

take note of this—it offered to donate the Mansion of the Governor as the official residence of the President of the Congress and if that were not enough, they offered to build thirteen residences and other buildings as quarters for the delegations of the thirteen states.

The Congress rejected the offer to establish the Capital in Annapolis on a permanent basis but decided nevertheless to use the Maryland State House as its seat temporarily. As a result, some of the most significant events in the early history of the United States took place in what is now the capitol of Maryland.

In a tearful but humble ceremony in the Old Senate Chamber of our State House, now restored and preserved as a national historic shrine by order of the Interior Department, George Washington tendered his resignation as Commander-in-Chief of the Army to the Congress in December, 1783.

Three weeks later in the same chamber, the Congress ratified the Treaty of Paris, formally ending the hostilities with Great Britain and establishing the United States as an independent nation.

Two years later in the Maryland State House a convention of the states was held in which the groundwork was laid for the establishment “of a more permanent union,” as it was later referred to.

It was agreed at the Annapolis meeting that another convention would be held the following year in Philadelphia to (and I quote) “take into consideration the situation of the United States, to devise such further provisions as shall appear. . . necessary to render the Constitution of the federal government adequate to the exigencies of the union.” It was at the Philadelphia Convention, as we know, that our present Constitution was drafted.

It was not until 1791 that the federal government, re-inspired and strengthened by the new Constitution, moved to set up a permanent seat of government. The decision was made to locate it in a ten-mile-square tract of land lying athwart the Potomac River, partly in Maryland and partly in Virginia. The Maryland General Assembly and the General Assembly of Virginia promptly ceded the territory to the federal government for the erection of the Federal District. Some fifty years later, the government restored to Virginia that part of the territory south of the Potomac, so that today all the land that now comprises the District of Columbia was once a part of the State of Maryland.

So much for the historical affinity of Maryland and Washington. What about other aspects of the relationship?