "Thus perished one, who, but for the want of APPLICATION, might, to use his own language, have moved the world."

By portraying Allen and Henry as authors, "Genius and Application" comments on the conditions of antebellum literary production. For example, Henry attempts the "lighter portions of literature" by writing a novel, but his work suffers "the then fate of most American productions" and vanishes without a trace. Allen, after long years of successful medical practice, finds time for the "exercise of his pen" and writes "several popular works of deserved repute." His essays are "remarkable for their force of argument, clearness of thought, and beauty of style and diction." These passages reinforce the curiously literal, if ambiguous, commentary "Genius and Application" makes on the lives and characters of Edgar Allan Poe and his brother Henry. According to Henry Poe's biographers Hervey Allen and T. O. Mabbott, Henry "possessed a considerable charm, not a little latent talent, a somewhat precocious development, and a vivid imagination."<sup>54</sup> Edgar Poe also claimed to have traveled in South America, at least according to David Hale—the son of magazine editor Sarah Josepha Hale—who knew Poe at West Point.<sup>55</sup> The clearest allegorical reading of the tale is that it recasts Edgar Allan Poe as Allen Wilson and Henry Poe as Henry Morrison. Seeming to celebrate Edgar Allan/Allen's diligence that has led to his contest victory, the tale dishonors Henry Poe while praising Allen's plodding sensibility in a way one might expect Edgar Allan to find insulting. Another possibility is that "Genius and Application" portrays Edgar Allan as the Henry figure—a shooting star whose moment of triumph might easily amount to little. Talent alone, this reading implies, is nothing when not joined to hard work and solid character.

Though the references entice with their tactical deployment as veiled references to Poe and his family, establishing the biographical basis of "Genius and Application" is ultimately not important to asserting its significance as a purposeful statement about the literary-linguistic options available to Baltimore authors of the time. The differences between the two stories are many, and a catalog of them inevitably suggests the artistic superiority of "MS. Found in a Bottle." Where Poe lavished attention on the physical details of the two ships and the seas through which they sail, while also infusing material and natural phenomenon with symbolic significance, Uncle Ben's establishment of setting throughout the "My Fireside" series was sketchy, arbitrary, and conventional. Where Poe skillfully moved between objective, chronologically precise renderings of reality and more imaginative distortions, Uncle Ben crudely manipulated fiction's plastic temporal and spatial dimensions. "MS. Found in a Bottle" roughly fulfills the demands of dramatic unity by portraying a relatively discreet experience from start to finish, while Uncle Ben depends heavily on authorial summary to cover huge jumps in time, space, and focus. Whereas "MS. Found in a Bottle" conveys a (frightening) sense of the protagonist's subjectivity, "Genius and Application" sets itself to the lesser literary task of portraying characters whose interior landscapes are shallow and one-dimensional.

Thematically, "MS. Found in a Bottle" invites readers to contemplate the solipsistic alienation of the narrator that leads to his mental deterioration and physi-

cal destruction, while "Genius and Application" delights in showing the steps by which an unconnected nobody—Allen Wilson—might become a valuable, popular community and national leader. Stylistically, "MS. Found in a Bottle" uses learned literary language to portray fantastic characters and events; "Genius and Application" depicts in a plebian literary register characters and events that were plausibly contemporary. Structurally, the heavily emphasized moral at the end of "Genius and Application" connects, coordinates, and focuses the potential diffuseness of the tale's episodic format, while "MS. Found in a Bottle" sputters to an inconclusive, nihilistic end. In terms of intention and reception, Poe's tale earned the high opinion of distinguished literary judges, while "Genius and Application" undoubtedly was commissioned by commercially minded men who hoped to profit by the *Saturday Visiter*. But "Genius and Application's" genius, if one may, lay in its promotion of the idea that stories best serve utilitarian, educational ends. To aid comprehension and insure relevancy, "Genius and Application" suggests that stories feature realistic portrayals of familiar aspects of antebellum public and private life. Because stories should aim to be improving, stylistic elements must be subordinated to and supportive of beneficial messages.

"MS. Found in a Bottle" and "Genius and Application" staked out positions in a burgeoning but rapidly coalescing magazine field. Stylistically and thematically, the contest pitted Poe's cultivated sensationalism against Uncle Ben's homely moralism, Poe's metaphoric sensibility against Uncle Ben's plot- and character-driven narration, and Poe's intrinsic interest in the plight of isolated individuals against Uncle Ben's abiding sociality. Philosophically, the works exemplified attitudes that, in the case of Poe's story, viewed literary endeavor as an artistic affair, carried on and judged by sophisticated authors and readers, and, in Uncle Ben's case, saw the same endeavor as at once an open, democratic affair available to all and a commercial activity in which capitalist entrepreneurs tried to predict and shape the tastes of consumers. Conceptually, the contest situated itself between the anonymous publishing practices of the early American print marketplace and the modern deployment of name-recognized popular authors by commercial print proprietors. By turning unknown authors into literary celebrities, the contest rubric bridged production epochs, while the sharp, quick counter-commentary represented by "Genius and Application" illustrated the accommodation to the market now expected of popular authors.

Studied together, the two stories illustrate why Baltimore was an important site for the development of cultivated and popular subjects, themes, and styles. The rendezvous of the two tales on the pages of the *Saturday Visiter* culminated a period of frenetic local activity, juxtaposed early antebellum fiction alternatives, and inaugurated an intense competition to determine the characteristic elements of popular fiction stylistics. In Poe lore and biography, the contest serves apocryphally as evidence of Poe's undeniable literary brilliance. Much like the message-in-a-bottle conceit on which the prize-winning tale depends, the tale of the contest glories in the

rescuing of Poe from the ranks of floundering authors. Anointed by the discerning patriarchs of Baltimore letters, promoted to the top of the local literary mountain, and propelled into national prominence, the saga of Poe's triumph functions as an illustration of the ultimate justice of the early antebellum publishing realm. It implies that some mechanism, not purely chance or dependent on crass popular taste, allowed meritorious works and authors to prosper in the face of poverty, competition, and an indiscriminating reading public. Talent will out, the contest narrative goes.

In the particular story of evolving American magazine fiction practice that is the subject of this study, however, Poe's prize-winning story operates differently. Viewed in the context of the ongoing development of American popular literary taste, the events and written works associated with the contest established exactly how difficult it was going to be for Poe's cluster of story-telling strategies to compete in the literary marketplace against rival styles and aesthetic philosophies. In the years after 1833, authors in Baltimore and nationwide picked, mixed, altered, and experimented with attributes featured in "MS. Found in a Bottle" and "Genius and Application." Never idly executed, never stemming solely from the whims and preoccupations of the authors themselves, and never designed to be merely entertaining, stories sought to manifest a fictional narrative surface and underlying ethos that might promote magazine consumption while exploiting the advantages of the periodical format. In time, American magazine fiction themes and poetics crystallized around a series of attributes that owed more to "Genius and Application" than "MS. Found in a Bottle." While Poe would attain critical acclaim and popularity of a sort, through the mid-nineteenth century, the face of American popular fiction would look a lot more like *Uncle Ben's*: simple in style, domestic in subject, and moralistic in tone.

#### NOTES

1. The phrase comes from an 1831 article in the *Illinois Monthly Magazine*. Frank L. Mott quotes it in his seminal *A History of American Magazines, 1741-1850*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1957), Part III of which is titled "The Period of Expansion: 1825-1830, A 'Golden Age of Periodicals.'" According to Mott, the golden age began in 1825, when the arch-Federalist journal the *Port Folio* went into a death spiral after twenty-five years as the leading journal of America's political, economic, and cultural aristocracy. Almost concurrently, a new magazine, the *New York Mirror* (1823), appeared that for over twenty years would serve as the model for thousands of imitators who admired its cosmopolitan and contemporary flair.

Regarding magazine influence, Michael Davitt Bell writes:

The influence of the rise of magazines on the development of American literature in the second quarter of the nineteenth century can scarcely be exaggerated. Cooper and Irving achieved fame in the 1820s as authors of books, but by the 1840s new native writers were far more likely to appear first in magazines. Such magazines as *Graham's* and *Godey's*, with circulations of 40,000 to 50,000, reached a far broader

public than Irving and Cooper could have dreamed of only two decades earlier. It would not be until the late 1840s and early 1850s that publishers of books by native authors would begin to capture this audience. ("Conditions of Literary Vocation," in *The Cambridge History of American Literature, Prose Writing, 1820–1865* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995], 59.)

Mott's *A History of American Magazines* and Edward Chielens' *American Literary Magazines* (New York: Greenwood, 1986) are the standard histories of American literary periodicals. More recent assessments include Heidi Nichols' *The Fashioning of Middle-Class America: Sartain's Union Magazine of Literature and Art and Antebellum Culture* (New York: Peter Lang, 2004), Ronald Weber's *Hired Pens: Professional Writers in America's Golden Age of Print* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1997) and Kenneth Price and Susan Belasco Smith, eds., *Periodical Literature in Nineteenth-Century America* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995). Several recent author studies have focused on periodical culture as an overlooked but important constituent of the conditions of literary production for well-regarded American antebellum era writers. Among those I have consulted are Meredith McGill's *American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting, 1834–1850* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), Terence Whalen's *Edgar Allan Poe and the Masses: The Political Economy of Literature in Antebellum America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), Thomas Nelson Baker's *Sentiment and Celebrity: Nathaniel Parker Willis and the Trials of Literary Fame* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), and Sheila Post-Lauria's *Correspondent Colorings: Melville in the Marketplace* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996).

2. *The Dial's* subscription figure is from Mott's *A History of American Magazines* (702), as is that of *Godey's* (581).

3. Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1960–1962), 6:355. Who read fiction in the early antebellum? In *Correspondent Colorings: Melville in the Marketplace* (1996), Sheila Post-Lauria provides a useful typology of those whom Nathaniel Hawthorne called the "tribe of general readers" and Herman Melville called "fireside people" (quoted in Post-Lauria, 4). Readers were primarily middle-class, but within this cohort differences existed. According to Post-Lauria, "'General,' 'common,' or 'popular' readers referred to those middle-class readers of both sexes who read largely for entertainment" (4). "Intellectual" or "cultivated" readers consisted of individuals who "attempted to regulate literary production as well as the aesthetic tastes of general readers": reviewers, literary critics, clergymen, celebrity authors, and people of high social standing (4–5). A third group of "literary" readers shared the tastes of the intellectual and cultivated readers, but lacked the means of disseminating their views in the public sphere. Finally, a large working-class audience known as the "masses" or "the people" far outnumbered middle-class readers. Often defiant of middle-class values and decorum, this group was eyed warily by general, cultivated, and literary readers (5).

4. Edgar Allan Poe, "Marginalia—Part VIII" in *Graham's Magazine*, December 1846, quoted in *The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, volume 16 (New York: AMS, 1965), 118. Poe in particular celebrated the monthly magazine as being in keeping with what he called "the rush of the age" (118). The quarterly, according to Poe, was apt to be verbose, ponderous, and too narrowly focused. The weekly was subject to "popgunnery"—"the discussion of ephemeral matters in an ephemeral manner" (118). On the other hand, wrote Poe, "The bulk and the period of issue of the monthly magazines seem to be precisely adapted, if not to all the literary wants of the day, at least to the largest and most imperative, as well as the most consequential of them" (118).

5. *The Baltimore Young Men's Paper*, April 4, 1835.
6. John Hewitt, *Shadows on the Wall; or, Glimpses of the Past* (Baltimore, 1877), 58.
7. *The American Museum*, May 1839.
8. Their energetic spirit animated not just the literary magazine scene but all aspects of the local publishing. John Neal, for example, wrote five novels while living in Baltimore between 1815 and 1823, and John Pendleton Kennedy's novels *Swallow Barn* (1832), *Horse-Shoe Robinson* (1835), and *Rob of the Bowl* (1838) are among the best published anywhere in the 1830s. A few years after learning to read and write in Baltimore, escaped slave Frederick Douglass reformulated orthodox conventions of autobiography on behalf of disenfranchised African-Americans. Passages in Douglass's *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (1845) describing the genteel Baltimore household of Hugh Auld and the roughneck shipyards of Fells Point portray well the polarized environs inhabited by the city's young white male aspiring authors.
9. For details of Poe's Baltimore years, I have used Arthur Quinn's *Edgar Allan Poe: A Critical Biography* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1941) and Dwight Thomas and David Jackson's *The Poe Log: A Documentary Life of Edgar Allan Poe, 1809-1849* (Boston: G. K. Hull, 1987). I have also consulted Kenneth Silverman's *Edgar Allan Poe: Mournful and Never-Ending Remembrance* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1991), Hervey Allen's *Israfel: The Life and Times of Edgar Allan Poe*, vols. I and II (New York: George Doran, 1927), and the chapter entitled "Baltimore Book Culture" in Kevin Hayes' *Poe and the Printed Word* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
- I have used the three-volume *Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap-Harvard, 1969-78), edited by Thomas O. Mabbott, for authoritative versions of Poe stories and poems, as well as for details of their publication. For critical essays, I have relied primarily on *The Selected Writings of Edgar Allan Poe* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2004), edited by G. R. Thompson, and in some cases *The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe* (New York: AMS, 1902/1965), edited by James Harrison. For letters, I have used the two-volume *The Letters of Edgar Allan Poe* (New York: Gordian, 1948), edited by John Ward Ostrum.
10. The same Seven Stars Tavern was also the location of the first "Odd Fellows" meeting in 1819. For more information, see Donald Koch's introduction to T. S. Arthur, *Ten Nights in a Bar-Room* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964) and John French's "Poe's Literary Baltimore" in the *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 32 (1937): 101-12. Other scholarship on 1820s Baltimore periodicals and periodical authors includes Frank R. Shivers' *Maryland Wits and Baltimore Bards* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), Rollo Silvers' *The Baltimore Book Trade, 1800-1825* (New York: New York Public Library, 1953), Lambert Wilmer's *Merlin: Baltimore 1827, Together with Recollections of Edgar A. Poe*, edited and introduced by Thomas Mabbott (New York: Scholars Facsimiles and Reprints, 1941), W. Bird Terwilliger's "John Nelson McJilton," in the *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 32 (1937): 301-31, Hervey Allen and Thomas Mabbott's *Poe's Brother: The Poems of William Henry Leonard Poe* (New York: George H. Doran, 1926), and John Hewitt's *Shadows on the Wall*.
11. Quoted in Thomas Mabbott's "Bibliographic Note" from the facsimile edition of *Al Aaraaf, Tamerlane, and Minor Poems* (New York: New York Facsimile Text Society, 1933), v-x. Poe was also identified in a verse fragment from the era, an 1830 document of disputed authorship called "The Musiad and Ninead."
12. Poe, "Introduction," *Collected Works*, 2:203.
13. "Metzengerstein" appeared in the *Saturday Courier* on January 14, 1832.
14. Poe, "The Duc de L'Omlette," *Collected Works*, 2:33.
15. Poe, "Epimanes (Four Beasts in One)," *ibid.*, 2:127.

16. An edition of *The Amethyst* in the Maryland Historical Society archives contains Brooks's annotations to the table of contents as to the authors. The notes indicate that Brooks wrote sixteen stories or poems for his own giftbook, T. S. Arthur five, Brantz Mayer four, John Hewitt two, and John McJilton one. *The Amethyst* also illustrates the amateurish production practices of the time. Brooks encountered numerous difficulties collecting material and finding a publisher, and was unable to get *The Amethyst* out in time for the Christmas and New Year's giving season. Consequently, he lost money and much of his reputation on the venture. For details, see "Profile of N. C. Brooks" in the September 1835 *Godey's* and John Hewitt's *Shadows on the Wall* (Baltimore, 1877), 48.
17. T. S. Arthur, according to the annotations in Brooks' copy of *The Amethyst*.
18. Thomas and Jackson, *The Poe Log*, 106.
19. Poe, "Letter to B—," *Selected Writings*, 593.
20. *Ibid.*, 590.
21. *Ibid.*, 588.
22. *Ibid.*, 589.
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Ibid.* Poe's sentiments were both self-serving and heartfelt. As Michael Allen writes in *Poe and the British Magazine Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), Poe's conception of a "few gifted individuals" amounted to a "virtual imaginative construction of his own elite" (201).
25. *The Baltimore Saturday Visiter*, June 30, 1832.
26. *Ibid.*
27. Lambert Wilmer, *Our Press Gang; or, a Complete Exposition of the Corruption and Crimes of the American Newspaper* (Philadelphia, 1860), 24.
28. *The Baltimore Saturday Visiter*, August 4, 1832.
29. *Ibid.*, August 25, 1832.
30. *Ibid.*, February 9, 1832.
31. Edgar Allan Poe, "Review of *Watkins Tottle* by Charles Dickens," *The Southern Literary Messenger*, June 1836.
32. *The Baltimore Saturday Visiter*, March 9, 1833. The first "My Fireside" appeared in the *Saturday Visiter* on February 23, 1833. The last on file in the *Saturday Visiter* appeared June 24, 1834.
33. *The Baltimore Saturday Visiter*, March 9, 1833.
34. *Ibid.*, April 13, 1833.
35. *Ibid.*, March 1, 1834.
36. On December 27, 1834, the column resumed in the *Baltimore Young Men's Paper*. The last "My Fireside" appeared on November 27, 1835 in the *Young Men's Paper*.
37. Hewitt, *Shadows on the Wall*, 41, 154–59.
38. *The Baltimore Saturday Visiter*, October 12, 1833.
39. Poe probably obtained the idea of the ghostly nautical adventure from versions of the Flying Dutchman tale written by Sir Walter Scott and American author William Gilmore Simms. Both Scott's and Simms' tales also modulate between calm and energetic styles as they address their material (see T. O. Mabbott's headnote to "MS. Found in a Bottle" at 2:132).
40. In *The Raven and the Whale* (1956), an account of New York City magazine life in the 1840s, Perry Miller mocks the frequency with which the publishing principals of the day used the terms "verisimilar" and "verisimilitude" as terms of praise. My debt in this discussion is not to Perry Miller, however, but to Donald Stauffer, who wrote extensively on Poe's style. See, for example, "Style and Meaning in 'Ligeia' and 'William Wilson'" in *Critical Essays on*

Edgar Allan Poe, compiled by Eric W. Carlson, (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1987), 113–27; “Poe’s Views on the Nature and Function of Style,” in *Style in the American Renaissance: A Symposium*, edited by Carl F. Strauch (Hartford, Conn.: Transcendental Books, 1970), 23–30; and “The Two Styles of Poe’s ‘MS. Found in a Bottle’” (1967) in *Style* (1967): 107–20. My account of the movement of “MS. Found in a Bottle” from the realistic-plainspoken to the fanciful-elaborate essentially follows Stauffer’s.

41. Poe, “MS. Found in a Bottle,” *Collected Works* vol. 2:135–36.

42. *Ibid.*, 2:135.

43. *Ibid.*, 2:136.

44. *Ibid.*, 2:143.

45. *Ibid.*, 2:135.

46. *Ibid.*, 2:139.

47. *Ibid.*

48. *Ibid.*, 2:145.

49. *Ibid.*, 2:146.

50. Primary influences on Poe’s arabesque style were British authors such as Edward Bulwer-Lytton, Benjamin Disraeli, and Thomas De Quincey. As a concept, the arabesque was an important one in the thought of German idealist philosophers (all familiar to Poe) such as Kant, Schiller, Schlegel, and Schelling. Schlegel, for instance, called the arabesque “the oldest and original form of human fantasy” and its use “the entire advantage of the so-called novel of the age,” quoted in Winfried Menninghaus, *In Praise of Kant and Bluebeard* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 85. He was intrigued by the idea that the arabesque manifested expression over content, and hypothesized that arabesque verse might be a “poem composed of nothing” (85). The affinity with “MS. Found in a Bottle” seems clear: the narrator employs an ever more arabesque style the closer he comes to annihilation.

51. Poe, “MS. Found in a Bottle,” *Collected Works*, 2:135.

52. *Ibid.*, 2:135.

53. On Poe’s fondness for De Quincey, see T. O. Mabbott’s notes to Poe’s “Shadow—a Parable” (*Collected Works*, 2:187) and “Siope (Silence)” (*Collected Works*, 2:199). De Quincey believed that “literature of knowledge” was written to instruct, while “literature of power” intended to move its readers. According to De Quincey, literature of power was the superior form; only it could potentially transcend its age and attain classic status. De Quincey’s most extended exposition of the concepts occurs in an 1848 essay on Alexander Pope called “The Literature of Knowledge and the Literature of Power.” Poe would have gotten the concept from De Quincey’s explications of it in 1820s British magazines such as *Blackwood’s*, or from De Quincey’s early *Letters to a Young Man whose Education has been Neglected* (1823).

54. Allen and Mabbott, *Poe’s Brother*, 26.

55. Quinn, *Edgar Allan Poe*, 171.



*The German cruiser Emden, c. 1938. The ship docked in Baltimore during a ten-day good will tour in 1936, seven months after Germany's Jews were deprived of their citizenship. (Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore City Life Museum Collection, gift of Nancy Bodine, 1973.)*

# Insiders and Outsiders: Jewish-Gentile Relations in Baltimore during the Interwar Era

DEBORAH R. WEINER

**O**n April 21, 1936, seven months after Germany's Nuremberg Laws stripped Jews of their citizenship, the German warship *Emden* docked in Baltimore on a good will tour. Thousands of curious Baltimoreans flocked to Recreation Pier to tour the ship during its ten-day visit. The "genial" Captain Hans Bachmann exchanged courtesy calls with Mayor Howard Jackson. At an officers' reception sponsored by the city's German societies, guests (including city and state officials) drank a toast to Hitler as "beer flowed freely." *Emden's* sailors fought a local German soccer club to a 4-4 tie at Gwynn Oak Park, and some 450 Marylanders enjoyed a shipboard luncheon that showed off "sea life's gay side." When the *Emden* steamed away, two thousand onlookers bade it farewell as its swastika flag fluttered and its band serenaded them with "Deutschland Uber Alles" and "Anchors Aweigh."<sup>1</sup>

The *Evening Sun* praised the city for "living up to its reputation as a hospitable and tolerant place," while acknowledging that the Jewish community "behaved during what was to them a trying period, with signal dignity and restraint." The reaction of the organized Jewish community was indeed muted. The *Jewish Times* editorialized before the ship arrived that it would be "unthinkable" that "Baltimore should officially offer a friendly gesture of welcome," but showed no trace of a communal response to the city's hospitality toward the Nazis.<sup>2</sup>

To Jewish Baltimoreans, the *Emden's* visit was clearly a setback in their efforts to become part of mainstream society. The city's large immigrant Jewish population had made significant strides in that direction: for example, in 1919, Jews had confidently appealed to their non-Jewish neighbors in fundraising for European Jewish communities devastated by war. The *Sun* had offered glowing coverage of gentile participation in their campaign. On one Saturday, "Gentile and non-Orthodox Jewish workers were at their 'bucket' posts downtown and collected large sums," the paper noted. "The confirmation class of the Eutaw Place Temple gave \$8 after a little girl from St. Joseph's School of Industry brought in \$5 from her classmates."<sup>3</sup>

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But through the 1920s and 1930s, rising xenophobia and anti-Semitism altered the landscape, nationally and locally. The congressional debate over immigration in the early twenties brought virulent anti-Jewish and anti-Italian rhetoric to the fore and resulted in federal restrictions that virtually halted the flow of Eastern and Southern European Jews into America. Henry Ford's Judeophobic newspaper, the *Dearborn Independent*, became widely circulated and achieved mass influence. By the time the anti-Semitic radio broadcasts of Father Charles Coughlin gained national popularity in the mid-1930s, it had become clear that Jews could not count on the good will of mainstream society.<sup>4</sup>

After Hitler gained power in 1933, Baltimore's Jewish communal leaders led mass protests against events taking place in Nazi Germany. But for the organized Jewish community, rallying against Hitler's Germany was easier than rallying against City Hall. Some Jews did protest the city's embrace of the *Emden*, but they did so through labor unions, progressive groups, and radical organizations rather than communal groups. The one exception, the activist Rabbi Edward Israel of Har Sinai Congregation, led an interfaith delegation to Mayor Jackson challenging the city's welcoming plans and was "roundly criticized by cautious fellow-citizens, both Jew and Christian." When two thousand demonstrators gathered near Recreation Pier the day after the *Emden* docked, hoisting signs such as "Don't Let It Happen Here," no Jewish communal leaders were among the speakers, who included Thurgood Marshall of the NAACP.<sup>5</sup>

Yet not all Jewish opposition came from the left. City Councilman Sidney Traub criticized the city's reception plans, and five state legislators asked the State Department to cancel the ship's permit to dock, including House Speaker Emanuel Gorfine. They were unsuccessful, though the city did mute some of its more lavish plans in response to the criticism. Also, the American Legion bowed to pressure from Jewish members, canceling its participation in welcoming activities.<sup>6</sup> If the *Emden* affair illuminated the tenuous position of Baltimore Jewry and the reluctance of Jewish leaders to challenge the local powers-that-be, it also revealed the growing involvement of Jews in the diverse institutions of modern society, from politics to voluntary associations.

Historians use the phrase "insiders and outsiders" to refer to the position of Jews in American life, and especially during the interwar period. That is because it accurately describes a world in which, for example, a Jew could be Maryland's speaker of the house while Baltimore's mayor welcomes a Nazi ship to his city. Even as anti-Semitism reached its peak, Jews were more engaged than ever in Baltimore's civic and cultural life. While this dichotomy reflected national trends, circumstances peculiar to Baltimore gave the position of Jews its own distinct character. First, as the city's largest new immigrant group and the one making the greatest economic strides, Baltimore Jewry was in a position to achieve more influence in political, civic, and cultural affairs than elsewhere—but at the same time, its prominence

presented a conspicuous target for resentment over the Depression and the rapid pace of change. Second, Baltimore's border city culture, and in particular its race relations, greatly influenced the position of Jews in the social structure and had a considerable impact on Jewish-gentile relations.<sup>7</sup>

### **No Jews Allowed**

In 1918, to make room for its growing workforce and gain control of the expanding harbor, the city annexed a large swath of surrounding land, tripling in size from thirty to ninety-two square miles. The largely undeveloped new territory underwent a residential building boom. Suddenly, people of all income levels were on the move: the wealthy and middle classes to the spacious new homes and rowhouses of the annex, the less well-off to the places they left behind.<sup>8</sup>

As the newly expanded city developed, discriminatory real estate practices decisively shaped the racial and ethnic landscape. Blacks, barred from the annexed area and the suburbs beyond, became concentrated in the city center. Jewish immigrants joined in the mass exodus of foreign-born from the city core. Following in the direction of their Central European coreligionists, who had settled around northwest Baltimore's Eutaw Place decades earlier, Eastern European Jews abandoned their immigrant enclaves in east and southwest Baltimore for a succession of northwest neighborhoods. An increasingly rigid system of residential exclusion kept them out of other areas, while close-knit networks of friends and family also influenced where they settled. This combination of residential discrimination and the desire of Jews to maintain community ties led to their rapid resettlement in northwest Baltimore. By 1925, more than half the Jewish population already lived in that section of the city, while only about a third remained in East Baltimore.<sup>9</sup>

According to longtime head of the Baltimore Jewish Council, Leon Sachs, by 1941, "The Jewish community had been herded into the northwest section of the city to such an extent that we were labeled everywhere as probably the most ghettoized community in the country." Sachs placed the blame on the Roland Park Company, which, he claimed, made residential restrictions popular. "It was a sales technique," he explained. "You make something exclusive and people want it more." Certainly he was right to emphasize the major role played by the city's premier residential developer. Roland Park Company founder Edward Bouton stated in 1924 that he did not sell to Jews "of any character whatever," believing that they depressed property values because gentiles would not buy homes in Jewish areas. Because his company developed much of North Baltimore, its strict enforcement of this policy kept upwardly mobile Jews out of a large swath of the city's new residential districts, including Roland Park, Guilford, Homeland, and Northwood.<sup>10</sup>

The methods developed by the Roland Park Company were copied by other firms—and since only a handful of companies controlled large tracts of land, their combined efforts effectively circumscribed Jews. The companies carefully screened

initial buyers. Then, to ensure that these homeowners did not, in turn, sell to Jews, they typically relied not on explicit deed restrictions (which were used primarily against African Americans) but on a potent mix of advertising, signage, and a "Gentlemen's Agreement" with the city's real estate board, which enforced discipline among realtors through control of the multiple listing service. Northwood was advertised as an "Ideal Location for Discriminating People," while a sign at the entrance to Homeland announced the neighborhood as "restricted." One 1930 brochure insinuated, "What kind of people are found in Homeland-Guilford-Roland Park? You probably know but these factors are so important that it does no harm to recall them." Such marketing techniques signaled to Jews that they were not welcome even if they were not explicitly banned.<sup>11</sup>

Jews who missed the warnings and slipped through the screening process found that the implicit could quickly become explicit. In 1941, thirty-five Ruxton residents signed a letter to Mr. and Mrs. Robert E. Hecht Sr., who had recently purchased a lot in their upscale north Baltimore community. "You have had an offer to take the lot off your hands without any loss to yourselves," the letter pointed out. "We respectfully, but urgently, request you to accept." A real estate company canceled Israel Saffron's contract to buy a house in northeast Baltimore's middle-class Ednor Gardens when it was discovered that he was Jewish. The agent told him he "could not sell the property to a Jew" but would be "very glad to sell him any home in a Jewish neighborhood."<sup>12</sup> Discrimination was not yet illegal, so the agent faced no penalty for being honest. But according to the social conventions of the day, subtlety was preferred in enforcing barriers against Jews, Italians, and other ethnic minorities. Jews were, after all, "white," and many had attained a degree of civic or economic accomplishment.

Far from being a straightforward tale of anti-Semitism, the story of Jews' increasing concentration in northwest Baltimore is a complicated one. For one thing, prominent Jewish real estate developers also discriminated against Jews. Joseph Meyerhoff, for example, partnered with the Roland Park Company during the depths of the Depression and scrupulously followed Bouton's anti-Jewish policy. Though he later stated that he "wasn't happy about it," he and other Jewish developers accepted Bouton's claim that gentiles did not want to live near Jews and saw restrictions as simply a matter of economics.<sup>13</sup>

Moreover, racial politics and white Baltimore's ongoing concern to prevent the advance of African Americans into white residential districts played at least as large a role as anti-Semitism. As Antero Pietila points out in his groundbreaking study of housing discrimination in Baltimore, opposition to Jewish encroachment into non-Jewish areas was heightened by the fact that Jewish neighborhoods often became "transitional zones where sellers ultimately tapped the black market." Although this pattern could be found in other places, it was particularly significant in Baltimore, the only American city with sizeable black and Jewish populations. In 1920, the city was roughly 15 percent black and 9 percent Jewish; in contrast, other

cities with large Jewish communities had relatively few African Americans at the dawn of the Great Migration of southern blacks to the North. Thus, in addition to the typical anti-Jewish tendencies of real estate brokers, housing developers, and gentile homeowners that existed elsewhere, the large percentage of blacks in Baltimore made the white establishment especially determined to limit the spread of Jews who might later turn their housing over to African Americans.<sup>14</sup>

In fact, during the interwar years, the city's Jewish neighborhoods did continuously give way to expanding black settlement, which could no longer be contained in the traditional African American district in West Baltimore. To escape overcrowding, African Americans looked to the heavily Jewish neighborhood to the north rather than the white, non-Jewish neighborhood to the west, where they faced greater resistance. As Leon Sachs later observed, "they followed the Jewish community because it was easier and safer." Jews didn't "throw bricks and break windows when blacks moved in." Moreover, Pietila points out, "The Real Estate Board did not generally accept Jews to membership. As a result, the board lacked capacity and will to enforce segregation in predominantly Jewish districts."<sup>15</sup>

Nor were Jews likely to initiate the genteel anti-black campaigns pursued by elite homeowner associations. When Harry Friedenwald was approached by segregationist leader William Marbury in 1929 to sign a petition for "the protection of our neighborhood from Negro invasion," he refused. "Our people have had such a long experience in the particular question of segregation . . . that I would never actively promote such a movement," he told Marbury, who replied that "nothing was going to arouse the animosity against the Jews more than this attitude of aligning themselves with the Negroes."<sup>16</sup> Some Jews did join homeowner associations aimed at keeping blacks out, either out of agreement with the goal or because they wanted to fit in. But more commonly, they simply moved further northwest, the advance of the black population becoming another contributor to the geographic trajectory of Jewish Baltimore.

Though racial dynamics and discrimination promoted residential segregation, it must be noted that other powerful factors helped create the largely Jewish neighborhoods of northwest Baltimore. A strong element of choice shaped Jewish residential patterns. The expansive precincts of northwest Baltimore offered an ideal place for tight-knit networks of family and friends to not only enjoy better housing, spacious parks, and other amenities, but also to build new kinds of institutions and create commercial districts that catered to their evolving needs. Meanwhile, the city's landscape virtually guaranteed that after the Jewish community became established there, it would continue to advance in a northwesterly direction. The diagonal corridors of Park Heights Avenue, Reisterstown Road, and Liberty Heights/Liberty Road provided the pathways for future growth.<sup>17</sup>

The formation of "second generation" Jewish neighborhoods in northwest Baltimore did not mean that Jews remained separate from local culture. Indeed, during the

1920s and 1930s, such neighborhoods in cities across the nation offered a safe space for the children of immigrants to experiment with becoming American, without the danger of losing their Jewish identity. As Baltimore Jews absorbed influences from their surroundings, American pastimes—and their Baltimore variants—came to dominate neighborhood life. Easterwood Park had its softball leagues; Druid Hill Park had its tennis. The dance hall at Carlin's Park offered a place for teens to meet members of the opposite sex. For many families, the steamed crab feast became a valued tradition, although often this decidedly non-kosher rite was confined to the basement and tables were scrupulously covered with newspaper to avoid contact with otherwise kosher surroundings. This strategy perhaps helped justify the large ads touting its "best seasoned steamed crabs" placed in the *Jewish Times* by Gordon Sea Food on West North Avenue.<sup>18</sup>

The emergence of northwest Baltimore as a Jewish space proved critical in determining how Jews would relate to the surrounding society. In regard to African Americans, the proximity of northwest Jewish Baltimore to the city's major black district had important implications for black-Jewish relations. As for Jewish-gentile relations more generally, in some ways having their own "turf" served to isolate Jews and encouraged them to continue to see non-Jews (and be seen by non-Jews) as "the other," even as they shed the trappings of their immigrant lifestyle and became more American. But their northwest Baltimore enclave also served as a launching pad for Jewish entrepreneurs, who could then reach beyond the ethnic economy with the kinds of businesses that characterized a new era of consumerism. Moreover, it provided a base of support that allowed Jewish politicians and community leaders to play a major role in city politics and urban affairs.

### Jewish-Gentile Interaction

Within the period's fraught national climate, Baltimore's racial and ethnic groups were on the move and often competed for housing, resources, and influence. Interactions between Jews and non-Jews became more frequent and more intense, especially among the younger generation. Many Jews who grew up during those years recalled serious clashes with non-Jewish youths. In southwest Baltimore, a tough, working-class, predominantly Irish and German district, "we had to use our fists because of such words as kike, sheenie, zut, and Christ-killer," recalled David "Dutch" Baer. In East Baltimore, Jewish and Italian boys engaged in turf battles, though the two groups mostly got along. The Polish area to the east was another story. "As soon as we crossed over to the 1700 block of Gough Street, we'd hear 'sheeny, Jews, dirty Jew,'" recalled Minnie Schneider. Jews also faced hostility in newer areas of Jewish settlement in northwest Baltimore, where Maurice Paper protected younger children from clashes with neighborhood rowdies. "The little kids would walk with me when we passed churches so the gentiles didn't come out," recalled Paper. "They would beat the kids if I wasn't around."<sup>19</sup>

Such experiences shaped a generation of tough kids. "When you grow up in a climate like that you go from one problem to another," noted Dutch Baer. When he was nine years old, five older boys attacked him in an alley. "They shouted Jew, kike, we are going to play 'church on fire.' They had my hands bound to a pole and they urinated on me. I was the church and they were putting the fire out." After that, Baer learned to fight, eventually graduating to "blackjacks and brass knuckles" and becoming a self-described juvenile delinquent. As for Maurice Paper, "Nobody would mess with me. . . . I would fight for anybody for anything. Parents wanted to put me in reform school!" (Both outgrew their youthful "delinquency": Paper served as a combat engineer in World War II; Baer was the athletic director at Easterwood Park before a career as a lawyer, state legislator, and IRS official.)<sup>20</sup>

Searing encounters with anti-Semitism helped shape the world view of many young people, yet that was not the only contact Jews had with non-Jews in and around the neighborhood. Jews could be the aggressors as well. As Isadore Livov recalled, "We used to pick battles with the *schwarzes*. . . . We would hide behind the wall and we would have teasers to get the *schwarzes* to run by, so we could waylay them." But friendships occasionally arose across racial and ethnic lines, especially in East Baltimore, where blacks, Jews, and Italians lived close together. Aaron Smelkinson roamed the waterfront with a black friend who lived in an alley street around the corner from his home, though he never set foot in his friend's house or vice versa. Oral histories of Jews and Italians reveal much positive interaction. One Italian woman recalled enjoyable visits to the Jewish Educational Alliance (JEA) with her Jewish friends. Italian men had fond memories of serving as "shabbes goyim," turning on lights and performing other chores forbidden to observant Jews on the Sabbath. Prominent political figure Thomas D'Alesandro Jr., who later developed close alliances with Jews, was one of them.<sup>21</sup>

Jews who lived above their stores in non-Jewish areas faced a different dynamic. Some experienced isolation. One gentile Highlandtown resident recalled, "Mr. Ruben, being the only Jewish man, the people would make fun of him." Often, though, the local Jewish storeowner was a familiar, accepted part of life. "During the Depression, my father was good to his customers," recalled Morty Weiner, who grew up in white, working-class northeast Baltimore. "That's why we got along so well with them." Rhea Feikin had many friends growing up in Hampden. "I would run around the neighborhood eating bacon," she recalled. There was little danger of complete assimilation, however: most youngsters living in non-Jewish areas visited Jewish neighborhoods regularly to see relatives, shop, or attend shul and Hebrew school.<sup>22</sup>

Compared to residents of the much larger and more densely populated New York Jewish neighborhoods of Brooklyn and the Bronx, Baltimore's Jews were much less isolated from interaction with non-Jews. But if the outside world occasionally impinged—for good or ill—they nevertheless found security in their own Jewish surroundings. Indeed, for most Jews who came of age during the interwar period, the

non-Jewish world was neither aggressively hostile nor a place to seek out friendship. It was a vaguely threatening fact of life that could be fairly easily ignored by staying on their own neighborhood turf. Gil Sandler and his buddies, for example, enjoyed exploring the woods that bordered Park Heights on the east, but would not venture beyond the forest into Woodberry, "a neighborhood as dangerously off-limits to us boys as if it were peopled by hostile aliens from another planet."<sup>23</sup>

Many youth received an eye-opening introduction to life beyond the Jewish world when they went off to high school. Attending all-girls Eastern High School in the late 1930s "was quite an experience for me, 'cause I more or less lived in a ghetto," Norma Livov Wolod recalled. "I was exposed to a lot of gentile young women, and some of them became my best friends." One school came to take on a special importance for the Jewish community. For decades, Baltimore City College high school had provided an excellent public education for (white) boys of many backgrounds, including Jews. During the interwar years, the sons of immigrant tailors and shopkeepers flocked to City to receive the education their parents hoped would launch them into the middle class. By 1925, around six hundred Jews attended City, almost 40 percent of the student body. It was Jewish enough to be comfortable, but it also provided many boys with their first opportunity to interact with non-Jewish peers. Since City served as a training ground for Baltimore's future leaders, these connections would prove valuable later in life.<sup>24</sup>

High school instilled confidence in many young Jews. Not only did they excel in academics, they joined wholeheartedly in activities from debate societies to athletics. City College shone in a variety of sports. When the 1923 basketball squad won the league title, four of its five starters were Jewish, including acting captain Dan Kolker. Yet, though they were accepted by non-Jews at their own school, they were marked as "the other" at schools where Jews were largely unknown. When City teams traveled to rival high schools to play, they were sometimes greeted with the chant, "City once, City twice, City is a bunch of lice, City College, the home of the Jews."<sup>25</sup>

Second generation Jews became accustomed to this double standard. As they grew older, they would continue to live in Jewish neighborhoods and socialize almost entirely with fellow Jews, but unlike their immigrant parents, most had neither the option nor the inclination to inhabit a completely Jewish world. Indeed, some of the people most deeply entrenched in the Jewish community also moved easily outside it—and that applied to both "uptown" and "downtown" Jews. Sadie Crockin was president of Baltimore's League of Women Voters as well as its Hadassah chapter, and counted fellow suffragist Madeleine Ellicott as one of her best friends. Three of Rabbi Rivkin's sons worked at the *Baltimore Post*, two as editors and one in advertising. Along with such participation came an understanding of the limits of social interaction; despite having gentile friends, Crockin belonged to a Jewish country club, and elite Jewish families continued to send their children to Park School, the only private school without quotas. Meanwhile, communal organizations also engaged



*Baltimore City College, 1925. (Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore City Life Museum Collection, gift of Julius Anderson, 1994.)*

in activities beyond the Jewish community, from the Council of Jewish Women's membership in the Maryland Federation of Women's Clubs to the JEA's many sports teams. (The JEA girls held the city's dodgeball title for the entire 1930s.)<sup>26</sup>

As Jews moved deeper into the public sphere, they employed a range of strategies to deal with the bigotry they encountered: ignore, retreat, educate/enlighten, or fight. Ignoring bigotry or retreating into their own institutions generally seemed the judicious choice given the climate of the times. Jewish leaders might have hesitated to protest against the *Emden* partly because Jewish-owned businesses were being eyed suspiciously for hiring refugees from Nazism instead of Baltimoreans. Rumors circulated that Hochschild, Kohn department store had fired Christians in order to give jobs to Jews recently arrived from Germany. Isaac Potts was accused of "discharging American Bohemian help and replacing them with refugees" at his furniture store. "This got to be a major problem in this country, and it happened in Baltimore very severely," recalled former Hochschild, Kohn executive Walter Sondheim Jr. Ignoring the rumors seemed the only way to keep them from spreading. Meanwhile, refugee aid groups took pains to keep a low profile; being out front on the *Emden* risked drawing attention to their work.<sup>27</sup>

On the other hand, initiatives to promote interfaith understanding and educate the public about Jews and Judaism took off during the era. Jews were not the only targets of xenophobia. Anti-Catholic sentiment ran rampant, reaching a peak during the 1928 presidential campaign of the Catholic Democratic nominee, Al Smith. In response, the National Conference of Christians and Jews formed to promote interfaith cooperation, and local groups followed. Baltimore Jews helped found the Religious Good Will League in 1928. The Federation of Church and Synagogue Youth held its initial meeting at Baltimore Hebrew Congregation in 1931. Rabbi Morris Lazaron took a special interest in interfaith work, becoming part of the NCCJ's famous "Tolerance Trio" (a priest, minister, and rabbi) who drew large crowds and garnered wide publicity during barnstorming tours across the nation in the 1930s.<sup>28</sup>

In the late thirties, the American Jewish Congress, American Jewish Committee, Jewish Labor Committee, and B'nai B'rith attempted to create a unified response to the rise in anti-Semitism. Their General Council for Jewish Rights lasted only three years, but during that time they encouraged their local affiliates to form similar umbrella organizations. Baltimore Jews, building on the collaborative structure they had developed in the campaign against Nazism, created the Baltimore Jewish Council in 1939. The BJC immediately established itself as the community relations arm of Baltimore Jewry, a position it retains today.<sup>29</sup>

As the first communal institution to engage in the "fight" strategy, the BJC went about its business quietly. Focusing at first on employment discrimination, its usual method was to investigate fully and then meet privately with the perpetrators, often calling upon highly placed Jewish business or governmental leaders to reason with them. Such methods enabled the BJC to end discriminatory hiring at some companies, but, as executive director Leon Sachs later observed, the group was only "scratching the surface of a major problem." More systemic solutions—and a more aggressive approach—would wait until the 1940s.<sup>30</sup>

Communal leaders kept a low profile on issues of Jewish defense not only to avoid giving publicity (and hence legitimacy) to local anti-Semitism, but also to protect the gains Jews had undeniably made: they did hold positions of power, but did not want to call attention to the fact. It was safer to protest non-local purveyors of bigotry. One well-reported campaign in defense of Jewish rights had a decidedly non-local enemy. In 1932, Rabbi Edward Israel successfully crusaded to remove Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* from the high school curriculum, but his campaign put school superintendent David Weglein in a difficult position. "It is worth noting," the *Afro-American* newspaper editorialized, "that Jews got nowhere with their Shylock protest until a Jew became superintendent of schools, and another was nominated to sit on the School Board." In this case, calling attention to Weglein was not a matter of bigotry (the *Afro* "heartily concurred" in the banning), rather, it was fuel for the *Afro's* campaign to have African American representation on the school board.<sup>31</sup>

Weglein faced a more explosive situation in June 1939 when Milton Bridge, a

Jewish student at Gwynns Falls Junior High School, was attacked one Friday by a group of boys, many sporting inked swastikas on their arms. In the melee, they reportedly cut an "H," for Hebrew, on the back of his neck with a "sharp instrument." Bridge's friend Morton Rosen, a nineteen-year-old ex-seaman, went to the school on the following Monday to protect him, got into a fight with two students, and was arrested for assault. Jewish students from City College also showed up to "get even" with Bridge's attackers, and police chased some thirty City boys through the woods near the school. Four City students were suspended by Weglein, along with eighteen Gwynns Falls boys implicated in the attack on Bridge.

The episode inflamed the Jewish community. The *Jewish Times* devoted significant coverage, as reports circulated of a "secret bund organization" operating in the schools. School authorities downplayed the incident, describing it as a "boyish prank" or "fracas between school children." Weglein promised a full investigation, which found no evidence of organized anti-Semitism at Gwynns Falls or any other school. Instead, the investigatory report deplored the "great amount of publicity" which created an "exaggerated impression of what occurred." It made a plea for "real tolerance" but made no recommendations except to place the suspended students on probation for the following school year. Criminal charges against Morton Rosen were tossed out by a grand jury.<sup>32</sup>

Rosen and the City students demonstrated that Jewish youth were ready for a more aggressive "fight" strategy than their elders. Indeed, young Jews had not been silent in the face of earlier incidents. In 1936, ninth graders at Clifton Park Junior High School had protested the required reading of Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*, charging that their classmates had used anti-Semitic passages from the book against them. *Jewish Times* columnist Maurice Shochatt had chosen not to cover their protest at the time but three years later he proudly hailed Rosen's "solid punches in the defense of Melvin Bridge."<sup>33</sup> He was not the only adult to approve the teen's actions: Rosen received pro bono representation from prominent attorney Ellis Levin and was given a job by a Jewish businessman. Taking heart from the younger generation, the Jewish community, it seemed, was now in more of a fighting mood.

### The Jewish Vote

Despite the climate of anti-Semitism, the interwar period saw Baltimore's Jewish community become a political force to be reckoned with. Jews had been active in politics for decades, but now their growing numbers, along with an increased level of political sophistication and organization, allowed them to claim a share of real power. They were aided by Baltimore's border city political culture, which had long combined the kind of ethnic-based machine politics common to northern industrial cities with the penchant for disenfranchising black voters characteristic of the South. These dynamics provided opportunity to a Jewish community that was at once significant in size and ever more concentrated into a single section of the city.

It remained only for someone to come along with the insight and ruthlessness to forge the Jewish population into a powerful voting bloc.<sup>34</sup>

That someone was James H. "Jack" Pollack. Pollack had grown up on the streets of East Baltimore and enjoyed a brief career as a boxer before becoming an enforcer in the bootlegging trade. Arrested often for assault and liquor violations in his twenties, in 1921 he and three accomplices were indicted for killing night watchman Hugo Kaplan during a robbery. The case never came to trial and Pollack soon embarked on a political career. In 1926, in the employ of Irish Democratic boss William Curran, he assaulted an East Baltimore election judge who questioned the qualifications of a man whom Pollack had brought in to register to vote. Curran himself represented Pollack at his hearing (he was fined twenty-six dollars).<sup>35</sup>

Pollack rose in Curran's organization, and in 1933 Governor Albert C. Ritchie appointed him to the state Athletic Commission, which regulated the boxing industry. Ritchie admitted that Pollack "used to be quite a bad boy" but noted that most charges against him had been dropped. He was now a family man living in northwest Baltimore, serving as Curran's co-leader in the fourth legislative district. The two were close; Pollack even named his son Morton Curran Pollack. Before long, however, he bucked his mentor and took over the district.<sup>36</sup>

Through his Trenton Democratic Club, Pollack "wielded nearly absolute control over the Jewish vote." The totals in his precincts "hit like a ton of concrete," recalled a *Sun* editor. "Three hundred to six! Four hundred and fifty to ten! When the fourth district came in, elections turned around!" His personality aided his rise: astuteness, charisma and charm, and a vindictiveness that struck fear into potential adversaries. When opposed, "he would take measures to destroy you," a close acquaintance said. "He was a vicious enemy." Forging alliances with highly placed officials—after Curran, the most notable being Thomas D'Alesandro Jr., congressman, mayor, and former "shabbes goy"—Pollack emerged by the early forties as the city's unchallenged political boss, a position he would hold for two decades as he "made" mayors and governors, city councilmen and state legislators, judges, housing inspectors, and liquor license holders.<sup>37</sup>

Pollack's motive was to amass personal wealth and power. While doing so, he gave his fellow Jews access to the political spoils of a burgeoning welfare state: government jobs and contracts, city services, and favorable treatment from regulatory agencies, zoning boards, and other public bodies. Easterwood Park athletic director Dutch Baer found himself on the receiving end of Pollack's largesse. An obsessive softball fan, Pollack made sure the park was kept in top shape. He also had a habit of hiring ringers for his Trenton Democratic Club team, "which he had no right to do because it was amateur sports," Baer noted. To many people, Pollack was a beneficent presence. "He did for everybody," stated neighbor Louis Bluefeld, who recalled Pollack dispensing favors to families who called his home daily. In return, "everybody on the block" helped Pollack at election time.<sup>38</sup>

Many Jewish public officials owed their elections to Pollack, who expected to be rewarded in turn. But, though obsessed with political power, he was uninterested in public policy. He often backed candidates who, "in keeping with the Jewish tradition, could be counted on to take the lead in the enactment of progressive legislation in the areas of education, health, welfare of the poor" without his interference, a politically connected observer noted. These included labor champion and New Dealer Jacob Edelman, elected to the city council in 1939, and state legislator E. Milton Altfeld, who sponsored anti-Jim Crow bills and other civil rights measures.<sup>39</sup> Yet it would be wrong to credit Pollack with advancing the interests of African Americans. With blacks making up a large portion of the fourth district, he took up the Baltimore power structure's ongoing project of keeping African Americans politically powerless, following a dual strategy of suppressing the black vote and playing on the racial fears of his Jewish constituency. Excluding blacks became a keystone of Pollack's organization, "one of its strongest cohesive forces," says political scientist Harvey Wheeler. Jews advanced politically, at least in part, at the expense of blacks.<sup>40</sup>

Pollack's rise to power was not without opposition in the Jewish community. In 1934, House of Delegates member Alexander Goodman organized a slate of anti-Pollack primary candidates; he never won another election. Other Jewish politicians, uncomfortable with Pollack's corrupt ways, dropped in and out of the fold. Altfeld temporarily broke from him in 1935, proclaiming that the fourth district had become "a political cesspool." (House Speaker Emanuel Gorfine condemned the "unwarranted attack upon Mr. Pollack.") An anti-Pollack faction coalesced in the 1940s around Judge Joseph Sherbow, known for his anti-gambling crusade. But even reform-minded Jewish Democrats were implicated in machine politics one way or another. Sherbow himself was a Curran ally.<sup>41</sup>

Jews and blacks had long been mainstays of Baltimore's perennially downtrodden Republican Party, and Republicans may have been the only Jewish officeholders to escape the taint of the machine. Popular Jewish reformer Daniel Ellison served as the "social conscience" of the city council and its lone Republican, despite running from the heart of Pollack territory. Among other things, he lobbied "long, hard, and successfully" for the 1937 creation of the Baltimore Housing Authority. The *Afro-American* saw Harry Levin, the city's sole Republican state legislator in the late 1920s, as a staunch ally. Simon Sobeloff, once a protégé of Republican mayor William Broening, was responsible for enforcing Prohibition laws as U.S. Attorney for Maryland in the early 1930s and somehow "emerged with the respect of both wets and dries."<sup>42</sup>

But the days when Jews split their vote between the two parties were drawing to an end. The interwar years saw American Jews move solidly into the Democratic camp, and Baltimoreans were no exception.<sup>43</sup> The rise of Pollack's machine no doubt helped, but ultimately it was the Depression that transformed the Jewish electorate into a solidly Democratic constituency. From machine hacks to progressive reform-

ers, from the labor movement to small businesspeople, Baltimore Jews embraced the New Deal.

Beyond the electoral process, Jews influenced local politics through their participation in the social movements that spanned the era. It was a time of broad-based alliances. Suffrage leader Sadie Crockin worked with union women in the campaign for women's right to vote; upper-class friend of labor Jacob Moses became a prominent advocate for a women's Equal Rights Amendment; socialist Samuel Neistadt and Rabbi Israel helped found the Maryland ACLU. The Jewish-led Amalgamated Clothing Workers became an important part of the city's political culture, sponsoring a popular lecture series for workers that served as a gathering place for a wide spectrum of progressives. Though reformers and radicals made little headway in the reactionary years after World War I, once the Depression hit, the networks they had created helped revive the labor movement and forge the citizens' movements that pushed for solutions to the economic crisis. Given the anti-New Deal stance of key public officials, the ACW and other progressive groups were critical in getting the New Deal to work in Maryland. Their efforts, the tactics of the Democratic machine, and the popularity of FDR and the New Deal brought Jews and other ethnic groups into the political process more than ever before.<sup>44</sup>

Embracing the Popular Front strategy of building alliances with liberals, Maryland's Communist Party—with much Jewish participation—reached the height of its influence in the 1930s and early 1940s. Jewish Communists worked as union organizers and attorneys, particularly in the maritime, shipyard, and steel industries. They promoted racial equality at forums sponsored by civil rights groups and held mixed-race dances that were often raided by the police. Johns Hopkins University professor Albert Blumberg was the Communist candidate for mayor in 1938 and senator in 1940. Baltimore attorney Bernard Ades achieved fame defending Euel Lee, an African American accused of killing a white family of four on the Eastern shore, in a case that drew comparisons to the Scottsboro boys. Before the trial, Ades and a colleague were beaten by a mob that gathered outside the courthouse in hopes of lynching Lee. Ades succeeded in having Lee's conviction overturned, based on the exclusion of blacks from the jury, prompting the *Afro* to praise what "two Jewish lawyers, backed by the Communist Party," had accomplished. (In a second trial, Lee was convicted and executed.)<sup>45</sup>

The heroic actions of Bernard Ades and racist ploys of Jack Pollack represented the extremes of Jewish political behavior toward blacks. Jewish elected officials like Ellison, Levin, Goodman, and Altfeld were among the few white politicians to ally with African Americans. When Ellison sponsored a resolution urging the U.S. Senate to pass an anti-poll tax bill in 1942, only the Jewish city councilmen voted in favor (no blacks served on the council at that time). Indeed, as author Lillian Potter put it, "No other community in Baltimore aided the Black struggle as the Jewish community did." Nevertheless, members of the two groups often found themselves in

opposition. In politics as well as in other arenas, interactions between Baltimore's two largest minorities were both intertwined and complex.<sup>46</sup>

### Jews and Blacks

In addition to politicians, several Jewish civic leaders demonstrated their support for black civil rights. Sidney Hollander, an Urban League founder, led a biracial committee charged with making the city's parks more responsive to blacks. He personally challenged segregation by bringing African American friends to concerts at the Peabody Conservatory. (In the 1950s, he would arrange for the first black performer, Marian Anderson, to appear at the Lyric Theatre.) Joseph Ulman served as president of the Urban League for several years. Rabbi Edward Israel fought for a black presence on the staff of the city's new employment agency and insisted on equal pay. He also angered Jewish owners of downtown department stores—including members of his own congregation—by calling on them to end their discriminatory policies against blacks.<sup>47</sup>

Yet, with the exception of Rabbi Israel, Jewish leaders were unwilling to confront Jewish-owned businesses that discriminated against or exploited blacks. Indeed, despite Jewish support for civil rights, economic and social relations between blacks and Jews were fraught with tension. African Americans' frustrations at the oppression they faced often found expression against Jews, who were highly visible in the black community as landlords, storeowners, and competitors for the same real estate. Articles in the *Afro-American* in the early 1920s pulled no punches: "Jews Making Barrels of Money from Colored Folk" is how the paper described the role of Jewish real estate speculators in northwest Baltimore's changing neighborhoods. One article depicted a woman's attempt "to save her home from the clutches of Simon Needle, a Jewish real estate dealer." Perhaps because of the *Afro's* developing relationship with Jewish political allies, such crude stereotypes disappeared from the headlines by the end of the decade.<sup>48</sup>

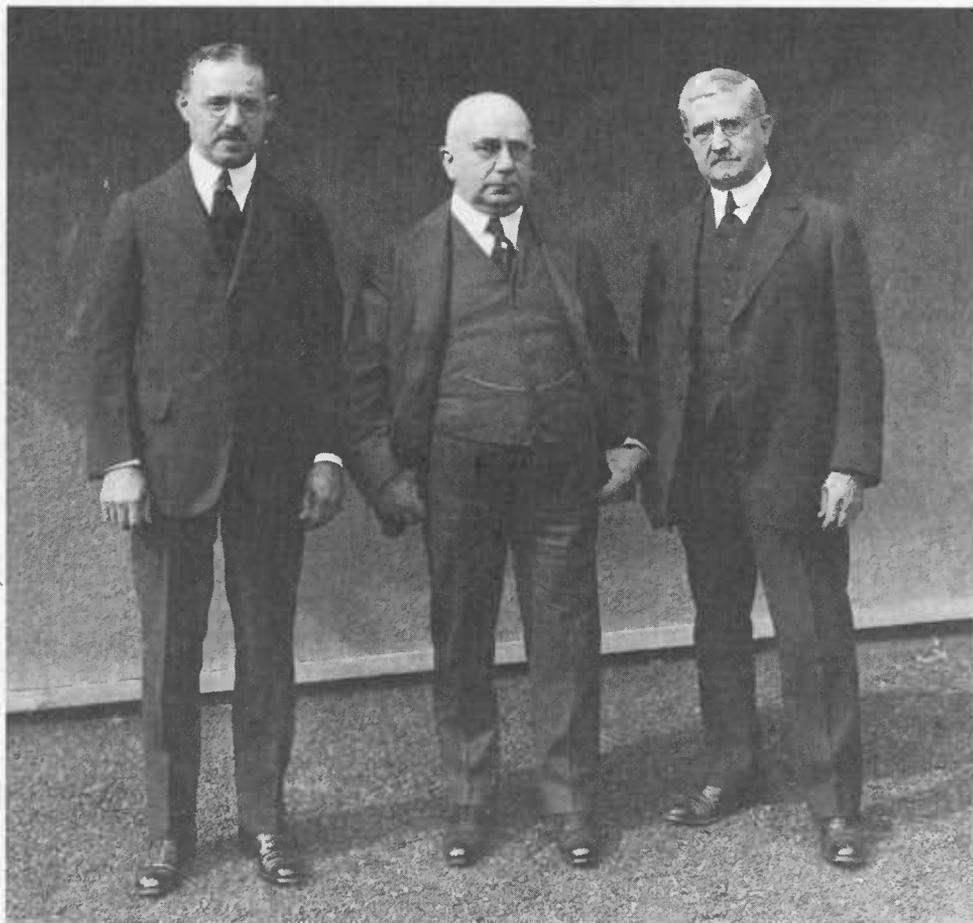
The most concentrated Jewish retail presence in black West Baltimore was along Pennsylvania Avenue. Lined with shops, movie theaters, clubs, and concert halls that showcased America's top black entertainers, "the Avenue" was the thriving "hub of Negro life and activity in Baltimore." As one female patron recalled, "downtown you couldn't try on a dress or stop and have a snack with a friend, but the Avenue was ours and, I'll tell you, it was a mighty fine place to go."<sup>49</sup> That most of the stores and many entertainment venues were owned by Jews had broad implications for Jewish-black relations. Among other things, the reluctance of Avenue merchants to hire black employees led many African Americans to suspect that "their Jewishness was somehow related to their discriminatory behavior," notes historian Andor Skotnes. In the 1930s, activists led a "Buy Where You Can Work" boycott of the Avenue's stores. The campaign had mixed success, but one clear result was an increase in tension between blacks and Jews.<sup>50</sup>

However, relationships between customers and merchants, employees and storeowners, and black and Jewish neighbors could be positive as well. Mickey Steinberg's family lived above their store in an African American block of West Lanvale Street. "All my friends were 'colored,'" he recalled. "We played ball on the street." He rarely ventured into the white, gentile, working-class area across Fulton Avenue, where, as a Jewish kid, he was more likely to encounter hostility. Moreover, while some African Americans complained of high prices and exploitive credit practices, others believed that Jewish merchants provided a valuable service and that the Jews' experience of oppression made them sympathetic to the plight of blacks. "In the Jews' stores, they would give you credit," one woman explained in an oral history. "You couldn't go into the white stores and say my children need a loaf of bread or a chicken or whatever, and have them give it to you. But in a Jew's store, you could get that. It's interesting because the Jews also have a history of being oppressed. . . . And I think that's why they did for us, because they were also downed people."<sup>51</sup>

To many African Americans, that history of oppression made discrimination by Jewish-owned businesses all the more infuriating. As Baltimore NAACP leader Lillie Mae Jackson put it, "the Negroes naturally expect better treatment from the Jewish group." And nothing aroused the anger of Jackson and other black leaders so much as the racist policies of the downtown department stores, most of which were Jewish-owned. Hochschild, Kohn chief Martin Kohn later admitted, "Colored customers, or blacks as they are called now, were not welcomed in any Baltimore department store. . . . They were not extended credit regardless of their worth. They could not try on clothes and they had no return privileges." They also were not served at store lunch counters.<sup>52</sup>

Kohn claimed the stores had little choice. "Baltimore was a border city, and all prejudices were a little stronger here than other places." His use of the word "all" hints at the vulnerability felt by Jewish merchants; they would not risk the good will of the white, gentile majority. More importantly, the owners believed that changing their policy involved too great a financial risk. Confronted by the NAACP in the 1930s and 1940s, Kohn relates, "I am ashamed to say that we put them off by saying that it was not us, but our customers, who determined our policy. . . . We had customers who would get off an elevator if a black got on, and who would leave a counter if a black stood next to them." Ironically, his rationale echoed the rationale of real estate developer Edward Bouton for keeping Jews out of Roland Park.<sup>53</sup>

Similar alliances and tensions between Jews and blacks could be found in other cities, but in Baltimore, the only city where "large Jewish and Black communities were juxtaposed in a southern-like Jim Crow environment," as Skotnes puts it, their interactions were likely more charged than elsewhere. Local tensions burst onto the national scene in a 1936 exchange between Rabbi Israel and Lillie Mae Jackson in the NAACP magazine, *Crisis*. Israel, a noted civil rights supporter, expressed dismay about the anti-Jewish sentiment he encountered at a civil rights forum. Jackson re-



*Benno Kohn, Max Hochschild, Louis B. Kohn, 1922, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Hochschild-Kohn department store. (Maryland Historical Society.)*

sponded with a barrage of angry charges against Jews, with special mention of the department stores.<sup>54</sup>

### **On the Civic and Cultural Scene**

It is not surprising that civil rights leaders, drawn primarily from the black middle and upper classes, found exclusion from the downtown emporiums particularly galling. As “prominent sites of civic culture and modernity,” in historian Paul Kramer’s words, the department stores symbolized Baltimore’s very identity during an age of rising consumerism. Hutzler’s “was so ‘Baltimore-ish’ and very classy,” as one former customer put it. “It was one of the big Baltimore traditions.” Novelist Anne Tyler considered the store so defining that for years, her characters shopped there at least once per novel. Hochschild, Kohn’s Thanksgiving parade was “one of Baltimore’s biggest and best-loved spectacles.”<sup>55</sup>



*Baltimore Bargain House, c.1920–1930. (Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore City Life Museum Collection, gift of Julius Anderson, 1995.)*

Their role in fashioning the downtown experience was not the only way Jews shaped Baltimore as it grew into a thriving modern city. From their circumscribed turf in northwest Baltimore, their contributions to civic and cultural life were city-wide, and major, from the foods Baltimoreans identified as their own to the places they spent their leisure hours to the art that hung on the walls of that newly built monument to civic pride, the Baltimore Museum of Art. Despite anti-Semitism and the limits imposed by a segregated social life, the Jewish community became an

integral part of the cultural fabric during the interwar years—not just through the contributions of old elite families like the Hutzlers, Hochschilds, and Hechts, but, even more so, through the ambitions and preoccupations of the Eastern Europeans, acculturated immigrants and their children, who made up the bulk of the Jewish population.

A new generation of Jewish-owned businesses began to rival the department stores in cultural influence. Jewish-owned car dealerships, movie theater chains, advertising agencies, and radio stations represented the cutting edge of consumerism. Delis such as Nate's and Leon's became hangouts where (white) Baltimoreans from a variety of backgrounds could congregate. Isadore Rappaport's Hippodrome Theater offered the latest in live entertainment, from big bands to comedy acts like Bob Hope and the Three Stooges. Hendler's Ice Cream ("The Velvet Kind") entered the peak of its popularity, while German Jewish refugee spicemaker Gustav Brunn created the spice blend that he named "Old Bay." Even the traditional Baltimore game of duckpin bowling received an update when the Shecter family opened the Charles Bowling Center in 1937, its one hundred lanes making it the largest of its kind.<sup>56</sup>

As the Eastern Europeans' elder statesman and Baltimore's biggest booster, Jacob Epstein exerted a major influence on his adopted city. His wholesale firm, the Baltimore Bargain House, had long been one of the city's largest businesses, and by the 1920s he was devoting most of his energies to civic life. In the early 1920s he served as one of five members of the powerful Public Improvement Commission, charged with overseeing the development of the land the city had annexed in 1918. This role gave him a hand in the expansion of the city's water supply and school system, among other public projects. Meanwhile, he joined the board of the nascent Baltimore Museum of Art in 1923, and his personal art collection became one of its founding collections when it opened in Wyman Park in 1929.<sup>57</sup>

Other Jewish Baltimoreans played key roles in creating the institutions of a modern era. As Maryland's relief administrator during the New Deal, Harry Greenstein set up the state's first welfare system, while Abel Wolman oversaw numerous city infrastructure projects as head of another New Deal state agency, the Public Works Administration. Dr. Bessie Moses, the first female obstetrical intern at Johns Hopkins Hospital, opened Baltimore's first birth control clinic in 1927 with the support of Hopkins faculty. In 1938 she established the Northwest Maternal Health Center, the first in the nation staffed by black physicians. Civic leader Jacob Moses led the drive to convert the former Hebrew Orphan Asylum into the West Baltimore General Hospital, an institution desperately needed in a rapidly growing part of the city.<sup>58</sup>

Jews contributed to Baltimore cultural life, from high to low. The Cone sisters amassed a good part of their renowned modern art collection during the interwar period; after Claribel died in 1929, Etta continued the sisters' close relationship with Matisse, who visited her in Baltimore in 1930. The Cone Collection later became the "crown jewel" of the Baltimore Museum of Art. Their cousin Saidie Adler May, an

equally adventurous collector, made her first substantial gift of art to the BMA in the 1930s. The May and Cone donations would give the museum one of the nation's finest collections of modern European art.

At the other extreme was Max Cohen, whose marketing genius helped make Baltimore's red-light district, The Block, a cultural institution that may have exceeded the art museum in popularity, if not in taste. Cohen advertised his Oasis night club as "the worst night club in America" with "the lousiest shows in the world." The Oasis drew fashionable uptown "slummers" and even developed a national reputation: famed showbiz reporter and emcee Ed Sullivan termed it the "most unusual night club I've ever seen." The Block would remain a key part of Baltimore's night life into the 1950s.<sup>59</sup>

Some cultural figures bridged the gap between high and low. Immigrant violinist Benjamin Klasmer founded the Jewish Educational Alliance youth orchestra in 1919. Under his baton it became a respected ensemble, and he recruited many of its musicians to join him in the fledgling Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. At the same time, he served as the city's leading director of pit orchestras, arranging and conducting the live music that accompanied silent movies and vaudeville. After sound replaced silent films, Klasmer settled into a permanent gig at the Hippodrome, where he led the orchestra and performed as part of a two-person musical comedy act. His most significant contribution to Baltimore's civic life may have come in 1947 when he co-wrote the Baltimore Colts' theme song with Jo Lombardi.<sup>60</sup>

Having embraced local influences, Jews became adept at reflecting them back out. As a boy in the late 1930s, Jerry Leiber delivered goods to the black families who lived around his mother's West Baltimore grocery store. "Inside those households, radios were always playing," he later wrote. "Music was everywhere, running through my head and coursing through my veins." He grew up to become half of the Leiber-Stoller songwriting team, which gave the world such seminal rock & roll hits as "Jailhouse Rock," "Hound Dog," and "Kansas City."<sup>61</sup>

Individuals such as Leiber and Klasmer exemplify the boundary-crossing that characterized Jewish life and culture during this period. Though Jews resided within well-defined geographic boundaries, the borders of their interaction with the larger society were porous in ways less visible, from political alliances to economic interdependence to civic and cultural activities. It was a time of transition, bridging the gap between the immigrant era and the period after World War II, when a fully American Jewish community would emerge. It was the time when the Jews of Baltimore embraced their identity as "Baltimore Jews."

## NOTES

1. *Baltimore Sun*: "Hitler's Birthday Observed Aboard Cruiser Emden in Bay," April 21, 1936; "Emden's Officers Guests at Dinner," April 22, 1936; "Emden Guests See Sea Life's Gay Side," May 1, 1936; "Bund Rally Recalls the Emden," February 26, 1939; Fred Rasmussen, "Nazi Ship Docked Here in 1936," September 29, 1996.
2. Rasmussen, "Nazi Ship"; *Jewish Times*, April 17, 24, and May 1, 1936.
3. "\$277,000 Is Given to Jewish Relief Fund," *Sun*, November 23, 1919; "Fund Short \$200,000," *Sun*, November 30, 1919.
4. Ford required his dealerships to carry the paper, guaranteeing a wide distribution. On the national rise in anti-Semitism during the interwar period, see for example, Beth S. Wenger, *The Jewish Americans: Three Centuries of Jewish Voices in America* (New York: Doubleday, 2007).
5. Abraham Shusterman, *Legacy of a Liberal: The Miracle of Har Sinai Congregation* (Baltimore: Har Sinai Congregation, 1967), 53; "Rabbi Raises Cry of Politics Over Welcome to Nazi Cruiser," *Sun*, April 20, 1936; "Emden Protest Recruits Sought," *ibid.*, April 19, 1936; "One Arrested as Nazis' Foes Jeer Crew of Emden at Pier," *ibid.*, April 23, 1936.
6. "Emden's Welcome Reported Changed," *Sun*, April 14, 1936; "Emden to Receive Official Welcome," *ibid.*, April 17, 1936; "State Legion Decides Not to Greet Emden," *ibid.*, April 21, 1936.
7. On Jews as Baltimore's largest immigrant group during the 1880-1920 period, see Joseph Arnold, "Thinking Big about a Big City: Baltimore, 1729-1999," in Jessica Elfenbein, John R. Breihan, and Thomas L. Hollowak, eds., *From Mobtown to Charm City: New Perspectives on Baltimore's Past* (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 2002), 3-13.
8. Sherry H. Olson, *Baltimore: The Building of an American City* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 292-304 (quote on 302). See also Joseph L. Arnold, "Suburban Growth and Municipal Annexation in Baltimore, 1745-1918," *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 73 (1978): 109-28.
9. Olson, *Baltimore*, 325; "Study of the Recreational, Social and Cultural Resources of the Jewish Community of Baltimore," 1925, 2, 13, 135-36, folder 297, MS 170, The Associated Collection, Jewish Museum of Maryland (hereafter JMM). This study (hereafter 1925 YMHA study), conducted by the Jewish Welfare Board of New York, was commissioned by the Baltimore Young Men's Hebrew Association. On discrimination against blacks and Jews in Baltimore, see Antero Pietila, *Not in My Neighborhood: How Bigotry Shaped a Great American City* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2010).
10. First quote: Leon Sachs, "Review of Baltimore Jewish Council Program," 8, c. 1958, Baltimore Jewish Council (BJC) Vertical File, JMM. Second quote: "The Only Mink He Ever Saw," *Baltimore Evening Sun*, December 19, 1972. Third quote: Robert M. Fogelson, *Bourgeois Nightmares: Suburbia, 1870-1930* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 65.
11. Olson, *Baltimore*, 325; Garrett Power, "The Residential Segregation of Baltimore's Jews," *Generations* (Fall 1996): 5-7; Pietila, *Not in My Neighborhood*, 56, 74; Beth Rubinsky, "Restrictive Covenants Do Not Explain Jewish Migration into the Northwest Suburbs of Baltimore" (unpublished paper, 1986, JMM Vertical File), 32-33; James F. Waesche, *Crowning the Gravelly Hill: A History of the Roland Park-Guilford-Homeland District* (Baltimore: Maclay & Associates, 1987), 113.
12. BJC memo, January 31, 1941, Baltimore Jewish Council Collection, Folder 352, MS 107, JMM; BJC memo, March 4, 1942, Folder 331, MS 107, JMM.
13. Joseph Meyerhoff oral history, OH 77, JMM, transcript p. 19; Pietila, *Not in My Neighborhood*, 136-40.

14. Pietila, *Not in My Neighborhood*, xi. Baltimore led the nation in efforts to segregate blacks, first through pioneering segregation ordinances, and then (when these were declared unconstitutional) through restrictive covenants and racial steering. See also Garrett Power, "Apartheid Baltimore Style: The Residential Segregation Ordinances of 1910-1913," *Maryland Law Review*, (1983): 289-328.

New York City's population was less than 3 percent black in 1920; blacks in Chicago, Detroit, and Cleveland made up around 4 percent; in Philadelphia, around 7 percent (U.S. Census). Even after a decade of the Great Migration, in 1930 Baltimore had the largest percentage of blacks of the nation's ten largest cities, almost 18 percent. Southern cities had large black populations but small numbers of Jews.

15. Phyllis Orrick, "Northwest Exodus: The Migration of Baltimore's Jews," *Baltimore City Paper*, June 5, 1987; Pietila, *Not in My Neighborhood*, 56.

16. Quoted in Alexandra Lee Levin, *Vision: A Biography of Harry Friedenwald* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1964), 338-39. Marbury was a longtime leader of attempts to enforce segregation in Baltimore. See Pietila, *Not in My Neighborhood*, 19-25, 38-42.

17. Orrick, "Northwest Exodus," 13; Gilbert Sandler, "On the Avenue," *Jewish Times*, October 31, 1997 and "Staying on Track," *ibid.*, August 28, 1998; Roderick N. Ryon, *Northwest Baltimore and Its Neighborhoods, 1870-1970* (Baltimore: University of Baltimore Educational Foundation, 2000), 56.

18. Deborah Dash Moore, *At Home in America: Second Generation New York Jews* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981); Gilbert Sandler, *Jewish Baltimore: A Family Album* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000).

19. David "Dutch" Baer, OH 114, JMM, 1980; Maurice Paper quoted in Ellie Ginsburg, *American Jews and the Holocaust: History, Memory, and Identity*, at <http://userpages.umbc.edu/~jonfeng1/thesisproject/elliieginsburg/interviews/mauricepaper/index.html>; Minnie Schneider, OH 66, JMM; Perry Siegel, OH 248, JMM. See also JMM oral histories of Ida Marton, OH 177; Edward Attman, OH 678; Martin Lev, OH 301; Milton Schwartz, OH 676; Aaron Smelkinson, OH 620.

20. Baer, OH 114; Ginsburg, *American Jews and the Holocaust*.

21. JMM oral histories, Isadore Livov, Smelkinson, Attman, Blanche Green, Rosalie Abrams; Baltimore Neighborhood Heritage Project (BNHP) oral histories, Catherine Mancuso, John Pente, Joseph Sergi (Langsdale Library Special Collections, University of Baltimore).

22. Rubinsky, "Restrictive Covenants," 36; Deborah Rudacille, "On the Corner: Growing up Jewish in a Gentile Neighborhood," JMM blog, [jewishmuseummd.org/2013/04/on-the-corner-growing-up-jewish-in-a-gentile-neighborhood-1/](http://jewishmuseummd.org/2013/04/on-the-corner-growing-up-jewish-in-a-gentile-neighborhood-1/) (accessed 7/15/13).

23. Gilbert Sandler, "A Front-Row Seat on Cottage Avenue," *Generations* (2003), 27.

24. Norma Wolod, OH 687, JMM; 1925 YMHA study, 102.

25. *Green Bag* (City College yearbook), 1923, 186; Sandler, "City Forever!" (2006), Gilbert Sandler Manuscript Collection, JMM. In 1941, the City football squad traveled to Florida to play against a Miami team in a contest of the nation's two best high school football teams, according to Sandler. One-quarter of the City team was Jewish.

26. *VOTE! The Life of Sadie Crocker*, JMM exhibition, 2010; "Owners of the Post," *Baltimore Post*, October 23, 1929; *Jewish Times*, March 24, 1944 (on dodgeball).

27. *Enterprising Emporiums: The Jewish Department Stores of Downtown Baltimore* (Baltimore: Jewish Museum of Maryland, 2001), 71; Dirk Bonker, "Matters of Public Knowledge," in *Lives Lost, Lives Found, Baltimore's German Jewish Refugees, 1933-1945* (Baltimore: Jewish Museum of Maryland, 2004), 68-69; Sidney Needle to Isaac Potts, May 11, 1939, folder 121,

MS 107, JMM. Little Potts and Hochschild, Kohn did make special efforts to hire refugees, but they did not fire other employees in order to do so.

28. Friedenwald correspondence, folders 269, 271, 273, MS 161, JMM; "Federation of Church and Synagogue a Joy," *Jewish Times*, September 30, 1932; Clementine Kaufman, "A Rabbi's Daughter Remembers," *Generations* (Fall 1999): 1-5.

29. Jewish Telegraphic Agency, "'Big Four' Forms General Council for Jewish Rights," August 17, 1938; Henry Feingold, *A Time for Searching: Entering the Mainstream, 1920-1945*, Volume 4 of *The Jewish People in America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 238-39; Leon Sachs, 1979, BNHP OH 174; *Jewish Times* February 5, 1971.

30. Sachs, "Review of BJC Program," 6.

31. *Jewish Times*, October 28, 1932; "School Board Bans Shylock as Offensive," *Sun*, October 16, 1932; *Afro-American*, November 12, 1932.

32. "Anti-Jewish Acts in School Here Charged," *Sun*, June 13, 1939; "City College 4 Suspended in Fight Probe," *Sun*, June 14, 1939; "Anti-Semitic Attack on Jewish Boy in Public School Arouses Stir in U.S.A.," *Jewish Times*, June 16, 1939; Maurice Shochatt column, *Jewish Times*, June 30, 1939; "Board Finds Schools Free of Race Rows," *Sun*, July 7, 1939.

33. In his June 23, 1939, column on the Gwynns Falls incident, Shochatt revealed that in 1936 he had received a copy of the Clifton Park students' letter of complaint but did not report on it at the time.

34. Harvey Wheeler, "Yesterday's Robin Hood: The Rise and Fall of Baltimore's Trenton Democratic Club," *American Quarterly*, 7 (1955): 337 on the latent power of the city's Jewish population.

35. Sandler, *Jewish Baltimore*, 160-63; "Four Indicted for Murder," *Sun*, August 2, 1921; "Fined for Attack on Election Judge," *Sun*, September 25, 1926.

36. "Ritchie Places Ex-Pugilist on Sports Board," *Sun*, December 31, 1933.

37. Pietila, *Not in My Neighborhood* (first quote, 112); Sandler, *Jewish Baltimore*, 164, *Sun* editor quote; Baer OH (third quote); Wheeler, "Yesterday's Robin Hood."

38. Wheeler, "Yesterday's Robin Hood"; Pietila, *Not in My Neighborhood*, 113; Baer OH; Louis Bluefeld, BNHP OH 159.

39. Sandler, *Jewish Baltimore*, 163; Edelman Vertical File, JMM; "E. Milton Altfeld, Former State Senator, Writer, Dies," *Sun*, November 30, 1965.

40. Wheeler, "Yesterday's Robin Hood," 339. In the early 1930s, boundaries were redrawn to split black voters among several districts, thus shutting blacks out of the city council and state legislature. Since most blacks voted Republican, the gerrymander may have been motivated more by partisanship than racism. Another goal may have been to create a Jewish district rather than deliberately reduce black voting power. In effect it did all those things. See "Would Redistrict G.O.P. Stronghold," *Sun*, February 20, 1931; "Redistricting Bill Hits Fourth District," *Afro-American*, March 4 1933; "Gerrymander of Fourth District Hit at Forum," *Afro-American*, April 8, 1933.

41. "Fourth District Clubs Pick Slates to Fight Curran's," *Sun*, August 29, 1934; "Goodman, Council Official, Dies," *Sun*, September 20, 1956; "House Speaker Declares Fight against Politician Is Unwarranted," *Sun* March 25, 1935; Altfeld to Gorfine, March 25, 1935, E. Milton Altfeld Collection, folder 2, MS 7, JMM. On Sherbow, memo, n.d., "Material in Baltimore Jewish Council Files Pertaining to Jack Pollack's Embarrassment of Jewish Community," BJC Vertical File.

42. Avrum K. Rifman, "Jewish Public Officials," *Generations*, 1 (December 1978): 17-28; Jo Ann E. Argersinger, *Toward a New Deal: Citizen Participation, Government Policy, and the*

*Great Depression in Baltimore* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 184 (on Ellison); "Harry Levin Dies at 77," *Sun*, January 5, 1966. Levin later became the *Afro-American's* attorney. Sobeloff went on to become U.S. Solicitor General in the Eisenhower administration. See Anthony Lewis, "Our Extraordinary Solicitor General," *The Reporter*, n.d. (quote), Sobeloff Vertical File, JMM. On Baltimore's Republican Party, see Joseph L. Arnold, "The Last of the Good Old Days: Politics in Baltimore, 1920-1950," *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 71 (1976): 443-48.

43. Moore, *At Home in America*, chapter 8, "The Rise of the Jewish Democrat."

44. "VOTE!" exhibition; Samuel Neistadt Papers, folder 1, MS 175, JMM; Deborah R. Weiner, "Ten in the Twentieth: Baltimore Jews and Social Justice," *Generations* (2009/10): 164 (on Moses); Jo Ann E. Argersinger, *Making the Amalgamated: Gender, Ethnicity, and Class in the Baltimore Clothing Industry, 1899-1939* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 75-78, 108. For more on the New Deal in Baltimore, see Argersinger, *Toward a New Deal*, and Andor Skotnes, *A New Deal for All? Race and Class Struggles in Depression-Era Baltimore* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2013).

45. Leonard M. Helfgott, "Enduring Idealism: Baltimore Jews in the Communist Party," *Generations* (2009/2010): 74-87; Skotnes, *New Deal for All?* (quote, 62). Ades headed the Baltimore branch of International Labor Defense, the Communist-backed group that defended the Scottsboro boys. After the Lee case, he went off to fight in the Spanish Civil War, one of thirteen Baltimore Jews who joined the fabled Abraham Lincoln Brigade.

46. "City Council Avoids Anti-Poll Tax War," *Afro-American*, October 31, 1942; Lillian Howard Potter, "Political Cooperation, Economic Competition: Relationships between Jewish and Black Communities in Baltimore, Maryland, 1930-1940" (paper presented at the "Making Diversity Work: 250 Years of Baltimore History" conference, Nov. 15-16, 1995), 16.

47. *Afro-American*, February 22, 1930 on parks; Weiner, "Ten in the Twentieth," on Hollander; "Late Rabbi Was Staunch Interracialist," *Afro-American*, October 25, 1941.

48. *Afro-American*, August 22, 1919; "Mrs. Pitts Asks for Injunction," *ibid.*, June 3, 1921. "Husband Sues Jewish Grocer," *ibid.*, January 2, 1920, and "Jewish Boy Kills Botts," April 3, 1920, describe violent confrontations outside Jewish-owned stores.

49. Thomas Edsall, "Pennsylvania Avenue Declining for Generation," *Baltimore Evening Sun*, May 10, 1967.

50. "Don't Spend Your Money Where You Can't Work," *Afro-American*, January 10, 1932; Andor Skotnes, "'Buy Where You Can Work': Boycotting for Jobs in African-American Baltimore, 1933-1934," *Journal of Social History*, 27 (1994): 735-61, quote, 754.

51. Conversation with Mickey Steinberg; Ruth Stewart OH, "Baltimore '68: Riots and Rebirth" Project (Langsdale Library Special Collections, University of Baltimore). See also Juanita Crider and Harold Knight oral histories in the same collection, online at <http://archives.ubalt.edu/bsr/oral-histories/index.html>.

52. First quote, Pietila, *Not in My Neighborhood*, 183. Second quote, Martin Kohn, "Hochschild, Kohn and Company: A Personal Account," 1979, JMM Vertical File. For a full account, see Paul A. Kramer, "White Sales: The Racial Politics of Baltimore's Jewish-Owned Department Stores, 1935-1965," in *Enterprising Emporiiums*, 37-59. On African American grievances against Jews, see Skotnes, *New Deal for All?*

53. Kohn, "Hochschild, Kohn."

54. Skotnes, *New Deal for All?*, 283. On other cities see, for example, Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, *Troubling the Waters: Black-Jewish Relations in the American Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006). On the *Crisis* exchange, see Edward Israel, "Jew Hatred Among Negroes," *Crisis*, February 1936, and Jackson's response in the April issue.

55. Kramer, "White Sales"; Michael J. Lisicky, *Hutzler's: Where Baltimore Shops* (Charleston, S.C.: The History Press, 2009), 143; Rosemary Hutzler, "Ghost of Christmas Past: Reflections on Baltimore's Grand Old Department Store," *City Paper*, December 3, 1997, 18; Sandler, "H-K Days," Hochschild, Kohn Vertical File, JMM.
56. "Entertaining America," *Generations* (2003) (JMM); Arthur Hirsch, "A Seasoned Veteran," *Sun*, August 9, 2000; "Louis E. Shecter, promoter and activist," *Sun*, November 11, 1992.
57. Deborah R. Weiner, "Filling the Peddler's Pack: Jacob Epstein and the Baltimore Bargain House," paper delivered at the Southern Jewish Historical Society annual conference, Baltimore, 2005.
58. Weiner, "Ten in the Twentieth," 165.
59. Deborah R. Weiner, "Always Have Kind Words for the Place that Feeds You: Jews on 'The Block,'" *Generations* (2003), 6-17.
60. Blanche Klasmer Cohen, "Benjamin Klasmer's Contribution to Baltimore's Musical History," *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 72 (1977): 272-76.
61. Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller, *Hound Dog: The Leiber and Stoller Autobiography* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010), 10.



*The aftermath of battle, September, 1862. (Library of Congress.)*

## Research Notes & Maryland Miscellany

### A Sharpsburg Resident's View of the Battle of Antietam, Maryland, September 17, 1862

DANIEL A. MASTERS

The following letter, originally published in the October 16, 1862 issue of the *Weekly Lancaster [Ohio] Gazette*, was written by Sharpsburg resident Dr. Augustin A. Biggs, who later served as the first president and superintendent of Antietam National Cemetery. Biggs wrote this letter nearly two weeks after the battle to his uncle Elijah Kalb, who was then postmaster of the small Fairfield County town of Rushville, Ohio. Kalb was the younger brother of Mary Biggs, Dr. Biggs's mother.

Augustin Asbury Biggs was born to John and Mary Biggs on December 27, 1812 in Double Pipe Creek, Maryland, and attended Jefferson Medical College of Philadelphia before entering the practice of medicine in Sharpsburg during the 1830s. Dr. Biggs specialized in obstetrics, and helped deliver more than three thousand infants during his fifty-three-year career. A county history described him as:

of a gentle and retiring nature, but at the same time he took an active interest in everything pertaining to the welfare of the community. In politics, he was a Whig before the Civil War and during the war was a strong Union man. He represented the state of Maryland as a trustee and one of the original incorporators of the Antietam National Cemetery, and was first president of the Board. As general superintendent of the cemetery during its construction and up to the time of its transfer to the United States, he was originator of the plan upon which it was laid out and of the order of the graves. His patriotism and unselfishness enabled him to link his name for all time with one of the most beautiful of our national cemeteries.<sup>1</sup>

*Daniel Masters, a lifelong resident of northwestern Ohio, is a local historian specializing in nineteenth- and twentieth-century military history.*

In this letter, Doctor Biggs related his impressions of the invading Confederate army, as well as his experiences during the battle as he huddled in his home with his family while the town was under artillery fire. The house in which he passed the battle (109 West Main St. in downtown Sharpsburg) still exists and is known as the William Chapline House, now listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The gable side of the house shows shell damage that Biggs described in this letter.

Sharpsburg, Maryland, September 29, 1862

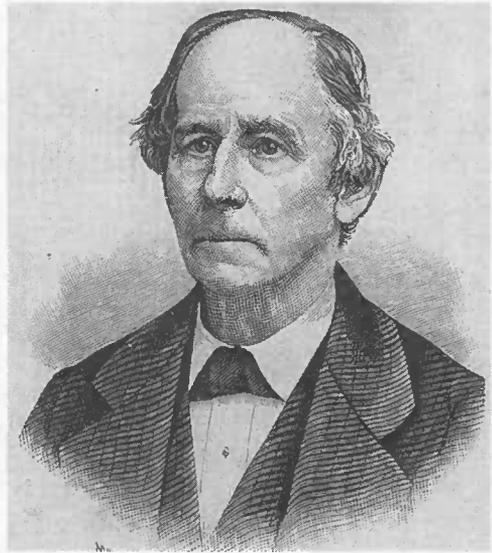
Dear Uncle:

I feel like again resuscitating my correspondence with you, but not for publication; yet at the same time will not restrict you in publishing such items of interest as you may think proper. To give you a correct history of the events in and around Sharpsburg for the past two weeks would be a task impossible for me. Furthermore, we are yet in such confusion, and my mind so distracted, that it would be difficult for me to gather up all that might be interesting to you. I will, however, commence with the first appearance of the rebels in our vicinity. First was their cavalry, next their infantry and artillery, and in a very short time our town and neighborhood was swarming with rebels.

They were poorly clad, indeed, and but few dressed alike—barefooted, dirty, and filthy in the extreme. To judge from appearances they have had no change of dress the past twelve months. Some few were clad in Union soldiers' dress. Most of them indecently ragged and their person exposed. They wore a dejected countenance and were seldom seen to smile or indulge in any hilarity, from the officers to the privates. This feature was remarkable. They seemed to have no disposition to keep themselves clean, and from appearances their persons are as filthy as time could make them—all alive with vermin. I conversed with many and believe there is universal dissatisfaction in their army. Thousands would desert if they could, but they say their families and property are in the South and to go North they could never return to their friends, and would be deprived of all that they have in this world. Many are anxious for the South to get whipped and the war brought to a speedy termination. Whenever an opportunity offers, they destroy and throw away their guns. They say fight they must while under their officers, and before going into battle each man has to fill his canteen with whiskey and gunpowder. This was the case before the battle of Sharpsburg.

The battle of Sharpsburg commenced on Tuesday the 16th just about 4 o'clock P.M., principally with artillery. On the next day (Wednesday) was resumed and continued without intermission until after dark. The line of battle was five or six miles long. McClellan's left wing extended below the bridge across Antietam [Creek] on the road leading to Shewman's. His center at the bridge at Mumma's Mill, William Roulett's, Joseph Poffbarger's, David B. Miller's to William F. Hobb's farm. The hardest fighting was between William Roulett's and Henry Piper's. I suppose you recollect a lane on the right of the Hagerstown road, about a half mile from Sharps-

*Dr. Augustin A. Biggs (1812–1889). Twelve days after the day long fighting at Antietam, Sharpsburg physician Augustin A. Biggs, stunned and exhausted, described the fear and carnage to his uncle in Ohio. (J. Thomas Scharf, History of Western Maryland. (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1882.)*



burg, leading to William Roulett's (formerly John Miller's) running from thence to the Boonsboro Pike at the culvert of said pike.<sup>2</sup> It was in this road the rebels had concealed themselves behind the banks and adjacent cornfield. It was at this place the slaughter on both sides was the heaviest. It was here that the Federals made a charge on the rebels and drove them back with terrible loss. In this road they laid in piles three and four deep. In the cornfield almost every step for several hundred yards around, dead rebels could be seen. The sight was awful.

In the space of a quarter of a mile dead rebels were strewn over the ground, also fragments of clothes, hats, caps, guns, horses, shells, and fragments of shells, and mounted artillery in such profusion that one could not step foot upon the ground without stepping on some of the effects of the mighty struggle between the contending armies. The bodies of the men were laying around mangled in every conceivable manner. Legs off and heads and parts of heads off, and mortal wounds of every description—the most were from rifle shots. In this road, large puddles of blood were visible for several days after the battle. One rebel lay across a fence with three bullet holes in his posterior. I have not learned how many fell, but from all information I could get from the rebels, and our own men, the rebel loss was about 7,000 killed and 20,000 wounded at the battle of Sharpsburg. Their loss since the invasion of Maryland is estimated at 60,000 killed, wounded, and taken prisoners.<sup>3</sup>

On Thursday, the rebels sent a flag of truce for permission to bury their dead, which was only an excuse to obtain more time to make their escape—in fact, they commenced retreating Wednesday night which was continued all day Thursday and Thursday night so that by Friday, all with the exception of some who refused to go were safely over the river on the Virginia side. I cannot account for McClellan not renewing the fight on Thursday. If he had done so, he would have captured the great

bulk of the rebel army. The retreat of the rebels was in much confusion, for they left their dead and a great number of their wounded on the battlefield. On the day of the battle, they carried a large proportion of their wounded to Shepherdstown and in the direction of Winchester. Some of their dead they also carried away. There are at this time about 4,000 wounded in Shepherdstown.

Our neighborhood is one vast graveyard. The rebels are buried in ditches dug sufficient to hold as high as eighty—piled in such a manner as to be barely covered sufficiently over the top layer of men. The stench is becoming so disagreeable, particularly after sundown, that we can hardly endure it. In addition to the dead rebels, we had about 400 dead horses on the field. I cannot describe all as it really was and is at this time. One thing is remarkably strange, and that is the rapid decomposition of the dead rebels. On Friday, I rode over the battlefield and with few exceptions they were all swollen and perfectly black, while the dead Union men were pale and looked as though life had just departed the body. All I met observed the same contrast. It must be owing to their taking freely of gunpowder and whiskey.

I must say a little more about the character of the rebels. They were destitute of everything necessary to sustain life and comfort. I never saw a set of men reduced so far to the point of starvation. They would eat anything, no matter how dirty or filthy it was, to satisfy their craving appetite.<sup>4</sup> They came upon us like a gang of hungry wolves or hyenas. Nothing could be hid from their grasp. All the fruit and vegetables of every description were devoured by them. Nearly every house was robbed of everything eatable. Some few that remained at home succeeded in saving what they had, but all who were forced to leave town lost everything. When they once had possession of a house, it was stripped clean, even the children's clothes, knives, forks, dishes, and bed clothes—in fact nothing escaped, for what they could not use, they willfully destroyed. Two thirds of the families in the place had nothing but the clothes on their backs. After the battle, several poor people in town had their houses burned down, after first being robbed of all that was in them. Money, jewelry, and all articles of any value to them was carried off. I never thought that human nature in a civilized land could lose, to such a degree, all sympathy for their fellow beings. They entered several poor people's houses and robbed them of everything they had in this world. Stealing and plunder seemed to be their profession and design. They appear to have lost all feelings of humanity and self-respect. They would strip themselves naked in the street and sit down and deliberately pick the vermin from their ragged garments.<sup>5</sup>

The rebels had their batteries planted on the hill above town extending in line opposite the line included above. This, as a matter of course, drew the fire of the Federals upon our town. I remained with my family in my house, otherwise would have lost all by the thieving rebels. Thanks to a kind Providence, we all escaped being hurt, although the shells were flying and exploding every moment around us. We suffered but little in comparison to others. One shell passed through the parlor



*Union Army wagons crossing Antietam Creek after the battle, September 1862. (Library of Congress.)*

window and exploded, tearing up and destroying things at a great rate. In a few moments, I entered the room and found nothing was on fire. Two shells went through my stable; one through my hog pen and five struck my house, but none went through the wall. One shell exploded just over my head and some of the fragments struck the rim of my hat. One man had his leg shot off on my pavement, and another instantly killed just above my house. None of the citizens got hurt as far as I know. There were sixteen rebels killed in town during the shelling.

All this time, some were busy robbing the vacant houses. Two rebels in James Hill's house were killed in the act of breaking open his safe. Few houses escaped unhurt. As many as six shells passed through some houses and destroyed everything in their course. On Wednesday night, J. H. Grove's house was set on fire and came very near setting the whole town on fire. My house caught fire three times, but I succeeded in putting it out. David and Samuel Reed's barn burnt down the same night. On the day of the battle, the rebels set fire to Samuel Mumma's house and barn, which with all his hay and grain, were burnt to ashes. Nearly all the horses are taken away; hogs and cattle killed and corn fed to their starving stock. William Cronises' store was broken open and all his goods taken. At present, it is a strange sight to see fowl of any description.

We have nearly the whole of McClellan's army quartered here, at Harper's Ferry,

and Williamsport. For five miles around nearly all the fences are gone, and this seems as one vast plain. We are all in a destitute state, and if the government don't relieve us, this neighborhood is ruined. All is lost, and in all probability, the farmers will not be able to put out any grain this fall.

Truly now I have written you a doleful letter and in my next my mind may be more composed and have more time to give you other items of interest.

Yours Truly, A. A. Biggs

#### NOTES

1. Thomas Chew Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland: From the Earliest Settlements to the Present Time* (Hagerstown: Higginson Book Company, 1906), 838.
2. Biggs is referring to the "Sunken Road," where fighting occurred in the second stage of the battle. The heaviest fighting actually took place north of this farm lane, in the fields and copses of trees around "the Cornfield" (the Miller farm), the Dunker Church, and the West Woods.
3. The generally accepted figure of the total number of casualties for both armies at Antietam is 22,700.
4. On the march to Maryland, the Army of Northern Virginia had subsisted largely on a diet of green corn and apples, foraged and usually paid for with Confederate scrip. Dysentery and diarrhea had ravaged the starving ranks. See Kathleen A. Ernst, *Too Afraid to Cry: Maryland Civilians in the Antietam Campaign* (Mechanicsburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 1999), 69–72.
5. With regard to theft by the troops, Biggs's observation was not shared by all Maryland citizens, who were pleasantly surprised at the Confederates' discipline despite their destitute appearance. The Army of the Potomac was less well regarded. "Our boys are, like most privates in the army, disgustingly unprincipled and profane," wrote one New York recruit. "Hardly one of them hesitates at a theft." Ernst, *Too Afraid to Cry*, 72.

# Maryland's First Military Commanders

RICHARD J. MARTINY

The *Ark* and the *Dove* arrived at St. Clement's Island in the Potomac River, bastion of fur trader Captain Henry Fleete, early in the spring of 1634. Moving back down river to what came to be called the St. Mary's River, they began to disembark the passengers with their belongings, tools, weapons, and other instruments of war. They were very conscious of the need to protect themselves from the Native American inhabitants, other, competing, English colonists and settlers and traders from other foreign lands who were competitors for trade as well as potential military adversaries.

They were also very aware of the importance of creating a strong martial impression for the benefit of the local inhabitants. Immediately upon landing, they organized an impressive military show, with weapons prominently displayed and flags flying. This military force, consisting of most, if not all, of the able-bodied male passengers, was under the strategic command of Governor Leonard Calvert, Lieutenant General of Maryland, among his other military titles, and brother of Lord Baltimore. Tactical command rested with professionals, identified as two militia captains, but otherwise nameless. Who were they?

On April 10, 1606, James I granted a charter authorizing two groups, one centered in London and the other in Plymouth, to establish plantations in Virginia. At that time Virginia was the name given to all of that portion of North America claimed by Great Britain. Self-defense was an integral part of the charter. Members of the first colony (Jamestown) "shall and may inhabit and remain there, and shall and may also build and fortify with any the same, for their better Safeguard and Defence, according to their best Discretion, and the Discretion of the Council of that Colony." Colonists were required to take with them "sufficient Shipping and Furniture of Armour Weapons, Ordinance, Powder . . . necessary for the said Plantations and for their use and Defence there." They were granted the right to "transport the Goods, Chattels, Armour, Munition and Furniture . . . to be used for them, for their . . . Apparel, Food, Defence or otherwise."<sup>1</sup>

The English promoters of the first English colonies knew something of the hazards of America. From the beginning, all of the colonial charters authorized defensive armaments. In 1607 the Virginia promoters instructed the settlers to form

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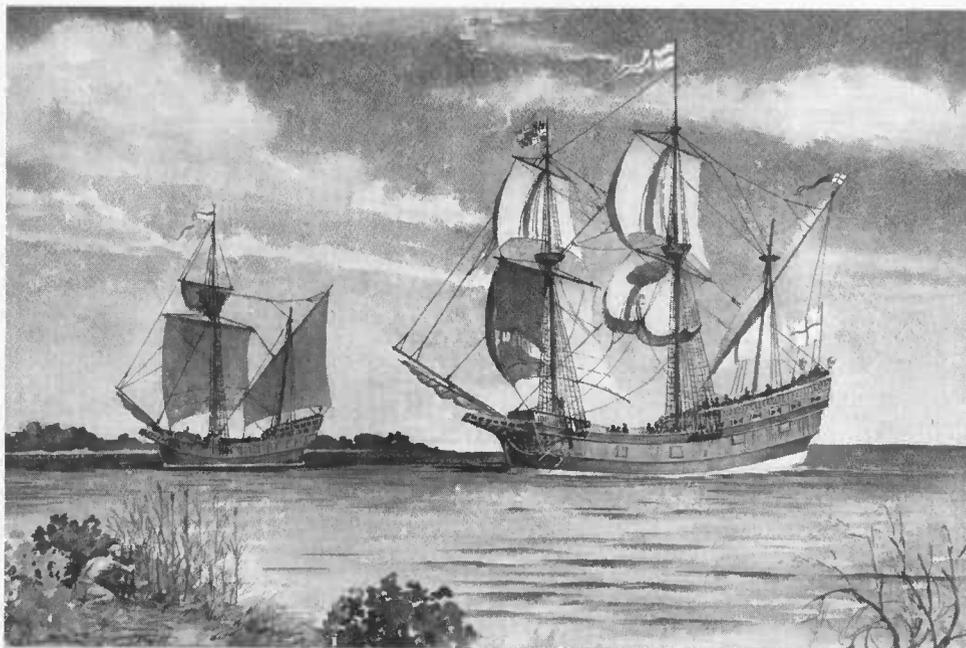
themselves into three groups immediately upon landing: one to erect the fortifications for defense, one to serve as a guard and to plant a crop, and the third to explore. The first ships were stocked with weapons. Pikes and swords were supplemented by firearms, primarily matchlocks. The matchlocks, in turn, were eventually replaced with flintlock muskets. All of these weapons, especially the firearms, required extensive training. Laws required that every able-bodied man, with a few exceptions, be given training in firearms, swords, and pikes. The citizen-soldier was required to drill in formation; possess, maintain and provision his weapon; and maintain his equipment ready for immediate use. Although it was faltering in military capability and effectiveness, the militia of Queen Elizabeth was what they knew. Shortly after her death, they brought that knowledge with them too.<sup>2</sup>

The first English settlers came prepared for war. Military considerations, especially defense, were important in their lives. Virginians knew that the Spanish objected to their presence. They also expected to be confronted by hostile Indians, as did the early settlers of Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay. They were not mistaken. Harassed by hostile Indians, in addition to Spanish, French, and Dutch colonial rivals also hostile to their survival, in a wilderness three thousand miles and many months from Britain, the colonists were ever mindful of the need to protect themselves. The Crown offered little more than company charters and proprietor grants. It originally expected the colonists to defend themselves.

Thoughts of war weighed heavily on the minds of the early English settlers, who were products of a tumultuous, violent epoch in European history—the seemingly endless ferocity of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Old World religious and secular life. They well knew that at any moment a belligerent fleet might appear on the horizon, or the stillness of a dawn could be shattered by Indian war whoops. These threats to the settlers' very existence were genuine, and prudence dictated that they take measures to defend themselves. They no more would have crossed the ocean without hoes or Bibles than have left their blunderbusses, crossbows, and pikes at home. The charter of Massachusetts Bay stated that the colonists were "to incounter, repulse, repell and resist by force of armes, as well as by seas as by lands" any attempt to invade to destroy their community.

The Maryland charter granted to George Calvert referred directly to the remoteness of the proprietary "placed among so many other enemies, pirates and ravagers." Maryland's first military law, written into the charter, stated that:

in so remote a region, placed among so many barbarian nations, the incursions as well of the barbarians will be feared, therefore we have given, and – for us, our heirs and successors do give by these presents as full and unrestrained power as any captain-general of an army hath had, into the aforesaid now Baron of Baltimore, to his heirs and assigns, by themselves, or by their captains or other officers, to summon their standards and array all men of whatsoever condition



*The Ark and the Dove on the Chesapeake Bay. (Maryland Historical Society, gift of John Moll.)*

or wheresoever born, for the time being in the said province of Maryland, to wage war, and to pursue, even beyond the limits of their province, the enemies and ravagers of aforesaid, infesting those parts by land and sea, and . . . to vanquish, and captivate them, and the captives to be put to death, or, according to their discretion, to save and do all other and singular things which appertain, or have been accustomed to appertain, unto the authority and office of a captain-general of an army.

Simply stated, Lord Baltimore was the general of an army wresting control of what was to become Maryland from whoever had it and protecting it from all comers.<sup>3</sup>

Cecil Calvert, second Lord Baltimore and Lord Proprietor of Maryland, was very aware of the potential dangers his new settlers faced. In his instructions to them he directed the colonists to be ready for any emergency: against Indian massacre, attacks by the Spanish, eruptions from Virginia to the south, or aggressions from New Netherlands in the north. To this end a fort was to be immediately constructed and universal military training put into effect.

In describing the site of St. Mary's City in May 1634, Leonard Calvert, the first governor, wrote his brother Cecil: "We have seated ourselves with one-half mile of the river, within a palisade of one hundred twenty yards square, with four flanks. We have mounted one piece of ordinance and placed six murders [small cannon] in parts most convenient, a fortification (we think) sufficient to defend against any real

enemies as we have reason to expect here." As further defense, "people were enforced not only to labor by day, but to watch in their turns by night."<sup>4</sup>

Leonard and his younger brother George also described to Cecil the initial landings and their encounters with the Indians. The town they call "St. Marie's . . . we bought . . . for hatchets, axes, hoes and clothes, a quantity of the same 30 miles of land. . . . And that which made them more willing to sell it, was the wars they had with the Susquehannock, a mighty bordering nation, who came often into their country to waste and destroy. . . . Yet, seeing we came so well prepared with arms, their fear was much less, and they would be content to dwell by us." Nevertheless, the colonists were cautious. The first thing they did on landing was to build a guard-house for their defense.<sup>5</sup>

Short-term survival depended on preparation. Aware of this fact, in 1635 associates of Cecil Calvert, at his direction, prepared a pamphlet entitled *A Relation to Maryland*, that contained instructions on what the gentlemen adventurers on Calvert's upcoming expedition to America should bring. It listed essential provisions and their price, presumably for helping potential colonists estimate the cost of going to America. The list included food, clothing, bedding, tools and "Armes For one man: one musket; 10 pounds of powder; 40 pounds of Lead, Bullets, Pistoll and Goose Shot, of each sort some; one belt; one bandelere and flaske; In (ch) match" at a total cost of 2 pounds, 5 shillings, 6 pence.<sup>6</sup>

The colonizers in England sent armaments with the settlers. In the first two settlements, Jamestown and Plymouth, however, these proved inadequate in both kind and number. Pikes and steel armor were not useful against the Indians. In contrast, Massachusetts Bay, with past examples to learn from and with more adequate funding, spent 22,000 pounds—one-ninth of its original capital—on twenty cannon and enough infantry gear for one hundred men. Individuals also brought their own stores of arms. After food, arms and armaments accounted for the greatest expenditures. Individually and collectively, the Puritans arrived in New England ready to defend themselves. However different the agencies that founded the various colonies in North America may have been, all of them, as well as the colonists themselves, believed that a military obligation rested on every free white male settler. Accordingly, the charters issued by the various English kings to the colonizing agencies gave their representatives the right "to assemble [in] Marshal Array and put in warlike posture the inhabitants of said colony." This clause referred specifically to able-bodied men between the ages of sixteen and sixty. Led by constituted authority, they were expected to "expulse repell and resist by force of Arms . . . and also to kill slay destroy by all fitting ways . . . all and every Person or persons as shall attempt the destruction invasion detriment or annoyance of the . . . inhabitants." This language, taken from Charles II's charter to the colony of Connecticut, is not found verbatim in other charters, but the same ideas and powers were everywhere present. The charter granted to the last of the original

colonies, Georgia, speaks specifically of the militia as the "backbone of colonial defense."<sup>7</sup>

Elizabeth I's government sent professional soldiers into the counties of England to assist in making citizens into soldiers. With similar intent, the organizers of every colony dispatched one or two professional soldiers to accompany the first group of settlers. Their main task was to instruct male colonists in the use of arms and military formations and, in some cases, to lead their trainees. The overall English concept of a small group of professional soldiers and a large group of citizen-soldiers, with various levels of training, was applied by the Crown. The boatloads of colonists included professional military men such as Virginia's John Smith, Plymouth's Captain Miles Standish, John Endicott of Salem (Massachusetts Bay), and John Mason of New Haven. Although the lure of adventure may have prompted these men to volunteer for a perilous and hazardous mission, they were there by design.<sup>8</sup>

The Pilgrims of Plymouth, under the blanket of the Mayflower Compact, hired Captain Miles Standish in 1620 to organize a "train band" from among their number as a protection against Indian raids.<sup>9</sup> The Puritans of Massachusetts Bay included a number of men with professional military experience, along with the military supplies brought by the colonists. In addition to John Smith, several of Virginia's early governors were military men. In the beginning, the hired captains had the authority to enforce discipline and training by the most draconian means necessary, though they often found that much of their European experience meant little in the American wilderness.<sup>10</sup>

In some cases, all of the military preparation prior to landing proved immediately beneficial. The Jamestown trading post organized itself into a virtual regimental garrison, complete with companies and squads. Within the first month of the initial landing, the settlement was attacked by Indians, who were only repulsed with the help of cannon fire from the still anchored ships. By the end of the first month, though, a fort was completed, with cannon placed at each of its triangular corners. In 1608, seventeen months after the initial landing, John Smith became the colony's undisputed leader. A mercenary by trade and veteran of many campaigns on the European continent, Smith imposed military discipline and training in order to guarantee the settlement's survival and to provide the means for offensive action against the Indians. After further improving Jamestown's defenses and organizing the settlers for work details and guard duty, Smith began a training regimen designed to prepare the citizen-soldiers to compete in open battle against Powhatan's braves.

For the next few years the settlement was virtually collocated around the fort and its protective artillery. In 1612, Governor Dale, another former soldier, arrived when the colony was close to extinction from starvation. Dale imposed military discipline on every colonist based on the laws governing the army in the Low Countries (the Netherlands). His policy impressed the Indians and allowed the colonists to farm and

hunt peacefully. That, combined with Dale's restoration of the economy, permitted a gradual relaxation of universal military discipline.<sup>11</sup>

On November 11, 1620, one hundred Pilgrims landed and established Plymouth Colony. They hired Captain Miles Standish, a veteran of the wars in the Low Countries, to serve as military advisor. A warning of an Indian raid on February 16, 1621 prompted action. Realizing that their survival was at stake, the colonists gave Standish broad powers to instill discipline and levy punishments. When one recalcitrant colonist refused to stand watch and called his commander a "beggarly rascal," Standish clapped him in irons. Frequent musters and training sessions became common. Over time, militia activities became an integral part of the colony's social structure.

The Massachusetts Bay Company profited from the experiences of the earlier settlements. In 1629, its first expedition left England for Salem with a militia company already organized and equipped with the latest weapons. John Endicott, who had established a trading post at Salem in 1628, served as Massachusetts Bay's first militia leader and completed the organization of Salem's first arriving militia company.<sup>12</sup>

According to tradition, among the adventurers who disembarked at what was to become St. Mary's City, Maryland, in March 1634 were two militia captains. Although, as in other early colonies, all able-bodied Marylanders were obligated to help defend the province, the captains called for volunteers to establish a professional armed force or "train band." A night watch guard was set up immediately. The Maryland militia was born.

Who the militia captains were and what their backgrounds and military experiences were is not clear, nor do we know if they were soldiers of fortune, like John Smith and Miles Standish, or just men whose military experience was limited to militia activities in England. For that matter, how many "Adventurers" arrived with the *Ark* and the *Dove* and who they were is unclear as well, but, based upon available evidence, they arrived with military capability, including weapons. The disembarkation in the vicinity of what was to become St. Mary's City included an honor guard and full military panoply, probably to impress the Indians with their power. One of their first orders of business was the construction of a fort that mounted several small cannon for protection. While it was under construction, someone organized and led patrols and night watches to ensure the settlers' safety. All of these activities indicate that the original group of settlers included several individuals with more than rudimentary levels of military expertise and leadership to ensure compliance with their directives.

In the opinion of Harry Wright Newman, a complete and accurate list of "Adventurers" (his term) on the *Ark* and the *Dove* remains, and will ever remain, unknown.<sup>13</sup> The same is true for the exact number of those men. It was officially reported to the government that the Oath of Allegiance had been administered to about 128 people while the ships were in the Thames River at Tilbury, downriver from London.

Some scholars contend that because the oath was repugnant to Catholics, since it required the individual to swear allegiance to the king as the head of the Church, they boarded the ship elsewhere, after the oath had been administered, to avoid taking it. If that is true, and since there were a number of identified Catholics, the number of Adventurers would have exceeded 128. Others, Newman among them, contend that at least some, if not all, of the Catholics must have taken the oath, hoping for subsequent absolution. As a minimum, the Calvert brothers, Leonard and George, and the commissioners, Thomas Cornwallys and Jerome Hawley, Catholics all, must have been on board from the moment the ships sailed from London, and, hence, must have taken the oath. The total number of Adventurers, then, could drop back closer to the 128 reported.

In a letter to the Earl of Stratford, Cecil Calvert, Lord Baltimore, stated that "There are two of my brothers gone with very near twenty gentlemen of very good fashion and three hundred laboring men." In 1634, Father Andrew White, one of the original Marylanders, wrote *A Relation of the successful beginnings of Lord Baltimore's plantation in Maryland*, in which he recounted the voyage of the *Ark* and the *Dove*, the initial meeting with the Indians, and the settlement of St. Mary's. In 1635, at the direction of Lord Baltimore, *A Relation of Maryland* was prepared and distributed to help generate interest in emigrating to Maryland and to outline what it entailed. It began with an abridgement of White's earlier *Relation*. Both documents include only the names of seventeen gentlemen—no other figure for the number of passengers is given. In the House of Lords, shortly after the ships sailed, Lord Baltimore put the number of passengers at about two hundred. A subsequent legal case, published in 1643, stated that Baltimore sent "about 200 people to begin and seat a Plantation." In 1757, in a message to the Lower House of the General Assembly, Governor Sharpe, after reviewing then existing records and documents no longer available, stated that the "first settlement (St. Maries's Citie) had between two and three hundred other person[s]," in addition to the Calvert brothers.

The best approximation is that between 150 and 200 people arrived in Maryland on the *Ark* and the *Dove* in early 1634. David Bell compiled a *Passenger List of the Ark and the Dove*, which lists 162 names of individuals identified by at least one source, if not more, as having been on ships, including crew members.<sup>14</sup> Again, exactitude is difficult to achieve in the absence of the passenger manifests. It is further complicated by the death of some of the people en route and the disembarkation of some passengers and embarkation of others at the ships' ports of call en route in the Caribbean and in Virginia.

During the intervening centuries, there have been numerous attempts to construct passenger lists for the *Ark* and the *Dove*. Starting with the gentlemen mentioned in White's *Relation*, the lists were developed by historians and genealogists using correspondence, government records, probate and estate documents, and other sources. David Bell's *Passenger List* is a compilation of a number of passenger lists assembled

by different authors and organizations including: Robert E. T. Pogue, Harry Wright Newman, Rhoda Fine, a listing of *Gentlemen/Gentlewomen of the Voyage*, John T. Marck, and The *Ark and Dove Society*. The last was drawn from work by Gus Skordas and Carson Gibb. George Mackenzie and the Russells, George Ely and Donna Valley, also conducted research in the field, which Bell did not include. Lois Green Carr conducted in-depth research on early St. Mary's and Maryland residents and developed an extensive set of index cards with biographical data. Collectively, this work resulted in a listing of passengers, or, at least, a partial one, that can be used to help identify the early Maryland military officers and leaders.

Before exploring that further, though, two other issues have to be addressed. First, in a practice that was prevalent during the colonial period and continued into the nineteenth century, men used the military rank they had acquired as a form of address and an honorific title. They continued to use it until they attained a higher rank or until they died. Further, in correspondence and publications discussing or dealing with past events, the individual's current rank or title was used, not the one he may have had during the years being discussed. Second, in addition to the obvious social differences between the gentlefolk and the laboring class among the passengers, was a distinction between those who were emigrating and those who were being transported, between those who paid for their passage and those whose passage was paid for.

While somewhat different than its predecessors in aims and tolerance, the voyage of the *Ark* and the *Dove* was at its core a commercial venture. There were investors, some of whom were passengers and others who did not make the voyage. One method of investment was to pay for the cost of transporting what were referred to as servants. The return on the investment would be the potential labor of the person being transported, and perhaps more importantly since land was the greatest source of wealth at the time, a grant of land from the Lord Proprietor for each individual for whom a gentleman had paid passage. The term servant had a different meaning than it does today. Many of the "servants" among the passengers aboard the *Ark* and the *Dove* were actually gentlemen and gentlewomen. Many were younger sons seeking their fortune who took advantage of someone's willingness to pay their way in return for some work and perhaps a claim to some land. Subsequently, many of them became wealthy planters and participated in the governing of the province.

Who then, among the first settlers, were the military leaders, the militia captains? In Andrew White's *Relation to Maryland* the voyage is recounted, along with the initial meeting with Indians and the creation of the settlement at St. Mary's, but White made no mention of any militia captains. The same is true in the subsequent *Relation*. Leonard Calvert, along with being appointed governor by his brother Lord Baltimore, was also given several military titles, including admiral and lieutenant general. The latter appears to have been most regularly used and was meant to indicate that he was the on-the-ground representative and executor for the Proprietor. Regiments of

that time and later were developed along the same line, with the colonel-proprietor-owner of the regiment overseeing its organization, arranging its employment, and reaping the monetary rewards while his lieutenant colonel led the unit in the field. While the lieutenant general could have been one of the "militia captains," and may have personally directed military activities such as the organization of protective patrols and night watches, as well as the design, construction, and arming of the first stockade, it is probable that he delegated those responsibilities to other men.

In identifying who the "militia captains" were, there would appear to be two basic criteria: they had to be among the first settlers; and, they would, presumably, be identified with a military rank during the initial period. Future military activity, especially in positions of leadership, might be another indicator, but not a conclusive one. Several candidates meet some of these criteria. Richard Gerard, Esquire, arrived on the *Ark* or the *Dove*, transporting five men whose land rights he assigned to the Jesuits, along with a manor granted by Lord Baltimore. In 1634/1635 he was present at a skirmish in which four men were killed. He returned to England prior to the January 1637 Assembly. Subsequently, he had an extensive military career in Europe, primarily in support of the Stuarts, and achieved the rank of lieutenant colonel. However, beyond his presence at the skirmish mentioned above, there is no indication that he was a military leader in Maryland.

John Price was transported by the Wintour brothers, Edward and Frederick, sons of Lady Wintour. He arrived with the original settlers and may have left Maryland and returned by 1636, this time with servants (transportees) of his own. On February 18, 1638 he was elected to the General Assembly while living in St. Michael's Hundred. In 1647 he was captain of the fort at St. Inigoes. In January 1659, as Colonel John Price, he was appointed a member of the Upper House of the Assembly, the governor's council, by Lord Baltimore. However, he was also a participant in the opening session of the first general Assembly on January 25, 1637. He is listed as being present, but with no military rank, though some of the other participants were listed with military ranks. In December 1642 he was listed among a large group of men being assessed taxes, expressed in pounds of tobacco. Again, he was listed without military rank while the ranks of others were given. It appears that he acquired his military title after 1634.

In *The Ark and the Dove Adventurers*, the Russells listed Major Thomas Baldrige, but also indicated that there was no indication of how or when he, and his brother James, arrived. Both are also included in the passenger lists of the *Ark* and the *Dove* Society, Harry Wright Newman, and *Gentlemen/Gentlewomen of the Voyage*. Robert T. T. Pogue also lists James, but not Thomas. However, none of them list Thomas' rank of major. James was a member of the first General Assembly in 1637 and Thomas appears attending the second Assembly session of that year. Thomas was appointed Sheriff and Coroner of St. Mary's Hundred on March 20, 1638 for a term of one year. This gave him the rank of sergeant, which may not have been considered a purely

military rank at that time. Subsequently, at least, the Sergeant of the Hundred was responsible for organizing the militia members for the captain. In an order dated August 28, 1642, Thomas was referred to as a lieutenant in charge of the southern part of St. Mary's Hundred. The order outlined procedures in case of Indian attacks and was the first mention of an officer's rank for Thomas. Lois Carr's biographical files indicate that Thomas was a captain in 1649. He was also referred to as "Capt. and Commander of those Rebels" during Ingle's rebellion. He moved to Virginia in 1651, probably right after Ingle's Rebellion.

The participants in the first General Assembly session in 1637 included several men with military rank. Among them were Captain Robert Evelin and Captain Henry Fleete. Fleete was primarily a fur trader from Virginia who had set up shop on an island in the Potomac River. He was a fierce competitor with, and opponent of, William Claiborne of Kent Island, who also worked the Susquehanna River region. Although he became a prominent member of the St. Mary's community and supported the Calverts against Claiborne, there is no record of his involvement in a military action. Evelin was the commander of Kent Island, a prominent military and political position given the fighting between the forces, albeit small in size, of the Calverts and Claiborne. Evelin, though, is not listed among the original adventurers by any source.

There were seven of the original settlers that the various compilations show with military rank and one other additional candidate. They were: Captain Thomas Cornwallys, Esquire, Commissioner, who emigrated; Major John Hallowes (Hollis, Hollows), Gentleman, who emigrated; Captain John Hill, Gentleman, who emigrated; Lieutenant William Lewis, Gentleman, who was transported; Captain Robert Vaughan, Esquire, who was transported; Captain Robert Wintour, Esquire, who emigrated; Captain Henry Fleete; and Jerome Hawley, Esquire, Commissioner. As discussed above, Fleete was primarily a transplanted Virginia Indian trader. Jerome Hawley was a prominent settler, one of the two commissioners on the voyage, the other was Cornwallys, and both were among the initial members of the governor's council. However, there is no indication that he was involved in any military activities.

Nothing is known of Captain John Hill except that his name is included in White's *Relation of Maryland*. All indications are that Major John Hallowes's military rank was acquired well after the initial landings. William Lewis was an early steward, or chamberlain, to the Jesuits among the initial settlers and in charge of their redemptioners, i.e. those they transported, or whose transportation they paid for in return for service. However, he was not included in the listing of Father White's servants. He was among the listed participants in the January 25, 1637 General Assembly session. Though he presented proxies for five other planters from St. Mary's, indicating some level of prominence, he was listed without military rank. Carr listed him as a sergeant in the militia in 1638 and as having been High Constable of St. George's Hundred in 1637/38, the same time period that Robert Vaughan is listed

in the office. He was a lieutenant in 1642 and a captain in 1647, the same year that he was appointed commander of Kent County. Wright maintains that although he was not styled as a lieutenant until 1640, he obviously was one of the early militia officers of the province.

Captain Robert Vaughan is not directly listed as being on the *Ark* or the *Dove*, but all evidence points to him having been there, and he is included in every compilation except for Pogue's. Although he was transported, indicating a somewhat lower social status, he witnessed the last will and testament of George Calvert on July 10, 1634, less than five months after the initial landings. Further, there is no record of another ship arriving in the intervening time. Although an Anglican, he was held in great confidence by Governor Leonard Calvert, possibly indicating long association and friendship before the beginning of the Maryland settlement. On January 5, 1637, three weeks prior to the opening General Assembly session, Cecil Calvert appointed Vaughan, identified as "our trusty Robert Vaughan of St. George's Hundred Sergeant of the trained band," High Constable of the St. George's Hundred, on the west bank of the St. George River. This implies two things: that in the intervening years the military organization within the province had grown outside the immediate vicinity of St. Mary's City, and that Vaughan occupied a position of military authority prior to the appointment. In 1638 he assisted Governor Calvert in gaining control of Kent Island. As Sergeant Vaughan, he led the force subduing Palmer Island, Claiborne's trading post at the mouth of the Susquehanna River. In late June Vaughan provided the council an inventory of the goods sized on Palmer Island, and possibly on Kent Island as well. In 1640 he was referred to as "Lieutenant Vaughan" in an order of the council. In 1642, Lord Baltimore made him commander of Kent. Also during the Assembly of 1648, he was addressed as captain. So, although his officer rank was acquired several years after the initial landings, Vaughan was an active military leader during that period. Wright maintains that Robert Vaughan was one of the two principal military officers of the province during the early, formative years. The other was Thomas Cornwallis.

Thomas Cornwallis (Cornwallis) was one of two commissioners accompanying the Calverts on the *Ark* and the *Dove*, the other being Jerome Hawley. Upon their arrival in America, Cornwallis became one of the three members of Governor Calvert's council, in effect the Upper House of the Assembly, who served as close advisors to the governor. He was a major investor in the Calvert project and one who participated in his investment. In Maryland he was a significant entrepreneur. He paid for his own passage and transported (i.e. paid for the transportation of) servants, not only on the initial voyages, but for a number of years thereafter. Between 1634 and 1651 he transported at least seventy-one servants to Maryland. In addition to those he transported on the first voyage, he took responsibility for five or more from a fellow Adventurer who died. Many of his transportees subsequently became plantation owners and acquired the title of Gentleman. Between his arrival

in 1634 and his final return to England in 1659, Cornwalllys acquired extensive land holdings, much of it as a result of the large number of people he had transported and the land grants associated therewith. He held several political offices and, in the opinion of several authors including Harry Wright Newman and Lois Carr, was Maryland's chief military officer.

In every contemporary reference, no matter how early, Cornwalllys is referred to by his military title of "Captain," implying that he probably acquired it before he set sail from England. On the first day of the opening session of the General Assembly on January 25, 1637, Cornwalllys was among those listed with his military rank. The others were Leonard Calvert as Lieutenant General, Captains Wintour, Fleete and Evelin, and Sergeants Vaughan and Baldrige. As pointed out above, Wintour was a ship commander, Fleete a fur trader, and Evelin not among the first group of Adventurers. Vaughan and Baldrige, especially the latter, appear to have that rank, at least in part, as a result of being constable of a hundred.

On February 12, 1637, the governor and council ordered a military expedition, to be led by Governor Calvert, to subdue Kent Island. Cornwalllys was a member of the council. The order directed, among other things, that "for his [Calvert's] better assistance . . . it was thought fit and so ordered that Captain Thomas Cornwalllys, Esq. . . . should go along with the Governor, and be aiding and assisting him to the uttermost of his power for command of the forces according to such directions as he shall receive from the Governor, during his expedition." The order was signed by Calvert, Jerome Hawley and John Lewger, the other two members of the council, but not by Cornwalllys. On May 27, 1638, Governor Calvert appointed "my good friend" Thomas Cornwalllys to act as Lieutenant General of the Province in his, Calvert's absence. This was the highest military appointment in the province, giving him command of all military forces (essentially the militia), and making him, in effect, deputy (acting) governor. Calvert made the appointment again on May 8, 1641, when he was going to be out of the province in Virginia.

On January 23, 1642, Cecil Calvert appointed and authorized Cornwalllys to "have and use all necessary and sufficient power for the levying and mustering of soldiers within the Province and for making with them an expedition upon the declared enemies of the Province." He did so "relying upon your [Cornwalllys's] prudence and experience in martiall affaires." On August 18, 1642, Cornwalllys was given a commission to "leavie men and Command them" preparatory to leading a subsequent military expedition. Finally, on April 17, 1643, Calvert used the same words, describing Cornwalllys's "known prudence and experience in military affaires" in appointing him "Captaine General" of a military expedition against the Susquehannocks. He was selected, among other reasons, because of his ability to recruit men, make them at least partial soldiers, and get them to follow him. He was deemed a good commander.

So then, who were the two initial militia commanders? Cornwalllys and Vaughan

seem likely candidates. There could have been other individuals with previous combat experience in one or more of the ongoing European or Middle Eastern conflicts who filled the role of military expert(s) for the newly landed Marylanders, a la John Smith or Miles Standish. However, if there were, their identities are not readily apparent. Cornwallly's and Vaughan's subsequent involvement in the highest levels of the provincial government, Cornwallly's involvement with the Calvert expedition early on at the highest level, coupled with his significant monetary investment, and the subsequent financial success both had in Maryland seem to militate against their being involved at that basic level militarily. However, the size of the force involved was not great, fewer than two hundred men. Self-protection, if no other reason, would dictate that everyone be involved. John Smith, twenty years earlier, had been secretly selected as one of the council members and leaders of the Virginia colony before the expedition set sail, to the shock of his fellow colonists. Subsequently he came to be in charge of the entire operation. So, the later activities of Cornwallly and Vaughan do not militate against their having been the early military leaders. However, this is merely supposition and not provable with any certitude. What is known is that these new Marylanders were conscious of the potential dangers, organized and prepared themselves to meet them, and someone, probably Thomas Cornwallly and Robert Vaughan, led them.<sup>15</sup>

The English government and early colonial promoters were aware, at least to some extent, of the potential dangers of establishing settlements in an American wilderness populated, even if somewhat sparsely, with potentially hostile Indians. At least one group of organizers, the Calverts of Maryland, had direct first-hand experience with wilderness America before sending out their first party of settlers. They all attempted to protect the settlers, or directed and enabled the settlers to protect themselves. They provided instructions for mounting defenses, for constructing protective fortifications and for organizing and maintaining defensive forces. They sent military supplies to arm the forces and experienced professional military men to train the colonists in the art of war.

What they did not send were any regular soldiers to defend the settlements. They did not send them for a very simple reason, there were none to send. A few professional regulars were on duty in the country—the king's guards and the garrisons of some of the coastal fortifications and fortified towns—but none were available for overseas deployment to Europe, much less to the New World.

The first settlers were influenced by what they knew before they landed in America. Over time they acquired new information, learned about new trends in Europe and new methods of doing things. But they were still people of their time and experience. English military developments moved slowly. There were no large regular English military units until the latter part of the seventeenth century, fifty to sixty years after the first settlements were started. Further, the initial number of troops under arms was relatively small. Many leaders may not have been all that

aware that they existed. Even if they were aware of the developments and wanted a comparable organization for their community, they ran into a major impediment, namely, how to pay for it.

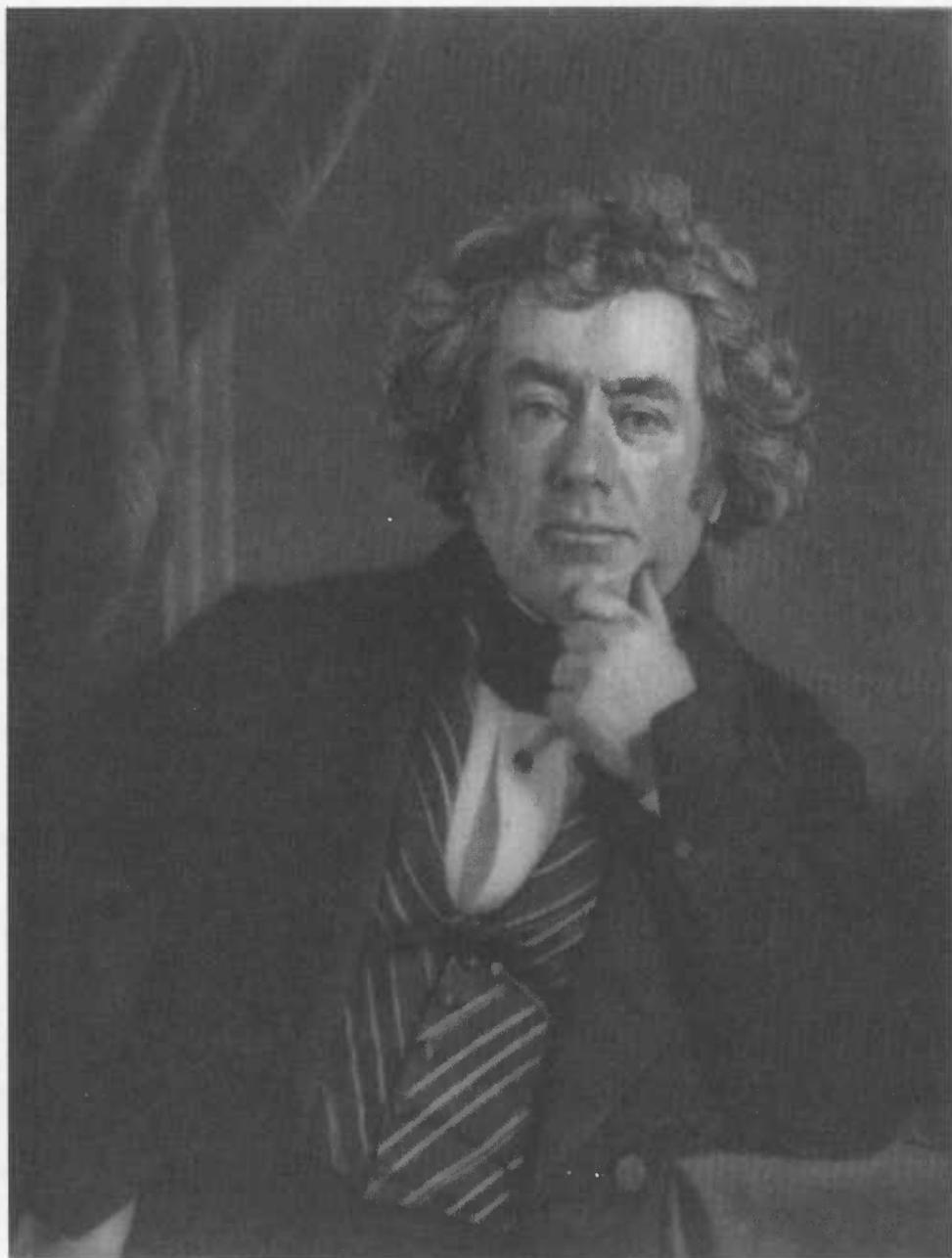
The leaders of the colony used what they knew and developed it to their needs. They took a military system that was waning in influence and importance at home, capitalized on the skills and talents of a few professional soldiers of fortune to get it started, and adapted it as required. They successfully employed the militia system to keep themselves safe from external threats for over 150 years.

#### NOTES

This article is excerpted from *Military Beginnings: Early Development of Maryland and American Forces*, published by Create Space and available on Amazon.com.

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*Robley Dunglison (1798–1869). Thomas Jefferson recruited the British physician for a teaching position at the University of Virginia. Dunglison later moved to the University of Maryland and then to the Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia. (Library of Congress.)*

# Robley Dunglison: The Father of American Medicine

WILLIAM L. BRYDON and RONALD L. HATZENBUEHLER

Four practicing physicians signed the Declaration of Independence, the most celebrated being Dr. Benjamin Rush of Philadelphia. Rush (1746–1813) is duly recognized for his numerous medical accomplishments, among which were treating thousands of patients who contracted yellow fever in the Philadelphia epidemic of 1793; giving Meriwether Lewis a crash course in medicine prior to Lewis's westward trek as leader (with William Clark) of the Corps of Discovery; and being an early champion of the mentally ill, for which he is frequently cited as the "Father of American Psychiatry." He also favored public education—including for women—and he was a staunch abolitionist.<sup>1</sup>

Less well known than Benjamin Rush, but overall a more important figure in the early history of medicine in the fledgling Republic, is Dr. Robley Dunglison (1798–1869). Although he was born in England and migrated to the United States in 1825, he established himself as a celebrated medical educator, humanitarian, and researcher/author during his tenures at the Universities of Virginia and Maryland in the 1820s and 1830s and then at the Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia, where, beginning in 1836, he served for more than three decades. Without diminishing the importance of Rush's notable accomplishments, Dunglison is more deserving than any native-born individual of the title, "Father of American Medicine."

Robley Dunglison received his medical training in London, Edinburgh (as did Rush), Paris, and in Erlangen, in Bavaria. He was practicing and teaching in London in 1824 when, at the behest of Thomas Jefferson, Francis Walker Gilmer arrived in search of professors for the almost completed University of Virginia.<sup>2</sup> Although Jefferson preferred to employ native-born individuals for his university, Gilmer hired Dunglison along with four other British professors, because suitable Americans could not be identified. In his *Autobiographical Ana*, which he wrote about 1852, Dunglison related that he accepted the position at Virginia so that he could afford to marry Harriet Leadham sooner than if he had remained in England. He recalled that his contract employed him to "teach to the best of his ability, and with due diligence, Anatomy, Surgery, the History of the Progress and Theories of Medicine, Physiology,

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Materia-Medica [medicines] and Pharmacy." Of Gilmer, Dunglison wrote that he was "a man of unquestioned ability and well educated. . . . In his speech, he had much of the peculiarity of tone that distinguishes many of the Virginians, which struck unpleasantly upon the ear in the first instance, but this soon wore off."<sup>3</sup>

If Gilmer's accent was unfamiliar to the Englishman, Dunglison was even less prepared to deal with the Virginia environment in which he arrived in February 1825 after an arduous, almost calamitous, three-month voyage from England. He reported that the roads from Richmond to Charlottesville "always of the worst kind, were, if possible, heavier than ever in consequence of the thaw that had been going on for some time." The doctor and his bride started at 6 A.M. by coach, and by 10 P.M. had made only thirty-five miles, declaring the roads to be worse than "we had ever witnessed in all our previous experience in England or on the Continent of Europe." As for the country through which they passed, Dunglison declared it to be "generally by no means inviting; and it must be admitted, that the prospects were highly unfavourable to the beauty or cultivation of the region in which our lot was to be cast," but he kept his spirits up by reflecting that he "was about to be transferred to a sphere in which I could be useful." Because the coach got stuck and almost capsized while trying to ford Brook Creek, the travelers had to walk the last two miles to Charlottesville through thick, sticky mud. "A Roman would have regarded it as a bad omen," Dunglison mused. "We were not Romans, however, and the affair only excited amusement."<sup>4</sup>

The day following their arrival in Charlottesville, the Dunglisons were greeted by Thomas Jefferson, who "presented himself and welcomed us with dignity and kindness for which he was celebrated" and invited the couple to take up lodging at the university, eventually in the pavilion on the lawn built for the professor of medicine. Unfortunately, there were no sleeping accommodations, and Dunglison later recalled that the newlyweds "slept on the floor. This was the most trying period of our residence at the University of Virginia." As for the rest of the pavilion, the doctor opined that Jefferson was only interested in "the agricultural exterior . . . and [left] the interior to shift for itself." The doctor further expressed his belief that the former president too studiously adhered to "the Palladian style" by omitting closets and placing windows in difficult locations, thereby "sacrific[ing] convenience."<sup>5</sup>

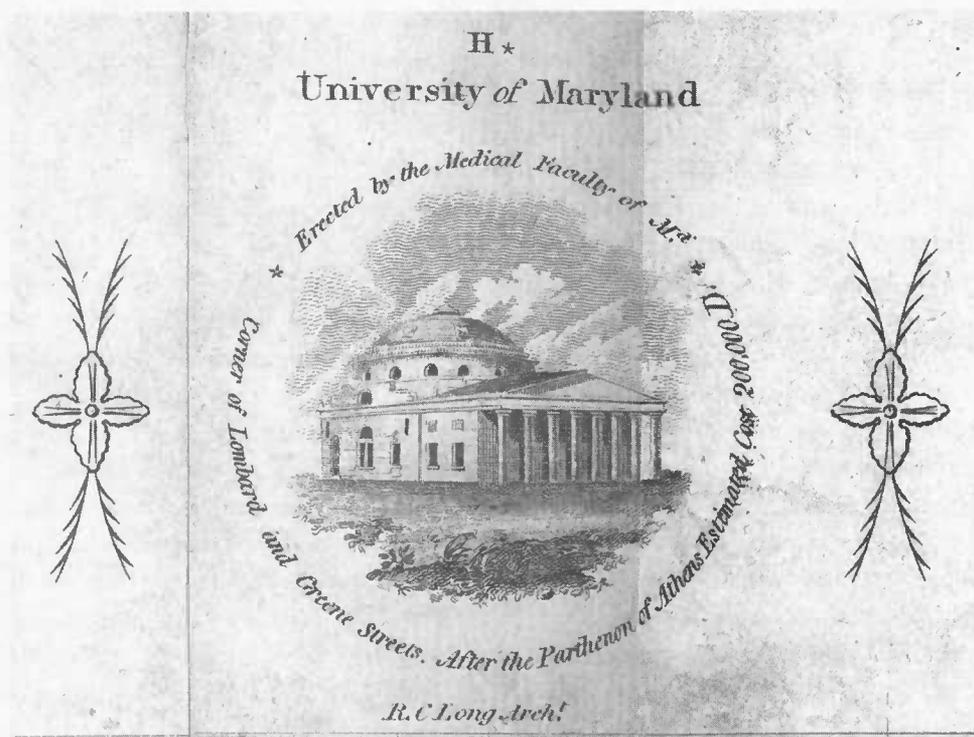
Although Dunglison expressed special disappointment that he was barred from opening a medical practice and that he would be required to devote his full attention to teaching and to his lectures, he quickly found the master of Monticello anxious to receive medical attention. Upon examination, Dunglison discovered that Jefferson was suffering from an enlarged prostate, and the doctor taught his patient how to insert a bougie (a catheter) into the urethra in order to relieve the constriction. In spite of the great difference in their ages—Jefferson in his eighties and Dunglison only twenty-seven—they became fast friends. The doctor reported that he often visited his patient two or three times a week, during the course of which he learned

that "Mr. Jefferson was considered to have little faith in physic [drugs in general, especially purgatives]; and has often told me he would rather trust to the unaided, or rather uninterfered with efforts of nature than to physicians in general. . . . But whatever may have been Mr. Jefferson's notions of physic and physicians, it is but justice to say, that he was one of the most attentive and respectful of patients." A measure of Jefferson's regard for his personal physician may be ascertained by the fact that Dunglison recorded in his *Ana*, "[I] always had my seat at table on his left hand" and that he was present at the time of his patient's death on July 4, 1826.<sup>6</sup>

Due to his close association with Jefferson, Dunglison also became associated with James Madison and James Monroe. The doctor greatly admired Madison as a man whose judgment was superior to Jefferson's, who "had more imagination. . . . In social intercourse no one could be more delightful than Mr. Madison." Dunglison did not record whether Madison consulted him for medical advice while Dunglison was at the University of Virginia (he did during the last two years of his life, when Dunglison was in Baltimore), but Monroe—whom the doctor characterized as "not in good health whilst [I was] at the university" did. As to the overall impression that Monroe conveyed, Dunglison observed that "He was apparently exceedingly amiable, but diffident and reserved; and made a much less favorable impression in regard to his intellectual powers than Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Madison." During a visit to Washington in the 1830s, Dunglison visited President Andrew Jackson and tried to persuade him that bloodletting—a practice to which the president (as well as Benjamin Rush) subscribed—was not advisable. Dunglison's interactions with so many of the nation's early chief executives were such that he may aptly be characterized as "Physician to the Presidents."<sup>7</sup>

AS EARLY AS 1829, Dunglison received offers to relocate to other medical schools. In 1833, he left the University of Virginia to accept the post of Professor of Materia Medica, Therapeutics, Hygiene, and Medical Jurisprudence at the University of Maryland due, in part, to the fact that he believed relocating northward would be felicitous to his wife's health. While in Baltimore, he realized an early interest in hygiene by adding that subject to the school's curriculum and publishing a book on the subject in 1835. It is worth noting that the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore—an outgrowth of his course on hygiene—is today one of the premier programs in environmental influences on human disease in the United States. It is also noteworthy that his 1835 treatise engendered little change in medical practice, as witnessed by the unhygienic practices in military hospitals during the American Civil War.<sup>8</sup>

In 1836, Dunglison accepted an appointment to join the faculty at the Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia, believing—as he recorded in his *Ana*, that "Philadelphia . . . had been so long esteemed the great centre of medical education, that it appeared impracticable to stem it, so that I despaired of seeing a permanently large



University of Maryland Medical School, 1822. (Maryland Historical Society.)

school established in Baltimore.” Upon arrival, he encountered much in-fighting among the faculty at the school, and he is credited with attempting to heal these schisms by becoming a “tie breaker” between the college’s two factions. Evidently, he also discovered that considerable antagonism existed between the Jefferson Medical College and the University of Pennsylvania’s Medical School, and helped to heal this division also. As a result of resignations and retirements at his college, Dunglison as dean was able to facilitate the hiring of replacement faculty and bridged the antagonisms among the faculty at his own institution as well as those that existed between those two great teaching establishments. He later arranged transportation for the students from both medical schools to attend important sessions at one or the other.<sup>9</sup>

Although Dunglison taught only a couple of dozen medical students while at the University of Virginia, during his three decades of tenure at the Jefferson Medical College, he helped to train more than five thousand medical students. Today the college proudly proclaims on its web site that it has awarded more than 31,000 medical degrees and that it has more living medical graduates than any other school in the nation. In all, Dunglison held ten faculty positions at the Jefferson Medical College.<sup>10</sup>

From his early years, Dunglison exhibited an interest in medical research. At the age of nineteen, he wrote an unpublished paper on the dilation of the pupil of the eye, dilating his own pupil and observing the reaction. His first medical degree was as a physician for women and children, and his first book focused on the diseases of the intestinal tract of children (*Commentaries on the Diseases of the Stomach and Bowels of Children* [1824]), in which was one of the first chapters on intussusception, an emergency condition of children in which one segment of the small intestine is in-folded into the next, more distal segment (often described as telescoping); the blood supply to the in-folded segment is quickly compromised such that the patient will probably die if the condition is not corrected.<sup>11</sup>

Dunglison's most notable medical publication while at the University of Virginia occurred during his latter days there. His *New Dictionary of Medical Science and Literature* (1833) became a standard reference work for physicians, sold more than 50,000 copies during his lifetime, and was subsequently republished in 23 editions until 1897. Sir William Osler, one of the founding professors of the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, recommended Dunglison's dictionary to his students until early in the twentieth century.<sup>12</sup>

In addition to his book on hygiene published in 1835, Dunglison made other notable, long-lasting contributions to the medical knowledge of the Early Republic while living in Baltimore. In 1832 he published his textbook, *Human Physiology*, which emanated from his first academic love and one of the first subjects on which he lectured at the University of Virginia. (He dedicated the first and second editions of the book to "James Madison, Ex President of the United States, etc., etc., alike distinguished as an illustrious benefactor to his country, a zealous promoter of science and literature, and the friend of mankind.") The popularity of this volume is evidenced by the fact that it appeared in eight successive editions. Although much of what he denoted in this notable volume has been corrected and expanded over the years, his clarity and style make it worthy of investigation. For example, in his text Dunglison wrote, "The movements of inspiration and expiration, which, together, constitute the function of respiration, are entirely accomplished by the dilation and contraction of the thorax. Air enters the chest when the latter is expanded; and is driven out when the chest is restored to its ordinary dimensions;—the thorax thus seeming to act like an ordinary pair of bellows with the valve stopped: when the sides are separated, the air enters at the nozzle, and when they are brought together, it is forced out."<sup>13</sup>

The grand total of Dunglison's contributions to the medical knowledge of his time is truly remarkable. He composed twelve original works, including his *Medical Dictionary*; edited and/or translated eight major works by others, often from the French or German (perhaps the most notable of his editorships was as co-editor of the *Dictionary of the English Language for the Use of the Blind* [1860]); wrote forty-four chapters for other authors' books; and provided forty-seven original essays or

other contributions to the medical periodical literature, first for the *Baltimore Medical and Surgical Journal and Review* and later its successor, the *North American Archives of Medical and Surgical Science*. In addition, he edited several medical journals, the first of which was the *American Medical Library and Intelligencer* in 1837.<sup>14</sup>

In addition to his medical writings, before coming to Virginia Duglison published essays in a variety of English literary journals, and, while at the University of Virginia, he co-authored *Introduction to the Study of Grecian and Roman Geography* (1829) and helped establish *The Virginia Literary Museum and Journal of Belles Lettres, Arts and Sciences* (also 1829). His involvement in the mores, culture, and needs of his day is further demonstrated by the huge number of civic and academic organizations to which he belonged, many of which he served in a leadership capacity. The list includes about seventy-five entries, many of which of course were medical, including care of the blind and infirm, but his involvement encompassed many other disciplines, including music, geography, history, mathematics, statistics, sanitation, natural history, and education. He was an active member of numerous societies, including the American Philosophical Society (1832) and the Board of Managers of the Pennsylvania Institution for the Instruction of the Blind (1844). His society memberships stretched from Paris and Marseilles—to Erlangen and Hamburg, to London and Edinburgh, to Toronto and Montreal, and in the United States as far west as St. Louis and Iowa. He received eight honorary degrees during the course of his life.<sup>15</sup>

In his autobiography, Duglison criticized how other doctors practiced their profession. Harkening back to his interactions with Jefferson, the doctor reflected that physicians routinely relied on “heroic” remedies for illnesses, meaning that they prescribed medications when nature might have better dealt with the patient’s symptoms. It is in this connection that it is relevant to note that whereas Benjamin Rush clung to such outmoded treatments as bleeding and purging throughout his life, Duglison had the ability to adjust to changing views and experience. For example, in his 1824 publication on children’s bowels, he recommended using various medications for treating abnormalities, but in later life he reversed this position and “endeavored on all occasions to practice conscientiously; and, in no case, to prescribe drugs unless I saw clearly their adaptation.”<sup>16</sup>

Though critical of physicians who prescribed “heroic agencies,” late in his life Duglison was also critical of “so called ‘practical’ [practitioners as] . . . constantly contrasted with the ‘scientific.’” By that he meant that many medical practitioners by the 1860s touted their ability to be “practical,” while ignoring the fact that physicians needed to be “very learned and scientific and literary.”<sup>17</sup> Certainly, Dr. Robley Duglison lived up to this admonition, and we believe he well deserves the title of the “Father of American Medicine.”

## NOTES

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2. There is no book-length biography of Dunglison. Two important articles on him are: Percy C. Hamlin, "Aesculapius in Charlottesville: Robley Dunglison, M.D.," *Virginia Cavalcade*, 22 (Summer 1972): 14-22, and Samuel X. Radbill, M.D., "Robley Dunglison, M.D., 1798-1869: American Medical Educator," *Journal of Medical Education*, 34 (1959): 84-94.
3. Robley Dunglison, *Autobiographical Ana of Robley Dunglison, M.D.*, ed. Samuel X. Radbill (Philadelphia: Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, 58, pt. 8, 1963), 3-5, 9-10.
4. *Ibid.*, 19, 21-22.
5. *Ibid.*, 22-23.
6. *Ibid.*, 26-33; Samuel X. Radbill, "Dr. Robley Dunglison and Jefferson," *Transactions & Studies of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia*, Ser. 4, 27 (July 1959): 40-44.
7. Dunglison, *Ana*, 54-56; Hamlin, "Aesculapus in Charlottesville," 18.
8. Radbill, "Robley Dunglison," 91; Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, "Vision, Mission, and Values" <http://www.jhsph.edu/about/school-at-a-glance-/vision-mossopm-amd-values/index.html> (accessed 4/7/15).
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10. Sidney Kimmel Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University, <http://www.jefferson.edu/university/jmc.html> (accessed 4/7/15).
11. Robley Dunglison, *Commentaries on the Diseases of the Stomach and the Bowels of Children* (London, 1824), chap. 9, 19off.
12. Robley Dunglison, *A New Dictionary of Medical Science and Literature: Containing a Concise Account of the Various Subjects and Terms: with the Synonymes in Different Languages: and Formulae for Various Officinal and Empirical Preparations, &c. &c.*, Vol. 2 (Boston, 1833); Radbill, "Robley Dunglison," 90; Dunglison, *Ana*, 196.
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14. Dunglison, *Ana*, 196-97.
15. *Ibid.*, 198-99, 195-96.
16. *Ibid.*, *Ana*, 151.
17. *Ibid.*



*The geographic area reached by WANN transmissions in 1959. (National Museum of American History.)*

# Racial Frequencies: WANN Annapolis, Black Radio, and Civil Rights

GARETH BROMLEY

In July 2015, the National Museum of American History inaugurated a new permanent exhibit entitled "American Enterprise." In the exhibit's vast collection, tucked alongside the ephemera of such giants as Andrew Carnegie and the McDonald's Corporation, is an unassuming wooden box once used to transport the equipment of WANN Annapolis. Founded in 1947 by first-generation American Morris Blum, the station was one of a handful of pioneers in the field of African American-oriented radio, a field which has never enjoyed a central place in the historiography of twentieth-century African American life or the civil rights movement. It has, in fact, been frequently subjected to overwhelmingly negative assessments. From the 1970s, such stations were condemned for a lack of public service programming, for their abstention from direct involvement in the civil rights movement and, most damningly, for their inability to free themselves from the strictures of white commercial society. African American-oriented stations, often owned predominantly by whites, with white managerial staff and financially dependent on income from white advertising, were dismissed as ineffectual and insignificant parts of the wider struggle. Yet the inclusion of WANN in the Smithsonian's new exhibit marks a resurgence of interest in African American radio, whose role in the culture and communities of twentieth-century African Americans is only recently being fully appreciated. Media and culture were key battlegrounds for the civil rights struggle, and black radio was born at the exact same moment the movement found its feet. Often, WANN led the way.

The necessary conditions for the growth of African American radio arose in the immediate postwar years. Crucially, this period saw an extraordinary improvement in the economic position of the African American population. Between 1940 and 1953, black median income rose by 192 percent, and black home ownership increased 129 percent.<sup>1</sup> Levels of African American education saw similar gains. In Anne Arundel County, the illiteracy rate among the black population fell from 23 percent in the 1930s to 9 percent in 1950.<sup>2</sup> Not only were conditions improving, but the size

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of the African American population itself was rapidly expanding, so much so that a 1949 edition of the trade publication *Sponsor* warned broadcasters that they were missing out on an African American market worth a potential \$12 billion.<sup>3</sup> These estimates only increased as the century went on. By 1966, that figure had swollen to a potential \$27 billion.<sup>4</sup> Most importantly, by the late 1950s more than 90 percent of African Americans owned radios.<sup>5</sup>

The concept of broadcasting presented by and to African Americans was not entirely novel. The 1920s Jazz Age had seen some black disc jockeys maintain commercially successful shows, such as Jack L. Cooper on Washington, D.C.'s WCAP, and the inclusion of a limited amount of so-called "race" music, although this practically came to an end in the Great Depression and the subsequent fall in "race record" sales.<sup>6</sup> More importantly, during the war two important precedents were set in the radio industry, which partially inspired the creation of African American radio and aroused the hopes of the nascent civil rights movement. First, wartime propaganda broadcasts aimed to deny racial hierarchies in the face of German broadcasting that attempted to exacerbate racial divides within U.S. forces. "Freedom's People," a landmark eight-part series produced by the Federal Radio Education Committee, celebrated African American history and the contributions of African Americans to American society. These overtures to racial diversity raised the hopes of the African American population, yet the armed forces remained strictly segregated, even down to the level of military radio.

This segregation led to the creation of radio stations with programming geared almost entirely toward African American GIs and created an appetite for such programming once the war was over. Following the war, radio quickly reverted to well-established caricatures. In 1943, *Billboard* noted that blacks could not be represented in radio drama except as a servant or comic buffoon, and could not be introduced by the formal titles of Mr., Mrs., or Miss.<sup>7</sup> Those ways of representing African Americans were quickly revived once the war ended, and the blackface minstrel remained the default African American character in radio programming, if such characters were included at all. The experience of wartime African American radio, and the scuppered dreams of a more equitable treatment in American society at large, created a strong demand for programming tailored directly, and respectfully, to an African American community growing in affluence and increasingly aware of the persistent disparities between black and white Americans. Membership in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, for example, boomed during and after the war, leaping from 50,000 nationally in 1940 to 450,000 in 1946.<sup>8</sup> It was not until the failing Memphis station WDIA switched to an all-black format in 1948 that the depth of such demand was realized. WANN made a similar move soon after.

This "discovery" of the African American market was more significant than it may at first seem. Rather than just creating a fresh field for commercial exploitation, the African American population finally being deemed a suitable target for com-

mercial ventures had a more positive, symbolic significance. Between the 1880s and 1930s, a mass consumer culture developed in America, which attempted to unify the country through common patterns of consumption. Widely distributed advertising, made possible by the development of print media and the radio, attempted to portray consumerism as a specifically American ritual, an integral part of being an American citizen. A 1907 Coca Cola advertisement declared that, "All ages, classes and sexes drink COCA-COLA," evoking the egalitarian spirit of democracy. A Gillette blade was marketed as "typical of the American spirit . . . its use starts habits of energy, of initiative," a campaign clearly drawing on popular ideas of American exceptionalism.<sup>9</sup> Notably absent from such campaigns, however, were the black population. Alongside the everyday humiliations of segregation, of subordinate social status, of disenfranchisement and the perils of racially motivated violence, consumer culture was another important facet of American identity denied to African Americans. Blacks had long attempted to assert themselves against such racist consumer norms. As archaeological evidence from nineteenth- and twentieth-century Annapolis demonstrates, many African American families of all classes were large consumers of national brands, pushing back against predominant social pressures to attain the consumer privileges aspirational advertising made so desirable.<sup>10</sup> It was not until after the war, though, that the African American market was taken seriously by mainstream entrepreneurs, signally one symbolic, albeit tentative and incredibly limited step on the road to acceptance as "Americans."

It was in this context that Blum arrived in Annapolis with the aim of establishing a radio station using his GI Bill money, money most people used to fund their college education. To talk of WANN is, essentially, to talk about Morris Blum. His story is in many ways a quintessentially American tale of a "self-made man": a Jew, born to Lithuanian parents who had fled tsarist pogroms, and lacking anything beyond a ninth-grade education, Blum embarked on a remarkable career in military radio. Serving the Radio Intelligence Division during the war, he was the first to intercept messages from the Axis powers regarding Pearl Harbor. He suppressed direct communications between German agents stationed in the U.S. and the Nazi regime, and established a ship-to-ship communication system for Allied convoys that could not be broken by submarines. He would later go on to co-ordinate activities between radio stations following the attacks on the World Trade Center of September 11, 2001, making him one of very few Americans to work both Pearl Harbor and 9/11 in such a capacity. In Annapolis itself, though, largely because he was Jewish, Blum's and WANN's reputations were practically non-existent.<sup>11</sup>

Yet Blum was also a man with a keen eye for legacy, acutely aware of the importance of what he was doing even as white Annapolis high society snubbed him. Before retiring, he waited until the station had been in family hands for fifty years, knowing such a feat had never before been accomplished, a milestone he achieved while well into his eighties. In the 2000s, he presented to the Smithsonian Institution

the great bulk of files and records he had so carefully maintained since the station's inception, despite the high price much of the rare vinyl would have commanded among collectors. As a result, a rich documentary record is available for anyone wishing to study WANN that has long been lost for other stations of its kind.

The early history of the station was one of experimentation and unexpected success. WANN was not always intended to be an African American radio station. At the outset, its mission was to play anything "from Bach to Bebop," a move that proved commercially disastrous. After a year of being on air, WANN was floundering at the bottom of local radio rankings. In Morris Blum's words, "you could have shot a deer in the balcony."<sup>12</sup> It was at the recommendation of Rev. Theodore C. Jackson of the Gillis Memorial Community Church in Baltimore that WANN began playing blues music, for forty-five minutes at the end of each day. It was an immediate success: the usual trickle of fan correspondence quickly became a flood, and, with the WANN letterbox bursting at the seams, Blum realized he had struck upon something special. In 1949, Blum boldly changed to an all-black format. A February 1955 profile of the station in *Sepia* magazine ran with the appropriate title, "Blues Rescue a Radio Station."<sup>13</sup>

At the time, Blum was navigating relatively uncharted, and potentially dangerous, waters. African American music received little radio play, and was viewed by much of the entertainment establishment as a potentially pernicious influence upon popular culture. Blum was acutely aware of the possible dangers of running a business which actively courted a black audience in a conservative, southern town like Annapolis. Attacks on such stations were not unheard of. In Birmingham, Alabama, for example, the antennae of a black radio station had been demolished by a white "posse."<sup>14</sup> In WANN's case, the most serious incident occurred in 1974, when an unknown gunman fired a bullet through the station's windows. The motive for the attack is unknown to this day, and it very well could have been racial.

Less dramatic, but perhaps more insidious, was the station's persistent marginalization. Its activities were kept within a clearly circumscribed world, and were frequently viewed with no small measure of distrust. Blum's association with so-called "radical" groups and his befriending of apparently "dangerous" individuals was not taken well. Following the February 1970 incident at Annapolis High School, for example, when a campaign for more black representation by over two hundred newly integrated students turned violent, Superintendent of Schools Edward Anderson attempted to pin the blame for the unrest on WANN. From the time it turned to an African American format until its closure in 1997, WANN never managed to shake these associations.

Yet Blum's experiment turned WANN into one of a handful of vanguard stations that kick-started an enormous growth in African American-oriented radio. By 1953, 260 such stations existed, and by 1974 a study by J. Walter Thompson found that 90 percent of African Americans were regular consumers of black-oriented radio.<sup>15</sup>

The arrival of television, predicted to spell the end of radio's ascendancy, actually resulted in a more lively radio culture, with unprofitable national ventures giving way to a highly segmented industry of local stations catering to specific audiences. Furthermore, propelled by a spirit of postwar youthful rebellion and the increasing availability of cheap, portable transistor radios, white teenagers found it easier than ever to circumvent the social norms of white society and listen to the "forbidden fruit" of rock 'n' roll and other predominantly African American musical forms.

As "race music" became increasingly popular, the entertainment industry's response was confused and ambivalent. Racial and commercial concerns regularly intersected. Commercial potential did not always dictate what radio stations chose to highlight, and pop radio frequently gave black artists a far smaller amount of airplay than their sales warranted. Fears among white society of the corrupting effects of black music upon the American mainstream loomed large, yet the entertainment industry could not afford to pass up such a lucrative new market. Many initially settled on awkward compromises. Some African American groups were repackaged into a more palatable form for a white audience, removing any "dangerous" sexual elements upon which racist stereotypes were so fixated. Other black artists, such as The Platters and Brook Benton, took such steps deliberately, in order to extend and maintain the black presence in the pop market.<sup>16</sup> White artists found it significantly more difficult to do the reverse and break into the black market. In one particularly bizarre episode, New Orleans station WJMR wanted a slice of the black audience but could not countenance having black DJs on their permanent staff. Their solution was to hire Vernon Wilson, an African American newspaperman and college professor, to teach their white DJs how to "sound black."<sup>17</sup>

Clearly, radio was at its heart a commercial venture, and WANN was located in a particularly favorable position to capitalize on an African American audience. One early advertisement boasted that WANN served the largest of such markets in the country outside of New York. A later advertisement claimed that "one radio station can carry your message to the one million, three hundred thousand blacks in Maryland, Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Delaware, Northern Virginia, Southern New Jersey, and Southern Pennsylvania."<sup>18</sup> The ability to attract advertising revenue was crucial to staying on air, as the "brokerage system" was the most common model of radio funding. In this mode of operating, station management sold airtime to DJs, who were then responsible for re-selling portions of that time to sponsors and advertisers at a profit.<sup>19</sup> The primary job of a DJ was, ultimately, that of a salesman. Hoppy Adams, the longest serving of WANN's DJs, Morris Blum's inseparable partner, and later the station's executive vice-president, epitomizes the DJ-turned-salesman figure. A consummate showman, Hoppy (so called because of a bad leg, picked up from a bout of polio as a child) exuded charisma and celebrity appeal, aided by what *Sepia* magazine called "a mellow, smooth voice that has brought him many marriage proposals through the mail."<sup>20</sup> One young fan even claimed listening to Hoppy had

caused her pregnancy; the baby, she said, was his. Such was the extent of Hoppy's popularity that every year he had to put off his Christmas shopping until the last minute, to avoid being mobbed by the adoring crowds that invariably followed his every move.<sup>21</sup>

Advertisers, unsurprisingly, were keen to sign up Hoppy as the face, or the voice, of their brand. A 1960 letter to Morris Blum from the owner of the Madera Wine Company thanked Blum for providing Hoppy to his store for a promotional event, claiming that it attracted 247 "colored people," many of whom were new customers. The letter concluded: "I believe that you may have snatched yourself a very fine salesman in this DJ," as women flocked to the store asking for "Hoppy's Wine."<sup>22</sup>

The white managerial staff that made up the bulk of most African American radio stations' employees were frequently quite forthright about their commercial intentions. For many, the station was a money-spinner, and little else. Although WDIA Memphis was renowned for its community work, when referring to the station's owners the legendary WDIA DJ Nat D. Williams admitted that "they are businessmen. They don't necessarily like Negroes. They make that clear."<sup>23</sup> Advocating for civil rights, if not taking any direct action, was simply an effective commercial strategy, a necessity for the credibility of any station claiming to be the voice of the African American community. In this respect, WANN was different.

For Morris Blum, public service lay at the heart of his vision for the station. Blum's close connection with the African American community was inspired to a great extent by his experiences as a Jew living in Annapolis. In areas such as the Fourth Ward, the "Harlem of Annapolis" in the mid-twentieth century, there had long been a history of Jews, African Americans, and other minorities working together, with Jewish merchants frequently running the local businesses on which the whole area depended.<sup>24</sup> Businesses such as the failing African American theater, the Star, were picked up by Jewish businessmen and turned into community centrepieces, with many of the owners opting to live above their businesses or in the immediate area. Such diverse groups were, on some level, unified by their shared minority status. Blum often spoke candidly about understanding his own "otherness" from an early age, and his son Larry remembers quite vividly the hostility the family faced upon moving to the Murray Hill area in the early 1960s.<sup>25</sup> Blum was even turned down by the FBI upon applying to be an agent, a decision he later learned was a result of his Jewish faith. Having experienced bigotry first hand, Blum was more attuned to the needs of the African American community than most, a fact of which he was well aware.

Blum's commitment to the African American community manifested itself in multiple ways. The ethnic make-up of WANN's staff in its early years was highly atypical of its contemporaries, with Blum hiring African Americans to fill behind-the-scenes roles, not solely as disc jockeys. In the early 1950s, Bill Williams was recruited as the station's engineer, making him one of the first African Americans



*Gospel singer and radio host Pauline Wells Lewis and Rev. Theodore C. Jackson of Gillis Memorial Church in Baltimore at the WANN-AM radio station in Annapolis, Maryland, c. 1951. (Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore City Life Museum Collection, gift of the estate of Paul Henderson, 1991.)*

in the country to hold such a position. At any one time, African Americans made up a third to a half of the station's fourteen employees, more than most stations could boast.

That Hoppy Adams gained such a high position is significant in itself, in a society where Hoppy's race still relegated him to second-class status. More than just a DJ, Hoppy actively dealt with black entrepreneurs, going out of his way to attract new advertising revenue rather than just punching out once his show came to an end. In a 1997 *Jewish Times* profile of Blum, Hoppy recounted two occasions on which Blum's principles and the intimacy of their friendship were clearly evident. Traveling together in the South for business, they stopped at a whites-only restaurant in Virginia, where Hoppy was refused entry and told he had to eat in the kitchen, away from the other diners. Blum, incensed, insisted on eating with him, and accompanied Hoppy into the kitchen area, where they dined together. On a separate occasion, the two arrived at a whites-only motel in Latta, in southern Virginia, looking for a place to spend the night. As Hoppy remembered: "The guy explained that the boss (meaning Blum)

could have a room, but they didn't have a room for me. So the boss started putting the money down in front of the guy, and the greener the money got, the whiter I got!"<sup>26</sup> The story goes that the following morning, a young African American gardener tending the grass in front of the motel almost cut his own leg off at the shock of seeing a black man emerge from the whites-only establishment.<sup>27</sup>

Integral to the popularity of African American broadcasting, and another crucial part of public service, was its potential for community expression. In their 1935 work, *The Psychology of Radio*, pioneering sociologist Hadley Cantrill and psychologist Gordon W. Allport wrote that the radio listener has "an imaginary sense of participation in a common activity. He knows that others are listening with him and in this way feels a community of interest with people outside his home."<sup>28</sup> The arrival of black radio for the first time gave African Americans the opportunity to hear from others in situations similar to theirs, to discuss issues pertinent to their community ignored by white media, and to proudly express African American cultural diversity. Nat D. Williams, for example, recounted how he "found a terrific amount of enjoyment from just being black" during his time at WDIA.<sup>29</sup> Running an African American station, as *Broadcasting Magazine* put it in 1966, was about "more than just tossing on a record."<sup>30</sup>

In this way, WANN quickly established itself as a focal point for the local African American community. Religious programming was of great importance to the station, bringing in anywhere between 50 percent and 70 percent of its entire revenue. Local religious establishments would pay for their services to be broadcast remotely, or submit them pre-recorded, giving them an unparalleled opportunity to widely propagate their message and uniting WANN listeners in a common act of worship. For a long time, WANN was the only significant platform for such programming within its broadcasting radius, where clergymen and other religious or spiritual figures could build up a devoted personal following. One popular early example was Rev. Rajah Raboid, a radio "mentalist" who sent tapes to WANN from his Florida residence, and in return received copious fan requests for prayers and clairvoyant predictions. He was eventually let go in the mid-1950s, following a minor scandal when complaints were filed against him by religious leaders. Not until the advent of cable television did financial support from religious establishments, and public enthusiasm for WANN's religious programming, begin to dry out.

During its time on air, probably the most notable of WANN's public service programs were "Community Viewpoint" and "Town Topics." The former, moderated by Carl Snowden, hosted interviews with prominent figures, including the head of a local Ku Klux Klan chapter, and controversial columnist Jack Anderson. Many of the interviewees rarely received mainstream media coverage: one particular interview with civil rights activist Stokeley Carmichael attracted the attention of the FBI, who secretly recorded the show and maintained transcripts that only emerged when

Snowden later sued the FBI under the Freedom of Information Act.<sup>31</sup> "Town Topics," was hosted by Blum and took the form of a roundtable discussion of current affairs, local and national. Blum was most proud of those two shows, for he was passionately convinced of the duty and necessity of public service.

African American culture found further expression at the legendary, black-owned Carr's Beach, a key stop on the East Coast "Chitlin circuit" of black entertainment venues, a proving ground for black artists able to gain a measure of independence from the white-controlled, highly exploitative music industry. Formed in 1948 by the son of Elizabeth Carr and Baltimorean William L. "Little Willie" Adams, by the early 1950s weekend crowds routinely exceeded 10,000. Attracted by the amusement rides, carnival games, slot machines and, most of all, the concerts, African Americans came from as far north as New York City and as far west as West Virginia and Ohio.<sup>32</sup> For a time, Annapolis was at the center of the black entertainment universe, the swelling crowds kept in line by African American police officer George Phelps Jr., whose authority helped to quell the fears of local white residents petrified by the arrival of blacks in such large numbers. Upon entering the site, revellers were heard the stern message that, in case of trouble, "we'll whip you so close to the ground, you will need a stepladder to see over a dime."<sup>33</sup> Recognizing the potential of Carr's Beach, Morris Blum had the presence of mind to buy mobile broadcasting equipment and, beginning in the 1950s, Hoppy Adams emceed the wildly successful Sunday program "Bandstand on the Beach." The popularity of the show and venue, and the star power of its presenter, attracted such A-list performers as Ella Fitzgerald, Otis Redding, and James Brown, many of whom Hoppy counted among his personal friends. One of the largest crowds was recorded at a July 1956 appearance by Chuck Berry, who drew an estimated 70,000 people and caused a five-mile-long traffic jam that remained backed up until 4 A.M.

As has long been noted, African American music had, and has, more significance than the term "entertainment" allows. Although to a white audience it may have been just that, a thrilling escape from the strictures of white society, for African Americans music was often intensely political, a powerful affirmation of black identity. The broadcast of shows from Carr's Beach allowed large numbers to be included in a celebratory, predominantly black public space, legitimizing African American art and helping to popularize African American music across color lines. Naval Academy students, for example, were reported to be building makeshift radios to pick up WANN, an act forbidden by the academy authorities. The few whites that attended Carr's Beach in person did so under one unwritten condition: that each member of a white couple would dance with at least one black person.<sup>34</sup> In a segregated society, the question of whether or not whites' experiences of black music did much to change their preconceptions of black *people* is highly contentious. Tuning in to broadcasts or attending concerts might have encouraged sincere engagement with black culture, but such experiences may also have been interpreted in light of



*Hoppy Adams, Morris Blum, and Richard B. Simms, c.1967–1971. (Author's collection.)*

existing white prejudices, and served to confirm them—prejudices, for example, concerning the highly sexual nature of African Americans, a characteristic often claimed to be demonstrably present in their art. Yet for the black population, the significance of such venues is clear. It is a sad irony that where Carr's Beach once stood, now stands a majority white, gated community, with only six of the 246 acres of land remaining under black ownership.<sup>35</sup>

The importance of the place WANN occupied in the lives of the local African American community is evident in the reams upon reams of fan correspondence Blum maintained. Helpfully for those attempting to understand the station's history and its relationship to its audience, Blum rarely threw anything away. We are therefore privy to a fantastic insight into the role of WANN in the everyday lives of its listeners. The letters kept in the Smithsonian vaults range from the deeply personal to the light-hearted, as listeners poured out their troubles to the station's religious broadcasters, or made more humorous requests. The bulk of these letters began with the writer declaring the importance of the station to their daily routines. One fan even suggested that listening to WANN's religious broadcasts was an important part of the school curriculum. Rev. Bishop Chambers, an ambitious clergyman who appeared frequently on WANN in the 1970s, held onto the greatest amount of correspondence. Here we find sprawling letters, thanking Chambers and the station for their work in promoting a religious message, asking for inclusion in prayer lists, or soliciting advice.

Other letters contain colorful requests ranging from the important to the trivial,

and frequently strike a lighter tone regardless of the content. In one undated piece of correspondence, sent at some point in the 1950s, an irate fan requests a song for "my good for nothing husband Walter Johnson, + his outside sweetheart Estel Hunter of Huntingtwon [*sic*]" ; the requested song was, fittingly, Ruth Brown's "Mama He Treats Your Daughter Mean."<sup>36</sup> As it happened, Ruth Brown played Carr's Beach on July 12, 1953. In a 1954 letter from one Howard Polmatier, the correspondent asks for written confirmation of a recent statement made on the radio that there is life on Mars, because, as he explains, none of his friends believe him.<sup>37</sup> A 1956 letter from a blind listener asked the presenter to "tell Ray Charles not to holler so loud when he is singing the alto,"<sup>38</sup> and an undated letter from Private First Class Robert Mayberry, responding to a recent advertisement aired by the station, reads "Say man, send me that ring set I'll give the bread to the Postmaster and the sooner the better cause this broad is closing in on me for the funeral."<sup>39</sup>

Surely the most striking example of WANN's commitment to community service came in the wake of the April 4, 1968 assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. In the immediate aftermath, the country witnessed violence and social unrest on a scale unmatched since the Civil War. Cities in thirty-six states and the District of Columbia experienced looting, arson, and sniper fire; fifty-four cities suffered at least \$100,000 in property damage; and two of the most afflicted cities were the nearby urban centres of Washington, D.C., and Baltimore, where the week's upheavals left trails of destruction worth \$15 million and \$12 million, respectively.<sup>40</sup>

As Washington and Baltimore burned, racial tensions in Annapolis mounted. With much of the local police force called elsewhere, the potential for escalation was great. As a crowd of teenagers converged outside the WANN building, a frightened staff member called Morris Blum. Accustomed to dealing with such crises from his time in the military, Blum arrived at the station and allowed every individual, one by one, to go live on air and express his grievances. Few Annapolis businessmen did so much to calm and reassure those whose sense of disenchantment was more profound than ever. There is no more emphatic endorsement of WANN's position as the voice of the community than the decision of the disaffected to go to the station first, before resorting to more direct, perhaps violent means. Along with the work of mayor Roger "Pip" Moyer and his close friend Zastrow Simms, the situation was, incredibly, defused, and aside from a few minor disturbances, the peace was maintained. In the aftermath of the assassination, WANN was at the forefront of positive developments. Funds contributed by both the station and Hoppy Adams allowed the conversion of Stanton School from a storage unit into a new recreational facility, following a petition by the "People's Right in Democratic Equality" group. Opened in September 1969, the "Stanton Community Center" appointed Zastrow Simms as its first director.<sup>41</sup>

As the years went by, WANN was showered with numerous awards for its community work—from the NAACP, local government, and from Mount Moriah

A.M.E. Church of Annapolis, to name just a few. By the 1990s, however, the station was no longer as viable. Facing challenges from FM radio, and CDs, and with the income from religious broadcasters being lost to cable television, daytime AM radio was becoming more and more difficult to fund. Blum, also sensing a change in the African American community's attitude toward the management of the station, abruptly shifted to a country format in 1992, before finally closing WANN for good in 1997. For fifty years, WANN programming had not just reported on the African American communities of Maryland, Delaware, and beyond, but had played an active role in them. By giving African Americans a platform, by discussing their issues, and by highlighting their musical culture, WANN and other black radio stations left an indelible mark on those communities. The great civil rights struggle of the twentieth century was not confined solely to the streets and chambers of government; it was debated, developed, and articulated over the airwaves, too.

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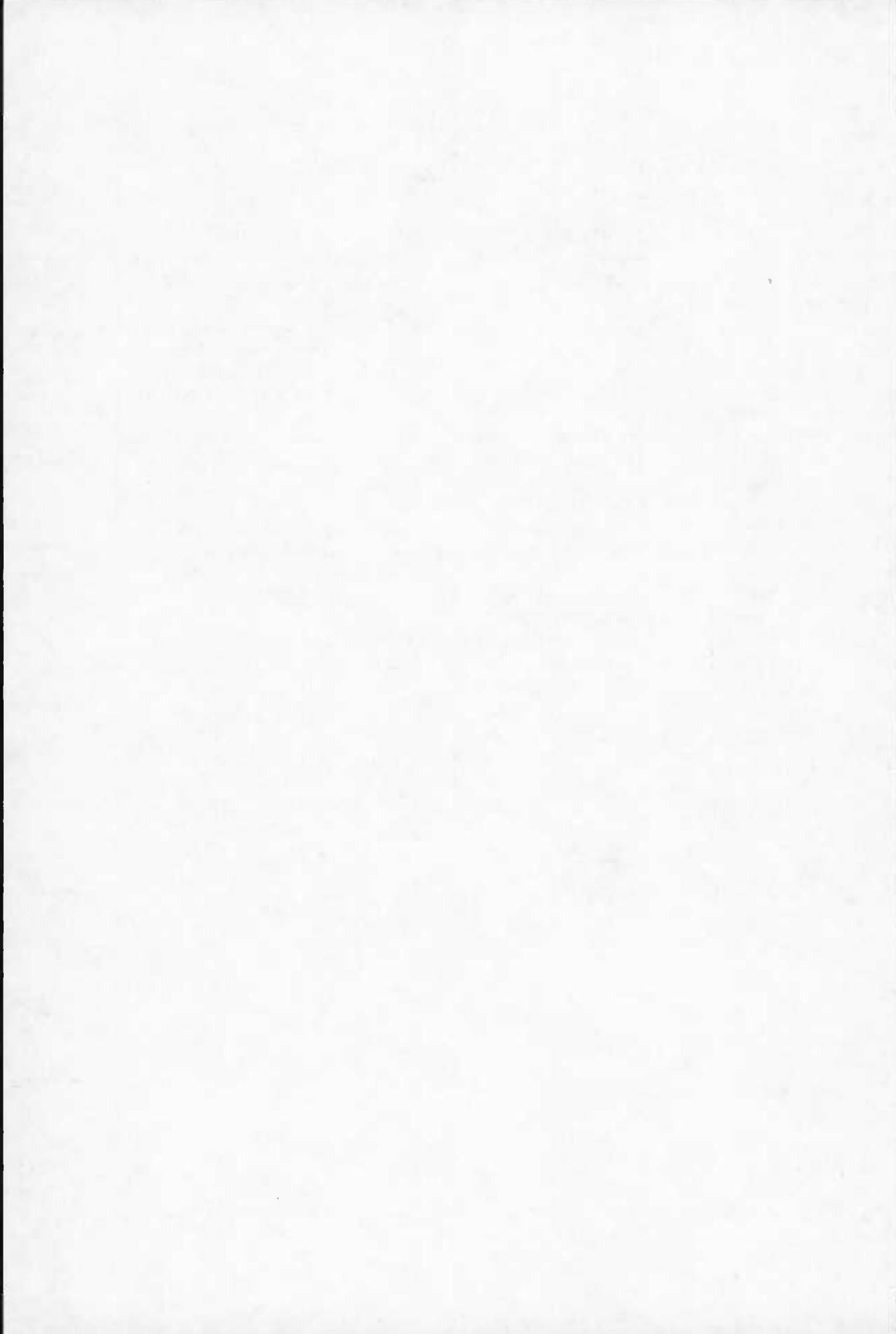
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