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MARYLAND

*Historical Magazine*



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# MARYLAND

## *Historical Magazine*

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## *The High Seas*

On July 28, 1814, a low, sleek Baltimore clipper carrying letters of marque slipped anchor off Staten Island and glided past British warships on blockade. Eighty-five feet at the keel, twenty-six at the beam, armed with sixteen long-range twelve-pound cannon, and manned by a privateer's complement of 150, she was the *Chasseur*, built in Thomas Kemp's Fells Point shipyard. Her captain and part owner was Thomas Boyle, a tough, wily veteran of naval conflict in the Caribbean, where his ship, the *Comet*, had disrupted British convoy patterns and made his name known on British quarterdecks.

Boyle headed away from the Caribbean, where most American privateers prowled and where the British were prepared to meet them, and sailed instead for the Grand Banks and thence for the mouth of the English Channel. It was there, between the channel and the Irish Sea, that British convoys, close to home and thinking themselves safe, broke up and individual ships headed in to separate ports. He captured his first prizes, the *Eclipse* and the *Commerce*, in mid-August and sent them to the United States with prize crews. On the twenty-first, he captured the *Antelope*, a heavily armed brig and privateer loaded with sugar. Irritated that the *Antelope's* master had refused to defend his ship, Boyle wrote a letter to the British Admiralty saying as much. *Fox*, *Christiana*, *Reindeer*, *Favorite*, *Prudence*, and *Marquis of Cornwallis*, heaved to before *Chasseur's* guns in quick succession, some sent home as prizes, others in to Britain loaded with prisoners (and Boyle's letter to the Admiralty).

Boyle then performed one of the more audacious acts in Baltimore maritime history. Standing off the coast of Ireland, on a small vessel with about a hundred men, Boyle sent to London aboard the *Marquis of Cornwallis* a message that effectively bearded the British lion. Dipping his pen in acid he wrote, "Whereas, it has been customary with the admirals of Great Britain commanding small forces on the coast of the United States, particularly Sir John Borlaise Warren and Sir Alexander Cochrane to declare the coast of the said United States in a state of strict and rigorous blockade" without the means of enforcing it, he, Thomas Boyle, now declared "all the ports, harbors, bays, creeks, rivers, inlets, outlets, islands, and sea coasts of . . . Great Britain and Ireland in a state of strict and rigorous blockade." In other words, if the British could proclaim a blockade they could not enforce, they might expect no less from an American privateer.

The master of the *Cornwallis* delivered the proclamation. The center of maritime insurance was Lloyd's Coffee House in London, and there on the door Boyle's declaration was posted. Soon all hell broke loose. Frigates and men-o'-war from

the Home Fleet set out after Boyle and in a short time had chased the *Chasseur* away from its hunting ground—but not before the clipper had swooped in to deliver a pair of broadsides from its long twelves to a British frigate. Of such feats legends are born, and traditions made. A few weeks later, after the British had burned Washington, they let it be known what they thought of such traditions. Turning their eyes northward, and with Captain Boyle and his colleagues on their minds, they sailed up the Chesapeake to clean out that “nest of pirates” in Baltimore.

Time passes, and people forget, but recently we have had good reason to be reminded of Baltimore’s bold maritime heritage. This year we witnessed the exploits of a surprising Baltimore entry, *Chessie Racing*, in the Whitbread Round the World Race. To George Collins, who stepped in where others hesitated and who subsequently financed and organized the project himself, to the daring and hard-working crew, and to the families and staff of *Chessie Racing*, thanks from all of us for a great first run. We’re heartened to know that our tradition endures.

Somewhere, surely, the spirit of old Tom Boyle is glad to know that, too.

R.I.C.

## Cover

### *Ocean City, Worcester County, ca. 1900*

Marylanders have flocked to Ocean City since the Sinepuxent Beach Company officially founded the town on July 4, 1875. The 1933 hurricane cut the inlet from the Atlantic to the Sinepuxent Bay, creating a natural haven for small boats. Quick action by state and federal officials secured New Deal funds to fortify the inlet, and the quiet summer retreat grew into a major vacation and fishing center.

Vacationers from an earlier time recall staying at the town’s grand and elegant Victorian hotels. The Plimhimmon, the Majestic, and the Commander lined the boardwalk like matronly chaperones. A day on their cool, wide porches or on the hotter, white beaches often ended with a stroll on the boardwalk, french fries, and a ride on the jewel-encrusted flying horses and whimsical creatures on Trimper’s merry-go-round. These college students were merely following the merry, leisurely pace set by their fathers and followed by generations since.

P.D.A.



*As head of Baltimore's Department of Planning, in 1960 Philip Darling proposed an east-west expressway through the city that led to controversy and ultimate failure. (Baltimore News-American photograph, courtesy, University of Maryland, College Park.)*

# Baltimore's Highway Wars Revisited

MICHAEL P. MCCARTHY

In March 1958, Philip Darling became head of Baltimore's Department of Planning, moving over to that job from the Baltimore Urban Renewal and Housing Agency (BURHA), where he had been the assistant director since 1957. Darling had considerable experience in housing planning, both at BURHA and before that with the city and federal housing agencies. He also knew a good deal about planning highways. He had a degree in civil engineering from Yale and had taken courses in traffic control at the Harvard Bureau of Street Traffic Research while earning a master's degree in city planning from M.I.T.<sup>1</sup>

Highway planning had become a priority at the time, thanks to the Interstate Highway Act of 1956, which provided federal funds for road building. Darling and his staff went to work on designing an east-west expressway that would be part of the interstate system within the city. The result was *A Study for an East-West Expressway*, which was released in January 1960 under the aegis of the planning commission. As part of the review process, the Department of Public Works hired three local engineering firms to study the proposal and consider any alternative possibilities. Working together as the Expressway Consultants, the three firms made some significant changes in Darling's route in the report they submitted in October 1961. Darling and his staff were unhappy with the changes, as were many members of the planning commission. Other public agencies and civic groups also voiced their displeasure at the Expressway Consultants' report. All of this led to more plan designs and more controversy, and ultimately to the defeat of nearly all of the city's interstate highway projects.

Baltimore's victory over the federal expressway planners has been considered one of its finest hours. Saved from the wrecker's ball were houses and other buildings in historic Fells Point and Federal Hill, plus blocks of other rowhouses in east and west Baltimore. Equally important, downtown was also spared all the ramps and the cloverleaves that would have taken precious land from the Inner Harbor. But from the perspective of the 1990s, were those victories really beneficial? Many of those neighborhoods on the east and west sides that were saved from the expressway have fallen victim to other ills like high unemployment, crime, and drugs. Ironically, the lack of expressways in those neighborhoods has also made it difficult for "empowerment zone" programs to attract private capital because they lack good connections to the Interstate system. And

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today downtown could certainly use the east-west expressway that was proposed, to get the clogging crosstown traffic off Pratt and Lombard streets.

A full analysis of the whole expressway story—which ran from the late 1950s to the early 1980s when the last of federal funding possibilities expired—would be beyond the scope of this essay.<sup>2</sup> But we can take another look at the ideas and plans of Darling, as well as his differences with the Expressway Consultants, in what in many respects was the formative moment in the expressway's ill-starred story. The episode also raises questions about the planning process. Who was making the design decisions for the city? Technically, under the city charter, this was the responsibility of the planning department and commission, but in the real world of bureaucratic in-fighting, neither enjoyed the power they had on paper.

During the years of controversy, critics of the highway framed the issues largely in terms of Baltimore as victim, asking questions like "Do we really want those interstate expressways cutting through our city and rending its fabric?" What has been less appreciated is that Darling and his staff were really trying to use federal dollars to meet Baltimore's needs, and in particular, the challenge of the Baltimore County beltway.

### Highway Dollars

The first beltway in the country was Route 128 outside Boston (completed in 1951), but the Baltimore beltway (completed in 1962) had the distinction of being the first in the country built under the 1956 Federal Highway Act.<sup>3</sup> Like Route 128, the Baltimore beltway was beyond the city limits, its thirty-one miles of road lay entirely in suburban Baltimore County, which surrounds the city on three sides. The role of the two roads differed in a significant way. Route 128 was seen primarily as a way to improve the movement of through traffic around Boston by providing in effect an expressway alternative to the older route 128 that meandered through the western suburbs. By contrast, Baltimore County had no highway system connecting its communities. Located in an arc around Baltimore, burgeoning communities like Catonsville and Pikesville on the west, and Essex and Dundalk on the east, had grown up on radial highways out of the city. The beltway would link them with each other as well as with Towson, the county seat which was in the middle.

This is how the Baltimore County Planning Commission viewed the beltway in its proposal in 1949.<sup>4</sup> To be sure, it expected some through traffic, between cities like Frederick and Philadelphia, or Washington and Harrisburg. But the county planning commission was primarily concerned with improving the highways in Baltimore County. The beltway in fact started off as a county project funded by the local taxpayers. In 1953 the state decided to take over the project,





*The Baltimore County beltway, completed in 1962, brought residential building, new businesses, and retail centers that threatened Baltimore City's economy. The view is of the Woodlawn area, looking to the north. (Baltimore County Public Library.)*

and federal dollars wound up paying most of the bills when the beltway became eligible under the 1956 interstate highway legislation. (Nearly all construction was done after 1956.) Baltimore county planners in effect found themselves in the best of both worlds: they got the highway they wanted, with little in the way of local cost.<sup>5</sup>

The county already enjoyed a boom in new suburban housing, and the beltway stimulated even more economic growth. Baltimore's downtown department stores saw the sales potential of the early beltway malls and opened branches at Eastpoint (1956) and Westview (1958).<sup>6</sup> The beltway also offered easy commuting and plenty of parking for white-collar workers. The Social Security Administration picked an eighty-acre site by the beltway on the west side, in the Woodlawn neighborhood of Baltimore County. The federal agency moved seven thousand workers to the new office complex and left behind some 600,000 square feet of space in eleven buildings in downtown.<sup>7</sup>

Industry also saw the benefits of plentiful land and easy access for its trucks to the interstate highway system. Shortly after the beltway was completed, for example, Maryland Paper Box Corporation, moved to a 200,000-square-foot new building on a sixteen-acre tract on Old Annapolis Road near the beltway on

the southwest side. The company's main plant had been on Leadenhall and Ostend Streets in South Baltimore, and it planned to consolidate all its manufacturing (some at three other plants in the city) at the new location in Baltimore County.<sup>8</sup>

Darling compared the beltway's effects to the economic threat Baltimore had faced when the Erie Canal opened in 1825. He wanted the city to respond as rapidly as it had at that time, when the city government provided financial support for the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. That was the nation's first commercial railroad, and as Darling pointed out, the new technology helped to keep Baltimore competitive in the western trade.<sup>9</sup> In the current crisis, Darling felt Baltimore needed a modern expressway system to compete with the beltway. It also needed to link that expressway with the beltway. This would especially help downtown, which was no longer at the center of the transportation system because of the shift from streetcars to autos after World War II. Locations along the beltway were more accessible, and motorists could move easily around it from home to the mall or office park at average speeds of forty miles per hour, compared to ten miles per hour when driving downtown. With expressway connections, or "radials" as the engineers called them, suburbanites would have easier access to downtown shops and jobs.

One of these radials was already being built as the Jones Falls Expressway, which was part of the Baltimore-Harrisburg Interstate Highway (Interstate 83) that had gotten underway in the early 1950s. The Jones Falls Expressway assumed the role of a radial in a somewhat incidental way, when the state decided to use a few miles of the beltway in the Towson area as a link between the Harrisburg section of Interstate 83 and the rest of the highway into Baltimore City. For the city, this turned out to be a fortuitous connection, since the Jones Falls Expressway—then still under construction at its lower end—would provide good access to and from the beltway and downtown. But other expressways, from other directions, were needed downtown to fully restore the accessibility of the central business district.

The idea of a crosstown expressway was not a new one, and it was also something of a political hot potato. There had been nine other proposals since 1942, among them one by the New York consultant Robert Moses in 1944, and the most recent in 1957.<sup>10</sup> All had been rejected for two primary reasons. First, disputes arose over whether there was enough through traffic on U.S. Route 40 (the main existing east-west highway) to merit another highway. Second, the proposed routes, most of which cut a swath through a genteel neighborhood along North Charles Street in the middle of the city (in the general vicinity of Route 40), raised the ire of influential residents.<sup>11</sup>

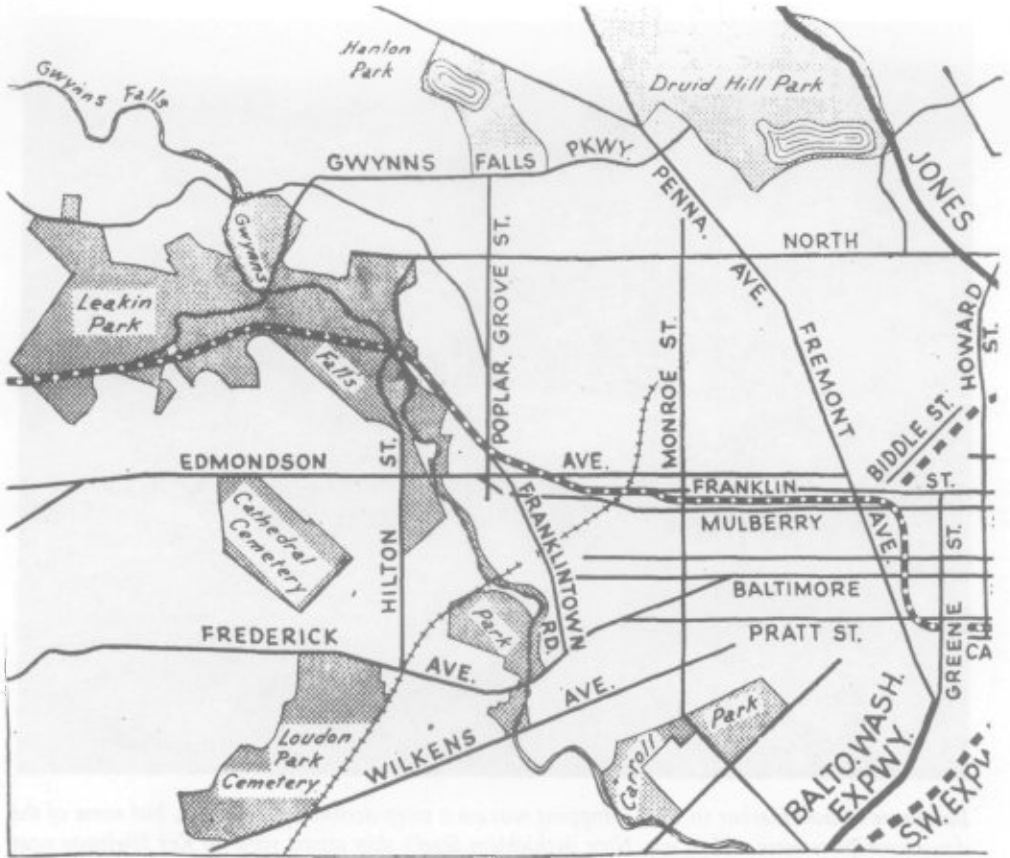
With federal plans to include the east-west expressway in the interstate system, Mayor Thomas D'Alesandro Jr. had asked Darling to have his department



*Baltimore's Inner Harbor in 1962. Shipping was on a steep decline by that time, but some of the downtown piers were still in use. Note Bethlehem Steel's ship repair yard on Key Highway near Federal Hill. (Courtesy Maryland State Archives, the Marion E. Warren Collection.)*

take another look at earlier proposals. Darling and his staff decided to swing the expressway route south, away from North Charles, to the north side of the Inner Harbor in the central business district. This would provide better access to downtown, and also better serve adjacent industrial districts in Fells Point and Canton. They also now downplayed the interstate function of the expressway. This was a valid argument, because a study by the Maryland State Roads Commission in 1957 estimated that only between four and six percent of the road use would be interstate traffic, in large part because the opening of the harbor tunnel that year was diverting traffic from both Route 1 and Route 40—the two main highways through Baltimore—to a crossing south of the city.<sup>12</sup> In short, the east-west expressway was going to be a road that would primarily serve Baltimore.

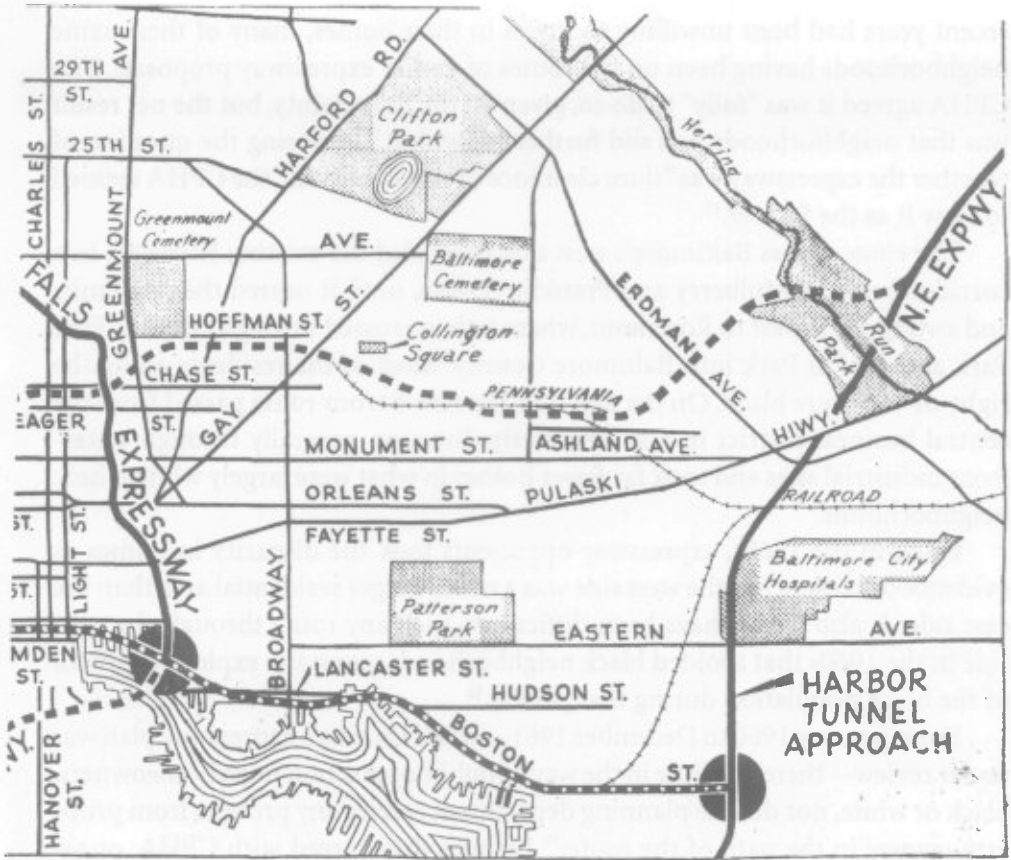
*A Study for an East-West Expressway* was an eye-catcher, and intentionally so on the part of the planning commission since it wanted to see the proposal adopted.<sup>13</sup> The softcover report had a map of the city on the outside cover and aerial photographs of the city, with the proposed route drawn in, on the two folios inside. The report also had a complete set of drawings of the route. It



Published in the *Baltimore Sun*, January 31, 1960, this map shows the original (or northern) route . . .

discussed the beltway threat and why the new route was better than the others. It also included a long section entitled the “Pros and Cons of Expressways,” which was something of a primer for Baltimoreans on this new kind of highway. It was frank about all the potential problems like noise and blight, but felt that expressways solved more problems than they caused.

Before releasing the report, Darling had discussed the expressway plans with many civic agencies, so it is not surprising that the recommendation met with wide support. (Darling’s only disappointment was the *Baltimore Sun*, whose editors remained noncommittal despite his efforts at two luncheon meetings. “A dismal failure,” he quipped in a letter to planning commission chairman John R. Royster.)<sup>14</sup> Among those that endorsed it were the Committee for Downtown and the Greater Baltimore Committee, who saw the expressway access as a boon for Charles Center, a major downtown renewal project they were promoting. The Association of Commerce, the Retail Merchants Association, and the Port



... proposed for the east-west expressway, and the Baltimore Department of Planning's new southern route.

Authority also endorsed it, the latter saying that the “route would enhance truck traffic serving the Port of Baltimore” and that any adverse effects to the port would “be minimal and would be far outweighed by the port advantages accruing by the provision of the Expressway along this particular route.”<sup>15</sup> Even the Citizens Planning and Housing Association (CPHA)—a bitter foe in later years—gave its approval. The expressway would help Charles Center, as well as the Howard and Lexington Street shopping district by making them “easily available and more appealing to shoppers all over the city. People who have kept away from downtown for years will be lured back.”<sup>16</sup>

The CPHA was ambivalent about the expressway’s impact on the residential neighborhoods it crossed. On one hand, the expressway would cause damage; on the other, residents might be better off in moving. The route went through many neighborhoods with aging and substandard housing (only 114 of the 3,187 dwellings that would be taken were classified as “good”). Moreover, owners in

recent years had been unwilling to invest in their homes, many of these same neighborhoods having been on the routes of earlier expressway proposals. The CPHA agreed it was “folly” to do so, given all the uncertainty, but the net result was that neighborhoods had slid further “downhill.” In posing the question of whether the expressway was “slum clearance or slum creation,” the CPHA seemed to view it as the former.<sup>17</sup>

The route across Baltimore’s west side paralleled the existing Route 40, in a corridor between Mulberry and Franklin Streets, until it neared the city limits and swung northwest to Rosemont, where it then crossed through Gwynns Falls Park and Leakin Park into Baltimore County. Most of the residents along the right-of-way were black. On the east side, the new harbor route passed from the central business district in a southeasterly direction generally through waterfront industrial sites and took far fewer homes in what were largely white ethnic neighborhoods.

Later, in the 1960s, expressway opponents took the disparity in homes as evidence of racism, but the west side was a much bigger residential area than the east side. It also would have been difficult to pick any route through the west side in the 1960s that avoided black neighborhoods, given the explosive growth of the black population during that period.<sup>18</sup>

From January 1960 to December 1961—when Darling’s expressway plan was under review—there was little in the way of public opposition from homeowners, black or white, nor did the planning department receive any protests from property owners in the path of the route.<sup>19</sup> Perhaps they agreed with CPHA, or assumed the expressway was inevitable. This was also before the rise of “black power” as well as “ethnic power,” and neighborhood activism was not yet prevalent.

The planning department did get some formal protests from the Hunting Ridge Community Assembly and the Wildwood Improvement Association, which represented two white, middle-class neighborhoods on the west side.<sup>20</sup> They were not in the right-of-way but just to the south of it, where it crossed through Leakin Park. The neighborhoods had been more or less resigned to the expressway because the park route had been a part of earlier proposals, but they were still concerned about the loss of land. Darling assured them that the total parkland would not be diminished because there were plans to acquire an equivalent amount.<sup>21</sup> The city kept this promise a few years later by purchasing the Windsor Estate, adjoining Leakin Park.

The main reason for the protest was the location of the route within the park. Residents wanted it shifted farther north, away from their homes. Darling thought the associations had a good argument and told them so. He sent on their letters for use in the review process with the request that they be given “special attention.”<sup>22</sup> In his reply to the president of the Hunting Ridge Commu-

nity Association, Darling said the "high quality of the Hunting Ridge community was an asset not only to its residents, but also to the entire city. The Planning Commission shares your concern that every effort be made to preserve this quality."<sup>23</sup> Responsive action like this, plus Darling's tireless efforts to promote the plan, helped to create what seemed like a consensus that extended from the boardrooms to the neighborhoods.

According to Baltimore's city charter, the planning commission was to prepare plans showing "the future general location . . . of streets, highways, boulevards." It was also empowered to prepare "preliminary detailed plans . . . showing the boulevard . . . as well as the exact grade and extent thereof."<sup>24</sup> In addition to Darling, there were two other civil engineers in the planning department who worked on the expressway plan. But the city charter required that engineers in the Department of Public Works take another look at any highway plans, in what was known as a feasibility study.

In the case of the expressway, the procedures were different because the federal government was paying most of the costs. The Bureau of Roads, which was overseeing the interstate highway program, required the approval of outside engineers. This was more than a consulting job, in the sense that the assignment included not only conducting a feasibility study but preparing all the detailed technical blueprint work that would be used in the actual construction. It was also something of a financial plum because the government was paying around \$500,000 in the feasibility phase and more later on.

The job of finding the outside engineers was in the hands of the Department of Public Works which normally did all this work. Without a need for bids, the department head Bernard L. Werner looked no farther than North Charles and Calvert Streets to find the offices of suitable candidates. He chose the J. E. Greiner Company, which had worked on the Harbor Tunnel, the Chesapeake Bay Bridge, and the Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Ohio, and Indiana Turnpikes; Rimmel, Klepper & Kahl, which had prepared plans for the Baltimore County beltway and done work on the Illinois Toll Road as well as many other projects in the Baltimore and Washington area; and Knoerle, Graef, Bender & Associates, who had also done work on turnpikes across the country as well as with the Jones Falls Expressway.<sup>25</sup> A separate firm called the Expressway Consultants was created to handle the assignment, with engineers from the three firms working under Greiner & Company's Bruce A. Herman, a graduate of Johns Hopkins who had been resident engineer on the Chesapeake Bay Bridge and project engineer for the Harbor Tunnel.<sup>26</sup>

Mayor J. Harold Grady told a correspondent to expect that the review process would be a formality, given the lack of controversy, which he noted was different from the earlier years.<sup>27</sup> Darling also assumed the same. Early in the review process, the consultants appeared, at most, to be considering only minor



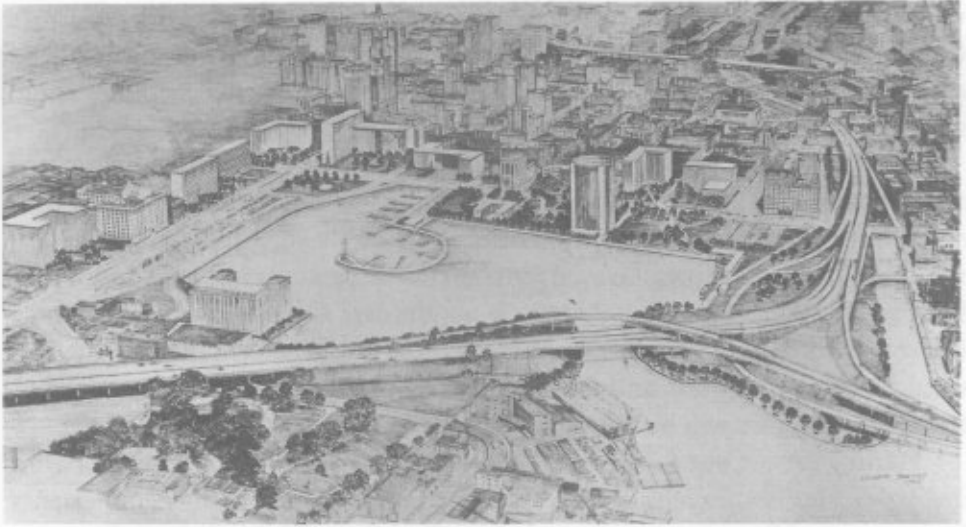
*The expressway route as presented by the Baltimore Department of Planning followed Pratt Street and intersected with Interstates 83 and 95 (the latter crossing the harbor and running southwest over Federal Hill at lower left).*

changes, some of which Darling thought were improvements. Given this promising beginning, it is not surprising that Darling was assuring Expressway Consultants' Bruce Herman that "he was in accord with the direction in which your studies are headed and with your recommendations."<sup>28</sup>

But the Expressway Consultants made many changes in their final report. On the west side, instead of using Myrtle and Pine Streets near the Central Business district for the southward turn toward the harbor, Expressway Consultants made their turn farther west, at Fremont Avenue. On the east side, their route followed a path through Fells Point and Canton that was similar to Darling's, but instead of linking the road with the expressway coming from the Harbor Tunnel, they ran theirs farther north, through more neighborhoods, before making the connection with the Harbor Tunnel expressway. The biggest change was in the central business district. Instead of running the expressway along Pratt Street, the consultants moved it southward toward Federal Hill where it joined Interstate 95 and crossed over the Inner Harbor to the vicinity of Fells Point.<sup>29</sup>

Darling had assumed that Interstate 95 would cross the Inner Harbor on a bridge since that approach had been on the drawing boards for years. What he had not anticipated was that the east-west expressway would go the same way. In retrospect, there were some hints that the highway engineers might not have been entirely satisfied with Darling's route. In August 1959, Darling had asked Werner to have the Department of Public Works do a review to determine if





*An artist's rendering of the Expressway Consultants' conception of downtown Baltimore. The East-West Expressway swings away from downtown and crosses a bridge over the Inner Harbor along Interstate 95. It would diverge from Interstate 95 southwest of the harbor and central business district.*

there were "any engineering problems which would be extraordinarily difficult or extraordinarily expensive to resolve" in his Pratt Street route.<sup>30</sup> A month later, Werner sent Darling a copy of the report he had received from William L. Chilcote, the department's deputy director and a civil engineer. Chilcote and his staff engineers had a number of potential problems. The route, designed to cross St. Paul's cemetery, could not readily do so for the city's right of condemnation did not apply to that property. A power substation on West Pratt Street would be a difficult obstacle to negotiate. Finally, building an expressway along the wharves might require sinking pilings as deep as 125 feet to find solid rock for the foundations. None of these engineering problems was "insurmountable," Chilcote said, but he did add that "a more economic and practical route for this East-West Expressway should be investigated and explored before any definite decisions are reached."<sup>31</sup>

In the view of the Expressway Consultants, their route was a more economical and practical alternative. They cited the problems with the cemetery and power station inherent in the Pratt Street route. They also said it would require taking one of the new high-rise buildings in the recently completed Lexington Terrace housing project, in order to have a more gradual highway curve that would meet the standards of the Bureau of Roads.

Darling received these changes in stunned disbelief, because he felt they were unnecessary. Chilcote had admitted that both the cemetery and power station

were problems that might be fixed. (Darling was negotiating with St. Paul's Church, and the power station could be relocated.) Even the curve might not be an issue, Darling told Werner, because it appeared that the Department could meet federal standards without taking the building.<sup>32</sup>

"It is of course possible," Darling told Werner in another memo written shortly before the release of the Expressway Consultants report, "that the consultants may have discovered some almost insuperable difficulties with the Planning Commission's recommended route. In the discussions I have had with you, however, I get the impression that this is not the case and the consultants merely feel that their route is somewhat preferable." Darling predicted that the changes would meet with protest, and the "new route will simply renew all the old controversy and . . . we will be right back where we started."<sup>33</sup>

Darling turned out to be right. "Why not use the Myrtle-Pine corridor with its blighted houses thereby sparing the Poe Homes and the many better quality houses west of Fremont Avenue and along Scott Street?" the Citizens Planning and Housing Association asked.<sup>34</sup> The Baltimore Urban Renewal and Housing Agency (BURHA) was also unhappy with the new route. The Poe Homes were the city's first public housing project when it opened in 1940, and in the view of BURHA, "was still one of the finest."<sup>35</sup> The 350-foot "swath of roadway" on the Fremont Avenue route would take 35.6 percent of the Poe Homes, plus the Community Building and the nearby Mt. Olivet Church and "seriously damage" the Lexington-Poe community that was on both sides of Fremont Avenue. Moreover, by not using the 700 blocks of Franklin and Mulberry, which would have been in the Myrtle-Pine turning corridor, the Expressway Consultants left the city with a headache of dilapidated and abandoned buildings, the owners long ago having assumed that this would be the expressway's route.

J. Jefferson Miller and Martin Millsbaugh, who were in charge of the Charles Center development office, preferred the Myrtle-Pine approach because it was closer to the central business district and provided better access to Charles Center. They also preferred the Pratt Street route because it provided what they called "a natural barrier" that "would contain the Central Business District and permit the development of different types of land use to the south." They were particularly worried about the consultants' view that—as their report put it—the new route would "promote growth of the Central Business District in a southerly direction." This was exactly what the Charles Center planners did not want. "The Central Business District is already too large," they said, "and the creation of a strong core demands the intensification of development, rather than a weakening of the core by continued dispersion."<sup>36</sup>

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) was the only major civic group that was willing to approve the Expressway Consultants' plan, in large part because the GBC simply wanted to get the project underway. The planning

commission's Pratt Street expressway was now an "imposing physical and psychological barrier" between the central business district and the Inner Harbor, the GBC argued.<sup>37</sup> Darling was clearly miffed at the GBC since it had not expressed any disapproval about that route at the time the planning department proposed it, as Darling pointed out to William Boucher III, the GBC's executive director.<sup>38</sup>

Darling was confident that the Pratt Street elevated expressway would be an asset and not an eyesore. He told an editor of *Architectural Forum* that it would have plenty of open landscaped space on either side, so that the area underneath would not be "dark and dreary."<sup>39</sup> In Darling's view, the elevated expressway would also not deter plans to develop the Inner Harbor as a tourist and recreational area. He was later proven correct, as Boston and Sydney provided examples of cities that successfully recycled their downtown waterfronts despite the presence of roadways overhead. Indeed, it could be argued that overhead roadways were a factor in those successes by making downtown Boston and Sydney more accessible to tourists and suburbanites.<sup>40</sup>

Whatever the view on elevated expressways, the consultants' route required a bridge across the Inner Harbor. As noted earlier, the idea of bridge for Interstate 95 had been around for a long time. But this was the first time it was being officially considered, and it now was a component of the east-west expressway design as well. The Maryland Port Authority had no problem with the bridge if the consultants lifted the vertical clearance from forty to fifty feet. As Harbormaster Jean Hofmeister pointed out, however, ships with tall masts and superstructures—in some cases ninety-five feet above the water—were still using the Inner Harbor. This particularly applied to naval vessels, which most often docked at Pier Four. They also provided a downtown attraction since they were usually open for inspection by the general public. "Is the right thing being done favoring a move to throw this all away?" he asked.<sup>41</sup>

The issue at this point was less who was right or wrong than that the Expressway Consultants had clearly failed to get a consensus behind their proposal, in no small part because they had not consulted with any of the city's private or public agencies. After May, they had even stopped talking to Darling. He attended most of the Expressway Consultants' monthly progress meetings, but they were not helpful because none of the staff at these briefings was providing any information on the direction "in which the studies were heading or the nature of the final recommendation."<sup>42</sup>

At the end of September, Darling got Werner to tell him something about the consultants study, which was soon to be released. But Darling said it was "only in very vague terms." Darling did not get what he called "the first real information" until he read it in the newspaper on October 13. His "first detailed knowledge" came with the delivery of one copy of the report to his office on October 31.<sup>43</sup>

In September, when he first learned of the changes from Werner, Darling had urged him to get the consultants to hold off making any formal recommendations. "Such a procedure," he said, "would enable all of the facts and comments to be studied by all the groups concerned."<sup>44</sup> But all to no avail. BURHA in particular was annoyed at what seemed a cavalier attitude on the part of the consultants. "There is a need for achieving a high degree of coordination between highway engineers and those involved in all the other aspects of planning and development," BURHA said. "A city simply cannot let one of its problems be solved in a way that conflicts unnecessarily with other plans that are being developed. The Planning Commission and Department should be the central agency for the type of coordination that would insure that this principle is applied."<sup>45</sup>

Why did the Expressway Consultants become so independent, particularly in their relations with the planning department? One possible reason is that the planning commission and the planning department, despite their formal authority in the decision-making process, were not agencies that had a lot of clout within the bureaucracy. This was especially so in recent years with the creation of BURHA (1957) and the Charles Center Planning Council (1956), which were now also doing downtown planning. But the Expressway Consultants had been hired as outside evaluators for the Bureau of Roads, so a degree of detachment was perhaps inevitable, and even necessary. The Bureau of Roads was also the final arbiter, which may have been a reason why the Expressway Consultants appeared to be looking over the heads of the local agencies to Washington.

Shortly after learning of all the changes, Darling wrote to his friend and fellow city planner Alan M. Voorhees for advice. Voorhees spoke to several of his friends "about your predicament," but they had no easy answer. "I think it is just a matter of continually stressing the disadvantages of the plan so far as you see them."<sup>46</sup> Darling followed this strategy by keeping up his own letters and memos. He also wrote to city officials who he knew were critical of some aspects of the new proposal, as was Henry A. Barnes, Commissioner of Traffic and Transit. At Darling's request, Barnes shared his views with John Royster, the chairman of the planning commission.<sup>47</sup>

Darling also decided to have his staff prepare a review of the Expressway Consultants' report for the planning commission. There were seven reasons why the Expressway Consultants preferred their new route, the staff report said—among them the issue of St. Paul's Cemetery (the new route would avoid it), its lower cost, and more benefits for the central business district. The staff report argued that all could be rebutted. The Vestry of St. Paul's Church, for example, had indicated to the planning commission back in December 1959 a willingness to discuss various possibilities, including moving the cemetery. The Expressway Consultants estimated their route at a cost of \$213.6 million, compared to \$237.3 million for the planning commission's route. But the figures were fiddled, the



*St. Paul's Cemetery, the city's oldest surviving burial ground, lay in the proposed path of the expressway. (Maryland Historical Society.)*

planning department staffers said. By their calculations, the costs would be about the same, with the planning department route being even less expensive on a cost per mile. As for the benefits to the central business district, the Expressway Consultants said it was a plus to expand its area south of Pratt Street. Like Miller and Millsbaugh of the Charles Center Development Office, the staff argued to the contrary—it would “weaken rather than strengthen” the existing downtown.<sup>48</sup>

On December 6, the staff report was presented to the committee that oversaw expressway design for the planning commission. One of the committee members was Bernard Werner, who clearly wanted to see the project get underway. Werner was also someone who was used to getting his way. A blunt, non-nonsense engineer, who would get himself in hot water in 1963 for calling members of the planning commission “amateurs,” Werner was a career civil servant, having started out as a draftsman for the city in 1923. Over the years he had moved up the ladder and worked as an engineer on various water supply projects, including the Liberty Dam. In the 1950s he was deputy and then head of the Bureau of Water Supply before taking over at Public Works in 1959.<sup>49</sup>

Werner won a request for the Expressway Consultants to rebut the planning department's staff report. On January 8, the consultants met with the committee. In a memo that the Expressway Consultants had prepared before the meet-

ing, they inferred that the Hamburg route was better because it was grounded on more research, which included more data on traffic and costs and studies of interchange geometrics, future highway development, and the like. They stood by their position that their route was cheaper than the Pratt Street route. In their view, 10 percent was a “substantial cost difference,” and they saw “no commensurate added benefits . . . to condone the additional expenditure.”<sup>50</sup>

Cost cutting was critical, they said, because they felt that the Bureau of Roads might make the city shift the east-west expressway back to a northern, mid-town route, which would be cheaper to build. “It is the conclusion of our report and apparently most of the city and community agencies that the southern alignment would be the more beneficial to the city, but without Interstate financing, the contemplated expressway system will not materialize.”<sup>51</sup>

Apparently the Expressway Consultants did not convince all the committee members of the advantages of the Hamburg Street route. On January 10, the master plan committee met once again, this time to decide whether or not to submit the staff report with a recommendation to the full commission. Werner urged the committee to forward the staff report to the commission without any recommendation. The Expressway Consultants’ report should be endorsed, he suggested, but with reservations since the consultants had not convinced everyone. “I don’t see anything gained by putting it off to a later time,” Werner added.

The report made by the Consultants is a report in their best judgement that reflects the thinking of certainly the top consultants in this area, some of which are nationally known and represents in excess of 40,000 man hours. . . . We have heard from a rebuttal from the Expressway Consultants where they disagreed with the Staff Report, and we heard from the staff again where they disagreed. [After the January 8 meeting, the planning department staff submitted a written response to the Expressway Consultants’ comments.] We have not heard from the Consultants again, but I say nothing is to be gained by rehashing it. It is a difference in judgement where it should be placed—in Pratt Street or Hamburg corridor.<sup>52</sup>

By a 3–2 vote, the master plan committee approved Werner’s recommendation that the Expressway Consultants’ route be approved with reservations. When it met on January 24, the full commission accepted the committee’s recommendation by a 7–1 vote with one abstention.<sup>53</sup> The route became the basis for future planning for the east-west expressway. It is impossible to know all the reasons why the Expressway Consultants carried the day. No doubt their reputation as highway experts helped, particularly at a time when the engineering pro-



*Preserving historic Fells Point was one object of the expressway's opponents. (Maryland Historical Society.)*

fession in general enjoyed great prestige. They also clearly felt their route was better and cheaper, which made a compelling combination.

But the planning commission had a formidable list of reservations, most of which were never fully resolved. First among them was the need for the consultants' route to provide "fast, adequate and convenient access to the Central Business District from the Hamburg segment." The second concern was "a demonstration that the Fremont Avenue segment cannot feasibly be relocated to eliminate certain problems in the displacement of families and property takings, including Poe Homes and the church immediate to the north of Poe Homes."<sup>54</sup>

The Expressway Consultants also had a host of other headaches, particularly with the route through Leakin Park. As noted earlier, Darling had recommended that they move the highway farther north, to mollify community groups. The Consultants did not make any changes, and Leakin Park became one of CPHA's causes. In 1960, CPHA felt Darling's route through the park was better than taking "hundreds, probably thousands of modern homes in West Baltimore." It also noted that "thoughtful engineering" would allow the roadway "to

blend in with its environment.” CPHA pointed to what it considered successful examples of expressways running through sections of Philadelphia’s Fairmont Park and San Francisco’s Golden Gate Park.<sup>55</sup>

The CPHA did not accept the new proposal. It questioned the route and also the taking of extra parkland for the Hilton Parkway interchange (which Darling’s plan had done more sparingly).<sup>56</sup> By 1971, CPHA had shifted into a militant position of opposing any route at all because of concerns over “extensive, unwarranted environmental damage to the park.”<sup>57</sup> This view was shared by neighborhood associations and their umbrella organization, the Movement Against Destruction (MAD) which was created in 1968. (Many groups, including the national Sierra Club, joined MAD as plaintiffs in environmental court challenges over the expressway in Leakin Park, in what became a major delaying tactic in the 1970s.)<sup>58</sup>

Nearby Rosemont also became a part of the controversy as expressway critics bemoaned the taking of so many homes, in what was described as a stable, middle-class community.<sup>59</sup> In December 1968, Mayor Thomas J. D’Alessandro III (the earlier mayor’s son) told the highway planners to swing the route away from Rosemont in a southerly direction to join Interstate 95 in the southwest section of the city. A boulevard, mostly at street-level, was to replace the expressway on the west side. (Work started on this project under Mayor William Donald Schaefer in 1973, but it was never completed.) Mayor D’Alessandro also rejected the Hamburg corridor and its bridge across the Inner Harbor. This saved the Federal Hill and Fells Point communities, but it left the city without any expressway plans for the central business district.

Darling had resigned in 1965.<sup>60</sup> His departure was largely the result of his growing frustration at his department’s lack of involvement in the planning process after the Expressway Consultants took over in 1962. A few years later, in 1966, the Expressway Consultants found themselves sharing the planning when the Urban Design Concept Team was created. The new group brought in outside architects from Skidmore Owings & Merrill, social scientists, and two technical consulting firms (Parsons, Brinckerhoff, Quade & Douglas, and Wilbur Smith & Associates) to assist the Expressway Consultants—more precisely J. S. Greiner & Company, which was the only one of the firms on the team (with Bruce Herman) still involved in the project.<sup>61</sup> This was an unhappy compromise, and not surprisingly an unsuccessful one, since many of the newcomers, including the architect and partner Nathaniel A. Owings, were not very enthusiastic about urban expressways.<sup>62</sup>

It could be argued that neither Darling’s nor the Expressway Consultants’ plans could have succeeded, given all the opposing viewpoints, which at that time included a growing interest in subways and light rail. (Maryland’s Mass Transit Administration was created in 1961, and it became in many respects a



rival for the highway engineers.) But timing may have been critical. Because of the lack of consensus, the Expressway Consultants' project moved with glacial speed into the later years of the decade when expressways no longer enjoyed widespread popular support. Now highway planners had to contend with a formidable thicket of new federal regulations that were the result of political activism on the part of historic preservationists as well as the environmentalists.

By contrast, Darling's route, with its wide support, might have been built in the quieter years of the early 1960s, if the Expressway Consultants had endorsed it. All this is ironic since Darling's plan did not appear to have any serious engineering deficiencies. As Werner said, it was "a difference in judgement." For better or worse, Baltimore lives with that outcome.

#### NOTES

1. The Harvard Bureau was later moved to Yale, where it became the Bureau of Highway Traffic. The Bureau is no longer in existence, but its library became the core collection for the Pennsylvania Transportation Institute, which was founded in 1968 at Pennsylvania State University.
2. There is no general history of the expressway in Baltimore, but references can be found in Joseph L. Arnold, "Baltimore: Southern Culture and Northern Economy," in Richard M. Bernard, ed., *Snowbelt Cities: Metropolitan Politics in the Northeast and Midwest Since World War II* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1990), 26–39; and Robert J. Brugger, *Maryland: A Middle Temperament, 1634–1980* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988). For an overview of the national story, see Tom Lewis, *Divided Highways: Building the Interstate Highways, Transforming American Life* (New York: Viking Press, 1997).
3. Susan Rosegrant and David R. Lampe, *Route 128: Lessons from Boston's High Tech Community* (New York: Basic Books, 1992), 107; *Baltimore Sun*, July 1, 1962.
4. Baltimore County Planning Commission, *Trunk-Line Motorways for Baltimore County* (October 1949); also *Baltimore Evening Sun*, January 26, 1953.
5. For stories on the beltway completion, see the *Sun*, July 1, 1962.
6. *Baltimore* (October 1956): 21 and *ibid.* (October 1958): 29ff.; also W. S. Hamill, "Changing Patterns of Baltimore's Retail Trade," *ibid.* (October 1956): 17ff.
7. *Ibid.*, (September 1957): 21ff., (November 1957): 31, and (May 1960): 20ff.
8. *The Jeffersonian* [Baltimore County weekly], June 22, 1962.
9. Darling to Editor-in-Chief, *Baltimore Sun*, September 18, 1961. Baltimore City Department of Planning Collection (microfilm), series 3, box 17 in the Archives at the University of Baltimore, Langsdale Library; hereafter cited as BCP. For more on the early B&O story, see James D. Dilts, *The Great Road* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993).
10. Baltimore Planning Commission, *A Study for the East-West Expressway* (Baltimore: Planning Commission, 1960), 6–11.
11. For correspondence from the Tyson Street and Mount Vernon District Improvement Associations, see the Greater Baltimore Committee Collection, series 11, box 19, Archives at the University of Baltimore (hereafter GBC).
12. The Maryland State Roads Commission study is cited in the planning commission report on page 16.

13. The Greater Baltimore Committee established a precedent of sorts, with its lavish brochure (generously funded by local businesses) to promote Charles Center in 1958.
14. Darling to Royster, November 20, 1961, BCP III box 18.
15. Port Authority quoted in Department of Planning, "Staff Report on Expressway Consultants' Report," (December 5, 1961), I, *ibid.*
16. CPHA Transportation Committee, "Report on the East-West Expressway," (June 1960), 4, GBC II, box 19.
17. *Ibid.*, 4–5.
18. See W. Edward Orser, *Blockbusting in Baltimore* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1994).
19. Department of Planning "Staff Report on Expressway Consultants' Route," 1.
20. Albert P. Backhaus to Darling, May 24, 1960; R. H. Sterner to Darling, July 25, 1960, BCP III, box 17.
21. Darling to Backhaus, May 24, 1960, *ibid.*
22. Darling to Bernard L. Werner [Director of Public Works], July 28, 1960, *ibid.*
23. Darling to Backhaus, May 24, 1960, *ibid.*
24. Charter provisions cited by Darling in letter to Edgar Jones [a *Sun* editor], February 18, 1963, BCP III, box 17.
25. Press release dated April 24, 1960 in Papers of Mayor J. Harold Grady, RG9–S24, Baltimore City Archives.
26. Author interview with Herman's wife, Evenden Herman, July 9, 1997. Herman died in 1986.
27. Grady to James Garner Deane, May 25, 1961. BCP III, box 17.
28. Darling to Herman, May 15, 1961. BCP III, box 18.
29. Expressway Consultants, *Interstate Highways 70N & 95: The East-West and Southwest Expressways* (Baltimore: Expressway Consultants, 1961). As the title indicates, the consultants were also working on the I-95 approach through the city.
30. Darling to Werner, August 6, 1959. BCP III, box 18.
31. Chilcote to Werner, September 10, 1959, *ibid.*
32. Darling to Werner, October 6, 1961, *ibid.*
33. Darling to Werner, September 29, 1961, *ibid.*
34. "Summary of the Sub-Committee Report on the Study of the Consultants' Report on the East-West Expressway," January 5, 1962. GBC, series 11, box 19.
35. "Statement of BURHA Commission on Adoption of Agency Report on Expressways," January 12, 1962. BCP III, box 18.
36. Memo to R.L. Steiner [Director of BURHA], January 2, 1962, *ibid.*
37. GBC press release dated January 30, 1961. BCP III, box 17.
38. Darling to Boucher, February 5, 1962, *ibid.*
39. Darling to Richard A. Miller, May 17, 1960, *ibid.*
40. Boston is now building an underground expressway downtown (with a massive federal subsidy) to replace the existing elevated one, mainly for reasons related to a new harbor tunnel and general traffic congestion. Sydney's elevated expressway heads to the Harbour Bridge, but it has a new tunnel as well, which has reduced overhead traffic at the Circular Quay.
41. Hofmeister to Darling, November 16, 1961. (Copy sent to Mayor J. Harold Grady.) Grady Papers, RG9 S24, Baltimore City Archives.
42. Darling memo to files, January 22, 1962. BCP III, box 18.
43. *Ibid.*

44. Darling to Werner, September 29, 1961. BCP III, box 17.
45. "Statement of BURHA Commission on Adoption of Agency Report on Expressways," January 12, 1962. BCP III, box 18.
46. Voorhees to Darling, October 17, 1961. BCP III, box 17.
47. Barnes to Royster, November 7, 1961, *ibid.*
48. "Staff Report on Expressway Consultants' Report," 17.
49. *Baltimore Sun* obituary, June 4, 1979. Werner retired from the Public Works Department in 1968.
50. "Comments on 'Staff Report on Expressway Consultants' Report,' Department of Planning, December 5, 1961. Grady Papers, RG9A524, Baltimore City Archives.
51. *Ibid.*
52. Transcript of Planning Commission Meeting, January 10, 1962. BCP III, box 18.
53. The opposing vote was cast by councilman William Bonnett from East Baltimore. He was particularly unhappy about the homes to be taken in the Dundalk, O'Donnell Heights, and Graceland Park sections. "Excerpt of Minutes of Planning Commission Meeting of January 24, 1962," *ibid.*
54. "Statement of Planning Commission on the Expressway Consultants' Report," January 24, 1962, *ibid.*
55. "Report on the East-West Expressway," 5.
56. CPHA press release, January 30, 1962. BCP III, box 18.
57. "An Expressway Through Leakin Park? A Report of the Transportation Committee," (November 1971), 1. Citizens Planning and Housing Association Collection 11, box 61 in the Archives at the University of Baltimore.
58. For MAD's views on the Leakin Park and other issues, see Carolyn Tyson [president], "The Road: The Expressway War," [1972] V11, box 1 in the Movement Against Destruction Collection, Archives at the University of Baltimore.
59. How stable the community was is open to question, since there had been dramatic shifts in population from white to black in the previous decade.
60. Darling stayed on for the rest of the administration of Mayor Theodore R. McKeldin (1963–67) as the mayor's aide for special projects.
61. In 1966 another important event occurred with the opening of an Interstate Division office in Baltimore. It was funded by the federal government and became the main coordinator for planning activities.
62. James Bailey, "How S.O.M. Took on the Baltimore Road Gang," *Architectural Forum* (March 1969), 40–45.



On April 21, 1898, two days after the United States declared war on Spain, this New York Herald cartoon appeared in the Baltimore Sun. The outbreak of hostilities brought to feverish pitch preparations to defend Baltimore harbor against naval attack.

# Defending Baltimore During The “Splendid Little War”

MERLE T. COLE

It is proper also to add that there was apprehension, at that time, of actual invasion of our waters by the Spanish fleet.” So noted Maj. Gen. L. Allison Wilmer, adjutant general of Maryland, in his 1900 report to the governor and General Assembly concerning the state’s participation in the Spanish-American War.<sup>1</sup> Those few words highlight a little known domestic aspect of the war which made the United States a world power. They also help explain several strange concrete structures visible along both shores of the Patapsco River leading to Baltimore harbor.

Spanish-American relations, for years strained by American dabbling in the Cuban struggle for independence, deteriorated rapidly following the mysterious explosion which sank the U.S.S. *Maine* in Havana harbor on February 15, 1898. On April 19, the *Baltimore Sun* carried a story concerning a Spanish naval squadron commanded by Admiral Pascual Cervera y Topete anchored in the Cape Verde Islands, ready to depart at once for Cuba in the event war began with the United States. The vessels included two armored cruisers, *Cristobal Colon* and *Infanta Maria Teresa*, and six torpedo-boat destroyers. Crew shore leave had been canceled; the ships were stripped for action and ready to sail. The transport *San Francisco* had just arrived with coal for the squadron. Two additional armored cruisers, *Vizcaya* and *Almirante Oquendo*, had sailed from Puerto Rico and were expected to arrive shortly.<sup>2</sup>

The next day the *Sun* reported Cervera’s squadron was complete and “considered quite a match for the American flying squadron, and may even be ordered to pay an unpleasant visit to North American ports if war breaks out.” Moreover, a second squadron was forming at Cadiz, under an admiral who was “a descendant of the Spanish commander at Trafalgar.” The plan was “to concentrate, as soon as they are ready, the battle ships *Pelayo*, now at Carthagena; *Emperador Carlos V*, now at Ferrol; *Cardinal Cisneros* and the *Numancia* and *Vittoria*, broadside ships; the cruisers *Alfonso XIII* and *Princess Mercedes*; the torpedo cruiser *Maria Molina*; three destroyers just received from England, and three torpedo vessels—which would make a respectable gathering.” In addition to its regular warships, the Spanish Navy would employ “as auxiliary cruisers, with crews and officers from the Royal Naval and heavy and quick-firing guns,”

*Merle T. Cole is the author of “Maryland’s Naval Militia, 1891–1940” in the spring 1995 issue of the Maryland Historical Magazine.*

and fourteen “fine large steamers offered by the Compania Transatlantica mail line and other firms.” The government had also received requests for issuance of privateering commissions, but had reportedly not yet decided whether to grant the requests. The article mentioned the Spanish marine corps, which included “three fine battalions just returned from hard service in the Philippines.”<sup>3</sup>

Cervera’s squadron was next reported as having sailed from the Cape Verde Islands on April 20, for an unknown destination. Mentioned as possible objectives were the Canary Islands, Puerto Rico, and Cuba. The United States Navy embarked on frantic efforts to locate the Spanish.<sup>4</sup>

On April 19, 1898, Congress had granted approval for President McKinley to use force against Spain. On April 28 the *Sun* carried a report that a Spanish squadron of four ironclads and three torpedo boat destroyers had sailed for the United States two days earlier. “It was rumored that the squadron was to steam across the Atlantic and bombard Northern ports of the United States.” Details were alarmingly scarce. “The port from which this squadron sailed was not mentioned.” There was also that second squadron forming at Cadiz. “News is expected before long, at the Spanish capital, of the bombardment of American coast cities,” the *Sun* warned. The Spanish reportedly believed they would have little difficulty breaking the American naval blockade of Cuba and the government had decided to “utilize the warships elsewhere” in the meantime.<sup>5</sup>

The alarmist tone of the news reports naturally heightened fears on the Atlantic seaboard. As early as April 20, the attorney general of Massachusetts had issued a legal opinion that insurance companies could not insure property against naval bombardment unless a fire ensued—and then coverage would be limited to the loss actually caused by the fire.<sup>6</sup> But civilians were not alone in fearing attack from the sea. The Naval War College conducted annual planning exercises each summer to acquaint students with various naval operations problems. The 1897 plan had taken “a different tack than any of the others in emphasizing American coastal defense to counter possible Spanish operations against the Delaware and Chesapeake bays.”<sup>7</sup>

The Spanish threat subjected the U.S. Navy to intense political pressure. Alfred Thayer Mahan’s theories of naval warfare had become firmly entrenched, and in line with Mahanian doctrine, the navy wanted to keep its powerful North Atlantic Squadron (five battleships and two armored cruisers) grouped to maximize its striking power in a decisive fleet encounter. In the face of fervent demands for naval protection, the squadron was grudgingly divided into two elements—one stationed at Key West for operations against Cuba and Puerto Rico, the other at Norfolk. This latter group, dubbed the “Flying Squadron,” was described as “a mobile fortress fleet for the roving protection of the Atlantic seaboard. A smaller Northern Patrol Squadron of obsolete and generally useless vessels guarded the coast from the Delaware Capes northward.” In addition, the United States Aux-

iliary Force, nicknamed the "Mosquito Squadron" and manned mostly by naval militiamen, was created to help with coast defense and perform quarantine patrols. Within the Mosquito Squadron was the so-called "Chesapeake Bay defense fleet" commanded by Cdr. C. T. Hutchins, which would "operate principally about the mouth of the bay." Its presence would help free the Flying Squadron "for an offensive movement against Spain's navy," and guard "the new battle ships, the *Kearsarge* and the *Kentucky*, recently launched at Newport News, as it is thought Spain might make an effort to dash in with a squadron and destroy them."<sup>8</sup>

The hysteria affecting the Atlantic coast also distracted the U.S. Army from preparations to invade Cuba. Secretary of War Russell A. Alger recorded that "a Spanish fleet was [reportedly] seen off Sandy Hook [New Jersey]," a sighting that prompted an army commander to immediately cease loading troop transports. "A New York regiment was already embarking for Tampa, but the men were taken ashore in great haste and sent South by rail. The alarm quickly spread to every coast town on the Atlantic." On the New England coast, "treasures and valuables were moved into the interior for safe-keeping." Alger was deluged with pleas "for immediate rescue from the advancing Spanish fleet." Representatives of endangered communities "wanted guns everywhere; mines in all the rivers and harbors on the map." The Atlantic Coast soon "bristled with defensive artillery, from the relics of the Civil War to the latest products of military science," and mines "were laid which would have destroyed the combined navies of the world." Given the war's brevity, the same persons were howling for prompt removal of the mines "a few weeks later."<sup>9</sup>

The 1898 war was the second time during the latter half of the nineteenth century that Baltimore residents believed themselves menaced by Spanish naval guns. On October 31, 1873, Spanish naval vessels seized the American-registered and flagged vessel *Virginus* near Jamaica on charges of transporting men and arms to Cuba. A week later, Spanish authorities in Cuba, acting independently, shot the captain and more than fifty crewmen and passengers. President Ulysses S. Grant ordered the navy mobilized for war. Spanish President Castelar maintained that his orders to halt the shootings had been received too late, but hostilities seemed imminent until war was averted by a protocol signed on November 28. One military authority later recalled Baltimore's sense of helplessness:

At the time of the trouble over the *Virginus* in Cuban waters, when war with Spain seemed inevitable, and we had no navy worth speaking of, and our coast was almost defenceless, all that could be done in the harbor of Baltimore, as money for the purpose was very scarce, was to mount one fifteen-inch smooth-bore gun at Fort Carroll and to renovate the old water battery at McHenry. Arrangements were made

to sink hulks, &c., in the channel, to prevent the ingress of Spanish ships, a very sure way also to stop commerce in ships of heavy draught.<sup>10</sup>

Twenty-five years later, with the Spanish navy's whereabouts uncertain, Baltimore manifested uneasiness and bravado. For example, on the afternoon of May 8, 1898, members of the Mechanics' Exchange Fishing Club staged an "amusing mimic warfare" near Stone House Cove in Anne Arundel County, evidently to celebrate Dewey's victory at Manila Bay. This involved destruction of "three dilapidated old boats, with the Spanish flag floating over each. The largest boat was labeled 'Regina Maria Christina,' and had on board a quantity of explosives, to which a fuse was attached which communicated with the shore." Following a bombardment by land forces, "a long rowboat named the 'Olympia' . . . appeared in the distance and took the 'Spanish fleet' by surprise, opening a destructive fire from six duck guns and sinking all but the 'Regina Maria Christina.' This fusillade covered the narrow creek with a cloud of smoke." Finally, "Much to the delight of the spectators the 'Regina Maria Christina,' with the Spanish flag flying above her, was blown to atoms. Burning fragments of the old boat drifted along the creek for a while, but finally the last trace of everything Spanish had disappeared." The fun evidently proved too realistic, as "people residing in the neighborhood, who were not aware of the cause of the din, at first jumped to the conclusion that some nery Spanish commander had commenced a bombardment."<sup>11</sup>

Residents of Baltimore were reported "much agitated about the effect the war with Spain will have on them. They have dire forebodings of destruction and see visions of untold and awful dangers." Many feared being impressed into army service. One African-American woman, having "heard a loud, rumbling noise . . . was sure the Spaniards had come and that everybody would be killed." She advised "all . . . colored people to move to the country until the war was over." Another citizen declared that "the city of Baltimore is doomed to destruction and that soon its streets will be rivers of blood. The Spaniards will come, the city will be bombarded and the houses will be knocked over like cards."<sup>12</sup>

Col. Peter C. Hains, the Corps of Engineers' engineer-in-charge for construction of harbor defenses in Baltimore, had to quash rumors "that navigation of the bay was to be impeded as a means of defense by sinking stones in the channel approaches to the bay from the sea." The army did not foresee the need for such a drastic measure, "because it is not believed that the commander of a Spanish squadron would be so indiscreet as to venture into the Chesapeake bay." Hains believed the "Spaniards are fully aware of the hopelessness of being able to accomplish any advantage in that way."<sup>13</sup>

The *Sun* opined that, in the unlikely event Spanish vessels eluded naval patrols and harbor defenses at Hampton Roads, their "danger of running aground



would be imminent from the inability of the fleet to safely navigate the bay." A successful run up the bay would require that each ship have "a pilot well acquainted with the intricacies of the passage, and these they could not get, because no Chesapeake bay pilot would show them the way." One veteran bay pilot predicted that if the enemy fleet got into the bay, it would "be equivalent to walking into a death trap. Every ship would not be long off the bottom, and when they got there once they would be absolutely helpless."<sup>14</sup>

Baltimoreans had ample reason to be jittery despite persistent reassurances, because frantic defensive preparations were everywhere evident. The government proposed to take up "all outside light vessels along the coast from the mouth of Cape Fear River, N.C., to the Northern New England coast," while maintaining "inside lights and buoys as usual." The lighthouse board agreed on April 27 "that all lightships may be removed from their stations any time after May 1 without further notice." Then, after the inspector of the Fifth Lighthouse District denied rumors of plans "to extinguish the lighthouses and remove the buoys from the bay," he did exactly that. By order of Inspector C. T. Hutchins, of the Lighthouse Board of Maryland, "every light marking the channel was extinguished" out of a fearful expectation of a Spanish approach at the Lazaretto and Leading Point lights.<sup>15</sup>

### Harbor Defense Technology

Harbor (also called coast) defense was assigned to the U.S. Army. Heavy artillery was, naturally, concentrated along the eastern seaboard. Following Reconstruction, the majority of army combat resources (including light or field artillery) were committed "west of the Mississippi River to battle hostile Indians and otherwise police the frontier," and were still there when war with Spain came.<sup>16</sup>

It is difficult to appreciate today that harbor defense was the high technology, "Star Wars" branch of the army at the turn of the century. In the days before radio, radar, and aircraft, when the telephone was little beyond its infancy, harbor defense employed what today would be called technologically sophisticated weapons systems in a demanding mission—destroying and damaging heavily armored, moving warships at long ranges.

A special edition of *Scientific American*, published during the war, summarized the major components of harbor defense as first, "powerful masked batteries of long-range high-powered rifles mounted on disappearing gun carriages"; second, "numerous and carefully concealed mortar batteries so placed that a continuous rain of shells can be let fall upon a fleet in any of the navigable waterways of the harbor or its approaches"; and third, "a carefully designed system of submarine mines, the location of the mine fields being such that they can be protected against countermining operations by the fire of batteries of rapid-fire

guns." Completing the defenses were "powerful search lights" for night engagements, and "concealed observing stations" equipped with the "most reliable range and position finders" to direct gun and mortar battery fire.<sup>17</sup>

These devices would begin destroying an advancing enemy fleet at "a distance of six or seven miles." Long-range "8- and 10-inch rifles [firing] high-explosive shells" would engage at this range, wreaking "deadly execution against unarmored ends [of the vessels], and by virtue of their plunging effect against the unarmored decks." Mortars would join in at "three to six miles," with shells "crashing through the protective decks and bursting within the vitals of the ship." If the enemy survived and approached within four thousand yards, "the masked batteries of 12-inch guns would open fire against the water-line [armor] belts and barbettes, which would be easily penetrable at these ranges."

Disappearing guns posed a real threat to hostile naval vessels. They would be extremely difficult to spot, fire smokeless powder, and be visible only "during the few seconds that they showed above the parapet." Armored warships of the era were incapable of high-angle gun elevation, which made effective counter-battery fire impossible. *Scientific American's* writer concluded that:

Gun for gun, such a [disappearing] battery has an enormous advantage over the floating ship, for it has in its favor: 1. Invisibility: 2. Almost absolute protection from gun fire: 3. Absolutely steady platform: 4. Absolute determination of the range and bearing of the enemy. To this must be added the moral effect upon the courage and endurance of the gun crews, resulting from their superior protection.

The function of twelve-inch rifled mortars was to drop shells "almost perpendicularly upon the weakest part of the ship's armor—her protective deck." Mortars lobbed eight hundred to one thousand-pound high-explosive shells fitted with delayed action fuses, which "would pass through the deck like so much paper and burst within the interior, possibly in the vitals of the ship." Should the shell fail to detonate, it could still "pass entirely through the hull, tearing a hole in the double bottom."

Mortars provide a good example of the fire control systems employed at the time. Crews neither fired the mortars nor saw the ships they engaged, but simply trained "their pieces according to the directions telegraphed to them by the observers, who may be half a mile away." Observation stations plotted ship range, position, and course and relayed these data to the firing battery commander. Using a "duplicate chart," that officer "quickly calculates at what time the ship will be at a certain square. . . . He also knows how long it will take the shells to travel from the battery to the square (over one minute at long range), and what elevation must be given the mortar to carry to the square." After the commander

transmits "elevation and azimuth (or bearing)" data, the mortars are rotated and elevated accordingly, "and exactly at the predetermined moment," the battery commander gives the fire order. The "great shells . . . rise from the battery and sweep in a majestic curve to meet the advancing ship at the predetermined point in the harbor." How difficult it was to accurately aim such weapons becomes evident when one realizes that when engaging an enemy ship making twenty knots at maximum range, "the vessel would travel nearly a quarter of a mile from the moment of firing to the moment at which the falling shells reached her deck."

Three types of submarine mines were available to deny channels to the enemy. Observation mines were "fired from shore when a ship is judged to be within range." Contact or automatic mines were "self-firing on being struck by a ship." The third type, detonated by electro-contact, was the most common and combined the two technologies. When a ship struck one of these, a flashing light signaled the mine operator, "who, by the throw [of] a switch, fires the mine." Additionally, mines were classified as either "ground mines," placed on the bottom in shallow water, or "buoyant mines." The latter, "placed in a buoyant cylinder or sphere which is anchored to the bottom and floats at the desired depth below the surface," usually carried a lighter charge as it lay "nearer the object of attack."

A complete electro-contact mine consisted of "a heavy, cast iron, hemispherical case, containing from 200 to 500 pounds of guncotton, dynamite, or blasting gelatine, which rests on the bed of the river or channel, and is held in place by heavy claws or hooks." Floating above the mine and attached to it was "a hollow, buoyant sphere, in which is placed the electric circuit-closer. Wires lead from the buoy to a fuse in the ground mine" and to the mine casemate ashore.

The final harbor defense component, rapid-fire guns, served principally to protect the mine field. Gunners were charged with preventing "small boats, launches, etc., . . . sent forward ahead of the ships" from detonating the mines by exploding large charges of dynamite." If the enemy succeeded in this venture, "mines . . . within the 'sympathetic radius' of the explosions . . . [were] exploded by the shock. The most effective protection against such countermining, as it is called, is by flanking the field with batteries of rapid-fire guns."<sup>18</sup>

The army's master plan for harbor fortifications was rooted in recommendations of the Endicott Board, the short name for a committee chaired by Secretary of War William C. Endicott. The board's 1885 report highlighted numerous deficiencies in the nation's existing harbor defenses, and stipulated a detailed plan "based upon . . . newly developing weapons."<sup>19</sup> Unfortunately, as Secretary Alger observed, "whereas the Endicott Board of 1885 provided for a thorough system of armament and fortification, Congress, which had sanctioned the plan, supported it so feebly with appropriations that the work had gone on at a snail's pace, and, in 1898, nearly thirteen years after its adoption, relatively little progress had been made."<sup>20</sup>



*Artillery emplacements under construction at Hawkins Point, November 30, 1897. (National Archives.)*

To illustrate, Alger noted that the plan of the Endicott Board called for expenditure of \$100 million for construction and emplacement of a total of 2,362 guns and mortars. By April 1, 1898, only 151 weapons were in place. Considerably more artillery pieces were available, that is, the gun tubes had been made, but only 151 carriages. In the thirteen years since the Endicott Board had made its recommendations, Congress had appropriated “for this great national work” less than a quarter of the money required. The War Department spent what it was given, but could do no more. Worse, the few guns in place had only ten to twenty rounds of ammunition each. “Dilatory and grudging legislation had borne its fruit.”

As tensions with Spain increased, Congress became more generous, and on March 9, 1898, appropriated \$50 million “for national defence.” According to Alger, “No part of this sum was available for offensive purposes—even for offensive preparation.” The fund could be used “to hasten the work upon our coastal fortifications, the plans for which had been formulated by the Endicott Board of 1885 and duly sanctioned by Congress at that time.” Monies were distributed among the army branches, but Alger emphasized that, “All of this was for purposes of coast defence—guns, mountings, emplacements, transportation, etc.—not a cent was used outside of the limits fixed by Congress.”

When war came, the Ordnance Corps and Corps of Engineers had made good use of their allotments. “Within a very few days after the formal opening of

hostilities, 1,535 torpedoes and mines, together with the electrical appliances necessary for their immediate operation . . . were placed in various harbors; and the Signal Corps had been increased to the proportions needed for an effective and complete system of 'fire control' in the forts."<sup>21</sup>

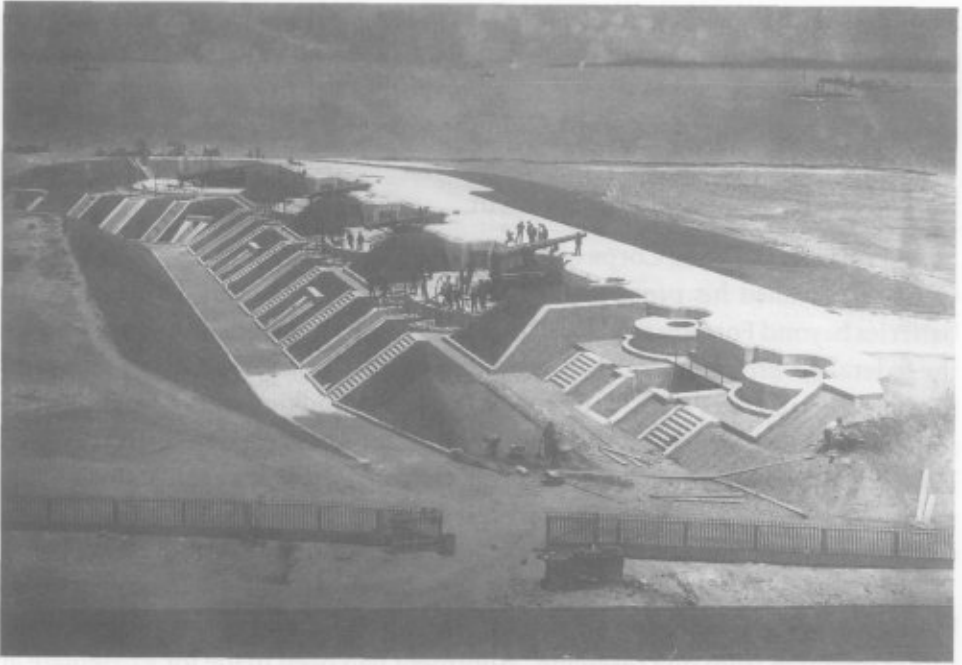
### Emplacement Plans and Development

As early as 1883, the Corps of Engineers engineer-in-charge, Col. William P. Craighill, detailed his proposals for the defense of Baltimore. These included batteries beyond Fort Carroll along the Patapsco River, and at North Point, where the federal government already owned seven acres, "a battery of heavy guns and mortars." Across the Patapsco, on the south side at Bodkin Point, Craighill envisioned "a similar structure." Additional batteries were planned at Rock Point, Hawkins Point, Sparrows Point, and Fort Carroll. Progress was slow until 1896, when Congress appropriated "the largest sum for fortifications ever known in the history of the country to that time."<sup>22</sup>

In 1893, Craighill reported that "the project for defense of [Baltimore] harbor by batteries is under consideration," and that "submarine defense will be by mines operated from one casemate." Allotment had been made for a casemate at Fort Carroll on January 6, 1893, and work was essentially completed at the close of the fiscal year.<sup>23</sup> By 1895 a report had been submitted concerning the three sites needed for batteries included in the harbor defense plan. The chief of engineers recommended on January 4 that these sites be acquired through condemnation. The secretary of war approved and directed that proceedings be initiated.<sup>24</sup>

In 1896, Colonel Hains finalized details of the proposed batteries, reviewed plans for Fort Carroll with the Board of Engineers to revise estimates for improvements there, and pursued condemnation of sites at Hawkins, Rock, and North Points. Juries in the Federal District Court of Maryland awarded the government 28.5 acres at North Point, 12.5 acres at Hawkins Point, and 100 acres at Rock Point.<sup>25</sup>

In 1897 work at the Hawkins Point reservation focused on emplacements for one twelve-inch and three eight-inch breech-loading rifles, all mounted on disappearing carriages. By the end of September 1897, Jones, Pollard and Company of Baltimore were to construct the battery, a wharf connected with the shore by a causeway, and a bulkhead filled with oyster shells. They began excavation in March and by June had removed 13,681 cubic yards and deposited it on the parapet and laid 1,682 cubic yards of concrete. They also placed about three thousand cubic yards of fill to curb erosion of the bank on the site's north side, which had reached "a very serious extent, so much so that the space required for the battery was becoming cramped." The engineers recommended constructing a sea wall and filling in the low ground.<sup>26</sup>



*The batteries at Hawkins Point, June 30, 1898. A single twelve-inch breech-loading rifle is at left, three eight-inch breech-loading rifles in the center, and emplacements for two 4.7-inch rapid-fire guns at right. The background of this photograph—with boats on the Patapsco and Fort Carroll absent—appears to have been painted, perhaps for security reasons. (National Archives.)*

At North Point, Sanford and Brooks of Baltimore constructed an emplacement for eight twelve-inch breech-loading mortars and a wharf connected to a shore bulkhead by a causeway. Excavation began in March 1897, and by July 6,591 cubic yards of earth had been moved and placed on the battery slopes. Lack of equipment caused delays as did “a succession of heavy rains causing [parapet] banks to cave in and wreck the shoring.” The engineers solicited bids for an emplacement for two five-inch rapid-fire guns and urged construction of a sea wall, noting that “the filling in of the low area between it and the bank would add several acres to an already contracted site.”<sup>27</sup>

At Rock Point activity was limited to constructing a 1,080-foot-long single pile wharf. A single custodian watched over the site.<sup>28</sup>

Army engineers employed the competitive bid process reluctantly, protesting that it was a threat to the necessary secrecy of the project. Recognizing that “a certain amount of publicity is necessary to secure intelligent bids” they nevertheless forbade strangers from visiting the fortifications or taking photographs. Although “all the details of the constructions are and must be shown to persons who come to the office in the guise of bidders,” they concluded that “It can not fail to be detrimental to have all these details made public.”<sup>29</sup>



*Aerial view of Fort Carroll taken in 1937. Behind the emplacements for a battery of twelve-inch guns is a power house. A lighthouse tower is visible on the southwest face, and the dock off the north face. (Enoch Pratt Free Library.)*

As diplomatic relations with Spain worsened, culminating in the actual declaration of war, preparations reached a frantic pitch. Severe weather in January and February 1898 halted work at Hawkins Point. Then, during March, April, and May, workers labored day and night until by June 30 platforms for three eight-inch guns and a twelve-inch gun were completed.<sup>30</sup> Armament arrived at the wharf, some three hundred yards from the battery, then guns and carriages “were moved to a position in front of the battery” and mounted by “hired labor.” Engineers constructed a sea wall by depositing riprap along the shoreline, backed by oyster shell and earth fill, and added emplacements for two rapid-fire guns.<sup>31</sup>

At North Point, despite the severe weather, the mortar battery was also completed by June 30. Another source of delay on this mammoth project was that the contractor “mixed all his concrete by hand, and much of it was carried . . . to its place of deposit in wheelbarrows.” Nearly 35,000 cubic yards of earth and 30,000 cubic yards of sand were brought in as fill; and the platforms consumed nearly 10,000 cubic yards of concrete. The battery consisted of two pits 120 feet apart and open to the rear, supplied by a powerhouse. Armament arrived at the wharf 2,000 feet from the battery, and was mounted by contractors under army supervision.<sup>32</sup> In June, Jones, Pollard and Company finished the rapid-fire gun

emplacement. They reinforced a visibly eroding bluff with a line of riprap, which also served as the foundation for a sea wall. Five thousand cubic yards of earth were brought to the reservation and placed in the rear of the riprap for further protection. The contractor finished the battery except for platforms, which could not be completed until the gun carriages had arrived.<sup>33</sup> In March 1898 the chief of engineers authorized emplacements for two additional twelve-inch guns, but the batteries were, in fact, never added.

The heavy gun emplacements at North Point were a monument to war fever as engineers and contractors labored around the clock. "Owing to the necessity for rapid work [i.e., the war] a much larger plant was purchased than ordinary conditions would have justified." Engineers enlarged the pierhead of the existing wharf and placed two stiff-leg derricks on it. They then laid half a mile of narrow-gauge railroad track to the site of the battery for use by a thirteen-ton locomotive, twelve side-dumping cars, six flatcars, and two hopper cars. Small flatcars drawn by mules hauled concrete to the derricks. Electric generators ran "a circuit of 10 arc lights, thus greatly facilitating night work." "From May 9 until June 20 work was carried on day and night," in ten-hour shifts and was nearly completed by June 30.<sup>34</sup>

Construction began in 1898 on emplacements at Fort Carroll for two twelve-inch guns on barbette carriages. Though the fort was originally constructed between 1847 and 1868, the army intended to provide it with powerful modern armament to control underwater mines. One gun platform was completed June 1, the second two weeks later. At Rock Point, work was confined to marking boundaries with concrete monuments, and enclosing property with a wire fence.<sup>35</sup>

In June 1898, as U.S. troops made their way to Cuba, Baltimore's harbor defenses began to bristle. Rapid-fire guns were in place at Hawkins Point, and at North Point a thirty-six-inch searchlight glared behind a battery of heavy twelve-inch guns. At Fort Carroll the twelve-inch gun emplacements were completed except for mounting the guns, the five-inch rapid-fire gun emplacement was ready except for the platforms, and work had commenced on a new three-inch battery. No progress had been made on the emplacement for two six-inch batteries authorized at Rock Point.<sup>36</sup>

### Submarine Mines

During the course of the "splendid little war," only a handful of the planned artillery pieces were actually mounted in the Baltimore defenses: one twelve-inch and three eight-inch guns at Hawkins Point and eight twelve-inch mortars at North Point. Of necessity, therefore, the harbor defense relied on minefields.

Unlike artillery, minefields were not permanently placed but were laid only when a threat appeared, then removed when no longer needed. Like the artillery,

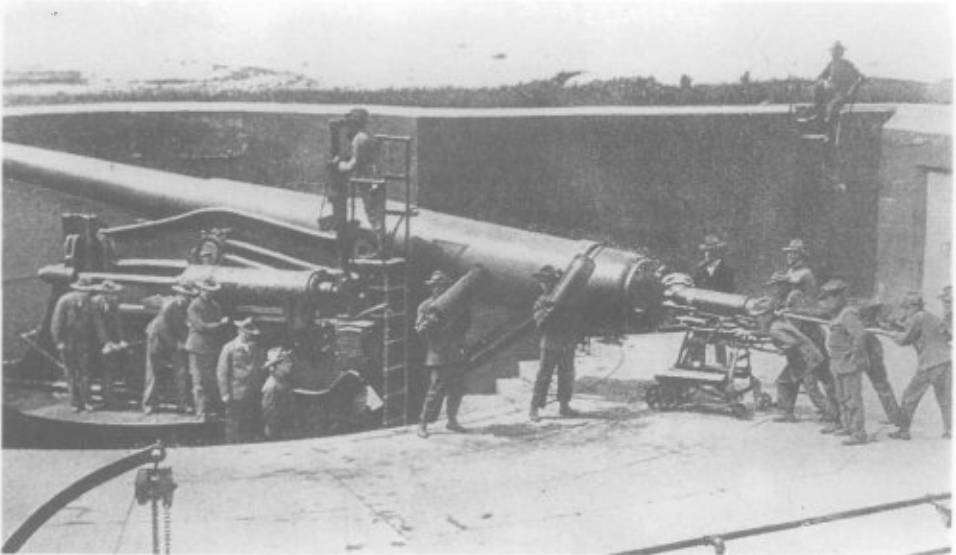




*Firing the twelve-inch mortars at North Point. The shells weighed 1,046 pounds each. (Dundalk-Patapsco Neck Historical Society.)*

submarine mines (confusingly also called “torpedoes”) were in short supply when the war began. Alger noted that although mine cases were plentiful, there were “no cable, explosives, search lights or any of the multitude of minor articles needed to plant and operate the mines.” The army hurriedly procured matériel to install “at every important harbor a preliminary line of mines”—miles of single and multiple cable, tons of explosives, electric search lights, and other paraphernalia. Soon, more than fifteen hundred submarine mines had been planted in twenty-eight different harbors.<sup>37</sup>

The official Corps of Engineers history of the Baltimore District summarizes submarine mining operations succinctly. On April 3, 1898, eighteen days before war was formally declared, the mining began. Between April 23 and May 12, mines were planted from Fort McHenry to a point a half mile below Fort Carroll and placed “only on the sides of the channel in order to keep shipping open.” The engineers arranged them “in two lines 400 feet apart on each side of the channel.” Mines that would block the middle of the channel were kept ashore at the ready “to be promptly laid when danger is imminent—say after an enemy’s fleet has arrived in the Chesapeake Bay.” The lighthouse inspector placed buoys in the mined channel to protect local commerce, though the “entire operation was shrouded in the utmost secrecy.” Warning that “there exists in this country a



A twelve-inch breech-loading rifle on a disappearing carriage at North Point. Projectiles weighed one thousand pounds each, and the powder cartridges carried by the gunners about eighty pounds each. (Dundalk-Patapsco Neck Historical Society.)

body of men under Spanish control, organized for the special purpose of cutting the submarine cables of our principal harbors,” the chief of engineers asked that “special vigilance be exercised to guard against any efforts to tamper with the mines.” There was no tampering.<sup>38</sup>

On April 22 the *Sun* reported that, “The government . . . is zealously guarding all information about plans for harbor defense, and especially regarding submarine mines.” The newspaper “understood” that a “system of torpedo and mine defense has been practically completed,” and that “mines have either been located or are ready to be put down in the channel leading to Baltimore at a few hours notice.” Readers were reassured that the mines would “be operated by scientific electrical apparatus and . . . always under control of officers designated to operate them.” The devices were “so arranged as to be harmless unless operated by shore connections, or may be changed in an instant into contact mines, that will explode when struck by an advancing ship.” The conversion would not be made “unless an enemy’s fleet were actually advancing on the city,” and in the interim “the mines are as harmless to vessels as if they were stored somewhere on shore.” “This,” the *Sun* noted hopefully, “insures the safety of passing vessels and all maritime operations.”<sup>39</sup>

Capt. Frank A. Wilcox, the officer directly in charge of installing and operating the mining system at Hampton Roads in 1898, reported that a shortage of

skilled personnel was a major problem during the war. Money might purchase equipment and rent "the best boats available," but could not hire trained men, for "outside of the small number of engineering soldiers there were none." Of his assigned engineering soldiers, he said "not one of them understood the use or even care of the electrical appliances in the casemate, which knowledge could be acquired only after months of theoretical and practical study."<sup>40</sup>

The army encountered the same obstacle in Baltimore and turned to experienced civilian volunteers to help with the mining project. Reporting to the chief of engineers in 1901, Lt. Col. Oswald H. Ernst stated that Baltimore was well supplied with trained electricians, many of whom were recruited into a "Civilian Electrical Corps" organized in 1898 "to assist in operating the submarine mine defense." Dr. Louis Duncan commanded the force of approximately 195 men and the steam tugs *Venus* and *Camilla*. Initially, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad steam tug *Transfer* was fitted with a temporary derrick, and a large scow was used to plant mines. These were not adequate and were replaced by a wrecking barge from the Louis E. Brown Company. The U.S. Lighthouse Service side-wheel steamer *Jessamine* also assisted. The Engineer Department steam tug *Sentinel* and U.S. Revenue Service tug *Guthrie* patrolled the minefield. Funds needed by the volunteer corps for "explosives, electrical machinery and supplies" were "advanced by the Maryland Trust Company."<sup>41</sup>

Mining operations originated at Fort Carroll, where the mines were loaded aboard the *Transfer*, *Sentinel* "and the steam hoisting machine of the Baltimore Wrecking Company," tendered by "Capt. H. L. Korter's tug," the *H. L. Korter*. A derrick on the *Transfer* lowered the mines into the water. Coils of wire by which to set off the mines were "stretched to points known alone to the engineers and those used in the performance of the work."<sup>42</sup>

On April 25, Colonel Hains announced that the dredged ship channel leading to the port of Baltimore had been mined and warned vessel operators that it was "dangerous to use the channel except at very slow speed, and under tow of a tugboat. The propeller of a deep-draught vessel should not be turned between Fort McHenry and Seven-Foot Knoll light, going out and vice versa coming in." For enforcement and security, patrol boats were stationed near the minefield. Operators were advised to heed "warnings from them when passing the portions of the channel where the mines are placed."<sup>43</sup>

Two days later, Hains issued and the *Sun* published a new series of regulations "for the navigation of the Patapsco river and Chesapeake bay in time of war":

No vessel will be allowed to pass through the channel on either side of Fort Carroll between the hours of sunset and sunrise. During this interval vessels must not approach within three miles of the fort.

Patrol boats will be stationed above and below the defenses. These

boats are authorized to stop vessels to inquire into their character, or to instruct them how to pass through the mine fields. The orders of the patrol boats must be strictly obeyed.

Sailing vessels and all small vessels drawing three feet or less can pass safely through any part of the channel during the daytime.

Steam vessels of all kinds using the main ship channel must run at slow speed from one mile northwest of Fort Carroll to the angle made by the cutoff with the Brewerton channel, and all vessels of more than 22 feet draft must be towed over this distance, steamers not turning their propellers.

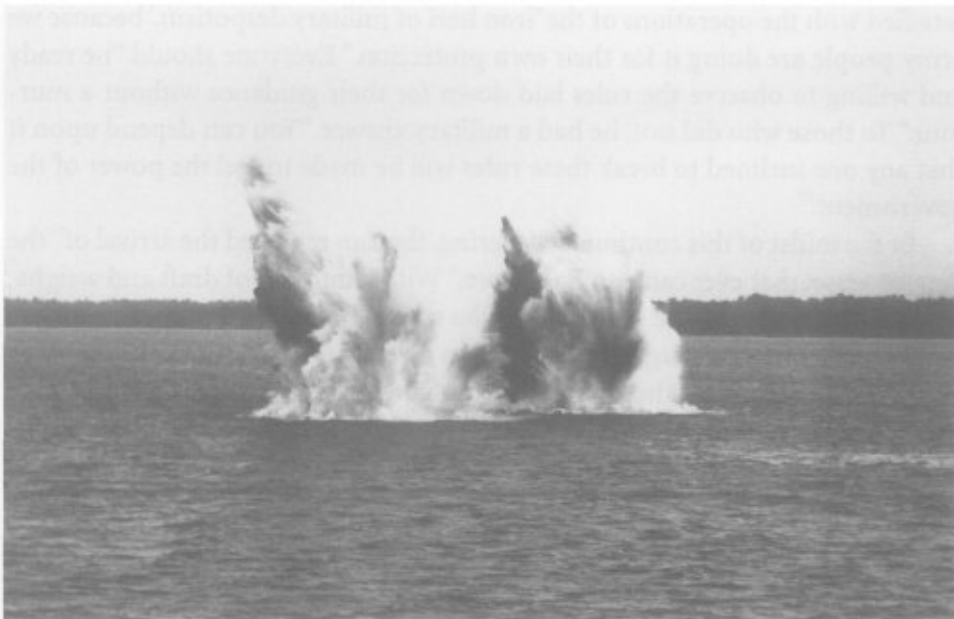
No vessel will be allowed to anchor within three miles of the fort [Carroll] without special authority.

Vessels are warned that if they disregard these regulations they will expose themselves to serious damage, and will be liable to be fired on by the batteries.<sup>44</sup>

No sooner had the rules been published than local shipping interests protested. A committee representing "the steamship lines running from this port" and composed of Joseph R. Foard, Robert Ramsay, George William Atkinson, James C. Gorman, William Randall, Joseph C. Whitney, and Capt. John Hebb, president of the Maryland Pilots' Association, "went down to Fort Carroll in the Merchants and Miner's Transportation Company's tug and had a conference with Colonel Hains." They were alarmed that the army's order "requiring that the propeller of a deep draught vessel should not be turned between Fort McHenry and Seven-Foot Knoll, going out or in the harbor," and particularly its warning that "it is dangerous to use the channel except at very slow speed . . . would cause shipowners to refuse to charter when there is at present such a promise of good business."<sup>45</sup>

Hains softened his stance. His reply is unrecorded; the committee expressed itself "satisfied" with it but regarded it "in the nature of a confidential communication and would say nothing." Hains reportedly modified his order in such a way that "while being satisfactory to the merchants interested in the shipping interests of Baltimore, would in no wise change the plans of mine fields already laid." Compromise was possible, according to the *Sun*, because, "There is no danger to a steamer going over and hitting the mines, but the action of her propeller, when deep-loaded, interferes with the connection and might force the mines out of position, as did the steamer *Hestia* on Sunday." Nevertheless, on April 26, the *Sun* reiterated that "After tonight no steamer will be allowed to enter or depart through the channel after sunset or before sunrise."<sup>46</sup>

The Tolchester Company donated to the army "a powerful searchlight" from its steamer *Louise*; they mounted it at Fort Carroll on April 27. This pleased



*A group of three submarine mines that had settled in the mud beneath thirty-one feet of water was detonated in Baltimore harbor on July 18, 1898. Each mine was packed with 225 to 250 pounds of explosives, and the tallest column of water rose 225 feet high, ample reason for commercial shipping to be wary. (National Archives.)*

military officials, who otherwise would have been forced to wait until a searchlight had been manufactured. A replacement light was ordered for the steamer.<sup>47</sup>

Notwithstanding Colonel Hains's accommodations, the prohibition on vessels entering or leaving the harbor at night had a chilling effect on shipping. Passenger traffic on bay vessels fell off out of "a fear that all boats, whether they go out or come in by day or night, will be in danger of being blown up by contact with a submarine mine while passing over the mine field."<sup>48</sup> On May 7, an army spokesman reminded Baltimoreans that it was "not the intention of the government to needlessly alarm people or to establish any excessively arbitrary rules." Obviously there was a danger when ships passed through the minefield, but vessels that followed War Department instructions would be safe. "The instructions to vessels are explicit, and if the rules are observed no mishap to any craft will happen." Military assurances, however, were far from reassuring. Army patrol boats would begin more energetic enforcement, and "the guilty boats will be fired on."

The army, too, was irritated, and its spokesman took this opportunity to express his dissatisfaction with civilians for their lack of patriotic forbearance. "The people of this country have forced the government to go to war," he reminded Baltimore. "It strikes me that if the people wanted war they should be

satisfied with the operations of the 'iron heel of military despotism,' because we army people are doing it for their own protection." Everyone should "be ready and willing to observe the rules laid down for their guidance without a murmur." To those who did not, he had a military answer. "You can depend upon it that any one inclined to break these rules will be made to feel the power of the government."

In the midst of this continued bickering, the *Sun* reported the arrival of "the biggest vessel that ever came to Baltimore." With a thirty-foot draft and weighing 10,221 gross tons, the steamer *Brasilia* of the Hamburg-American Line arrived on May 18 with cargo and passengers directly from Germany.<sup>49</sup>

By summer's end, the Spanish-American War was over. Disruption to Baltimore's waterborne commerce had been minimal. The official Corps of Engineers history of the Baltimore District noted that, "By August [1898], Spain was defeated and the Army ordered the mines removed. Since they were loaded with loose dynamite, it was deemed best to detonate them in the water,"<sup>50</sup> a wise approach since Captain Wilcox reported that, of twelve men killed during mining operations, six died "raising a mine below New Orleans," and two more "preparing to unload mines in Boston Harbor."<sup>51</sup>

Any assessment of the probable efficacy of the mine field in defending Baltimore would be conjectural, inasmuch as "No Spanish Farragut came to defy these mines and to force violent entrance into our harbors; no venturesome enemy like the Japanese before Port Arthur [during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–5] came to destroy these torpedoes by counter-mining."<sup>52</sup> However, the U.S. Navy's experience in Cuba illustrated how much naval strategists of that era respected mines as a major threat. Commodore Dewey had brazenly sailed into Manila Bay and caught the Spanish coast defenses napping, but at Santiago de Cuba, the enemy was alert and the American fleet was reduced to blockading the harbor. Its entrance was a "narrow, twisting channel" sewn with mines which "could not be cleared because of the nearby shore batteries." An attempt to sink blockships to confine Admiral Cervera's squadron inside the harbor failed. Eventually, Cervera attempted to escape, only to lose his entire fleet to U.S. naval gunfire in a running battle along Cuba's southern coast.<sup>53</sup> The United States was left with command of the sea, and the war with Spain had been decided.<sup>54</sup>

On July 25, U.S. Army forces invaded Puerto Rico in a quick and virtually bloodless campaign. The belligerents signed a peace protocol on August 12, and the Spanish-American War was formally ended by the Treaty of Paris on December 10, 1898.

## NOTES

1. Adjutant General of Maryland, *Report of the Adjutant General of Maryland, 1898–1899* (Baltimore, 1900), viii (hereafter RAG).
2. *Baltimore Sun*, April 19, 1898, p. 6.
3. *Sun*, April 20, 1898, p. 6.
4. *Sun*, April 21, 1898, p. 1.
5. *Sun*, April 28, 1898, p. 2. Cervera had originally been ordered to destroy the American naval base at Key West, then blockade the U.S. coast. Knowing that his fleet was actually greatly inferior to U.S. sea forces, he believed "the most practical naval strategy . . . in event of war would be to retain forces for defense of the homeland and asserted that his fleet could make the American coast a profitable objective only if Spain could enlist a powerful ally capable of furnishing assistance." His mission was changed to defending Cuba and Puerto Rico, and he sailed from Cadiz on April 8, 1898. See E. B. Potter and Chester W. Nimitz (eds.), *Sea Power: A Naval History* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1960), 367; David F. Trask, *The War With Spain in 1898* (New York: Macmillan & Co., 1981), 62.
6. *Sun*, April 21, 1898, p. 2.
7. Trask, *War with Spain*, 77.
8. Potter and Nimitz, *Sea Power*, 367–68, 372; Trask, *War with Spain*, 87; *Sun*, April 19, 1898, p. 6, and May 5, 1898. Once Cervera had been located at Santiago de Cuba, the Flying Squadron rejoined the North Atlantic Squadron at Key West on May 18, 1898.
9. Russell A. Alger, *The Spanish-American War* (1901 repr.; New York: Books for Libraries, 1971), 37–39. Panic over the Spanish fleet later delayed the invasion of Cuba. "Just as the last [transport] was moving out from Port Tampa" on June 8, General Shafter, the Fifth Corps commander, was ordered to return. The U.S. Navy had reported sighting a Spanish armored cruiser and torpedo-boat destroyer in the Nicholas Channel off Cuba. The Secretary of the Navy requested the convoy's recall, and Alger complied. The expedition "rocked idly in the bay, suffering from the extreme heat and the crowding, and losing a week of immeasurable opportunity at Santiago . . . before the rains began." The Spanish "ghost fleet" turned out to be three American vessels. Shafter's expedition sailed again on June 14. See Alger, *Spanish-American War*, 72–75.
10. Brig. Gen. William P. Craighill, "Baltimore and Its Defences, Past and Present," *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 1 (1906): 35–36. See "Virginius Affair," *Dictionary of American History*, 7 vols. (rev. ed.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1976), 7:204. The Cuban insurrection of 1868–78 "came at a time when Americans were weary after the Civil War and national attention was turned inward," otherwise the *Virginius* might well have proven a *casus belli*. *Ibid.*, "Spanish-American Relations," 6:360.
11. *Baltimore Sun*, May 9, 1898, 12.
12. *Sun*, April 23, 1898, 12.
13. *Sun*, April 29, 1898, 10.
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Sun*, April 29 and May 2, 1898. The *Sun* did not give an explanation for the channel blackout.
16. Clayton D. Laurie and Ronald H. Cole, *The Role of Federal Military Forces in Domestic Disorders, 1877–1945*, Army Historical Series (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, U.S. Army, for the U.S. Government Printing Office, 1997), 21–22. Alger noted that the entire U.S. Army stood at 2,143 officers and 26,040 enlisted men on April 1, 1898. There

were only 288 officers and 4,486 artillerymen, the majority in coast artillery batteries. In the other combat arms, there were 437 officers and 6,047 men in ten cavalry regiments, and 886 officers and 12,828 enlisted in twenty-five infantry regiments. See Alger, *Spanish-American War*, 7, 15

17. *Army and Coast Defence Edition of the Scientific American Supplement: Guns, Armor and Fortifications*, Supplement No. 1175, July 9, 1898 (New York, 1898), 18829 (hereafter *Scientific American*).

18. *Ibid.*, 18831, 18833, 18835–37.

19. U.S., Congress, House, 49th Cong., 1st Sess., Exec. Doc. No. 49, *Report of the Board on Fortifications or other Defenses Appointed by the President of the United States under the Provisions of the Act of Congress Approved March 3, 1885, and Plats to Accompany the Report*, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1886) (hereafter, *Endicott Board Report*). See also Emanuel Raymond Lewis, *Seacoast Fortifications of the United States: An Introductory History* (7th prtg., Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1993), 77. Lewis's is the most widely available work about American coastal defenses.

20. Alger, *Spanish-American War*, 10–11.

21. *Ibid.*, 8–11. Total available artillery on April 1, 1898, included 12"—46, 12" mortars—70, 10"—91, 8"—88, and no rapid-fire guns.

22. Harold K. Kanarek, *The Mid-Atlantic Engineers: A History of the Baltimore District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 1774–1974* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1978), 84, 86. Plans drawn up in 1893 depicted three twelve-inch breech-loading rifles (BLR) at Ft. Carroll; four eight-inch BLRs at Hawkins Point; three twelve-inch BLRs and sixteen twelve-inch mortars at North Point; and sixteen twelve-inch mortars at Rock Point in a massive multi-pit emplacement (four mortars each in four pits). By 1896, the armament plan had changed. Ft. Carroll would hold two twelve-inch BLRs and four five- or six-inch rapid-fire guns; Hawkins Point would have one twelve-inch and three eight-inch BLRs, and two five- or six-inch rapid-fire guns. North Point would have four twelve-inch BLRs, eight twelve-inch mortars, and three six-inch rapid-fire guns. Rock Point would have eight twelve-inch rifle mortars and two six-inch rapid-fire guns. The final defenses "as built" differed markedly. See U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Fort McHenry National Monument and Shrine Library, Historical and Archeological Research Project. FOMC HF 1893 002 D5, "Sheet B—Baltimore Harbor, Md. General Project for Defense of . . . September 12, 1893;" FOMC HF 1893 005 D5, "Sheet E—Baltimore Harbor, Md. Plans and Sections of New Works at North Point, September 12, 1893;" FOMC HF 1896 007 D5, "Project for Defense of Baltimore Harbor, June 19, 1896"; and FOMC HF 1896 006 D5, "Plots Showing Location of Defenses of Baltimore, Md."

23. U.S. Cong., War Dept., *Annual Reports of the Secretary of War for the Year 1893* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1893), 8, hereafter RSW by year.

24. RSW, 1895, 14.

25. RSW, 1896, 488–89. By deed dated July 16, 1908, the Hawkins Point reservation was enlarged by 33.04 acres to a total of 45.10 acres. Record Group 392 (hereafter RG 392), Records of United States Army Coast Artillery Districts and Defenses, 1901–1942, Entry 45 - Fort Record Book, Fort Armistead, Md., b6, U.S., National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives, Philadelphia, Pa. For titles to the land parcels, and the 1874 general cession of jurisdiction by the Maryland legislature, see U.S. War Dept., Office of the Judge Advocate General, *Military Reservations, National Military Parks, and National Cemeteries: Title and Jurisdiction* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1898), 83–87.



26. U.S., Cong., War Dept., *Annual Reports of the War Department for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1897, Report of the Chief of Engineers* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1897), 641–47, hereafter *RCE* by year.
27. *Ibid.*, 647–49.
28. *Ibid.*, 649.
29. *Ibid.*, 647. *Scientific American* (18829) also noted that “elements of secrecy and invisibility” were “all-important in the location and working of harbor defences.”
30. *RCE*, 1898, 658–59. For pitch of construction activity, see the *Sun* March 28, 1898, p. 2, and April 23, 1898, p. 12. The year seems to have been plagued by bad weather—snow was reported in Baltimore as late as April 27–28, 1898. *RAG*, 117.
31. *RCE*, 1898, 659, 660. The *Sun* reported on May 2 that mounting the twelve-inch rifle at Hawkins Point began May 2, and was expected to take “fully ten days to accomplish.” On May 12 and 18, the *Sun* reported that Batteries D and C, 4th Artillery had garrisoned Hawkins Point. *RCE*, 1900, 866, states that troops occupied the reservation on April 20, 1898.
32. *Ibid.*, 661–62. On May 12, the *Sun* reported that “Four rifled mortars for the North Point batteries are expected to arrive Saturday [May 14] and will be placed in position as soon as possible.”
33. *RCE*, 662–63.
34. *Ibid.*, 663–65.
35. *Ibid.*, 666. For Fort Carroll, see U.S., Cong., 57th Cong., 2d Sess., House Doc. No. 439, *Analytical and Topical Index to the Reports of the Chief of Engineers and Officers of the Corps of Engineers, United States Army, 1866–1900* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1903), 1378–81. Installing new armament “within and on top of existing Third System forts” was a common expedient during the 1890s. “Third System” refers to forts constructed during 1817–1867. Lewis, *Seacoast Fortifications*, 89, 140. Throughout the 1890s, engineer operations at Fort McHenry were restricted to preservation and repair work, since the fort was “useless as a defensive work.” See *RCE*, 1899, 805. Although Fort McHenry had no tactical value it was “strategically important to the defense, being close to the deep water channel and the B&O freight yards, and providing a good encampment site.” RG 392, Entry 56 - Fort Record Book, Fort Smallwood, Md., pages unnumbered. Fort McHenry was abandoned as a garrison post on April 9, 1907. RG 392, Entry 45 - Fort Record Book, Fort Armistead, Md., 3, 70.
36. *RCE*, 1899, 818–22. The first troops at North Point were seventy-three men of Battery E, 4th Artillery under Capt. William F. Stewart who arrived on June 27, 1899, from Fort Monroe and camped near where Battery Harris is now located. RG 392, Entry 52 - Fort Record Book, Fort Howard, Md., 6. Rock Point remained ungarrisoned until May 8, 1900. RG 392, Entry 56 - Fort Record Book, Fort Smallwood, Md., pages unnumbered.
37. *RSW*, 1898, 199. As Lewis explains: “The terms ‘mine’ and ‘torpedo’ were used at times interchangeably, though the former was, strictly speaking, an underground explosive charge usually placed to breach the exterior wall of a fort, while the latter was originally an explosive device for use under or on the surface of the water, usually anchored at a given place. When ‘torpedo’ began to be applied around 1900 to the mobile, self-propelled devices still known by that name, the term ‘mine’ was broadened to include stationary underwater or surface devices, as well as those used in land warfare.” *Seacoast Fortifications*, 88, fn. 85. A later coast defense board considered “automobile torpedoes” possibly useful in channels “which are too deep to be mined or in which the currents are so swift as to make the maintenance of mines very difficult or impossible.” U.S., Congress, 59th Cong., 1st Sess., Sen. Doc. No. 248, *Coast Defenses of the United States and the Insular Possessions* (Washington,

D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1906), 35. This was the "Taft Board," which recommended changes to the Endicott Board system of defenses.

38. Kanarek, *Mid-Atlantic Engineers*, 88.

39. *Sun*, April 22, 1898, p. 12.

40. Capt. Frank A. Wilcox, "The Torpedo for Coast Defense," *Journal of the Military Service Institution*, 39 (1906): 279, 286.

41. Lt. Col. Oswald H. Ernst, U.S. Engineers Office, Baltimore, Md., to Brig. Gen. John M. Wilson, Office of the Chief of Engineers, March 9, 1901 (hereafter Ernst to Wilson), 7–15, in RG 392, Entry 52 - Fort Record Book, Fort Howard, Md. *Sun*, April 20, 1898, 12. "Fort Carroll in Service," *Baltimore News-Post*, January 2, 1942, states that Dr. Thomas C. Harris of Baltimore was the "man who mined the channel and who exploded the mines after the war." The experience of a counterpart volunteer force in Boston is told in Louis Bell, "Emergency Engineering for Harbor Defense," *Transactions of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers*, 19 (1902): 1415–23. In addition, two companies were recruited in Baltimore as part of a twelve-company regiment (Boston was to supply two companies and New York eight). This unit would be grouped with two additional regiments as the 1st U.S. Volunteer Engineer Corps, "to meet a deficiency in the United States Engineering Corps, which is now pressing, because of the vast amount of work on hand calling for skilled men." A recruiting office "opened May 3d at 807 Equitable Building, with Dr. Louis Duncan and Messrs. W. R. Molinard and James E. Hewes enlisting men." *Sun*, May 4, 1898, 12.

42. Ernst to Wilson, 1, 7; *Sun*, April 25, 1898, p. 12.

43. *Sun*, April 25, 1898, p. 12.

44. *Sun*, April 27, 1898, p. 10. Articles in the same edition announced similar orders about minefield navigation in New York Harbor and the Delaware River and on the Potomac between Fort Washington, Md., and Sheridan Point, Va. In New York, seventy-four mines had been planted and "three times that number" were eventually to be laid between Fort Wadsworth and Sandy Hook. Near Fort Delaware, twenty-two mines had been planted. The *Sun* reprinted Hains's order on May 7 with one addition: "Paragraph 1 of the regulations for the navigation of the Patapsco river and Chesapeake bay in time of war is modified to permit vessels to pass the mine fields in daylight between 4 A.M. and 5 P.M."

45. *Sun*, April 26, 1898, p. 9.

46. *Ibid.* At the same time, it was learned that "Hampton Roads must be considered in a state of blockade from sunset to sunrise and no vessels must be allowed either to depart or to enter between those hours." This restriction worked some inconvenience on the Washington and Baltimore passenger boats. "The Baltimore Steam Packet Company, operating the old Bay Line, has made arrangements by which the safety of passengers is assured. While these steamers are of such light draught that they are far above the obstructions placed in the channels, they will enter and leave the harbor outside the channel limits, as their draught enables them to do this without grounding. The company has also decided to enter and leave the harbor during daylight as an additional precaution."

47. *Sun*, April 28, 1898, p. 10.

48. *Sun*, May 7, 1898, p. 8.

49. *Ibid.*, and *Sun*, May 19, 1898, p. 17.

50. Kanarek, *Mid-Atlantic Engineers*, 88.

51. Wilcox, "The Torpedo for Coast Defense," 287.

52. *Ibid.*

53. Potter and Nimitz, *Sea Power*, 373–75. Trask contends that "The mines posed the most serious problem for [the American naval commander at Santiago], more so than the land

batteries, which a determined bombardment could have silenced." Trask, *War with Spain*, 135. The Russian and Japanese navies suffered major losses to mines in action around Port Arthur.

54. Trask, *War with Spain*, 284. For later development of the Baltimore harbor defenses, see Merle T. Cole, "Imperial German Invasion Plans and Landward Defense of the Patapsco River Forts," *Coast Defense Study Group Journal*, 7 (Fall 1993): 31–43; "Maryland National Guard Coast Artillery, 1908–1917," *Military Collector and Historian*, 45 (Summer 1993): 50–62; "Fort Armistead," *Anne Arundel County History Notes*, 25 (July 1994): 1–2, 8–11; "Fort Carroll," *Anne Arundel County History Notes*, 26 (Oct. 1994): 1, 4, 6, 9–12; and "Fort Smallwood's Military Mission," *Anne Arundel County History Notes*, 25 (April 1994): 1, 6, 8, 9–11.



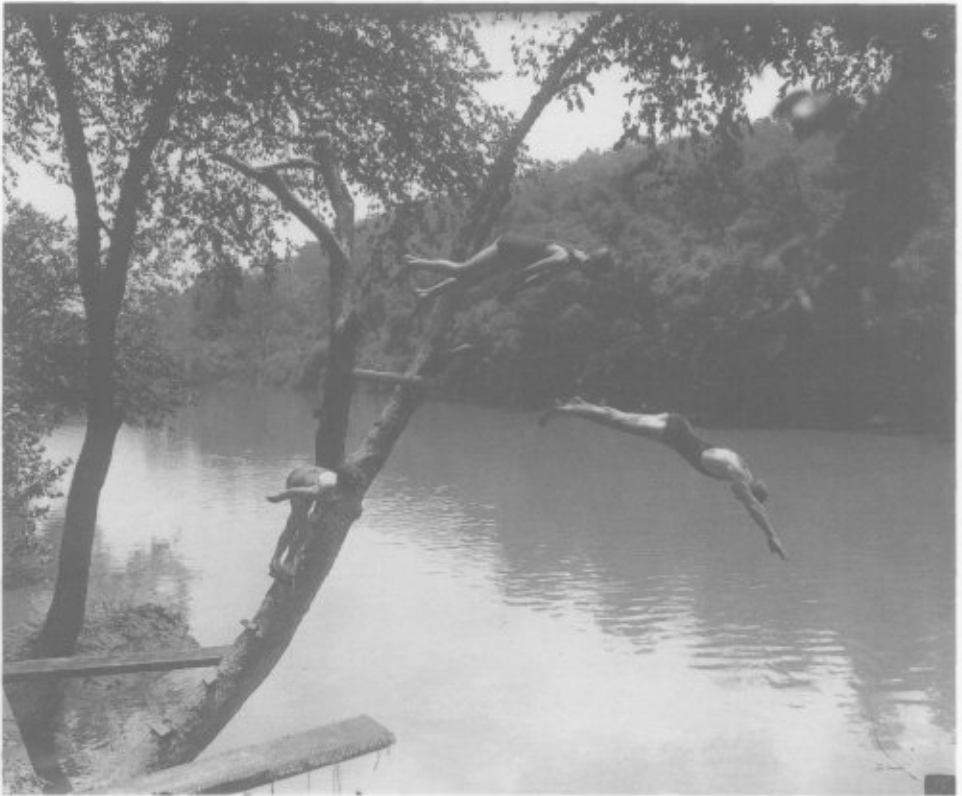
## Portfolio

If it was beautiful, interesting, and in the Chesapeake region, A. Aubrey Bodine probably photographed it. Born in Baltimore, Bodine (1906–70) grew up in Elkridge, Maryland. In 1929 he began his lifetime career as a photojournalist and nationally recognized camera artist with the *Baltimore Sun*, where he worked until 1970. His many books, such as *The Face of Maryland* and *Bodine's Baltimore* are still popular.

The photographs presented here are printed from the more than twelve thousand Bodine negatives that were part of the Baltimore City Life Museums' collections, recently transferred to the Maryland Historical Society.

M.M.

*Boys swimming, 1936. Possibly the Patapsco River.*



*Facing page: Native Dancer, 1957.*



*Ewell, Smith Island, 1945.*

*Smith Island, 1948*





*White School House, Caroline County, no date.*

*Hurry, St. Mary's County, 1948.*





*"She Leans." Kent Island, 1949.*

*Nanticoke, Wicomico County, 1952.*







*Hager House, Hagerstown, 1953.*

*Pocomoke River Near Snow Hill, no date.*





*Hollins Market, 1956.*

*Ocean City, Labor Day 1957.*

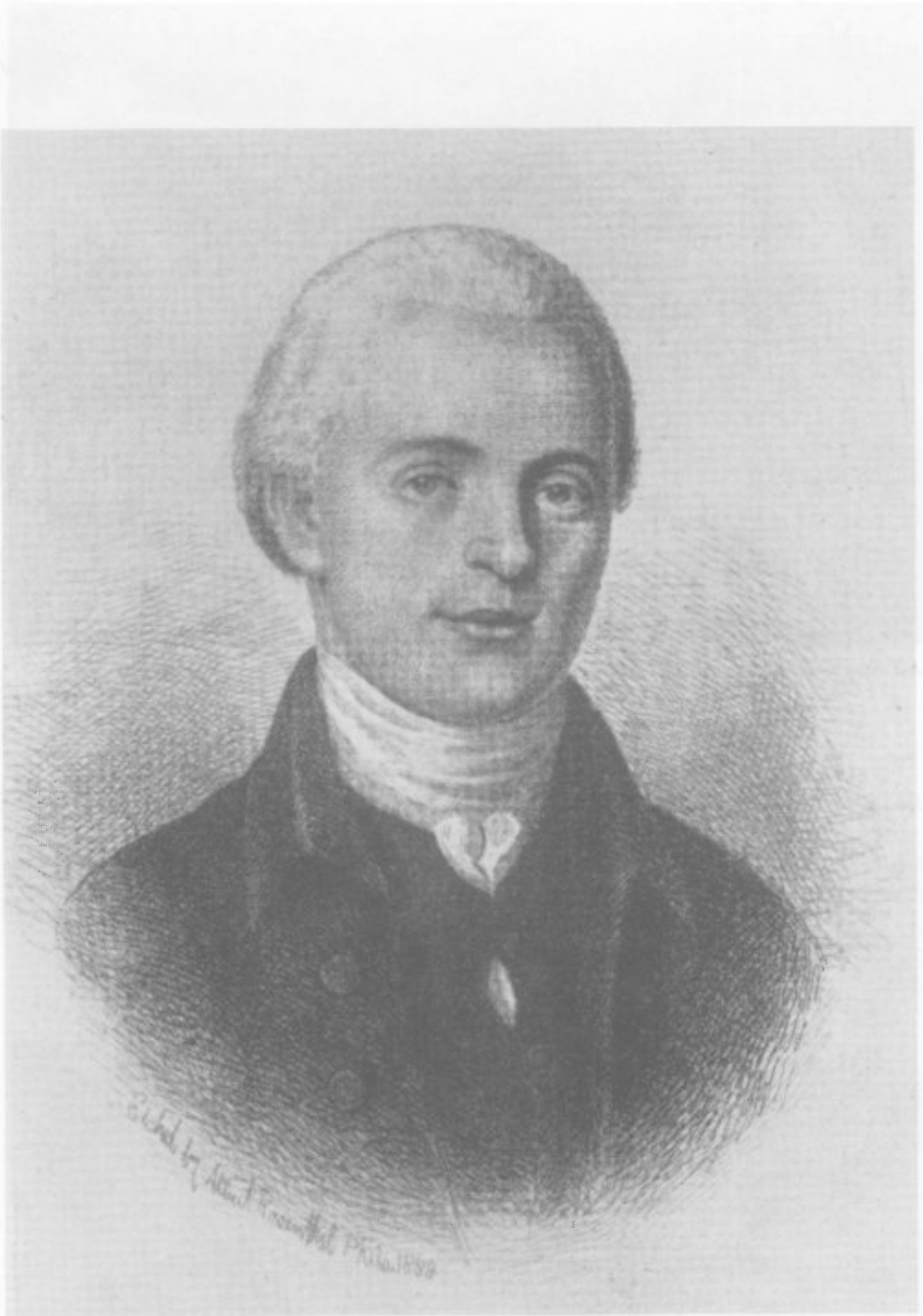




*All-Star Game, Memorial Stadium, Baltimore, 1958.*

*Route 40, Western Maryland, 1965.*





*Irish-born James McHenry (1753–1816) rose quickly to political eminence in the aftermath of the Revolution. (Maryland Historical Society.)*

# Ambition Rewarded: James McHenry's Entry into Maryland Politics

BY KAREN ROBBINS

James McHenry, an Irish-born Marylander best known as secretary of war during the 1790s under both George Washington and John Adams, had a career that touched most of the significant events of his time. McHenry had come to know these men while a physician during the Revolution, but he left medicine to serve as an assistant secretary in Washington's military "Family," followed by service to Lafayette. By the end of the war, McHenry would accept the position of senator in the upper house of Maryland's legislature.<sup>1</sup> Just how did it happen that an Irishman who had spent little time in the Chesapeake state was offered the position of senator?

Although historians generally agree that the Revolution did not commonly open Maryland politics to the middle or lower classes, educated and ambitious newcomers with property could gain entrée into political circles.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps because the historical consensus has been so widely accepted, attention has not been paid to the "exceptions." But only by looking at those who do not fit the mold can we determine just how accurate the accepted view is. How many entered politics at the local level when that path had been previously closed, and how many used the tumult of the times to get ahead is not yet known. In the more visible higher echelons, James McHenry provides an illustration both of how it was possible to enter the elite and of just how difficult that could be.

McHenry realized his ambitions in Maryland politics largely as the result of his service as assistant secretary to George Washington during the Revolution. For one thing, being a trusted associate of the commander-in-chief placed him among those who could help an educated young man, such as fellow aide Tench Tilghman, whose family was prominent in Maryland politics. It was probably through the Tilghmans that McHenry came to know the Carrolls, another of Maryland's most notable clans. Also, because of his service to Washington, McHenry became Lafayette's aide-de-camp. There, he came to know Lieutenant Colonel Uriah Forrest, adjutant general of Maryland, and began to correspond with Maryland's revolutionary governor, Thomas Sim Lee, who was naturally eager for all the information he could coax from McHenry, a highly placed source in the military. McHenry's position was also, surely, in the minds of Baltimore's civic leaders when the young aide offered information and military advice for

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the defense of the city. McHenry did gain access to Maryland politics, but the initial and critical part of his journey, the path to Washington's military Family, had been circuitous.

In 1771, at age eighteen, McHenry came from Ireland to Maryland by way of Philadelphia. Family legend claims that excessive study had hurt his health, and that he was sent on a (dangerous) trans-Atlantic voyage to improve his constitution. But since the entire family relocated to British North America within a year after McHenry's voyage, it appears they were ready to leave the oppressive political climate in northern Ireland for the freer atmosphere of the colonies. Young McHenry may well have been sent ahead to assess the situation, especially in regard to relocating his father's dry-goods business.

After all, McHenry was a Presbyterian, and that made him a dissenter in a land where the Anglican faith was established. Although Scottish Presbyterians had been intentionally transplanted to the north of Ireland in the early seventeenth century in order to provide a population loyal to the king, ensuing persecution by the Anglicans had diminished those ties. Public Presbyterian church services and denominational schools had been outlawed. College Fellows and the clergy had to conform to the Book of Common Prayer. Magistrates were compelled to take the Anglican sacrament or swear never to attempt a change in church or state. The Test Act of 1673, requiring that all officeholders swear allegiance to England and her established church, continued in effect well into the eighteenth century. Even the legal status of Presbyterian marriages was unclear. To McHenry this meant a limited future, while the freedom of the British North American colonies stood in stark contrast.<sup>3</sup> Many Scots-Irish Presbyterians had reached the same conclusion, leaving Ireland during the eighteenth century at the rate of 1,000 a year, so that the young man could expect a warm welcome from others who had preceded him. His contacts took him to the City of Brotherly Love.

Philadelphia, it turned out, had more than enough merchants but was closely connected by trade, especially in wheat, to the small but growing town of Baltimore in Maryland. Blocked by the mountains west of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania's frontier farmers generally sent their wheat down the Susquehanna to the head of the Chesapeake Bay, and sold it in Baltimore.<sup>4</sup> Maryland merchants, in turn, bought this and wheat grown locally and transported it by water to Philadelphia, which relied on this source. The Scots-Irish Presbyterian community in the Chesapeake was growing, and McHenry had already met the new minister. During the next year, the McHenrys moved their business to Baltimore. Theirs proved to be a wise choice, for the town, which had consisted of only a few hundred families in 1750 would number 5,700 by 1776.<sup>5</sup> Letting his family tend to business, McHenry spent the time completing his formal education at Newark Academy in Delaware.

Newark had a fine reputation and boasted a more demanding curriculum than many academies as it planned to evolve into a college. (It is now the University of Delaware.) The school taught "every branch of the liberal arts and sciences," including logic, mathematics, and moral and natural philosophy. Since moral philosophy emphasized not merely ethics but also what would be called political science, McHenry studied Enlightenment philosophy, including natural law and the rights of man.<sup>6</sup> These ideas, of course, helped to form the intellectual bedrock of revolutionary thought and doubtless increased McHenry's willingness to accept radical political change. After he had completed his preparatory education, he looked about for a career and chose medicine.

McHenry opted to study with Dr. Benjamin Rush in Philadelphia, but the three years he spent with Rush constituted more than a medical apprenticeship—it was also a tutorial in what it meant to be an American patriot. These years in Philadelphia, 1772–75, came toward the end of the Imperial Crisis, when the political conflict with Britain finally transformed itself into military conflict. True, McHenry had missed the first stages of resistance, when the Sugar and Stamp Acts had mobilized the colonies against English policies, nor had he experienced the first opposition to the Townshend Duties which placed an unpopular tax on tea, among other items. But McHenry was in Philadelphia when in 1773 the city opposed Britain's act giving the East India Company a monopoly on the export of tea to the colonies. (His mentor, Dr. Rush, numbered among the men who organized the opposition to landing the tea.<sup>7</sup>) Philadelphia also served as the home of the Continental Congress, which helped to politicize the entire city. McHenry, who became familiar with the city's byways, found political excitement in every corner. In Philadelphia, class lines blurred and religious rivalries found an uneasy truce.

It was hardly an accident that McHenry happened to serve his apprenticeship with Rush. The doctor was a controversial figure who had completed his own medical education only three years earlier in both Edinburgh and London and had returned to Philadelphia with a commitment to extensive bloodletting. Other doctors in the city bled their patients moderately and disapproved of the outspoken young physician's views. Rush had also begun to make vocal opposition to the practice of slavery, a stance that endeared him to few. Consequently he had no patron in the city and had to find money in other ways: by treating the poor and taking on apprentices.<sup>8</sup> He also courted other members of his own Presbyterian denomination, to which McHenry belonged.

Presbyterians were generally inclined toward resistance, an attitude doubtless aided by the fact that many were Scots-Irish, a group long noted for its hatred of England. But resistance also flowed from Presbyterian theology, which taught that the world functioned by God's laws, natural rights among them, and the most important natural right was liberty. Government existed to protect

that liberty and to help man conform to God's laws. England's restrictive acts and efforts to tax an unrepresented populace threatened to take away their Christian freedom. Presbyterian ministers soon argued that it was the colonists' Christian duty to rebel.<sup>9</sup>

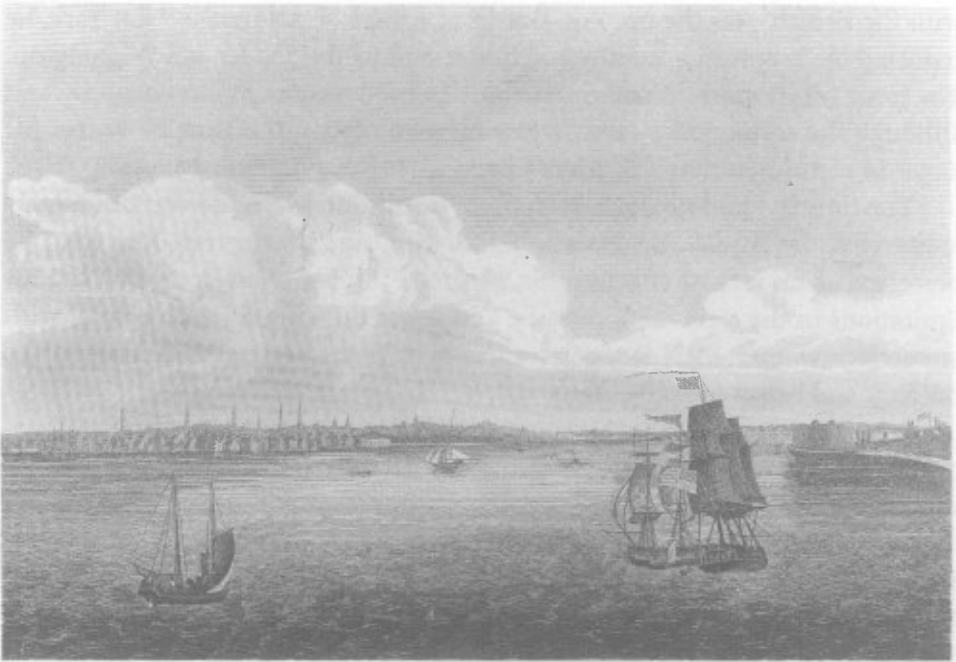
So the world immediately around both McHenry and Rush talked of resistance. Important patriot leaders like John Dickinson, Charles Thomson, and Patrick Henry became either patients or confidantes of Rush, and John and Samuel Adams were frequent visitors to the doctor's household.<sup>10</sup> Revolutionary ideas confronted McHenry whether he went to church, bookstores, taverns, or studied with his mentor. Caught up in the cauldron of revolutionary Philadelphia, McHenry became both a doctor and a patriot. So intense was his conviction that a few months after Lexington and Concord, McHenry joined the newly formed army as a surgeon's mate, the lowest rank at which a doctor could serve and beneath his level of proficiency.<sup>11</sup>

From 1775 until 1778, McHenry served the Revolution as a doctor, but he desired a position more in keeping with his level of medical education. Soon the head of the military medical establishment, Director-General Morgan, offered McHenry a promotion to surgeon under Dr. Jonathan Potts in the Northern Hospital or Corps. McHenry's first assignment was to procure supplies in Philadelphia.<sup>12</sup>

While in Philadelphia, McHenry learned the surprising precariousness of his situation. It seems that Dr. Potts had inadvertently placed himself in competition for the position held by Dr. Samuel Stringer, director of the Hospital in the Northern Department. After Congress reaffirmed Stringer's directorship, the latter decided to make a show of power by relieving McHenry of his appointment. Because of congressional action, therefore, McHenry found himself embarrassingly independent only months after that body had signed the declaration claiming that status for the country at large. For the first time, but not the last, McHenry felt the sting of politicians' decisions. Congress soon compensated him by offering him the next available surgeon's berth. McHenry now knew firsthand the importance of political power.<sup>13</sup>

McHenry was soon appointed surgeon to Colonel Robert Magaw's Fifth Pennsylvania Battalion. The war had moved away from the northern states, where the British had found resistance too intense, and now centered in the middle colonies, in New York, to be exact.<sup>14</sup> Outgeneralled, Washington had just lost the Battle of Long Island and had largely retreated from the almost indefensible island of Manhattan. There was, however, one exception: Magaw's battalion. With McHenry now a member, the Pennsylvanians were assigned to hold Fort Washington in northern Manhattan. It, along with Fort Lee on the New Jersey side of the Hudson, was built to bombard British ships trying to make their way upriver. But Fort Washington was small, had no source of water, and could not withstand a siege without great loss of life. It fell to the British on November 16, 1776.





*New York ca. 1776. After James McHenry's capture by the British following Washington's retreat from Manhattan, McHenry was appalled at the treatment accorded to American prisoners-of-war. (Maryland Historical Society.)*

As an officer, prisoner-of-war McHenry could roam New York City, but a Dr. Louis Debuté, who had convinced the English that he was with the Americans and should be placed in charge, prevented McHenry from tending wounded and sick American soldiers. Debuté was a fraud who pocketed all the money he could squeeze from the men and from medical supplies. On one occasion, McHenry's brogue fooled the guards into thinking he was British and allowing him to check upon the men, and he left shocked at their deplorable condition. But McHenry and the British could not agree on terms for their relief until Debuté actually struck and killed an American soldier. At that point the enemy paroled McHenry and permitted him to escort twenty-five of the sick to Philadelphia.<sup>15</sup>

While the young doctor was on parole during the next year, the war pressed on without him. Howe took Philadelphia from Washington without much of a fight since neither side considered it to be of special strategic value and defeated the Virginian again at Germantown, this time with significant losses against an American army that was gaining experience. Moreover, British General Burgoyne's efforts to march south from Canada along the Hudson to divide the country and then conquer it met with resounding defeat at Saratoga, costing Burgoyne his entire army.<sup>16</sup>

Meanwhile, McHenry dealt with his growing anger and frustration. Furious

with the British over the needless deaths of American soldiers in New York, he reported the events in a lengthy and blistering account to General Washington. The letter hit its mark. Washington, too, deplored the enemy's callousness, and although the commander rarely wrote his own replies, this time he vented his anger in commiseration.<sup>17</sup> McHenry had gained Washington's attention.

The timing could not have been more fortuitous. McHenry was not merely angry with the British, he was also upset with himself, frustrated by what he perceived as his lack of effectiveness. Medicine, after all, was bound by serious limitations in the eighteenth century, and it was difficult to save a soldier with any serious wound. McHenry determined to leave the healing profession for the military and began to spread the word.

So, at the same time that McHenry let it be known that he wanted a military position, he also had come to Washington's attention. The general, moreover, was always on the lookout for educated, congenial young men to serve in his military Family. After a short stint as senior surgeon at the Flying Camp at Valley Forge, McHenry was offered the position of assistant secretary.<sup>18</sup> It was voluntary and without pay or rank, but the McHenrys were capable of subsidizing him. Although Washington's reputation had suffered in some circles (including that of Benjamin Rush) because he had yet to win a major battle, the general retained great prestige and was still in charge of the armies. A position with Washington would open doors and supply connections that would be unavailable otherwise. By the end of the difficult winter of 1777–78, the young doctor was assigned to headquarters at Valley Forge.

Indeed, McHenry was fortunate to receive this position, and he knew it. This was not an honor given lightly. The general was careful about those he invited into his Family; they had to be devoted to the cause, educated, sensible, and even-tempered. Moreover, they could not request consideration for the position—this was a relationship the general initiated.<sup>19</sup> McHenry had been singled out. He was flattered.<sup>20</sup>

Once within Washington's Family, McHenry made contacts that would shape his future. Alexander Hamilton, or "Ham" as "Mac" referred to him, became a fast friend and later influenced McHenry's appointment to the Federalist cabinet. But doubtless of more immediate help was Tench Tilghman.

Although Tilghman had been a Philadelphia merchant before the war, he was closely related to Matthew Tilghman, who was his future father-in-law and a very important man in Maryland politics. Matthew was part of the "country" or "popular" party which had ousted the Tory "court" party early in the Revolution, an event that occurred in a number of states. He was also wealthy, knowledgeable and well organized, so that he held a variety of significant executive positions throughout the war. He had led the assembly and all the provincial conventions, had served in the Continental Congress, and at present sat in the Maryland Senate.<sup>21</sup>

The Senate tended to follow the wishes of Charles Carroll of Carrollton, one of the wealthiest men in the state, although he cannot be said to have "ruled" that body. The Carrolls were wealthy, aristocratic, and influential Catholics with an important history in Maryland. Charles Carroll of Carrollton, generally conservative, had not wanted independence and had accepted its necessity slowly. Around him moved other worthies such as his cousin, Charles Carroll, the Barrister, William Paca, Thomas Johnson, and Samuel Chase, who dominated the Lower House.<sup>22</sup> Through Tilghman, then, McHenry surely became acquainted with many of the most important men in Maryland.

By 1779 they, too, were aware of McHenry. Samuel Chase, who was also a delegate to the Continental Congress, had used privileged information for personal gain. Unlike those among whom he circulated, Chase did not come from a moneyed background but was instead a man on the make, looking for every opportunity to improve his financial position. He had studied law only to find that the wealthier clients had other attorneys. Chase therefore turned to numerous debtors for his fees, and in his eagerness to acquire wealth overextended himself in land speculation. Representing debtors both in court and in the House of Delegates meant that he was simultaneously advancing his own interests.

Chase saw another opportunity to make money in 1778 when, as a member of Congress, he learned that the government planned to buy large quantities of wheat to help supply the expected French fleet. He directed his partner to corner the Baltimore wheat market in order to raise the price and make a windfall at Congress' expense. When Hamilton discovered this profiteering, even as soldiers everywhere risked their lives, he could not restrain himself. Anonymously, Hamilton exposed Chase in the *New York Journal and the General Advertiser*. Naturally, the Maryland legislature felt the need to respond, and the Senate (Carroll of Carrollton's bailiwick) formally chastised Chase. Chase proclaimed his innocence against the overwhelming evidence, letting the matter lie until March 1779. Then, rather than explain his actions, he publicly insisted that Samuel Adams had declared Mathew Tilghman and Charles Carroll, the Barrister, traitors. The Maryland Senate investigated and found the charges baseless, but in May, Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer, president of the Senate, traveled to Philadelphia. There, Samuel Adams, with McHenry as witness, denied ever accusing Tilghman or Carroll of treason.<sup>23</sup>

This episode revealed several things. Of most immediate significance to Maryland politics, a new rift had emerged between Chase and Charles Carroll of Carrollton, who was naturally upset that his cousin had been irresponsibly accused of treason, and who had encouraged the Senate in its earlier censure of Chase's speculation.<sup>24</sup> It was the beginning of tension between the conservative Senate and more liberal House of Delegates that would last for years.

It also reveals the origins of McHenry's involvement in Maryland politics.

For when Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer wrote the Senate of his conversation with Samuel Adams he mentioned that McHenry had acted as witness, but he did not bother to explain who McHenry was. Probably, through the Tilghmans, the Senate already knew. Moreover, as witness, McHenry could not help being aligned with the party in opposition to Chase, the more conservative senatorial cadre of the Carrolls and Tilghmans. Now known and aligned within Maryland's high political structure, McHenry would not be forgotten.

Back at Washington's headquarters, McHenry and the other aides served a variety of functions from messengers, to baggage carriers, and lived the military life. The life of an aide was more physically demanding than McHenry had anticipated. "In sleeping in the open fields — under trees exposed to the night air and all the changes of the weather I only followed the example of our General," he wrote his father Daniel. "Tho' long in the army I was but a hospital soldier. When I joined his Excellency's suite I gave up soft beds — undisturbed repose — and the habits of ease and indulgence which reign in some departments — for a single blanket — the hard floor — or the softer sod of the fields — early rising and almost perpetual duty." In fact, McHenry's health suffered as a consequence, a matter of some concern to a young man who had immigrated partly for health reasons. If McHenry's life was difficult, it did not compare to that of the ordinary foot soldier, however, as McHenry appears to have lived much like any other "gentleman officer." He had a body servant and considerable baggage which he carried with the army. He rode rather than marched, and, whenever he could, chose warm taverns over field messes.<sup>25</sup>

But the main task of the Family was that of scribe. McHenry regularly wrote to Major Generals Gates, Heath, and Sullivan, Brigadier General Maxwell, and even the president of Congress. He became the principal correspondent with General Dickinson, General Scott<sup>26</sup> and the fledgling Secret Service. Lack of supplies was a perennial problem that led to commandeering. Morale suffered during the long winters, and mutinies had to be suppressed.<sup>27</sup>

In fact, by 1779, McHenry, again filled with discontent, was not alone among the members of the Family in feeling this way. Hamilton wished to do more militarily, and the situation certainly was frustrating.<sup>28</sup> These were men of ability and ambition who found themselves unengaged because the war was being fought elsewhere. Washington may have been in charge of all the armies, but there were three campaign theaters and Washington commanded the Middle Department. By now, however, the British had moved the fighting to the South for a variety of military reasons. The southern colonies had fewer inhabitants, and Washington would be unlikely to leave the middle colonies and offer his southern army assistance as long as the enemy held New York. Moreover, Georgia and South Carolina were difficult for the Americans to reach by land while the English could move their armies by sea. The British also assumed there would

be more loyalist support in that region. So the fighting had moved to the Southern Department, where American General Benjamin Lincoln commanded.<sup>29</sup> Headquarters gave what assistance it could from a distance but otherwise merely waited for reports.

Of real significance in the middle states at this time was General Sullivan's campaign against the Iroquois, who sided with the British and attacked settlers in New York's Cherry Valley. Washington hoped for hostages from a surprise attack, but Sullivan moved slowly, giving the Iroquois time to flee. As a result, Sullivan was only able to destroy settlements. Still, he split the Iroquois Confederacy and effectively neutralized the Six Nations, so Washington counted the expedition a limited success.<sup>30</sup>

More impressive to McHenry, however, were two daring military operations undertaken by the Continental Army. In an effort to cut the Americans in two, the British had claimed control of the Hudson, partly by taking two incomplete forts, Stony Point and Verplanck's Point. General "Mad" Anthony Wayne led an American counterattack by night. Using only bayonets, his men captured and destroyed the forts. In imitation, that is, using only bayonets, Major "Light-horse" Harry Lee attacked another British encampment at Paulus Hook and took 150 prisoners.<sup>31</sup>

Thrilled by these actions but frustrated by his own inactivity, McHenry penned a piece of political propaganda. It was an impressive work, full of boasting and disdain for the enemy and signed by an anonymous "Z."<sup>32</sup> Whether it ever saw print is unknown, but McHenry was clearly searching for a more significant way to make his mark, and political involvement of some sort beckoned.

By the summer of 1780, despite McHenry's growing interest in politics, he was not ready to give up military pursuits. A year-and-a-half's service as Washington's secretary did not satisfy his ambitions. He considered some form of diplomatic position in Europe, but there a "secretary" was not held in high regard. He preferred service in the army. As a "volunteer" rather than a voluntary assistant secretary, he would have greater status and the flexibility to grab whatever opportunity might present itself. He would still waive pay (until after the Revolution, when governments were in a better position to recompense their soldiers).<sup>33</sup>

Washington agreed to the change, and soon realized that he could help McHenry and further the war effort at the same time. Although Washington was fond of his Family, he was closer still to the young French officer serving with the army. The Marquis de Lafayette had come to the United States in 1777, the year before France had entered into a formal alliance with the American colonies. The French nobleman was impetuous whereas McHenry was cautious. Washington decided to find the Marquis a field command and offered McHenry a position as Lafayette's aide. In this way, Washington could keep the services of two talented young men and be assured that McHenry's thoughtfulness would temper Lafayette's



*The Marquis de Lafayette, the young French officer who had cast his lot with the Continental Army, proved a bold, sometimes reckless commander. (Maryland Historical Society.)*

enthusiasm. Though McHenry would still have to perform some light secretarial work, service as an aide was far more martial than anything McHenry had previously done. He accepted the offer and left Washington's Family.<sup>34</sup>

Lafayette's command in 1780 consisted of a light division that functioned as a "mobile elite corps" in New Jersey.<sup>35</sup> The Marquis had hoped to be part of an assault on the British in New York, but it gradually became apparent that such plans would not succeed, and his command had to content itself with harassing the British.

McHenry, for his part, still aimed for more than being an aide. So even while he worked for the Marquis, he cast about for a position with rank and apparently called upon old friends. Hamilton wrote to James Duane, his congressman from New York, requesting a "majority" for the Marylander. Hamilton also placed the matter before his future father-in-law, Philip Schuyler, one of the wealthiest and most influential men from the Empire State. Alas, the best they could do was to procure McHenry a place with the New York militia, which made little sense for someone who now hailed from the Chesapeake.<sup>36</sup>

What McHenry could not know was that while under Lafayette's command he would participate in two of the most significant events remaining in the war. The first of these began to unfold in September when McHenry and Lafayette accompanied Washington to a conference at Hartford with the Comte de Rochambeau, who in July had brought a French army of five thousand troops and a strong naval escort to Newport, Rhode Island, only to have a British blockade close in behind them. On the return trip to headquarters, Washington and

McHenry were to stop at West Point for a visit with General Benedict Arnold and his wife, inspect the area, and push on. Before they reached the fort, Washington decided to check some redoubts on the east bank of the Hudson and sent McHenry and Major Samuel Shaw ahead to inform Arnold. While McHenry, Shaw, and Arnold exchanged pleasantries over breakfast, Arnold received a communication that agitated him. He rose to check on Mrs. Arnold, then hurriedly left. He told his own aide that he would prepare West Point to receive Washington, and McHenry that he would return to see the general.

By the time Washington arrived, Arnold had not returned. The general breakfasted, then rode out himself, only to learn that Arnold was nowhere to be found. What had happened became clear when Washington returned and opened a packet of letters that had just arrived. A roving band of thieves with questionable political allegiance called "Rebel Skinners" had captured a British spy named Major John André. Papers in André's possession made it clear that Benedict Arnold was a traitor. McHenry and Hamilton rode off in pursuit of Arnold, but it was too late; the traitor had already boarded a British sloop. Four days later, Lafayette sat at André's trial. Because the accused man's guilt was undeniable, only an exchange for Arnold could save the major's life. André died as had Nathan Hale: by the noose.<sup>37</sup>

Arnold's treason shook headquarters, for he had been supplying the British in New York with details of West Point's weaknesses. He had been discovered none too soon. Had the British captured West Point, American forces would have been split, perhaps permitting the British to divide and conquer. The patriots could take heart in the fact that the French had brought reinforcements.

The South, however, continued to be the seat of the war. General Horatio Gates, Congress's choice after his victory at Saratoga, had taken command from Lincoln but had embarrassed everyone by his behavior at the defeat of Camden. Gates not only lost the battle but fled in such a panic that he traveled 180 miles in just three days.<sup>38</sup> By mid-October, Congress was willing to accept Washington's choice for the Southern Command: General Nathanael Greene.

McHenry was thrilled. He and Greene had been friends for some time, ever since Greene had formally witnessed McHenry's oath renouncing allegiance to George III and promising to defend the United States as Washington's secretary. Needing to establish a loyal staff, Greene soon wrote to Congress, expressing his "earnest desire to have Doctor James McHenry as an aide de camp upon the southern command . . . and that the said Doctor McHenry . . . be intitled to the rank of major by brevet." Congress would not allow it. Too many others were in line for rank ahead of McHenry, and to make him a major would draw political repercussions. He had lost his greatest chance to see action in the South.<sup>39</sup>

McHenry stayed with Lafayette until November 26, when it became clear that the Light Corps could accomplish little more and was disbanded. He then

helped with Washington's transition to winter quarters, but by December 28 his work was done. McHenry, now without a job, returned to Baltimore.<sup>40</sup>

Once again, McHenry turned his eyes toward politics, writing another political tract, and apparently letting his Maryland contacts know of his interest in a post. The regard was mutual, for they came close to putting McHenry on the council. But how could McHenry, an outsider, come so close to being an advisor to the governor?

The answer lies in the structure of Maryland's government. The general populace voted for only two offices, the Lower House and the county sheriff. An electoral college chose the Senate, whose members had to be worth at least £1,000, as were members of the council. The legislature chose the council and the governor annually. The council, which existed primarily to advise the governor, was also comprised of wealthy men, and here lies its immediate significance for McHenry: if a member died or resigned in midterm, the council itself chose the replacement. On January 17, 1781, Daniel Carroll resigned his seat. Five men were nominated to replace him, and three of them, including McHenry, tied for the position twice. In the end, the council decided the election by lot. Only chance had kept McHenry from this post.<sup>41</sup>

The fact that McHenry was even considered for the post was surely due to the social aspect of colonial and revolutionary governments, of which Maryland was no exception. These governments were run by relatively small groups of fifty to one hundred men who all knew each other fairly well. When one segment of that group became interested in someone, the others could not help but hear of it. The Carrolls and probably the Tilghmans had exerted their influence on McHenry's behalf.

Doubtless pleased to find a group of men who appreciated his talents, McHenry stayed in Baltimore until March while he and local Maryland dignitaries took the other's measure, each apparently approving of what they saw. Certainly McHenry was welcomed practically everywhere, for he was a close associate of General Washington and could tell the locals much about the war effort that they would be hard pressed to learn elsewhere.

But soon that very war effort reclaimed McHenry's attention. He was still Lafayette's voluntary aide-de-camp and that began to mean something. In fact, this was the beginning of the second significant event McHenry would experience while serving under the Frenchman's command. Early in 1781, George Washington decided that Benedict Arnold, now serving the British as a commanding officer in Virginia, must be dealt with, and that Lafayette was the man to do it.<sup>42</sup> McHenry, as Lafayette's aide, would at last see action in the South.

It did not escape anyone's notice that fighting in Virginia might well lead to the war spilling northward to Maryland. Since McHenry was in the perfect position to get the best intelligence available, he began an extended correspondence with Maryland's Governor Thomas Sim Lee that would last until the end of the



*Tench Tilghman's influence among Maryland's elite helped secure McHenry's political future. (Maryland Historical Society.)*



war. This reinforced McHenry's growing acquaintance with the most powerful men in Maryland, helping him prove his worth at the most significant levels.<sup>43</sup>

Lafayette, for his part, quickly saw the wisdom of utilizing McHenry's contacts and popularity in Maryland, for it fell on McHenry's shoulders to mobilize and coordinate Maryland's activities. The most pressing problem was to get the Frenchman's troops to Virginia immediately, marching them south from the middle states to the northernmost point of the Chesapeake Bay at Head of Elk. Boats would then transport them to Annapolis, whence they could later move strategically into Virginia. McHenry therefore spent February and the early part of March locating all types of vessels, some to be armed, others for dispatches, others to serve as transports or scows. He contacted not only the governor and council but also the merchants of Baltimore. With their assistance, Lafayette's needs were met. McHenry himself contributed \$110.76 ½.<sup>44</sup> By March 9, 1781, McHenry had joined the troops on board a ship called the *Nesbit*. From there, he continued to oversee such matters as transporting sick soldiers to a hospital. Once McHenry even notified Governor Lee that two British sloops had been sighted in the bay, but he anticipated no danger and none occurred.<sup>45</sup>

Throughout the rest of the war, McHenry continued to communicate on matters of Maryland's safety to the governor and local merchants. In fact, at McHenry's recommendation, Baltimore merchants created a committee to oversee the city's war efforts. Significantly, after only a month the merchants voted McHenry president of the committee.<sup>46</sup>

Probably the merchants selected McHenry to lead them because the mer-

cantile community in Baltimore had lost its cohesion. Its four leaders, Charles Ridgely, James Calhoun, William Lux, and Samuel Purviance, had taken to feuding. Calhoun and Lux had accused Ridgely of attempting to divide the patriots, which Ridgely denied; this naturally caused hard feelings that were difficult to smooth over. And Purviance had fallen out badly with the popular party's leaders in Annapolis. It seems that Chase, Johnson, and Carroll had invested in the Illinois-Wabash, Indiana, and Vandalia companies that were fighting with Virginia over the ownership of western lands, but Purviance had taken Virginia's side. The alienation of Purviance in turn led to a rift between Baltimore and the powers in state politics from which the Baltimore community had not recovered.<sup>47</sup>

Baltimore had a political power vacuum into which McHenry slipped, facilitated by his expertise in military matters. In April, Baltimore merchants decided they needed a decent harbor defense. To accomplish this, the committee opted to construct two "look-out boats," which McHenry feared would be ineffective. Convinced that he could not sway the Baltimore populace, McHenry privately urged Governor Lee to support construction of a galley instead. This expedient apparently worked, for McHenry wrote Lee later in the same month that the galley was almost complete.<sup>48</sup> McHenry's fear for Baltimore peaked again early in August when the British moved and many thought Baltimore the target. Instead, the British went to Yorktown.<sup>49</sup>

In the meantime, General Daniel Morgan had won the Battle of Cowpens and Greene met General Lord Cornwallis at Guilford Courthouse. Although there the Americans withdrew in a technical loss, Greene's troops had fought well and seriously punished Cornwallis, who now found himself in need of men, supplies and respite.<sup>50</sup>

McHenry still hoped that Lafayette might join Greene, but the latter expected orders to move momentarily, he knew not where. In the interim, there was no point in Greene's sending for the Frenchman. Instead McHenry spent the rest of March aboard the *Nesbit* serving Lafayette and Maryland simultaneously. The work was strenuous and by the end of March he was sick once again.<sup>51</sup>

As if being sick were not bad enough, on April 3, Congress finally agreed to make McHenry a major "from the time at which Genl. Greene applied in his favr. (last octobr.)."<sup>52</sup> One might expect this recognition to have pleased McHenry, but he had long since stopped thinking in terms of rank and now thought in terms of flexibility. He had not completely lost his desire to see important military action, but he knew that being a volunteer without rank had its advantages. He could take whatever opportunities presented themselves without having to ask anyone's permission, and he could serve in the army for as long as he wished, then leave it should something come up, say in politics.

By July something did indeed come up in politics. His friend, Colonel Uriah Forrest, had returned to Maryland and decided to push for McHenry. Forrest

was auditor general for the state, had served with the Maryland forces, and had surely met McHenry at Washington's headquarters. Forrest was now based in Annapolis, where he had ample opportunities to put in a good word for his friend. For his part, McHenry was still ambivalent. He desired a political position, was tired of the war, yet still found it difficult to leave. Realistically he knew that his health had suffered during his war service. Since Forrest proposed a place for him in either the council or the senate, McHenry expressed his preference for the council, which he thought would be less taxing physically.<sup>53</sup> Of course, he would take either place.

By September, however, it became apparent that an interested Maryland hesitated to give him a post because they thought his rank as major tied him to the army. Quickly, he wrote to Governor Lee that he had not asked Congress to give him rank (Greene had made the request, and McHenry had desired it; after Congress's initial refusal, McHenry had considered the matter closed). When Congress gave him the rank, he was insulted by their sluggishness and believed he was due a lieutenant-colonelcy, the same rank of the other aide-de-camps. After all, majors and colonels did abound in the military, and he had served for quite some time. McHenry had therefore simply ignored Congress and continued to serve as a volunteer. But, in case Governor Lee required it to satisfy Maryland politicians, McHenry enclosed a resignation of his military office, asking Lee to use it only if necessary. He was still not burning any bridges unnecessarily, and even continued searching for a place in a more active command.<sup>54</sup>

In June, McHenry was called back to the southern army, not knowing if he would serve Lafayette or Greene but suspecting the latter. Since Lafayette still wanted McHenry, Greene deferred, writing to McHenry, "I am persuaded you are useful to him in moderating military ardor, which no doubt is heated by the fire of the modern hero."<sup>55</sup> The desires of Washington and Lafayette won the day.

McHenry continued to pine for another commander late into August.<sup>56</sup> He cared deeply for Lafayette (he would later name his estate Fayetteville in honor of the Marquis), and the affection was mutual. But he was convinced that Lafayette was too low in the military hierarchy ever to lead an important or decisive command. Americans were not eager to give important commands to foreigners. Despite this, McHenry served Lafayette well. His rapport with the Baltimore merchant community came in handy when Lafayette needed money, because, on July 1, McHenry helped arrange and witness a personal loan of £1500 to Lafayette from the Baltimore merchants.<sup>57</sup>

By now it was clear that their task was to keep a close eye on Cornwallis and harass him without provoking an attack, for the British had seven thousand men in Virginia while Lafayette had half that number. In fact, with this disparity in men, one of Lafayette's first problems was to convince Cornwallis that the American army was actually much larger. Accomplishing this, McHenry wrote,

required "sorcery and majic, and I have reason to think that it had its effect." Under the circumstances, it was all the army could do. "We have done nothing, and, I hope will do nothing; although, there is nothing I wish for so much as to do something. This is an enigma, which I must leave to time to explain."<sup>58</sup>

But Cornwallis would not let that state of affairs continue. Although he was on the Virginia peninsula with the York River to the north and the James River to the south, he had not yet settled on a location. By crossing the James and moving to Portsmouth, the British general thought he could accomplish two goals at once: he hoped to leave the peninsula and injure Lafayette's command. Thus, he planned his own "majic."

Cornwallis sent part of his forces ahead across the James in a way that suggested he was crossing with the entire army and left Colonel Banastre Tarleton in the rear to act as a decoy. The Americans began pursuit, and Lafayette sent Wayne ahead in reconnaissance. When Wayne saw Tarleton and only a few British units remaining on his side of the river, Mad Anthony decided to attack. Before long he saw his mistake—the bulk of the British army had not crossed the James but lay before him, and his force was about to be swallowed up. Cornwallis expected the Americans to beat a hasty retreat that would become a rout, but to the astonishment of the British, Wayne deployed his men for a bayonet counterattack. A short fight ensued that allowed Wayne's men to execute an orderly retreat. All in all, the Americans were pleased that the losses were not greater and they had fought well. Cornwallis moved south toward Old Point Comfort without having inflicted a serious blow on the Americans, but the British commander soon decided that this site was less defensible than Yorktown, to which they returned.<sup>59</sup>

The British move northward precipitated McHenry's fears for Maryland in early August. "Cornwallis," McHenry wrote Governor Lee, "is a modern Hannibal." He warned the inhabitants of Baltimore that if they could not provide a galley and a boom for the town's protection, they might be wise to transport everything movable, people and things, out of the town.<sup>60</sup>

To the Americans' surprise, Cornwallis remained at Yorktown. Yet McHenry remained unenthusiastic. Not until August 28 did he begin to comprehend the possible significance of Yorktown, and even then his comprehension was partial. For he now heard that the French admiral, Comte François J. P. de Grasse, was sailing his fleet from the West Indies, where the French had taken command of the waters from the British two years before, to the Chesapeake.<sup>61</sup> This created an unexpected opportunity for the Americans, because Cornwallis's force rested on the York River next to the Chesapeake Bay. If the French could control the bay, Cornwallis would have to move by land, and by land he could be surrounded. Cornwallis's army was vulnerable. So Washington secretly moved his troops from New York to Virginia, warning Lafayette not to allow Cornwallis to escape

south to the Carolinas. To that end, Lafayette sent Wayne north of the York River to guard the few British troops on that side while the Marquis (and McHenry) tried to keep Cornwallis against the York.<sup>62</sup>

McHenry communicated this information to Governor Lee by private letter. At last, McHenry had awakened to the possibilities. After all of his military service, and all of his attempts to extricate himself, he would not quit the army now. "A propos, should the state make me a civil man, I must beg a week or two's indulgence in this quarter, but this will be a hereafter consideration."<sup>63</sup> Maryland did not ask him to leave. By September 1, Cornwallis was nearly encircled. "Cornwallis is at York . . . General Washington . . . at or near the head of Elk; Count de Grasse in the Bay; and some of his frigates in [the] James river," McHenry told Governor Lee.<sup>64</sup> McHenry, along with Washington, was primarily concerned that the French fleet might not be able to stay long enough to force the British to surrender.

The British were not going to give up without a fight. On September 5, with the arrival of Admiral Thomas Graves and the British fleet, they attempted to aid Cornwallis by sea. The French fleet sailed out of the bay to meet them and engaged the British off Cape Henry. The two fleets maneuvered, only occasionally engaging, until they were off the coast of North Carolina, whence they slowly started to move back north. Finally, on the night of September 9, the British ships left for New York. The French commanded Chesapeake Bay. Thus, when Washington arrived at Yorktown, prospects could hardly have appeared brighter, especially when de Grasse informed Washington that he would try to stay until the end of October if necessary. McHenry remained cautious, for "when we reflect that war is like an April day, it will temper our mind to disappointment."<sup>65</sup>

Washington, however, did not intend to be disappointed. He spent the rest of September perfecting the American and French positions and earthworks. The allied land forces surrounded Cornwallis in a semicircle, leaving only the swamplands unmanned. At strategic points, they dug trench earthworks or redoubts for added protection. Occasionally the British fired on the allied soldiers, but generally did little harm. Washington now planned parallel trenches, by which he could close in for an assault.<sup>66</sup>

On October 6, McHenry wrote the Maryland governor, "Tonight we begin to work upon our first parallel. This siege will be a very anxious business." Three days later the first parallel was nearly complete with hardly a problem, but he feared that digging the second parallel, still closer to the British, might mean storming some of the British works nearby and result in loss of life. American spirits were nevertheless high. "A Major General and his division mounts the trenches twenty-four hours in every three days; and this is a place in which few men wish to sleep," he informed Lee.<sup>67</sup> Though McHenry served his turn and had hoped to open the second trench, that honor went to Baron von Steuben's men.

Part of the second parallel had to cover ground that the British held with earthworks. Those works had to be taken, one by the French, the other by the Americans. On October 14, Colonel Alexander Hamilton (who finally got his command) led the American attack with some of Lafayette's men. Probably Lafayette and McHenry observed from the second parallel, where they were "exposed to a heavy fire from the enemies gun[s] during the attack on the redoubt." McHenry was "much fatigued by three days and two successful nights' duty," but the effort was crucial. As a staff officer, even a voluntary one, this was as close to the fighting as McHenry could get, and he could now honestly say that he had been in battle. After all his maneuverings to be assigned to another command, there was now no more important place than with Lafayette and Washington. So he assisted Lafayette while Hamilton and Laurens attacked. It was a resounding success and the Americans were ecstatic.

As soon as the success of the Am[erican]-arms was ascertained, the Marquis desired Major McHenry to hasten to the redoubt and congratulate Col. Hamilton [and] Laurens in his name. The first officer he recognized was his friend Col. Laurens – when embracing him [Laurens] he exclaimed here is caesar but where is Alexander – He is safe replied Laurens.<sup>68</sup>

Still, the British were not quite ready to surrender. Two days later they attacked the second parallel and spiked the American guns but did no permanent damage. Cornwallis could now only retreat across the York. Some British crossed the river that night but winds were high and the water too rough to send the entire army over. They had no choice but to surrender.

On October 17 a British officer under a white flag opened negotiations with Washington, and the next day commissioners agreed on terms. Two days later the papers were signed, and that afternoon the surrender ceremony occurred. Cornwallis, pleading illness (which few believed then or now), sent his second-in-command to surrender his sword. Ever mindful of protocol, Washington referred the British officer to his second-in-command; the British were then informed where to lay down their arms. As they watched the men in red march to the mound of guns to surrender their own, no one, including McHenry, knew for certain that it was the end of the war. In fact, more fighting did occur, claiming the life of John Laurens.<sup>69</sup> But they must have sensed it was the beginning of the end.

For England, Yorktown was a catastrophe in an otherwise terrible year. She had suffered "defeats in India, the loss of West Florida and Tobago, heavy losses of merchant shipping, Minorca invaded, the French and Spanish fleets riding once more in the mouth of the Channel."<sup>70</sup> If England was not willing to stop fighting, she was willing to talk about peace. Now McHenry had to know that it



*The British surrender at Yorktown. (Maryland Historical Society.)*

had all been worth it. This last year of service to the cause had been awkward while he searched for a place in an important command, a place where he could be useful and receive recognition. It had also been a year of accomplishment, for Lafayette and Maryland had needed him. In the end, McHenry and the other men in his circle of friends were rewarded for their earlier services to Washington with active roles at Yorktown, the most decisive military engagement of the war.

Further, because of his service with Washington McHenry had widened his contacts in Maryland, who now opened the doors of a political career to him. The Maryland elite apparently appreciated his education, willingness to work, desire to improve his station, and his presentable demeanor, commendable characteristics in a young politician. McHenry saw clearly that opportunities existed in Maryland which were not available in Ireland, and, like the true American he had become, McHenry intended to make the most of them.

In the euphoria after the victory at Yorktown, McHenry left the military. Of course, at the time nobody could be certain that the war had essentially been won. British troops still held parts of the country—New York and South Carolina—and with their powerful navy were capable of retaking the offensive. Still, a serious blow had been dealt England on the American front, persuading the king's ministers to negotiate for peace. Americans would have to face the after-



*James McHenry in later life, by Saint-Memin.  
(Maryland Historical Society.)*

math of war and the challenges of self-government. This was the world McHenry was about to enter.

In his absence, a Maryland Electoral College had selected McHenry state senator, and he was sworn into office on November 30, 1781. Undoubtedly, the support of Uriah Forrest, the Carrolls, and Mathew Tilghman had been decisive; the last even served on the committee that examined the report of the Electoral College. It was Tilghman who reported McHenry's election to the Senate.<sup>71</sup> Clearly, Maryland politics beckoned, and therein lay McHenry's future.

But McHenry had created this opportunity through a combination of hard work and making influential friends. Finding his way into Washington's military Family had been the critical step. From that point, doors began to open. It was here that McHenry met Tench Tilghman and consequently Matthew Tilghman, a man prominent in Maryland politics. This appears to have served as his entry into the higher echelons, for all of the most important men knew each other and their circles of acquaintances. Apparently, it was at Washington's headquarters that McHenry also met Maryland's adjutant general, Uriah Forrest, who would promote McHenry at Annapolis. Through Washington he came to serve Lafayette, who required him to make the most of his Maryland contacts, strengthening those ties in the process. He also corresponded with Maryland's governor as well as Baltimore's civic leaders in an effort to assist with the state's defense. His hard work had proven to Maryland's leaders that he was capable and reliable, and they now welcomed him.



## NOTES

1. For a more detailed account of McHenry's early career, see Karen Evelyn Robbins, "James McHenry: His American Experience" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1994), chaps. 1–4.
2. Norman K. Risjord, *Chesapeake Politics, 1781–1800* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 73; Ronald Hoffman, *A Spirit of Dissension: Economics, Politics, and the Revolution in Maryland* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), 2; Philip S. Crowl, *Maryland During and After the Revolution: A Political and Economic Study* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science, series LXI, no. 1, 1943), 18.
3. Robert Brendan McDowell, *Ireland in the Age of Imperialism and Revolution, 1760–1801* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 173. Also Maude Glasgow, *Scotch-Irish in Northern Ireland and American Colonies* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1936), chaps. 3 and 4, and pp. 83, 113–14.
4. Risjord, *Chesapeake Politics*, 16.
5. Hoffman, *A Spirit of Dissension*, 10, 61–67.
6. Thomas C. Pears Jr., "Colonial Education Among Presbyterians (Concluded)," *Journal of Presbyterian History*, 30 (1952): 169.
7. Benjamin Rush, *Letters of Benjamin Rush*, L. H. Butterfield, ed., 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951), 1:83–84.
8. David F. Hawke, *Benjamin Rush: Revolutionary Gadfly* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1971), 84.
9. Barbara Christian Gray Wingo, "Politics, Society, and Religion: The Presbyterian Clergy of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York, and the Formation of the Nation, 1775–1808" (Ph.D. diss., Tulane University, 1976), 2, 23, 62, 104–7, 224–26.
10. Benjamin Rush, *Autobiography of Benjamin Rush* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1948), 109–11. An excellent and thorough account of just how Philadelphia mobilized for the Revolution can be found in Richard Alan Ryerson, *The Revolution is Now Begun: The Radical Committees of Philadelphia, 1765–1776* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978), esp. 33–38. Ryerson credits Rush with radical patriot leadership, and in many ways documents the mobilization of the lower and middle classes.
11. Note of pay due McHenry from Dr. John Cochran, Director of Military Hospitals, July 25, 1775, McHenry Papers, reel 3, container 11, Library of Congress (hereafter LC).
12. Harvey E. Brown, *The Medical Department of the United States Army from 1775 to 1873* (Washington, D.C.: Surgeon General's Office, 1873), 21; James E. Gibson, *Doctor Bodo Otto and the Medical Background of the American Revolution* (Menasha, Wis.: George Banta Publishing Co., 1937), chap. 11.
13. Gibson, *Doctor Bodo Otto*, chap. 11 and p. 110; Worthington G. Ford, ed., *Journals of the Continental Congress*, 34 vols. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1904–37), 5:705.
14. The military portions of this account are gleaned from the relevant portions of the following: Don Higginbotham, *The War of American Independence: Military Attitudes, Policies, and Practice, 1763–1789* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977, paperback ed. printed in cooperation with Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1971), ch. 7; Cols. R. Ernest and Trevor N. Dupuy, U.S.A., retired, *The Compact History of the Revolutionary War* (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1963), 68–71.
15. Bernard C. Steiner, *The Life and Correspondence of James McHenry, Secretary of War Under Washington and Adams* (Cleveland: Burrows, 1907), 10–12. McHenry to Washington,

January 31, 1777, McHenry Papers, reel 1, container 3, LC. Philadelphia was their most likely destination.

16. Higginbotham, *War of American Independence*, chap. 8.

17. John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., *The Writings of George Washington*, 39 vols. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1931–44), 8:352.

18. No document explaining how and why McHenry was offered such a position survives.

19. There were two exceptions out of thirty-two, Tench Tilghman and John Laurens. John C. Fitzpatrick, "The Aides-de-Camp of General George Washington," *DAR Magazine*, 57 (1923): 2.

20. McHenry to Daniel McHenry, May 15, 1778, McHenry Papers, reel 1, container 3, LC.

21. See Tench Tilghman in *Dictionary of American Biography*, Dumas Malone, ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), 18:543, 545; Hoffman, *A Spirit of Dissension*, 113–14.

22. Risjord, *Chesapeake Politics*, 72, 74; Hoffman, *A Spirit of Dissension*, 113–14.

23. *Ibid.*, 243–47.

24. Chase and Charles Carroll of Carrollton had argued before, over the confiscation of Loyalist property, and would argue again, but they set aside those matters when larger issues required. See Risjord, *Chesapeake Politics*, 75. It is also worth noting that Risjord (77) is quite clear that the rifts were over issues and not personalities.

25. McHenry to Daniel McHenry, August 15, 1778, McHenry Papers, Reel 1, Container 3, LC; Fitzpatrick, "Aides-de-Camp," 4.

26. See letters McHenry wrote for Washington in 1778 in John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., *The Writings of George Washington*, vols. 22–30.

27. See the following letters in Fitzpatrick, ed., *The Writings of George Washington*: Washington to Brigadier General William Irvine, January 4, 1780, 17:347–49; Washington to "Brigadiers and Officers Commanding Brigades," January 6, 1780, 17:358; Washington to Major General Heath, January 14–15, 1780, 17:395–98.

28. Hamilton to John Laurens, January 8, 1780, in Syrett, ed., *Hamilton Papers*, 2:255.

29. Dupuy, *Compact History of the Revolutionary War*, 324. Higginbotham, *The War of American Independence*, 352–53.

30. Dupuy, *Compact History of Revolutionary War*, chap. 23, and Higginbotham, *The War of American Independence*, 328–29.

31. Higginbotham, *War of American Independence*, 250.

32. McHenry Papers, reel 1, William L. Clements Library (hereafter WLC), University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

33. McHenry to Washington, July 11, 1780, McHenry Papers, reel 1, container 3, LC.

34. This account comes from McHenry's nephew John, who heard this from his uncle. See Steiner, *The Life and Correspondence of James McHenry*, 29. Also see Hamilton to James Duane, January 8, 1780, Syrett, ed., *Hamilton Papers*, 2:364.

35. Stanley J. Idzerda, ed., *Lafayette in the Age of the American Revolution, Selected Letters and Papers, 1776–1790*, 5 vols. to date (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1977– ), 3:xxii.

36. Hamilton to James Duane, July 22, 1780, Syrett, ed., *Hamilton Papers*, 2:363–64, and Philip Schuyler to Hamilton, September 15, 1780, *ibid.*, 2:543–44.

37. James Thomas Flexner, *The Traitor and the Spy: Benedict Arnold and John André* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1953), 366–67, 371–72. See also Mitchell, *Alexander Hamilton: Youth to Maturity*, 210–21.

38. Dupuy, *Compact History of Revolutionary War*, 166.

39. Ford, ed., *Journals*, 18:992–93.

40. McHenry to Mr. Von Riper, blacksmith, Wayne MSS, 11:86, MS Division, Historical Society of Pennsylvania (hereafter HSP).
41. Hoffman, *Spirit of Dissension*, 179–80; *Archives of Maryland*, 70 vols. (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1883– ), 45:287–88.
42. Dupuy, *Compact History of Revolutionary War*, 242.
43. Most, although not all, of this correspondence is published in a book entitled *A Sidelight on History, Being the Letters of James McHenry, aide-de-camp of the Marquis De La Fayette to Thomas Sim Lee, Governor of Maryland, Written During the Yorktown Campaign, 1781* (privately printed, 1931; reprint edition New York: The New York Times and Arno Press, 1971).
44. McHenry to Governor Thomas Sim Lee, February 4, 1781, 4603–46, Maryland State Papers (hereafter MSP), Maryland State Archives, Annapolis. J. Thomas Scharf, *The Chronicles of Baltimore, being a complete history of "Baltimore town" and Baltimore city from the earliest period to the present time* (Baltimore: Turnbull Bros., 1874), 414.
45. James McHenry to Governor Lee, March 9, 1781, *Archives of Maryland*, 47:114; McHenry to Lee, March 14, 1781, *ibid.*, 47:127.
46. McHenry to Baltimore merchants, March 6, 1781, *ibid.*, 47:116; R. Purviance, W. Patterson, M. Ridley Baltimore, to McHenry, *ibid.*, 47:113. For his presidency, see McHenry to Lee, April 7, 1781, 4603–48, Maryland State Papers.
47. Hoffman, *A Spirit of Dissension*, 242–43.
48. McHenry to Lee, April 7, 1781, 4603–48, MSP; McHenry to Lee, April 7, 1781, McHenry Papers, reel 1, container 3, LC; McHenry to Lee, April 27, 1781, *Sidelight on History*, 11–14.
49. McHenry to Lee, August 1, 1781, *Sidelight on History*, 41–43; McHenry to Lee, August 6, 1781, *Archives of Maryland*, 47:383.
50. Dupuy, *Compact History of Revolutionary War*, 404.
51. Greene to McHenry, March 22, 1781, McHenry Papers, reel 1, container 1, LC; J. B. Cutting to McHenry, March 29, 1781, *ibid.*, reel 1, container 3.
52. Ford, ed., *Journals*, 20:541.
53. See *Archives of Maryland*, December 31, 1779, 43:68; January 25, 1780, 43:70; and May 13, 1781, 43:494. McHenry to Colonel Uriah Forrest, July 26, 1781, McHenry Papers, reel 1, container 3, LC.
54. Royster, *Revolutionary People at War*, 91; McHenry to Lee, September 1, 1781, *Sidelight on History*, 58–59. McHenry attempted unsuccessfully in early April to transfer to General Mordecai Gist's command. McHenry to Mordecai Gist, April 9, 1781, McHenry Papers, reel 3, container 11, LC.
55. McHenry to Lee, June 9, 1781, *ibid.*, reel 1, container 3, and Major General Nathanael Greene to James McHenry, July 24, 1781, *ibid.*, reel 5, container 14.
56. McHenry to Colonel Otho Holland Williams, August 27, 1781, Ferdinand J. Dreer Autograph collection, 10:1, volume: Presidents I, 15, HSP.
57. Lafayette to Smith, Young, Neill and Bowley, July 1, 1781, MS 1814, Maryland Historical Society.
58. Dupuy, *Compact History of Revolutionary War*, 431–32. The number of men naturally varied, but this number seems to be correct for the beginning of July. McHenry to Lee, *Sidelight on History*, 24–25; McHenry to Colonel Otho Holland Williams, July 4, 1781, Dreer Collection, vol. MOC III, 97, HSP.
59. McHenry to Lee, July 7, 1781, *Sidelight on History*, 19–21; Dupuy, *Compact History of Revolutionary War*, 430–31.
60. McHenry to Lee, August 6 and 25, 1781, *Sidelight on History*, 43–44, 54.

61. Mackesy, *War for America*, 273.
62. Higginbotham, *War of American Independence*, 378–80.
63. McHenry to Lee, August 28, 1781, *Sidelight on History*, 55–56.
64. McHenry to Lee, September 1, 1781, *ibid.*, 60.
65. McHenry to Lee, September 15, 1781, *Sidelight on History*, 63. Higginbotham, *War of American Independence*, 381–82, and Mackesy, *War for America*, 423–24.
66. McHenry to Lee, October 2, 1781, *ibid.*, 64–65. See Christopher Duffy, *The Military Experience in the Age of Reason*, (New York: Atheneum, 1988), especially chapter 8, “The March of the Siege.”
67. McHenry to Lee, October 6 and 9, 1781, *Sidelight on History*, 66–68.
68. “Taking of the English Redoubt at Yorktown by the American troops,” McHenry Papers, reel 1, WLC.
69. Franklin and Mary Wickwire, *Cornwallis: the American Adventure*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1970), 386; Higginbotham, *War of Independence*, 413.
70. Mackesy, *War for America*, 435.
71. Journal entries for November 20, 24, and 30, 1781, Journals, Minutes and Proceedings of the Upper House (Senate), A.1.a., Maryland Legislative Records, in William Sumner Jenkins, ed., *Records of the States of the United States of America; A Microfilm Compilation* (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress Photoduplication Service, 1949).

Book Excerpt

# The Life of Benjamin Banneker

SILVIO A. BEDINI

**T**his fall the Maryland Historical Society will publish a revised and expanded edition of Silvio Bedini's definitive biography of Benjamin Banneker, first issued by Scribner in 1972. We are pleased to present as an introduction, the first chapter of that masterful work, entitled "The Heritage and the Land."

Benjamin Banneker lived his entire life, which spanned three quarters of the eighteenth century almost to the day, in Baltimore County in tidewater Maryland. During his lifetime he witnessed major changes in the development of Maryland, from an English province to a state in the new republic. He and the members of his family were at the same time victims and beneficiaries of many of the colony's problems and their resolutions during this period, so that the story of Banneker's life becomes, in many ways, the story of eighteenth-century Maryland.

Much of that part of central and southeastern Maryland known as the tidewater was still a wilderness at the end of the seventeenth century. It was a rich, wild region divided by a waterway which created the eastern and western shores. In contrast to the lower horizon of the opposite side of the bay, the western shore was more elevated and undulating, presenting vistas of open fields in green valleys against a dark background of dense forest that studded the sturdy, low hills.

Separating the shores was the great Chesapeake Bay, from three to eight miles wide and extending from the capes at its ocean entrance 170 miles north to its head at the mouth of the Susquehanna River. Feeding into this great body of water were forty-eight tributaries, from two to one hundred miles in length. Many of these rivers were navigable and sufficiently wide and deep to permit seagoing vessels to penetrate them for considerable distances.

The bay's tides moved up the western shore for a distance of approximately thirty miles, seeking the openings of major waterways such as the Severn, South, Rhodes, and West Rivers, and finally the broad mouth of the Patapsco River. The tides crept fully twenty miles up the Patapsco from its entrance between Rock

Point and North Point, until the river narrowed considerably as it turned westward. It began to lose its tides at the mouth of a great gorge at the river town of Elkridge Landing. The larger vessels that came to trade with the surrounding countryside could not proceed up the Patapsco but lay at anchor off North Point, where they received their cargoes by river transport.

“Patapsco” was an Indian name that appears in at least nineteen variations in the colonial records. It derived from the word *pota* in the Algonquin language, meaning “to jut out,” *psk* meaning “a ledge of rock,” and the locative *ut* meaning “at,” so that the original form was *Pota-psk-ut* or “at the jutting ledge of rock” or “at the rocky corner.” Originally this was applied not to the river itself but to a place on the river that has been identified as “White Rocks.” This was a formation of limestone ledge which projected over the river opposite the point where Rock Creek joins the Patapsco River. Still prominent today and well known to fishermen, it rose much higher out of the water and displayed a more extensive surface when white men first came into the region. Captain John Smith did not use the name Patapsco, and when he explored the Chesapeake region in 1608, he named the river Bolus. Patapsco first appeared on a map in 1660, and in the land records only several years before that date with the first grants made in the region.<sup>1</sup>

Scattered along the river were occasional towns or seaports, now extinct, which were established in thinly settled sections of the tidewater region after the mid-seventeenth century. Created by an act of the Assembly, the towns were directed to be self-supporting, and the inhabitants of neighboring regions were required to bring their products to the towns to be sold in the warehouses established for that purpose. By the same token, ships entering the rivers from the bay were required to anchor at these ports and unload their cargoes in exchange for local products. The towns thus supported themselves on warehouse fees. In addition to the warehouses, agents of merchants in Glasgow, Bristol, and London maintained stores that sold clothing, hardware, stationery, agricultural tools, and other imported goods that provided comfort and luxury to the primitive community.

Each town had its own “husting,” or court, with jurisdiction over ordinary offenses and civil suits. The first buildings to be erected in each new river town were a church, a guildhall or courthouse, and warehouses. A town council governed the community. Market days were established several days a week, during which an active business was carried on. Autumn fairs of four and five days’ duration attracted inhabitants throughout the region. Buyers and sellers came together to negotiate the sale of farm and plantation produce. Minstrels and mountebanks furnished entertainment, and common games of chance competed with a variety of outdoor sports and horse races. Slaves and tracts of land were frequently raffled during these gatherings. Many towns contained a slave

market, where slaves were unloaded from the ships and sold for labor on the plantations. Londontown, for instance, was designated in 1706 as a port for the unloading of Negroes in addition to wares and commodities, and cabins of unusual construction existed east of the town and survived until recent times.<sup>2</sup>

Such river towns sprang up along the Patapsco's shores at the end of the seventeenth century, but none existed very close to the area in which this story takes place until the first quarter of the eighteenth century. Probably the most important community in the area was the first county seat of Baltimore County. It was a small community, also called Baltimore, established on the Bush River in what is presently Harford County. The old Baltimore was originally intended to become the capital city of the province of Maryland. In 1674 an act of the Assembly authorized the erection of a courthouse, and two years later an ordinance was passed designating sites where inns could be kept. Old Baltimore was the county seat for twenty-five or thirty years, after which it was removed to Gunpowder, where it remained until 1712. Few records were maintained during this early period because of the sparseness of the settlements, thus creating particular difficulties for the historian.

The tobacco plantations on both sides of the Patapsco were farmed by slave labor. Because communication was limited, each one formed a separate community independent of the outside world. Large numbers of artisans—blacksmiths, coopers, housewrights, cobblers, and millers—supplied the plantations' needs. Although the major crop was tobacco, many of the plantations harvested a substantial amount of grain for their own use, and some operated their own gristmills. Millers were brought from England, either as free men or as indentured servants. Those larger plantations situated at a distance from the river towns found it necessary to make their own importations. The planters sold their tobacco through English or Scottish agents, and as part of their return they imported goods that were delivered to their plantation wharves by the English vessels calling for tobacco. If prices on the London market were favorable, the planters frequently ordered more goods than they required for the plantation's needs. The surplus was kept in a storehouse from which it was later distributed to non-importing planters and farmers in the region. Sale of such items was announced by the plantation cannon.

Large plantations summoned all workers to begin each work day by firing a cannon at sunrise. When a planter had selected those items which he needed from the shipment and was ready to dispose of the balance, he fired his cannon at sunset. This was a signal recognized by other planters and farmers throughout the area, and during the next several days they would find time to call at that plantation to purchase or trade for their needs. Included in such sales was a wide range of agricultural implements, a variety of cloth, from the most common sort to fine brocades and silks; china and glassware; books, wines, shoes, and

many other goods which were not produced in the province. Planters and farmers arrived on horseback, sometimes with one or more pack horses in tow if they anticipated making substantial purchases.

The plantations were connected with each other and with the river towns by horse trails and by the "rolling roads" in a network that branched out in all directions, like the strands of a cobweb. The "rolling roads" were an unusual form of thoroughfare created for the transportation of hogsheads of tobacco by hand from the plantations to the docks. The method employed was quite ingenious. Each hogshead served as its own means of transportation by having a pin or gudgeon fastened into each end; hoop shafts were attached to these, and fastened to the collars of horses, which thus rolled the load to the docks. Often a similar device was used for hauling the hogsheads by laborers. Another simple means was to have the hogsheads rolled merely by manpower.

These "rolling roads" survived to become the basis of the highway system throughout the region. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the law required that all public and main roads be cleared and grubbed fit for travel twenty feet wide. The roads that led to the county courthouse were to be marked with two notches on the trees on both sides of the road, and another notch at a distance above the other two. Any road leading to a place of public worship was marked with a slip cut down the face of a tree near the ground. Another important means of travel was provided by the river and its tributaries. The province maintained ferries over the rivers and other large streams, which provided a means of transporting the hogsheads of tobacco by water when it was more convenient.

Tobacco dominated the lives of most people in the province of Maryland from the earliest period of its colonial existence. The crop was grown upon at least one-half of Maryland's arable land and provided the chief product and support of its people as well as the foundation of its trade and commerce. Tobacco culture severely limited the cultivation of grain and prevented the introduction of manufactures. The currency of the colony was in tobacco, and even the county payment was made in this tender.

The emphasis of an entire province on a single commodity had additional unfortunate results. Tobacco production soon increased beyond its true value, and its price consequently fell until a new code regulated its production and retarded its depreciation. It was not until 1763 that the colony passed a "tobacco code" "to amend the staple of tobacco, for preventing frauds in His Majesty's customs and for limiting the fees of officers." This act provided for the most minute details of inspection, warehousing, and shipment of tobacco, as well as punishment for opening hogsheads, burning, and stealing. Every provincial officer as well as every laborer in the province was to be paid in tobacco, all debts could be discharged in tobacco, and all duties were to be paid with it. Because of



the importance of the product, stringent laws for its purity and for its inspection were strictly observed.<sup>3</sup>

The production of tobacco did not, however, totally obscure other needs. From time to time the Assembly passed laws to encourage industry and manufactures. Efforts were made to promote the raising of provisions and the erection of water mills for producing flour for export. However, it was not until the eve of the War for Independence that these efforts achieved some success.

Few communities existed on the Patapsco River in the late seventeenth century. Occasional large plantations flourished on both sides of the river in the mountainous regions. The upper reaches of the Patapsco with its great falls provided a wealth of water power which was harnessed to operate small mills, but large sections remained virtually unexplored and uninhabited. Farther up the gorge from the site of Elkridge Landing, steep hills rose on both sides of the river, with rocky ledges overhanging the impressive mountain torrent.

A low valley that extended just below the great falls was locally known as "The Hollow." It was enclosed on all sides by sloping hills densely covered with trees and undergrowth. Wild turkeys were plentiful, and herds of deer found shelter there. Among the major threats to travelers were wildcats living there in rocky ledges and caverns near small streams, unhindered from the time of the Indian settlements. Before the land became thickly settled, wolves roamed the region, sometimes in packs of forty or fifty. The unfortunate sometimes encountered bears and snakes, including the black snake, red-bellied water snake, corn snake, and rattlesnake.

It was in this region that our story begins, with the arrival of an Englishwoman named Molly Welsh, at about the turn of the century. There is no certainty about the correct spelling of Molly's last name inasmuch as no documents relating to her have survived. Both "Welsh" and "Walsh" have been used, but it is likely that the former is the correct version. Young Molly, a servant or milkmaid on a cattle farm, said to be in Wessex County, England, was doing her chores at milking time, when a cow knocked over a pail of milk. Her employer accused her of stealing the milk, and for this offense Molly was arrested.

According to the criminal code in England at that time, stealing was one of more than three hundred felonies for which the penalty was death on the gallows. Cruel as the system was, it was mitigated by two means, the pleading of clergy and royal pardon. When a person was convicted of a felony, he had the privilege of "calling for the book." If the prisoner could read the book, sentence of death was reduced to branding of the thumb. The other method was the judges' submission, after each session, of a list of persons considered worthy of mercy. A pardon under the Great Seal could then be issued for those listed. It was the ability to read that saved Molly from death on the gallows.

Conviction as a felon during this period was not necessarily evidence of

crime; the least excuses were used to gather involuntary convicts for shipment to the American colonies to supply labor for the plantations. Although it was not legal to penalize a felon with transportation or exile, it was possible to pardon him on the condition that he or she leave the country. Soon after the beginning of the seventeenth century, Parliament modified the common law to enable certain classes of offenders in the clergy to be sentenced to transportation. By the middle of the seventeenth century a system of conditional pardons was refined and continued in use for a century to come. The new system required that after each major assize the justices submit to the secretary of state a pardon signed by two justices for those convicts believed worthy of reprieve from the gallows. When the document was signed by the king, countersigned by the secretary of state, and passed to the chancery, it was issued. The prisoners then appeared in open court to plead their pardons; if successful, they then became available for shipment overseas, for a period of exile fixed at seven years. The sheriffs made arrangements for transportation with merchants trading in the plantations, and the latter realized their profit from selling the convicts as indentured servants overseas.<sup>4</sup>

No organized system for transportation of convicts existed, and they frequently underwent great hardships before they arrived in the colonies. They were often made to await the next jail delivery while held in the care of sheriffs who made no provision for their support. The sheriffs were not permitted to deliver felons to the transporters without a license. Despite repeated petitions that Parliament enact legislation to improve the situation, many years passed before any action was taken. Selection of the ship on which the felons were to be transported was left to the discretion of the sheriffs, who consigned the prisoners to one of the captains who had petitioned to transport convicts. Payment of a bond was required from the merchants to give security to the sheriffs for the safe conveyance of their charges.<sup>5</sup>

The voyage from England to the New World was a terrible experience for anyone, but for the transported convicts it was almost unbearable. Judged by modern standards, the vessels were extremely small, few being over two hundred tons. The number of passengers they carried varied from 150 to two hundred, including as many as twenty-five under twelve years of age. The ordinary price for passage from England to Virginia and Maryland was six pounds, although it was sometimes reduced for large parties. The length of the voyage varied from 47 to 138 days. Often after the ship's departure from London, it could be delayed by storms which detained it in another English port for several weeks before getting under way.

The great uncertainty about the length of the voyage invariably caused problems in providing sufficient food and water for passengers and crew. Since the food consisted chiefly of bread or ship biscuit, salt meat, peas, and cheese, the

difficulty arose primarily from lack of space for storage. The passengers generally received the same rations as the sailors, consisting of a weekly allowance of seven pounds of bread, cheese and butter, and a weekly allotment of one half pound of pork, with peas on five days. After arrival in Chesapeake Bay, a vessel might spend three or four months calling at various ports to deliver English goods and collect tobacco for the return voyage to England.<sup>7</sup>

Shipmasters disposed of the felons and indentured servants as their vessels moved up the Chesapeake Bay to the river landings, their planned arrival duly announced in the local newspapers. For example, a notice in the *Maryland Gazette* told of the arrival on June 29, 1767, of the ship *Blessing's Success* from London with "a parcel of healthy country servants, for seven years; amongst which are many valuable Tradesmen . . . to be disposed of on board the said Vessel laying in the North West Branch of Patapsco River on Friday the Third Instant."<sup>8</sup>

A similar announcement which appeared several years later read:

Just imported from Bristol, in the Ship Randolph, Capt. John Weber Price, One Hundred and Fifteen Convicts, men, women, and lads: Among whom are several Tradesmen, who are to be sold on board the said Ship, now in Annapolis Dock, this Day, Tomorrow, and Saturday next, by Smyth & Sudler.<sup>9</sup>

The transported convicts were popularly called "Seven Year's Passengers" or "King's Passengers," and frequent advertisements in the local newspapers announced their arrival. The announcements varied, and occasionally a writer with a wry sense of humor reported the arrival of "Eighty passengers, sent in for the term of Seven Years on account of their Ingenuity," or the arrival of "Sixty-eight of His Majesty's Seven Years Passengers, who had too much Ingenuity to be suffer'd to live in England."

Although the laws of Maryland prohibited the importation of convicts, it is probable that transported convicts were nevertheless permitted to land, possibly under the title of indentured servants, when they came within the right of clergy. Whatever the case, Molly Welsh arrived in the province of Maryland around 1683 on an English vessel that docked at one of the major ports of entry, which may have been Providence (later re-named Annapolis) or Londontown. There she was sold, in accordance with the custom, to defray the cost of her passage. Purchased by a tobacco planter with a plantation on the Patapsco River, Molly was required to work seven years as an indentured servant to pay for the voyage.

The role of the "servant" in the colonies requires definition. A servant was in fact any person brought into the colonies for hire, and great numbers in this category arrived who indentured themselves for varying periods of time in or-

der to to work off the costs of transportation and board of the overseas voyage. There was great need for workers on the plantations and in the cities of the New World, and English shipmasters searched out and assembled persons in all conditions of poverty from the English cities and the countryside of England. They transported them at their own expense, well aware that they would recover their investments and with profit on the colonial shores. These dregs of humanity included not only farm laborers and house servants but also tradesmen and craftsmen, such as carpenters, masons, mechanics, shipwrights, and members of the educated but frequently impoverished class, teachers and clerks, who were eagerly sought as tutors or as clerks on the plantations.

The period of indenture ranged from five to seven years and was a form of voluntary slavery. During the period of service the employer was required to provide clothing, food, shelter, and washing, and in return the servant was required to be obedient at all times, to serve his master well, and particularly not to steal. A master could not punish a servant with more than ten lashes for a single offense. No servant was permitted to travel a distance of more than ten miles beyond his master's premises without a written pass.

Upon completion of the period of servitude, a reasonable provision was made to enable the servant to establish himself or herself in gainful employment. In the province of Maryland, the freed servant was entitled to receive fifty acres of land, an ox, two hoes, a gun, and clothing. Clothes, in the case of a man, included a new suit of kersey, stockings, a hat, and shoes. Each woman was provided with a skirt and waistcoat of penistone (a coarse woolen cloth), a linen smock and a blue apron, two linen caps, stockings, shoes, and three barrels of Indian corn. Although the new landholder received the land without cost, he was thereafter required to pay an annual quitrent in order to keep the land for himself and his heirs. Shortly after the first landings in the province, however, the land allotments were reduced to one half of the original acreage, and the system was abandoned altogether in 1683. Thereafter land was available only by purchase.<sup>10</sup>

Molly worked out the period of her indenture faithfully and without incident. She was reasonably well treated by her master, and she made use of her time by learning as much as she could about this new country, so different from her own. Whether she was a house servant or a plantation hand is not known, but the latter seems more likely, since she was later able to develop a small farm of her own. Finally, around 1690, Molly won her freedom. There was little that a single woman could do in the wilderness by herself with the few items she acquired with her freedom rights; and it must have been a bewildering prospect. Molly was a courageous and strong-willed woman, however, and after considering all possibilities, she decided to establish a farm of her own. She had neither money nor other forms of legal tender with which to purchase land, and had

received none as part of her freedom fees. Her only prospect was to rent a small farm for a modest fee, to be paid annually in tobacco, located on a suitable and inexpensive tract of land in the undeveloped region not far from the edge of the Patapsco and adjoining a tributary called Cooper's Branch. It was situated conveniently near the rolling road, approximately twelve miles north of the mouth of the Patapsco.

Her new home was in the midst of wilderness, but it held few terrors for a woman who had already survived such experiences as Molly had undergone. At first she worked alone, clearing a small section of the land that was relatively free of large trees, and planting her bushels of Indian corn as well as some tobacco. She concentrated on the care of her crops, and she had rewarding harvests. She had no friends, and there were in fact very few people living in that region. There may have been one or two Indian families living in cabins some distance away, but there was no Indian settlement of any size at that time. Occasional references occur in the Baltimore County court proceedings to Indian residents of the county, and reports of the Baltimore County Garrison noted the existence of Indian cabins from time to time. Indians were attached to the fort built in the county in 1692 and paid in a type of garment called "green matchcoats" instead of money.<sup>11</sup>

Although Molly worked alone, she probably received some assistance in the beginning from friendly neighboring planters or their employees. She was evidently very industrious, and became a successful farmer. From time to time she put aside a little tobacco or money until at last she was able to purchase land of her own, perhaps the very piece of ground she had been farming. This was an impressive achievement, and her new status as a landowner gave Molly impetus to carry on. After several years had passed she had put aside enough tobacco, besides that which she sold to fill her needs, to purchase some assistance for managing the farm.

Molly had deliberated over this action for many months. She could not afford the highest quality of slaves, because they brought good prices and were quickly sold after arrival at the major ports of entry. She had taken the time to visit the nearby river towns when English or New England ships moved northward up the bay to sell their slaves. She had also given thought to buying one or two male slaves from one of the "soul drivers" or "soul agents" who came along the rolling roads several times each year, driving gangs of slaves that had remained unsold on shipboard. Too frequently these were ill or otherwise in poor physical condition. The system prevailed into the nineteenth century, and Robert Sutcliffe, for one, reported having encountered such gangs several times during his travels between Baltimore and Georgetown between 1804 and 1806.<sup>12</sup>

Molly was opposed to slavery on general principle, particularly after her own experience, but when she evaluated the alternatives she found herself without

choice in the matter if she meant to survive and prosper in this strange new world. Once her decision had been made, she planned to carry it out when she next delivered her tobacco crop to the landing. Tradition handed down in the family reported that in 1692 Molly purchased her two slaves "from a ship anchored in the Bay." This would have been one of the larger English or New England slave ships that could not navigate the Patapsco and anchored outside North Point. It would have been necessary for Molly to make her way down the river, which she may have done with her tobacco crop at the end of the summer.<sup>13</sup>

In the late seventeenth century, traders purchased slaves at a prime cost of £4 to £6 per head and sold them in Virginia and Maryland at prices ranging between £16 and £20. The prices rose to £40 per head by the mid-eighteenth century. Prices fluctuated according to age, sex, physical condition, and particular accomplishments of the slaves, and also with the season. Higher prices for slaves were realized in the Chesapeake during the spring and early summer, due to the need for extra labor on the plantation during the working months. Prices dropped sharply after the crops were harvested near the end of the year.

Molly was able to pay only modest prices, and then in tobacco credit. She finally selected two young male Negroes from those offered. One of them looked particularly healthy and strong, and she quickly visualized his usefulness on the farm. The other lacked these characteristics, but there were qualities about him that she could not identify but which appealed to her. Furthermore, his price was particularly reasonable and she was certain he would be a good investment.

Molly's hopes were quickly realized in her first choice, and her fears were confirmed with the second. The strong slave, whose name has not survived, proved to be extremely energetic and willing to work, and he soon adapted himself to the climate and the farm labor. He seemed to enjoy felling the great trees to clear another section of the farm, and he assisted her in erecting the new tobacco building she needed, as well as with other chores.

The other slave was otherwise inclined. He was neither as strong nor as adaptable as the first, and although Molly assigned him the lighter tasks of the farm, he was not disposed to work willingly. Molly gradually managed to communicate with him and learned a little of his background. His name was Bannka or Bannaka, he told her, and he claimed to be the son of an African chieftain. Molly spoke of him later as an African prince, the son of the king of his country. He had been captured by slave traders, sold to a slave ship, and brought to the American colonies. Despite his royal blood, or probably because of it, Bannka was unfamiliar with manual labor, and Molly had great difficulty in utilizing him on the farm. All that is known about Molly and Bannka relies on descriptions and anecdotes handed down in the Banneker family from one generation to another, and subsequently collected in interviews with survivors and contemporaries conducted by Martha Tyson decades later. According to one description, he was

“a man of bright intelligence, fine temper, with a very agreeable presence, dignified manners, and contemplative habits.”<sup>14</sup>

The origins of Bannka have been the subject of much speculation, concerning his nationality as well as the actual spelling of his name. According to contemporary records, his name was Bannka, Bannaka or Banneka, and his claim to have been a prince was resolved as being the son of a king in Senegal, on the western coast of Africa. Subsequent research conducted in Senegal by Dr. Ron Eglash confirmed that Bannaka was a native of Senegal, and probably of Wolof ethnic origin. A Wolof given name or first name of *Banne* is to be found in Senegal, and appears to have a semantic relationship to the term “nectar,” inferring a person of sweet or serene disposition. The name *Banne* in Wolof dialect is a feminine given name or first name sometimes given by Wolof mothers to their sons; it cannot, however, be passed on from that son to one of his sons.

Although *Ka* is not a surname in the Wolof language, it exists in the Peul dialect, and there had been intermarriage between the two ethnic groups. It is not likely that one would have the name of his ethnic group, but it is possible that when Molly Welsh first asked her slave his name that he answered with the name of his people. This seems to be unlikely for the son of a tribal chief, however. Wolof men are sometimes given their mother’s first name, so that it is possible that Bannaka’s name derived from that of a Wolof mother and of a Peul father. That the Bannaka name was derived from a Wolof-Peul combination seems likely in view of the prevalent caste system maintained during this period, which permitted members of different ethnic groups to marry if they were of the same social caste. However, Banneker’s extremely dark skin color is associated only with that of the Wolof ethnic group in the Senegambian region.<sup>15</sup>

Eglash has pointed out that stronger identification comes from the linguistic historian Pathé Diagne, who cited the Wolof name *Banakas* as being derived from the royalty of the Wolof kingdom of Walo, presently in the St. Louis region of northern Senegal. Diagne states that the name *Banakas* can be traced to the Arabic word *Tanakas* meaning “belongs to the place” which was later west-Africanized with the consonant B replacing the T. There were many chiefs under each ruler and there was in fact a ruler of the Walo region in northern Senegal named Yerim Mbanyik Aram Bakar, who reigned in the years 1640–1674. The names “Mbanikas” and “Banakas” also were names associated with royalty of the Walo region. “Banakas” is an Africanization of the word “Tanakas.”<sup>16</sup>

During the period that the Senegambian slave trade prevailed and for years thereafter, slaves from that region—described as tall and slender black-skinned people standing straight and proud—were favored among American plantation owners and generally given preferential treatment and assigned light work around the house instead of labor in the fields. The Walo region became a considerably more vulnerable source of slaves since its economic situation was much more

fragile than that of other Wolof kingdoms, and because its location exposed it directly to the European slave traders.

That a member of a royal family could be captured and sold as a slave can be explained by the fall of the region to the Tubenan religious revolution in 1677. According to historian Joseph E. Holloway, large numbers of slaves were taken from Senegal, which was then referred to as "Guinea," as a consequence of religious revolts that occurred in that region between 1670 and 1700, and brought to the United States. "Guinea," as a designated region, changed over time, and when Bannaka was kidnapped and enslaved "Guinea" referred to the area extending from modern Ghana to Nigeria. Large numbers of Wolofs were enslaved and transported in the late seventeenth century, a dark period in Senegambian history. Around 1670, Holloway wrote,

. . . the Wolof, or Jolof, empire broke up into a number of kingdoms owing to a revolt instigated by Mauretanian marabouts [a dervish in Muslim Africa believed to have supernatural power]. The disintegration of this one-time empire caused instability, resulting in prolonged warfare as the Cayor region attempted to sublimate other secessionist states. Each Wolof state tried to fill the power vacuum. The long-term effect of this instability and continual warfare was that large numbers of Wolofs were taken as prisoners of war, sold to slavers, and transported to America. But after the seventeenth century the Wolofs were never again to provide a significant number of Africans to the American slave market.<sup>17</sup>

As well as can be determined, the greatest number of slaves were provided not from the continent's interior but from areas within a radius of two hundred miles of the ports of departure, generally from the west coast of Africa, particularly "the basin of the Senegal River," "the Guinea Coast," and the Niger Delta. The ethnic groups Mandingo, Malinke, Bambara, Wolof and Fula were included in the Senegambia region. This also explains why members of a royal family, or of the family of a tribal chief, would be taken, as has been documented for other Wolofs sold into slavery.<sup>18</sup>

After several years had passed, Molly Welsh gave her two slaves their freedom. In general, manumissions were rare in the province of Maryland, and then usually given because of blood relationships or in recognition of good and faithful service. Slaves might be manumitted by one of three methods during the early history of Maryland: by word of mouth, by last will and testament, or by means of a deed. A formal statute of 1752 abolished the first two methods. Although manumission by deed was rarely employed prior to this date, it became a standard practice by the time of the American Revolution. Molly Welsh's unnamed



diligent slave joined the Christian faith, but Bannka held to the beliefs of his African ancestors, as well as his name, which eventually was changed by popular usage to "Banneky."<sup>19</sup>

Soon after Molly's slaves became free, she married Banneky, probably in about 1696. She did so at considerable risk to her own freedom, for Maryland laws governing miscegenation were stringent at that time. The intermarriage of white and black was regarded as a serious problem in several of the British colonies in North America after the middle of the seventeenth century, and legislation regarding its control became increasingly strict and was rigidly enforced. The status of the two classes of servants, the white servant and the Negro slave, varied greatly because the former became free upon the expiration of his term of service, whereas the slave generally remained in servitude all his life. By 1661, Maryland was forced to enact a law which specified:

And forasmuch as divers freeborn *English* women, forgetful of their free condition, and to the disgrace of our nation, do intermarry with negro slaves, by which also divers suits may arise, touching the issue of such women, and a great damage doth befall the master of such negroes, for preservation whereof for deterring such free-born women from such shameful matches, be it enacted, That whatsoever free-born woman shall intermarry with any slave, and after the last day of the present assembly, shall serve the master of such slave during the life of her husband; and that all the issues of such free-born women, so married, shall be slaves as their fathers were. . . .

And be it further enacted, That all the issues of *English*, or other free-born women, that have already married negroes, shall serve the master of their parents, till they be thirty years of age and no longer.<sup>20</sup>

The law was further enforced by a revision in 1681, but miscegenation continued, and new laws later enacted to prevent it only produced a greater problem, the need to provide for the care of illegitimate children resulting from such marriages. By 1681 it had become illegal in Maryland for any minister to join in marriage any Negro and "a white woman servant freeborn." As of 1684 any such woman who married a Negro or bore his child forfeited her freedom and became a servant "to the use of the Minister of the Poor of the same Parish." Laws even more stringent were enacted in 1715 and 1717 in Maryland, providing severe punishment for any white man or woman who cohabited with a Negro, free or slave.<sup>21</sup>

Molly Welsh considered the hazards long and carefully before she undertook marriage, but again, once she had made her decision she proceeded without further hesitation. It was a great risk, but perhaps she concluded that her little farm in the wilderness was too remote to warrant the attention of the law.

She changed her name to that of her husband, adopted his people, and thereafter withdrew completely from her white neighbors.

In due time four daughters were added to the Banneky family. The oldest was named Mary, followed by Katherine, Esther, and Jemima. The young family led a peaceful existence in the wilderness, and eventually they prospered. Not for one moment, however, did Molly relax her watchfulness and awareness of the dangers that might threaten her and hers. The unusual circumstances of her family, because of mixed blood, was a subject of unrelenting concern. Official records in that period left much to be desired, and documentary proof of her and her family's freedom, though seemingly essential, may never have existed. In many cases, freedom or manumission papers were never written, and the fact that no evidence of any such papers in Molly's case has been found suggests the possibility that none existed originally, and that her family's security always remained in jeopardy.

Meanwhile the region along the Patapsco River was becoming increasingly settled. Several new river towns had sprung up within a day's ride of Molly's farm, and more and more of the land in that part of the country was being developed into tobacco farms. Prominent among the new settlements was Joppa Town, established in 1707 on the tract of land called Taylor's Choice, northwest of Foster's Neck. Located near the mouth of the Gunpowder River at the intersection of several rolling roads that passed through Baltimore and Harford counties, it replaced the former county seat on the Bush River. Joppa served as the county seat from 1712 to 1768 and rapidly achieved prominence as a major exporting center for the tobacco trade. This was as a consequence of an Act of Assembly of 1724, which specified that planters bringing their tobacco to the port of Joppa for sale and shipment received a 10% credit against any debt they might owe the buyer. This method of paying old debts not only proved to be popular but also had a beneficial effect upon the commercial growth of Joppa. Soon after its establishment as a county seat, Joppa had not only a courthouse, prison and pillory, and tobacco warehouses, but also many town houses of imposing size and construction built by affluent officials and merchants. These homes, which formed a social center for the community, were at some distance from the taverns, warehouses, and teeming wharves where English vessels frequently docked to collect tobacco and deliver imported goods. Joppa grew quickly in size and importance, and by 1750 had become a thriving port town with some fifty private residences in addition to warehouses and public buildings. Ships from New England and from the West Indies and Europe made regular calls. The community developed a lively social life as merchants and travelers came to visit friends and attend the local race track.

By 1750 Joppa's fate was already predetermined, however, by the competition that soon developed from Baltimore Town. This new community on the

Patapsco River, first settled in 1730, superseded Joppa as a commercial center and became the new county seat in 1768. Contributing to Joppa's decline were the timber cutting along the Gunpowder that had caused the harbor to fill with silt, and a smallpox epidemic that decimated the population. As inhabitants moved to more prosperous Baltimore, storehouses and wharves fell into ruin, the prison and courthouse buildings were sold, and all that remained in the ghost town were a few gravestones.<sup>22</sup>

Another river town of growing importance was Patapsco, later renamed Elkridge Landing. This town, a residential and trading center for farmers, together with the small village of Rag Landing on the Baltimore County side of the river, were the towns most accessible to upper Patapsco Valley residents during the early eighteenth century. Located at the termini of several rolling roads, Elkridge Landing provided an outlet for much of the tobacco produced in Baltimore and northern Anne Arundel counties. Elkridge Landing was established in 1725 by the second Caleb Dorsey of Hockley, who had added to the lands his father had accumulated and opened iron mines, built forges and mills, and developed a port of entry from which he shipped his products to England. He became known as "the rich iron merchant of Elkridge Landing," and in 1738 he built Belmont, an imposing family mansion that still survives. Although the tobacco trade greatly decreased during the Revolutionary War, Dorsey's forges and furnaces busily produced arms for the Continental Army.<sup>23</sup>

The first sadness to strike Molly's family was the death of Banneky, at a relatively early age. Perhaps his constitution had been undermined by the severe winters to which he was unaccustomed, or he may have been a victim of one of several epidemics of yellow fever that raged through the region at the time. Once more Molly found herself alone, with the additional burden of four young children to raise. When the children were old enough, they assisted her with the chores. The years passed quickly, and suddenly Molly realized that her children were grown and soon, one by one, they would marry and leave her. By this time, she had secured her land, and she began to consider the future of her children.

#### NOTES

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  22. J. Thomas Scharf, *History of Baltimore City and County From the Earliest Period to the Present Day, Including Biographical Sketches of Their Representative Men* (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1881), 43–47; *Maryland, A Guide to the Old Line State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 326–27.
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## Book Reviews

*The Complete Colonial Gentleman: Cultural Legitimacy in Plantation America.* By Michal J. Rozbicki. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998. 233 pages. Notes, index. \$35.00, cloth.)

In this monograph, Michal J. Rozbicki tackles the difficult issues of cultural legitimacy and the creation of a genteel identity in colonial America. For years historians have wondered how wealthy colonial Americans attempted to pattern themselves after their English counterparts in search of a similar, genteel, hierarchical society and ultimately ended up with a democratic one. No easy answer exists; the question of how colonial elites changed from imitating English culture to rebelling against it persists. In contrast to those historians who have argued that the English pursuit of gentility and the idea of being a gentleman could not take place in the colonies because society there was too provincial, too rural, too commercial, too uneducated, etc., Rozbicki argues an opposing case. Using Virginia as his foremost example “because of its well-crystallized and sophisticated gentry class” (5) and the important role its upper class played in creating the new country, Rozbicki proposes that the rise of the colonial elite was made possible because colonial gentlemen followed “current English models of social advancement and prestige” and because their pursuit of gentility was “one of the more stabilizing elements of . . . colonial culture” (4). Rozbicki argues that the colonials’ success in establishing a genteel culture based on, but not identical to, England’s made the leadership of the Revolution possible.

This is a tall order for a short book, but for the most part Rozbicki presents his thesis adroitly. The first chapter discusses the concept of cultural legitimacy, how historians have used it in the past and the possible existence of genteel culture in colonial America. In the second chapter he traces the origins of gentility and describes the life of a gentleman in England and the problems inherent in transferring such a culture to the colonies. The third chapter examines the duality of provincialism, demonstrating that while English gentlemen considered the colonies and their inhabitants “provincial,” aspiring colonial gentlemen used other “provincials”—especially Indians and slaves—so as to appear their betters. Chapter four addresses the role that objects and taste played in the pursuit of gentility, and chapter five discusses the colonial elite’s success in creating a genteel society based on, but not identical to, the English model.

In the end, Rozbicki argues that colonial gentlemen derived a strength and self-confidence from their hard-earned genteel society that made them able to stand up to, and break away from, England. Genteel Americans such as George

Washington, Thomas Jefferson, William Byrd, and Maryland doctor Alexander Hamilton almost certainly did not understand where “natural rights” and “equality” eventually would take their country, but they knew it would be in a direction different from England.

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*The Lord Cornbury Scandal: The Politics of Reputation in British America.* By Patricia U. Bonomi. (Chapel Hill and London: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, by the University of North Carolina Press, 1998. 304 pages. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95, cloth.)

In this book, Professor Bonomi debunks the legend of the transvestite behavior of Edward Hyde, Viscount Cornbury, a first cousin of Queen Anne, who governed New York and New Jersey from 1702 to 1708. Her argument rests essentially on the assertion that if Cornbury really had engaged in transvestite behavior, he would have attracted much more notice, and it would have been recorded far better than it was. The contemporary testimony is sparse, second-hand, uncertain in tone, and issues from Cornbury’s political opposition; more importantly, the testimony describes behavior of such a public and emphatic sort that had it actually taken place, the records of Cornbury’s life would have reflected it in a much more decisive way.

This is not a book about a transvestite, then, and those interested in the history of gender and sexuality will find it of limited interest. Professor Bonomi’s discussion of transvestitism is, more than anything else, a tribute to the ease with which modern scholars incorporate a growing body of secondary literature on sexual and gender issues into the examination of subjects that involve those issues only peripherally.

Other good reasons exist for perpetuating a story than the fact that some believe it to be true, and Professor Bonomi brings to bear another rich body of secondary literature in her examination of the nature of gossip and scandal in the eighteenth century. Accusations of gender ambiguity or sexual perversion were among the wide range of possibilities available to the burgeoning Grub Street press for use in discrediting public figures. Whether there was any foundation in fact for such scandal was irrelevant to the utility in political warfare of the symbolic power of sexual reference. Political events of 1998 make Professor Bonomi’s examination of the topic only too pertinent. When she reminds us that “the notion that any political group, when out of power, might function positively as a loyal opposition simply lay beyond the mental horizon of these

premodern leaders" (101), the reader is tempted to ask whether we are not, in fact, still in the premodern period in that respect.

The accusations against Lord Cornbury involved not only transvestitism but corruption and mismanagement, and those accusations, too, have been preserved in the historical record without much contradiction. Over a third of this book is devoted to a biography of Cornbury and an examination of his career in the colonies. Since the publication of *A Factious People: Politics and Society in Colonial New York* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), Professor Bonomi has reigned unchallenged as one of the chief elucidators of that time and place, and one cannot imagine the task set forth here better performed. Indeed, in this portion of the book we approach the theme which (to scholars of American history, at least) may be its most provocative contribution.

Professor Bonomi sees the accusations of corruption against Lord Cornbury as an early emergence of the "Country" ideology, which perceived chaos as conspiracy and any governor from abroad as a potential adversary. Bonomi makes the case that one of the reasons for the lingering opprobrium attached to Cornbury's name is that we are still writing the history of colonial America from a "Whig" perspective. Without necessarily abandoning this perspective for a "Tory" viewpoint, we can approach an examination of Cornbury's career in America with a sense of the validity of the task he had been set—to maintain and improve the coherence and unity of the administrative bonds between London and its North American empire. We may find that, quite apart from the unpleasant prickliness of his personality, Lord Cornbury's insistence that colonials toe the line of a discipline imposed by a distant and uncomprehending government is unattractive to a vision possessed by the hindsight of the "necessity" for American independence. But to pass judgment on him or on the many other loyalists who play such an important role in Colonial history, simply on the basis of their having been on the "wrong side," is to commit an act of bias that is no longer tolerated against so many of the other social groups in colonial America that have been misunderstood and prejudged in the past. Bonomi's book serves most usefully as a lesson in the ways in which the rules of eighteenth-century politics are likely to be misunderstood by later historians—rules governing the ways in which values were to be upheld, as well as the grounds upon which opponents were to be disqualified. Her book deserves our gratitude for proving an exception to that general misunderstanding.

GARY RALPH  
*University of Delaware*

*Abraham Lincoln, Constitutionalism, and Equal Rights During the Civil War Era.*  
By Herman Belz. (New York: Fordham University Press, 1998. 288 pages.  
Bibliography, index. \$32.00, cloth.)

Herman Belz's newly published collection of essays provides important insights into the role of law in nineteenth-century America and a well-reasoned critique of post-modernist methodology and the recent historiography it has produced. The author, a highly regarded scholar in Constitutional and political history teaching at the University of Maryland, contends that the Civil War and Reconstruction were not revolutionary events in the history of the American Constitution but instead continued and extended the ideological and legal principles of the Founding Fathers.

The Civil War and Reconstruction can be seen as the means by which Americans addressed the vagaries and inconsistencies in their Constitution that made conflicting interpretations possible. Chief among the Constitutional issues of the sectional crisis were: (1) the character of the Union as either a confederation of independent states or the product of a social contract written by its people; (2) the relative authorities of the national and state governments to regulate liberty, property, and civil rights; and (3) the legitimacy of slavery, and subsequent to its eradication, the meaning of equality and the legitimacy of government action to secure it. In his analysis of the Constitutional thinking of Lincoln and the Congress during this era, Belz contextualizes his own research and conclusions in a historiography largely at odds with his findings.

Belz finds the explanation for this disparity in a basic difference in perspective regarding the nature and purpose of history. In his opinion, the rejection of "historical objectivity" has fostered an acceptance of ideologically constructed portrayals of the past primarily intended to serve "presentist concerns" (232-33). Revisionist historians have depicted Lincoln's wartime actions and the program of the Reconstruction Republicans as precedents for the expansion of federal power and the agenda of pragmatic liberalism. The most aggressive among them argue that lawmakers of the Civil War era consciously rewrote the Constitution to vest the national government with the authority to promote social equality at the expense of state authorities and the protection of property rights. Therefore, though Reconstruction-era legislation failed to realize social equality, more recent social legislation originating in the 1960s has historical precedent and reflects the true values of the American Constitution. These historians, reflecting a post-Freudian world view in which a historical actor's own expressions are discounted as rationalizations or self-serving posturings, reject "conscious rational thought as . . . a decisive influence on history" (49). Belz responds that "it is a requirement of historical analysis to understand historical actors as they understood themselves" (1). To him, this means that on the issue of whether Lincoln and his contemporaries sought to form policies which conformed to or revised prevailing Constitutional parameters, "we can consult no more perceptive or authoritative explanation than the rationale Lincoln himself offered" (35). Belz offers the possibility that "thought and reason" have served as the "basis of



political action" and investigates this proposition in an examination of Lincoln's political philosophy as a premise for "his actions as a statesman" (42–48, 68). He applies the same analytical format to the programs of the Reconstruction Congress.

Belz re-articulates the idea of a "two track Constitution" formulated by Charles L. Black Jr., consisting of both the text of the document and the political philosophy embodied in it (35). He finds that during the Civil War Lincoln and the Republican Congress recognized the limits posed by this conception of the Constitution and strictly adhered to them. This adherence to Constitutional principles not only provides the basis for historically accurate understandings of emancipation and the postwar amendments but also explains why Reconstruction policies did not extend to property redistribution and the creation of positive rights of equality.

Through a careful correlation of Lincoln's political thought and actions, Belz identifies the sixteenth president as a committed constitutionalist and legal scholar who recognized the parameters formed by the law and conformed his policy initiatives and wartime actions to it. He cites Lincoln's prescription that "reverence for the laws . . . become[s] the political religion of the nation" (80–81) and concludes that Lincoln in office "adhered to the Constitution of the framers—its forms, procedures, principles, and spirit—and was guided by it in political action aimed at achieving the ideals asserted in the Declaration of Independence" (73). No greater example exists than Lincoln's abridgment of the scope of the Emancipation Proclamation to conform to the limits of the Constitutional justification of the action contained in the executive's war powers provision (31–32, 91–92, 174). In his analysis of Lincoln's fidelity to law, Belz implicitly refutes the instrumentalists who conceive of law merely as a tool for addressing desired social ends. Belz's Lincoln does have something to contribute to contemporary understandings of law and Constitutionalism, but his contribution is not rooted in the pragmatic expansion of government power. Rather, Lincoln, as presented here, epitomizes the commitment of the president to the rule of law and to the Constitution as the written expression of the nation's political philosophy. He respected Constitutional limits but perceived the Constitution more broadly defined by its purpose—to preserve republican liberty. Whenever he exercised authority to control persons or property he did so pursuant to the Constitutional war powers of the executive. Therefore, his actions "did not constitute a permanent expansion of federal authority" (42).

Reconstruction programs attempted to disseminate free labor ideology throughout the country. The purpose of Reconstruction was to bring the people of the Southern states into conformity with the legal and economic conditions prevailing in the North. Contract law served both as an expression of laissez-faire ideology and an embodiment of the political concepts of freedom and equality

on which that ideology is based. During Reconstruction, contract law governed the approach to the freed slaves taken by the Freedman's Bureau and the legislature. Racially neutral policies entailing minimal governmental interference with property rights recognized a negatively constructed legal equality rather than a positively constructed social equality. States and individuals were prohibited from interfering with the freed slaves' right to contract. To Belz, this is due to congressional adherence to the written Constitution and the republican philosophy on which it is based. The historical actors saw the Reconstruction amendments not as a rewriting of the Constitution but as "a completion of the Constitution which brought the nation's organic law into agreement with the principles of the Declaration of Independence" (173). The scope of the amendments and the legislation of 1866 was limited by the parameters of the two-track Constitution still very much in place since the Founding.

Each Constitutional issue facing Civil War policy-makers resolved so as to protect the federalist system of checks and balances, protect liberty and property rights to the greatest extent possible, and provide for all people a racially neutral environment for the pursuit of private objectives. The union was re-established as a product of the social contract among the people, slavery was abolished, and the national government exercised its rights to check the authority of the states to limit of civil rights.

Belz's new book provides a valuable historical account of how Civil War policy-makers recognized the parameters posed by public law to limit policy alternatives while pursuing broad political goals. In the process, he demonstrates how according historical actors the integrity of their own words and deeds provides a necessary analytical corrective for historical understanding.

MARK D. MCGARVIE  
*Indiana University*

*Orphanages Reconsidered: Childcare Institutions in Progressive Era Baltimore.* By Nurith Zmora. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994. 256 pages. Notes, index. \$19.95.)

Traditional impressions of nineteenth-century orphanages as holding cells for ragged, hungry waifs vanish with this engaging study of Baltimore's childcare institutions. The story that emerges is one of dedicated concern by philanthropists, communities, and orphanage personnel who made the ideological and practical commitment to prepare Maryland's orphans for successful adulthood. It is also a story of children who learned middle-class values and aspirations in these homes only to return in frustration and confusion to the poor families and neighborhoods from which they came.

The author carefully researched and meticulously analyzed the records of

three Baltimore orphanages from the late 1880s to their closure in the twentieth century. The Samuel Ready School for Girls, the Hebrew Orphan Asylum, and the Dolan Children's Aid Society provide good examples of religious and ethnic diversity in dealing with the needy children of the Industrial Age. The well-endowed Ready School housed Protestant girls of the "worthy poor" whose situation in life declined after the death or disability of a parent. The Hebrew Orphan Asylum had no initial endowment but drew heavily from the Jewish community in its mission to aid the young. The Dolan Home sheltered the Irish Catholic poor in the port city of struggling immigrants. Despite these obvious differences, the author found striking similarities in the practices and goals of these institutions.

These homes provided an academic education, proper manners, and domestic and vocational skills. The children did not necessarily follow the job choice of their parents but were encouraged according to their abilities. Some pursued a college education while others trained as clerks, teachers, seamstresses, and in scores of other trades that would make them self-sufficient adults able to contribute to the support of their families. They achieved a remarkable level of education in an era when there were no obligatory school attendance laws. Zmora's research shows that orphans in this sample gained significantly higher levels of learning than their peers.

Zmora's attention to detail is the strength of this work, and she leads the reader skillfully through dozens of case examples to build her new view of late-nineteenth-century orphanages. Her cautious and analytical style does not allow for many quotes from her subjects, but the personalities of the leaders and some of the children still come through her samples. By using tables, percentages, and institutional records, the author presents operating costs, demographics, quantitative measures of food and clothing, and reasons for admission. The result is a profile of children who were "half orphans." Most had one living parent who turned them over to the homes because they simply could not care for them in the pre-welfare world. This well-crafted and important work would be stronger if the author had compared her samples with other orphanages of different types, and if she had told her story against the backdrop of orphan homes in pre-Progressive Era Baltimore. Without these contrasts and an awareness of rhythms of change the reader is left wondering whether these three homes were exceptional or commonplace.

The orphanages come forth in this study echoing the early-nineteenth-century view of raising children to be useful citizens of the republic, despite the Darwinian pessimists who saw no hope for the poor and disadvantages. The homes opened on the eve of the Progressive Era and quickly adopted the reforms in health, nutrition, recreation, and education that became the standard for successful childcare and that elevated the job to one of the new professions

by the turn of the century. Zmora has done an admirable job opening the doors of Baltimore's orphanages and exposing muckrakers' tales of ragged and hungry waifs as fiction.

PATRICIA DOCKMAN ANDERSON  
Baltimore

*Olmsted's Sudbrook: The Making of a Community.* By Melanie D. Anson with a Foreword by Charles E. Beveridge. (Baltimore: Sudbrook Park, Inc., 1997. 230 pages. Photographs, appendices, notes, bibliography, index. \$25.)

*Way Back When in Sudbrook Park.* By Beryl Frank. (Baltimore: Sudbrook Park, Inc., 1997. 66 pages. Photographs, bibliography, list of interviewees, index. \$13.)

Anyone who lives in Sudbrook Park, who appreciates Sam Bass Warner's *Streetcar Suburbs: The Process of Growth in Boston* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962) or who is interested in the early twentieth-century competition between the developers of Sudbrook Park and Roland Park should read Anson's book. Those with an interest in vignettes from Sudbrook Park's social life and some of its first families, along with pictures of their houses, should buy Frank's book as well. The books may be purchased together from Sudbrook Park, Inc.

Anson's book begins as though it is about the firm founded by Frederick Law Olmsted, his adopted son John Charles Olmsted, and Frederick Law Olmsted Jr., who were in charge by the time that Sudbrook Park's development started in 1889. The book's underlying theme involves right and wrong ways to do large-scale development 110 years ago. This means location, transportation, and money. Sudbrook Park, near Pikesville, depended on the capricious Western Maryland Railroad for transportation to Baltimore. Its competitor, the Roland Park Company, had trolley service. Sudbrook Park was initially capitalized with seventy-five thousand dollars. Its sponsors had a total of one million dollars in assets. Roland Park was backed by a firm with twenty million dollars in assets, largely British. Its initial capitalization was one million dollars. There was really no match. Anson's book fills in some of the details.

Sudbrook Park development pre-dated Roland Park's by two years. Unlike Roland Park and most other developments with grid patterns, Sudbrook Park featured a more graceful curvilinear road design. This reflected the taste of the man who assembled the 850-plus acres between 1852 and the mid-1870s. That was James Howard McHenry, descended from Revolutionary War hero, physician, and statesman James McHenry, and Col. John Eager Howard, fifth governor of Maryland and a United States senator. McHenry died before development could begin. The man who took the lead in Sudbrook Park development was Hugh L. Bond Jr., from another of Baltimore's old families. Fortunately, both communities were developed before the ugly, cheap, clear-cut style of de-

velopment began during the 1930s. Surveyors hated Olmsted's curvilinear designs. When one asked an Olmsted how to "translate" the plan to stakes (for roads) on the ground, Olmsted replied, "the curves we always draw 'freehand' in order to get them graceful."

Chapters eight and nine, with one notable exception, are the best in the book. They describe the problems of finance and marketing by developers who got their inspiration largely from the British. The first part of Roland Park was designed by George E. Kessler of Kansas City. This helps explain the dispute (not mentioned by Anson) between Roland Park and Kansas City over which had the first "shopping center" in the nation—Kansas City with its Alameda Center or Roland Park with its Tudor-style block on Roland Avenue across the street from Roland Park Presbyterian Church. Sudbrook Park hoped to overcome its capital shortage by depositing two hundred dollars from each lot sold into a fund designated to pay interest for financing. Unfortunately, by 1895 Sudbrook Park, with shallow pockets, had sold only twenty-six houses, while Roland Park, with deep pockets, had sold more than 250. Lots in Sudbrook Park, Anson informs us, were selling for about one thousand dollars an acre. In Roland Park, she claims they were selling for \$122,000 and houses for \$185,000! Actually houses in Roland Park in 1900 cost buyers between \$4,000 and \$5,000. The lots in Roland Park were smaller than Sudbrook Park's, where they were often larger than two acres and cost more.

There are a few other irritations in these uneven though overall worthwhile books. In some instances one more good edit would have helped, such as where Anson tells us that perhaps some of Olmsted's planting plans will be found someday. Readers may be confused when Frank explains that "the sea level was higher in Sudbrook Park than Roland Park" but may assume that Frank is referring to elevation. On the other hand, she informs us about interior designs and a number of details about prices and assessments that faced the early homeowners. Anson gives us architectural drawings and front and side elevations for a house at 507 Sudbrook Lane. There are many good maps of Sudbrook and Pikesville, including plot plans, and Anson informs us about certain misspellings such as changes in street names. This attention to detail and the extensive notes reassure.

Both communities were built for Baltimore's upper middle and elite classes. Anson tells us more about business life, Frank about Sudbrook Park's social life. Frank also gives us some vintage pictures of Sudbrook Park from the Victorian era, for example one of Dr. Samuel Kemp Merrick and his family on the lawn in front of their house at 517 Sudbrook Lane, which they purchased in 1897. By their front porch is a horse and buggy with driver under the porte-cochère. Frank's book, which describes dances, galas, dinners, and affairs at the Sudbrook Hotel, the community's social center and a summer resort, is less a history and more a

collection of reminiscences with information drawn from sixty-seven interviews. The main part of the book describes various houses and the families who occupied them.

Both books reflect the maleness and whiteness of the era, although each mentions a significant women's organization. Anson informs us that the Sudbrook Club was formed in 1946 because the Sudbrook Park Improvement Association "had never been successful at involving women and that remained a men's organization." Anson mentions that the community restricted Jews and African-Americans but does not tell us if there were restrictive covenants similar to those which rival Roland Park required home buyers to sign. Frank tells of the Adana Road Bridge Club, founded in 1945 and still going strong. Bridge games often lasted until midnight, after which women could walk to their homes, fearless. The houses reflect the more graceful style of living of another time, and one wishes that some of the customs of that era had been preserved as well as the houses have been.

TED DURR

*University of Baltimore*

## Books in Brief

Edited by Ronald Hoffman and Peter J. Albert, *The Bill of Rights: Government Proscribed* continues the Perspectives on the American Revolution series published for the United States Capitol Historical Society.

After the drafting of the Constitution in Philadelphia in 1787, there was no guarantee that the document would readily be adopted. Instead, strident opposition erupted at the convention, presaging similar Antifederalist changes in many of the states. The resulting process of negotiation between the Federalists and the Antifederalists produced the first ten amendments to the United States Constitution, the Bill of Rights. The volume comprises ten essays, ranging in focus from the scope of the governing authority provided by the Bill of Rights, to the debate over its organizational and governing consequences.

University Press of Virginia, \$42.50 cloth

Drawing primarily from the published records of Charles, Prince George's, Frederick, and Anne Arundel counties, author Elise Greenup Jourdan has written the sixth volume of *Early Families of Southern Maryland*. The author focuses on ten families, including Ashaman, Hawkins, Dyer, Beall and related families. Her sources are land and church records, as well as court and probate records. In addition to family lineages, the indexed book records christenings, marriages, and burials.

Family Line Publications, \$ 32.00

David V. Heise has compiled Eastern Shore records in *Worcester County, Maryland Orphans Court Proceedings, Vol. I: 1777-1800*. Founded in August, 1777, the Orphan's Court adjudicated matters related to guardianships, apprenticeships, indentures, and the probate of estates. Heise's book includes the names, ages, and trades of apprentices and orphans, and lists petitions for release from indenture, as well as penalties for failing to provide for wards. The book is also useful for researchers of African-American history, as it includes indexes listing the names of free blacks and slaves.

Family Line Publications, \$ 32.00

The University of Nebraska Press has released 3 paperbound reprints under the Bison Books imprint. Together, Ella Lonn's *Desertion During the Civil War* (\$12.00); Robert Penn Warren's *The Legacy of the Civil War* (\$8.00); and *Letters Home: Henry Matrau of the Iron Brigade*, edited by Marcia Reid-Green (\$11.00), portray contrasting viewpoints of the Civil War.

Ella Lonn's *Desertion During the Civil War* was originally published in 1928;

it explores the causes and consequences of desertion from both the Northern and Southern armies. Drawing on official war records, the author finds soldiers deserted for various reasons, including cowardice, lack of food, clothing, and equipment, and concern about family safety.

“The Civil War was, for the American imagination, the great single event of our history,” declares Robert Penn Warren at the opening of *The Legacy of the Civil War*. Writing for the war’s centennial, the Pulitzer-prize winning author examines the multiple social, economic, and psychological costs of the war. He also addresses popular misconceptions, including several concerning Abraham Lincoln and the issue of slavery.

Marcia Reid Green’s *Letters Home: Henry Matrau of the Iron Brigade* features sixty-three previously unpublished letters from a young Civil War soldier to his family in Bainbridge Township, Michigan. A sixteen-year-old when he joined the Union army in 1861, Matrau served in the Sixth Wisconsin Regiment, one of the units of the “Iron Brigade.” The letters were edited by his great-granddaughter, Marcia Reid-Green.

D.B.S.



## In the Mail

*Editor:*

I was quite surprised that my friend, Jean Russo, thought there was adequate basis for characterizing William Paca as having a “dubious reputation,” either relative to women or in general. I have yet to see any facts to support it.

To begin with, no one (not even Dr. Russo, unless I’m mistaken), places much credence in what Edward Tilghman Jr. said in the letter on which the article was based. Second, if the real issue is the fact that William Paca fathered two illegitimate children, it should be noted that both were conceived very soon after the death of his first wife, Mary Chew, when he was “distraught”—to use the words of his biographers, Dr. Gregory Stiverson and Phebe Jacobsen. The circumstances of his life during that period deserve further scrutiny, if we are to be fair about it.

I am not aware that we condemn other men of the period, like Benjamin Franklin, for such indiscretions, nor of anything to suggest that William Paca’s peer group did the same of him. To the contrary, it seems he was generally thought of as a man of high principle. Therefore the fact that this is now in the public domain, to be used or mis-used forever after, is disturbing.

Sincerely  
*Ned Paca*  
*Alpharetta, Georgia*

*Editor:*

I was just recently looking through a copy of the Spring 1997 issue of the Maryland Historical Magazine at the article on the photographs of Baltimore by William Weaver. I noticed some errors that you may wish to correct. According to the text, Weaver took the photos in 1873, yet the picture on page 86 shows the Academy of Music, which did not open until January 1875. Also, the Academy of Music was not on the corner of Howard and Center Streets as stated in the caption on page 86, but rather was in the middle of the block where the Stanley was later built.

I enjoyed the article on Weaver and hope to see more examples of his and other early photographers’ work in future issues.

Sincerely  
*Robert K. Headley*  
*University Park*

# Notices

## Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum Calendar of Events

### Crab Days '98

The Maryland Blue Crab is celebrated in this festival taking place August 1 and 2, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Visitors will take part in crabbing demonstrations and a cooking contest, along with other activities, while enjoying live music, steamed crabs, and crab cakes. The fee to participate is included in museum admission.

### Ecology Cruise

On Saturday, August 8, from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m, the public is invited to explore the Miles River aboard the *Master Jim*. Participants will learn about the ecology of the Chesapeake Bay, the largest and most productive estuary in North America. Under the guidance of experts Bob and A.J. Lippson, participants will learn to test water quality, view the resident waterfowl, and help to stock the on-board aquarium with oysters, crabs, and fish.

For more information about the above events, contact Gwyn Novak, at 410-745-2916, or write to the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, at P.O. Box 636, Mill Street, St. Michaels, MD, 21663.

### Sugarloaf Crafts Festival

The Sugarloaf Crafts Festival takes place in Manassas, Virginia, on September 11, 12, and 13 at the Prince William County Fairgrounds. Located near Washington, D.C., the festival features over 350 craft designers from 40 states and Canada. Festival hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. each day; admission is \$7.00, with children under 12 admitted free of charge. For further information, call 800-210-9900.

D.B.S.

## Maryland Picture Puzzle

We received a number of correct answers to the last Picture Puzzle. John H. B. Latrobe's summer home, Fairy Knowe, burned shortly after he built it in the 1840s. Latrobe immediately built the house shown in the photograph. This second Fairy Knowe burned in the 1900s.

Congratulations to William Hollifield, Harry Dengel (descendant of C. D. Kenney, former owner of Fairy Knowe), James T. Wollon Jr., Raymond and Percy Martin, Carolyn Simmons-McClintock, and Joetta Cramm for their correct answers.

This issue's puzzle is a scene in Baltimore County. Can you identify the location and the activity pictured?



# Maryland History Bibliography, 1997: A Selected List

ANNE S. K. TURKOS and JEFF KORMAN, Compilers

Since 1975 the *Maryland Historical Magazine* has taken note of books, articles, and doctoral dissertations relating to Maryland history. We have made as thorough a compilation as possible and published selected titles which relate most strongly to readers' and scholars' interests in Maryland history. As has been our practice, the list for 1997 includes materials published in that year and earlier works but recently brought to our attention. The complete bibliography for 1997 is available on the society's web page, located at <http://www.mdhs.org>.

Bibliographers must live with the fact that their labors never end. Please notify us of any significant omissions so that they may be included in subsequent compilations. Send additional items to: Anne S. K. Turkos, Archives and Manuscripts Department, McKeldin Library, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742.

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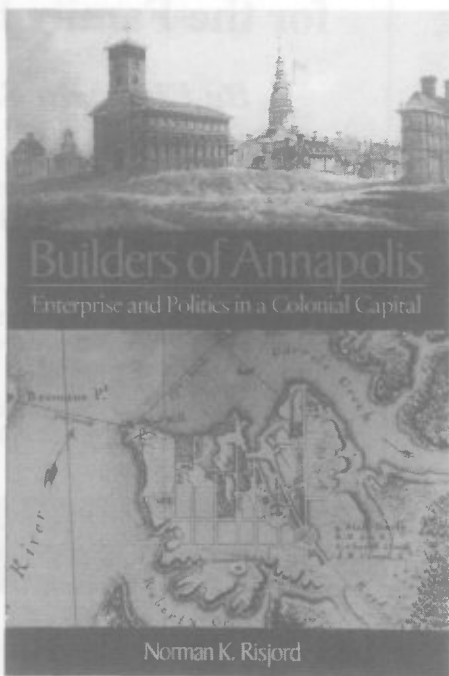
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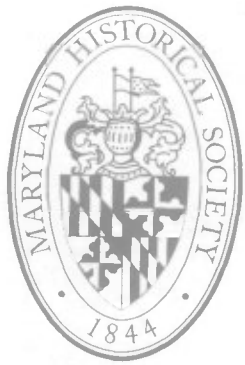
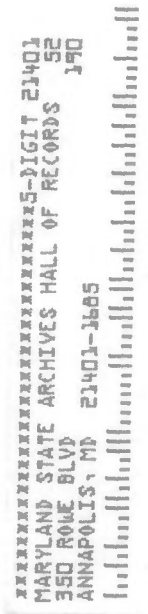
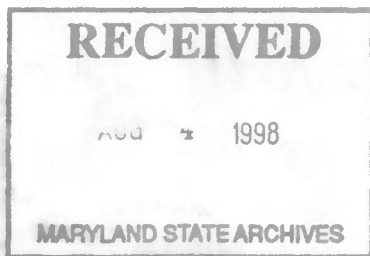
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