

Before coming to Annapolis for its historic session in this City on the Severn, the Congress had been humiliated by mutinous soldiers in Philadelphia. Moving from Philadelphia to Princeton, New Jersey, the Congress was outraged by the inadequate provisions for its accommodations, and vowed that all future sessions would be held only where arrangement befitting the dignity of Congress would be assured. This fine State House was then only four years old. Then, as now, it was a beautiful and functional building. Maryland offered it to the nation as a permanent Capitol. The General Assembly offered to appropriate 30,000 pounds to build a home for each of the 13 State delegations. Congress accepted Maryland's invitation, but only on a temporary basis.

In November, 1783, Delegates to the Congress began arriving in Annapolis. Four states failed to send representatives. Two sent only one delegate each. Many grave problems faced that Congress. It was a Congress without money—without a quorum—without public confidence. It was truly a time to try men's souls.

The British Parliament had submitted a preliminary treaty nearly two years earlier, and negotiations had been going on between British and American Peace Commissioners in Paris for more than a year. In September, 1783, the formal agreement was signed in Paris, but was not effective until it could be ratified by the Continental Congress. Until this was done, the United States of America had no official status as a sovereign, free and independent nation. As the year drew to a close, only seven of the 13 States had sent legal delegations to Annapolis. To transact major business such as ratification of a treaty, the presence of representatives of nine States was required.

The year ended. It was now January, 1784. And still there was no quorum. The Congress met here in this building—there was talk—but there was no action. On January 13th, Congress was about to adjourn its Annapolis session for the lack of a quorum, when two delegates from Connecticut arrived. But still another delegate was needed. On the very next day, South Carolina's Richard Beresford, who had been detained by illness, arrived in Annapolis. At last a quorum was present. Congress lost no time in getting down to business, and on that very day—January 14th—the Treaty of Paris was ratified in our Old Senate Chamber.

This Act of Ratification officially ended the American Revolution. The United States of America, by this Act, became a full-fledged member of the community of nations. Nine years had passed since our War