

Annapolis, Inc., and its indefatigable president Mrs. J. M. P. Wright, for the splendid work they are doing to further the cause of historic preservation and research in Annapolis. I understand that partly as a result of their labors, the Historic Sites Survey Committee of the Department of the Interior is going to consider the old city for possible designation as a registered national historic landmark.

Annapolis was once a major port in colonial America. It was a great center of culture. Some of its leading citizens played a key role in the American Revolution. It was, as I have said, the first peacetime capital of the United States. In the early federal period it served as the port of entry for Washington. On this point, the *Maryland Gazette* of November 20, 1817 reported the following:

“Annapolis is, from its situation, more accessible from the ocean than any other port, within a convenient distance, from the city of Washington. It has been spontaneously selected by the ministers from foreign powers, for their place of landing, and our own envoys have generally made it the point of their departure. In respect to the latter, it offers incalculable and exclusive advantages, in the celerity in which dispatched, sent from the seat of government (a distance of only 30 miles) may be forwarded to the different courts in Europe, or to our navy, in its stations abroad. Our port might also be conveniently used as the place of embarkation for troops, or stores, either by the way of Frenchtown or Elkton, at the head of the Bay, or to the southern states, as was frequently the case, during the late War; and orders could be transmitted for such purpose by the heads of departments, without any material delay.”

Incidentally, we are indebted to Historic Annapolis, Inc., for bringing this information to light.

In 1845, the federal government honored Annapolis by selecting it as the site for the United States Naval Academy. And, of course, since 1649, it has been the capital of Maryland. In my view, Annapolis is one of the great cities of America in terms of American heritage. I sincerely hope that when the Historic Sites Survey Committee of the Department of the Interior convenes in 1964 to select places for designation as registered national historic landmarks, that the old city of Annapolis, as well as several other Maryland treasures of antiquity will be named.

I want to express my deep appreciation to Dr. Murray Nelligan, of the National Park Service, for presenting us with the Certificate and Plaque. I also want to thank all of you for coming here today to observe this 180th anniversary Ratification Day.