

At the close of the war, the Continental Congress met at Annapolis, and in one of the dramatic moments of American history George Washington resigned his commission in the Senate Chamber of the State House on December 23, 1783. It was at Annapolis also that Congress, on January 14, 1784, ratified the Treaty of Paris ending the Revolutionary War.

The Maryland capital again played a part in the national scene by entertaining delegates from New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania and Virginia September 11-14, 1786. Ironically, Maryland did not participate. The delegates discussed means of improving and strengthening relations between the states. Recognizing the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation, the delegates urged that another meeting be held to devise means of remedying these defects. Accordingly, the Federal Constitutional Convention met in May 1787 at Philadelphia. On April 28, 1788, Maryland ratified the Constitution; the seventh state to endorse the document which she had helped to bring into being.

Because of the exhaustion of the tobacco lands, however, serious agricultural problems remained. Slavery was becoming a burden, and currency problems vexed Maryland's economic life. In the formation of a new nation, Maryland did its part by sacrificing its territory and advancing money for public buildings to form the District of Columbia (1791). To offset some of the difficulties, Baltimore had grown until it was five times as great as Annapolis, the flourishing port of the "Golden Age." Early in the new century exports from Maryland ports reached the \$14,000,000 mark.

### **The Second British Conflict**

This shipping was, however, seriously hampered by British policy. Finally British interference with our vessels and crews brought on the War of 1812. Fighting began in Canada but was soon carried south by the British. From 1813 Maryland bore the brunt of the war. British troops routed our forces at Bladensburg and then proceeded to Washington, where they burned the public buildings. But defeats at North Point and Fort McHenry prevented the British from capturing Baltimore. During the bombardment of Fort McHenry on the night of September 13, 1814, a Maryland lawyer, Francis Scott Key, was inspired to write the "Star Spangled Banner".

At sea, Marylanders, sailing in the speedy Baltimore clippers, terrorized British shipping to the coasts of England, accounting for 556 British vessels, almost a third of the total taken by American vessels. Outstanding privateers-