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# MARYLAND
## *Historical Magazine*

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*Cover:* The Wye Oak, Talbot County, Maryland, photographed in September 1952 by
noted Maryland photographer Aubrey Bodine.

A MAP OF
VIRGINIA
AND
MARYLAND
M A
R Y
LAND.
Anne Arundel
Charles
BAY
Minquaas
Sasquahana
Tockwoghs
Minquaas
Cæcil C.
Delawar
Bay
PART OF

# The Transition from Capitalism in the Chesapeake Bay Region, 1607–1760: An Interpretive Model

JAMES E. McWILLIAMS

Few issues have polarized historians of colonial America as radically as the "transition to capitalism" debate. When did America become capitalist? When did its economic framework permit a majority of free settlers to pursue profit in an increasingly unregulated environment? When did the individualistic concerns of the capitalist supercede the communal ones of the subsistence producer? Differing answers to these questions have proliferated to the point where the historiography has managed to spawn its own historiography.[1]

Two general arguments predominate. One group of historians claims that seventeenth-century settlers fostered a simple, subsistence-oriented economy in which "men and women were enmeshed . . . in a web of social relationships and cultural expectations that inhibited the free play of market forces." This environment fostered "the pre-industrial yeoman," a man for whom "[t]he maximization of profit was less important . . . than the meeting of household needs and the establishment of social relationships within the community." The salad days of subsistence, however, were brief. Eighteenth-century colonists ushered in an elite merchant and planter class, embraced generous overseas credit extensions secured by profitable staple crops, and dove headlong into the expanding transatlantic economy in a quest to match or even exceed metropolitan levels of wealth. The eager quest for material profit thus subsumed the older subsistence mentalité under a crashing tide of capitalistic pursuits and luxury goods.

A competing school of thought dismisses this transition altogether and argues that the pursuit of profit within a collective capitalistic mindset—if not an actual framework—characterized colonial life from the outset. The "drive toward personal aggrandizement and the impulse toward anarchic individualism" was "powerfully evident" among the settlers as they crossed the Atlantic to seek opportunity on the periphery of the British Empire. Colonial America, according to this perspective, was a "postfeudal society without a precapitalist past." Capitalism, in short, was present at the creation.[2]

*Left, a detail from John Speed's* A Map of Virginia and Maryland, *1676. (Maryland Historical Society.)*

*James McWilliams teaches American history at Southwest Texas State University.*

A critical assumption common to both arguments holds that, no matter when the transition to capitalism emerged, capitalism went on to become increasingly entrenched throughout the course of the colonial era. Indeed, the assumption of capitalism's intensification makes perfect sense when considered through a narrow economic lens. The economic decisions made by colonial American planters, artisans, farmers, and merchants clearly confirmed a rising acquisitive impulse, a pressing desire to obtain and expand capital for investment, and the constant search for overseas markets. With the possible (and unlikely) exception of New England, every region of colonial British America experienced substantial economic growth and development, and there is every reason to attribute that progress to the savvy and self-interested management and maximization of land, labor, and capital. John McCusker and Russell R. Menard remind us that "the traditional notion of a severe, chronic deficit for the colonies has been discarded," and that, among white colonists, "the rich got richer [while] the poor prospered as well, but at a slower rate." All things considered, "the years just before the American Revolution were a 'golden age.'" As long as "each British colony was harnessed to its foreign sector," prosperity was widely shared among colonists as they forged a society rooted in an increasingly capitalistic foundation.[3]

From this perspective, the assumption of capitalism's intensification seems unassailable, but upon taking into consideration the larger social, cultural, and political developments occurring throughout colonial America—developments that were manifested most explicitly in the Chesapeake Bay region—the claim falters. While an identifiable transition to capitalism in colonial America may or may not have taken place (most likely not), there were a number of other broad transitions that historians of the Chesapeake region have spent the last twenty years substantiating.[4] A number of these, six to be exact, collectively complicate the assumption that capitalism intensified throughout the colonial period. Together, in fact, they suggest quite the opposite—that, for an increasing percentage of the population, developments in the Chesapeake colonies did not foster capitalism's growth so much as dismantle the preconditions required for the unregulated and open exchange of land, labor, and capital.

To summarize: First, the Chesapeake evolved from a place of fluid and unstable political relations to a society grounded in narrow and stable political consolidation. Second, the region went from lacking an established and recognizable social and cultural elite to being bound by a clearly defined group commanding disproportionate social authority and deference. Third, what was once a society characterized by a flexible (if small) labor force became a place structured by an inflexible (if more plentiful) pool of workers who were tightly circumscribed by gender and race. Fourth, a settlement society that once primarily stressed the internal economic development of a "wilderness" evolved into an export-based society focused on carving a wide niche in a preexisting transatlantic economy.

Fifth, a land-rich colonial periphery characterized by excessive and easy mobility became an environment strained by land conflict and geographical constraint. Finally, a relatively decentralized system of adjudication yielded to a more centralized legal apparatus run by and protective of elite interests.

As these six themes suggest, the argument presented below hinges not on the *size* of capitalistic ventures, but rather on the issue of *access* to entrepreneurial opportunity. Specifically, it rests on the premise that capitalism can only be said to have intensified when *increasing numbers of settlers enjoyed the freedom to pursue profit through entrepreneurial activity*. When a small minority of settlers pursued capitalistic endeavors that generated greater wealth for a few, capitalism was not so much intensifying as it was consolidating. There is a difference. A society that calls itself capitalistic must foster a capitalistic mentalité as it develops the structural preconditions that nurture a capitalistic frame of mind, the pursuit of private initiative, and the creation of a useful outlet for competitive propensities. The Chesapeake region from 1620 to 1700 was a place where the barriers to economic progress through capitalistic strategies were lower, more fluid, and easier to hurdle than they would be between 1700 and 1760, when the burgeoning colonial American economy hemmed itself in with rigid social, political, and legal constraints. An elite few may have been behaving in a conspicuously capitalistic fashion by the mid-eighteenth century; few historians would deny that reality. But the social and political actions of these planters ultimately ensured that only a small cadre of capitalists would come to dominate colonial Chesapeake society. In light of this refined conceptualization of capitalism, the transition that colonial economic historians should thus seek is not the transition *to* capitalism, but rather away from it.

## The Chesapeake's Real "Golden Age" of Capitalism: 1620–1700

The eventual rise of political stability in the Chesapeake Bay region established the basis for an economic system that carefully rationalized the production and marketing of tobacco (and, to a lesser extent, wheat) to generate wealth for hundreds of large planters and merchants. Such stability, however, was primarily an eighteenth-century development. Before 1700, Virginia and Maryland experienced what some considered an alarming degree of political discontinuity, erratic leadership, and diffused political authority. In Maryland, neither the Lords Baltimore nor the crown successfully imposed a stable council rooted in conspicuous wealth, ability, and loyalty prior to 1715. The obvious lack of "men of Estate and Ability" hampered proprietary efforts to build a council that commanded appropriate deference and power. As David W. Jordan has demonstrated, "A particularly rapid turnover of membership was highly characteristic of the council" during the colony's proprietary era. The council's revolving door of authority spun rapidly enough to prevent a single commissioned councilor from surviving the first decade of his appointment. Almost half of the councilors who assumed their

posts before 1660 served for less than two years. Sons very rarely inherited the council positions of their fathers, a condition influenced by the fact that 70 percent of provincial officeholders from 1660 to 1689 were immigrants from Europe. An abbreviated life expectancy, the shock of a new environment, and "wavering allegiance and overt disloyalty" all conspired to keep Maryland mired in seemingly perpetual political instability.[5]

A similar situation prevailed in Virginia, where the inadequate and inexperienced political authority of the colony's first immigrant families resulted in a political precariousness that peaked temporarily in 1660, only then to revive and persist until 1720. Public affairs in the seventeenth century were "riven with rife and discord." Open struggles for power in an "extremely fluid social and economic environment" characterized political life until the Restoration, after which another, even more harmful, conflict developed. With the crown reestablished, its attempt to assert greater control over the Chesapeake colonies raised issues that split the nascent gentry into warring factions. Their disputes "led to the expulsion or removal of one governor after another for the next fifty years."[6] Bernard Bailyn describes an early Virginia political environment in which leaders "had little opportunity to acquire the sense of public responsibility that rests on deep identification with the land and its people." They accordingly "lacked the attributes of public authority," and their equally rapid turnover reflected "a profound disorganization of European society in its American setting." Carole Shammas elaborates on this point when she writes that, during this era, "no one really pursued a political career as such."[7] As in Maryland, Virginia was devoid of solid political authority for most of the seventeenth century.

Closely related to the region's frequent political turnover was its lack of an established social and cultural elite whose future emergence would subsume the region's early and relatively unfettered economic development under its consolidation and control. As J. H. Plumb has shown for England at the end of the seventeenth century, the political maturity of governing institutions demanded first and foremost the active approval by the community of the men elected or appointed to the region's traditional ruling apparatus. Not only was such an apparatus yet to be firmly established, but such approval was long in coming for the small, roughly organized communities dispersed along river banks out on the colonial periphery. The emergence of a landed social and cultural elite—men whose concerns exceeded more than just material gain—was a slow process.[8] The conspicuous markers of genteel status that had traditionally helped command a deferential stance from the "lesser sort" were so rare as to be meaningless. Furthermore, the events that would later be the venues through which to display those markers—court days, musters, weddings, and cock fights—had yet to become routine, highly publicized cultural activities, hampered as they were by bad roads, poor communication, and other infrastructural problems.[9]

The base pursuits of the region's putative leaders struck many settlers as strange. Denizens of the English empire were inveterately accustomed to deferring to the social authority of men whose family name glowed with landed interest and widespread recognition. The relatively clean slate of the seventeenth-century Chesapeake, however, made it anyone's guess just who that might be.[10] The principle forces of order and stability—an economically established planter class, the county court, and the established church, to cite only a few examples—had yet to be exercised by an identifiable class of gentry-like individuals to confirm their status and structure the social order. In fact the current leaders were men whose authority rested precariously on nothing more than their early success in achieving an observable level of crude material accumulation. They hardly commanded deferential responses from their fellow settlers, in part because their motives were so blatantly transparent: they sought office to protect their individual economic interests. Bailyn described Virginia's early council members. "They were tough, unsentimental, quick-tempered, crudely ambitious men concerned with profits and increased landholdings, not the grace of life." They went about their days seeking profit, drinking excessively, gambling, barking profanities, and generally behaving in a conspicuously ungentlemanly fashion. In so doing, they belied the august image of the graceful gentility that would later come to structure Chesapeake society and reinforce it as one in which, as in England, everyone more or less had his place. To the average settler seeking a competence on the colonial frontier, these men seemed more like economic competitors than social betters, and thus, in their open quest for economic gain, far too familiar.[11]

A third factor reflecting the early Chesapeake's predisposition to the unfettered pursuit of wealth was the fluidity of its labor force. Racial lines had yet to solidify around slavery, leaving planters the option of working free blacks and white servants together on the same task more flexibly and efficiently than later slave codes would permit. In Northampton County, for example, free blacks covered the social and economic gamut much as whites did. In the decades before slave codes, some blacks worked under strict servant contracts, others owned land, and still others followed the natural ebb and flow of the economy in and out of servitude and independence in the ongoing quest for material improvement. As Stephen Innes and T. H. Breen explain, Englishmen and Africans could interact with one another "on terms of relative equality for two generations." While the social implications of a genuinely multiracial society have been amply explored, we must also recognize that this social arrangement had a substantial impact on local economic behavior: it opened the quest for private initiative to black men.

Consider a free black like Anthony Johnson. In overcoming his original bondage, Johnson, who arrived in Virginia in 1621, acquired property, engaged in mixed commercial farming, and, through the dint of a little luck and a lot of hard work achieved a measurable level of success. Innes and Breen go so far as to say that he

even may have touched upon "the American dream." Johnson was, of course, exceptional. Nevertheless, as an example of the relative racial fluidity prevailing at the time, he forces economic historians to consider the implications of such fluidity for the region's collective economic structure. The fact that he and others like him enjoyed opportunities to obtain land and pursue mixed agriculture implicitly highlights the comparatively stringent alternative of working as legally sanctioned lifetime laborers toiling on increasingly consolidated tobacco farms. The latter scenario, as historians of nineteenth-century slavery regularly point out, would have been less conducive to the unrestricted pursuit of economic self-interest, if not outright anti-capitalistic.[12] When Johnson lived and worked, though, such a pursuit was still possible.

Although its impact on the region's economic structure was less dramatic (or at least less explored) than the racial fluidity that prevailed, the flexibility of gender roles further contributed to an environment supportive of a relatively open pursuit of economic gain. English women in the early Chesapeake encountered a rugged new world lacking the strict gendered division of labor that shaped working life back home. In England, a deep tradition insured that, as the seventeenth-century poet Thomas Tusser put it,

> Good Husbands abroad, seeketh all well to have:
> Good Housewives at home, seeketh all well to save.
> This having and saving, in place where they meet,
> Make profit with pleasure such couples to greet.

Women pursued work within the household while men worked beyond the domestic realm. While the distinction might appear overstated, Kathleen Brown reminds us that "many English women would have found these maxims to ring true," but such was hardly the case in the early bay colony. On a rugged colonial periphery lacking the most basic rudiments of "civilization," the process of building a society from the ground up demanded that wives liberally extend their traditional working habits beyond the home and into the male-dominated sphere. Brown, for one, recognized "the ability of individual women to take advantage of these disruptions to wield influence in a society still committed to patriarchal forms of authority," but generally historians have mined the cultural and social implications of this gender fluidity without considering its economic impact. While it would later become "the self-appointed task of colonial officials" to restore traditional patriarchal roles, those officials, as we have seen, had yet to consolidate the requisite authority to undertake such a comprehensive social and cultural reconstruction. As a result, married and unmarried women were released from an exclusive dedication to domestic tasks and ushered into the strange new worlds of farm building, fuel gathering, and market transactions. They would indeed later

be relegated to "women's work" that contributed indirectly to the perpetuation of an export-based economy, but early on they worked in an economic environment where supply and demand functioned without the interference of gender and race. Women's early, direct contribution to the primary economic endeavor of building a mixed commercial farm on the colonial periphery offers a small but telling piece of evidence that the seventeenth century was a time of economic freedom for an unusually wide range of settlers.[13]

Fourth, this more fluid labor force existed symbiotically with the type of economic endeavors that most planters engaged in before the unqualified and singular dominance of tobacco: replicating the basic economic infrastructure, as it existed in England, from scratch. We tend to overstate the weight of tobacco farming. Of critical importance, according to James Horn, was the fact that "the majority of men and women who lived in Maryland and Virginia during the seventeenth century were born and raised in England." Why is this demographic condition so important? Because early English settlers in the Chesapeake hailed from a diversified agrarian economy that stressed a wide mix of economic endeavors aimed toward achieving a modest competence—endeavors including raising cattle and sheep, growing corn, and making small crafts. Families formed the most fundamental unit of production while male farmers individually managed their pasture, arable land, and woodland tracts in an attempt to make the most out of these potentially profitable pursuits.

That pattern was not easily abandoned in the new world, where land was much cheaper. As they did in the West Indies before the onset of sugar production, settlers in the Chesapeake worked diligently to replicate the mixed economy they knew from home and tried with admirable persistence to adapt the old habits of economic improvement to a new environment. As Paul Clemens explains, "Land was plentiful and many inhabitants acquired large tracts of undeclared woodlands, but they actually cultivated no more than they would have on a twenty-acre farm in England." Rather than immediately embracing tobacco and the transatlantic market, as many analyses suggest they did, inhabitants instead turned to the more mundane task of building a farm. Many settlers, after building that farm, worked it to achieve modest competence and a secure place in the local economy through inherently entrepreneurial strategies.[14] In Talbot County, as Clemens demonstrates, the conscious decision on the part of many recent settlers not to embrace the tobacco market reflected their ambition to establish instead a mixed farm on the English model rather than take a risk on a venture with which they had no experience. Even during the boom years of 1697–1701, tobacco exports from Talbot County did not exceed 1.8 million pounds a year. Had every planter been exporting tobacco, that figure would have been as high as 3.1 million pounds. This line of reasoning should not suggest that tobacco was unimportant in the Chesapeake economy during the seventeenth century, but rather that a significant num-

ber of English farmers continued to pursue traditional versions of composite farming and local market exchange, even as the transition to slavery and tobacco intensified. In so doing, they transformed what was in England a pursuit that promised modest returns into one that had, in the unregulated context of the new world, a greater potential to offer a more substantial payoff. Speaking for Maryland, one group of scholars called the mid-seventeenth century the "age of the small planter."[15]

The experience of one Maryland settler, Robert Cole, illustrates the initial impact that local economic concerns placed on a planter's production decisions. When Cole acquired 250 acres in 1652, he would have preferred to dedicate the entire plot of land to tobacco. However, not only was the labor too expensive, but the Cole family first had to develop a basic plantation consistent with what English settlers believed to be an adequate English farm. Although he knew that he could not "carry on the kind of husbandry in which he had been trained in England," he nevertheless pursued a pattern of farm building that approximated the rough outlines of an English homestead. The family first built an orchard to grow fruit for cider. Next, Cole purchased a sow and pigs, a few chickens, and a cow. His sons then helped their father clear six acres of land for planting corn. Mrs. Cole dedicated her labor and that of her daughters to the demanding tasks of milking, making butter and cheese, and planting beans, pumpkins, and barley. Only when these critical components of an English farm were in place did Robert Cole finally clear six more acres of land in order to pursue modestly the very un-English habit of growing tobacco. The vast bulk of the Coles' economic activity always centered on the production of goods for the family and the local market. Indeed, it was not to the tobacco trade that we first find Robert turning but to the vagaries of local economic exchange. In an economy that was still rapidly expanding as a result of farm development, a ready market existed for cattle, corn, dairy, and other basic products. This local economy was more open, required fewer intermediaries, and was less subject to labor and price manipulations than the single crop tobacco economy would later become.[16] In choosing the familiar over the exotic, Cole was not only expressing his cultural familiarity, but also contributing to an economic structure that was far friendlier to capitalistic pursuits than it would later become.

A fifth factor contributing to the relatively unencumbered pursuit of economic gain by a large proportion of the population was the widespread availability of land. Seventy percent of the immigrants to Maryland between 1634 and 1681 arrived as indentured servants. While the verdict is still out on the question of how many indentured servants survived their indenture, those who completed their time of service were, before 1681, entitled to a fifty-acre land warrant. The land they received, while not extensive or especially fertile by Chesapeake standards, nevertheless provided the necessary foundation for productive and independent participation in the region's nascent economy. As Lois Green Carr and Russell R. Menard explain, "most servants who migrated to Maryland from the 1630s through

the 1650s, if they escaped early death, achieved considerable property and status and were fully integrated into the community as small planters, masters of families, and participants in local government." Those who migrated to the region as free colonists also enjoyed a favorable land market. Large landowners lacking the labor to improve their holdings rented and sold land to small, independent farmers like Robert Cole on highly generous terms. When Cole arrived in Maryland in the 1650s, for example, he was able to rent three hundred acres of land (for a meager three barrels of shelled corn a year) and begin building his farm on St. Clement's Manor, where "good unclaimed land was still available." He was also able to patent land in Charles County—which he later sold to more recent arrivals. Settlers who purchased land before 1700 could augment their plantations with relative ease. In Surry County, Virginia, 10 percent of land sales between 1620 and 1690 involved the augmentation of an existing plantation. With so much cheap land available, farmers could adjust rapidly to new economic circumstances. Land, as a result, regularly changed hands more than once within the course of a decade.[17]

The final factor contributing to the early Chesapeake's deregulated economic environment involves the structure and maturity of its legal system. There was precious little structure and less maturity before 1700. The immediate demands posed by local infrastructural development, the minimal interaction of planters dispersed over a large geographic region without adequate roads, the absence of towns, and the lack of legal expertise inhibited the concentration and refinement of legal authority in the Chesapeake region for many decades. The county courts that would later prove so essential to the promotion of local social, economic, and political authority existed throughout most of the seventeenth century not as authoritative replicas of the English judicial system, but as ad hoc, situational, and generally weak responses to provincial concerns. Of the sixty or so criminal entries listed in the Accomack-Northampton County Court records between 1632 and 1635, the vast majority of cases dealt with minor trespasses, slanders, and defamation. Seven commissioners appointed by the governor met every month to decide civil cases for a community of 650 persons, most involving small debts between neighbors. In Kent County, Maryland, according to Bradley Chapin, "proceedings were loose to the point of disorder." Over sixteen years of operation, one finds only "fifty-two incidents that could by any standard be related to crime or control of behavior." These records, he concludes, leave the impression "that the planters expected to operate their plantations and control their families and servants without outside interference." Marylanders evidently did as they pleased "with little prospect or fear of judicial discipline." A comparison to New England highlights the relative inactivity of the region's judicial systems. Between 1622 and 1629 the Virginia General Court heard sixty-seven cases; between 1630 and 1660 the Maryland Provincial Court listed a hundred cases; from 1630 to 1643, by contrast, the Massachusetts Assistants Court heard 290 cases, while Plymouth's superior court

heard 260 cases from 1633 to 1660. In short, most seventeenth-century Chesapeake Bay residents had little contact with the region's judicial system, further evidence that they were free to pursue their economic goals with minimal oversight.[18]

The absence of an identifiable and authoritative political structure, the lack of a social elite, a fluid labor force, the widespread pursuit of mixed agriculture, the vast availability of land, and a weak legal infrastructure all insured that rapid economic development occurred over a wide area, in a large portion of the population, and with minimal regulatory intervention. Rather than pursuing "an alternative to capitalist development," as several historians have suggested, early settlers in the Chesapeake Bay dove into the work of not only achieving a competency, but of accumulating resources that could potentially lead to economic profit.[19] These six factors—all of which were pre-existing conditions rather than conscious designs—expanded the scope of private initiative and entrepreneurial quests. They enabled many to pursue their economic interests in an environment where social, economic, cultural, and legal barriers to the widespread individual pursuit of economic independence had yet to cohere. They were, in other words, the structural preconditions that allowed a man like Anthony Johnson to prosper.

Scholars have marked the transition from seventeenth- to eighteenth-century Chesapeake economic life by highlighting the region's remarkable stabilization. Indeed, the region's sex ratio balanced out, the Chesapeake became a healthier place to live, emerging social networks tied settlers into coherent communities, family structure tightened, and a new creole elite provided the region with a more entrenched identity. While these developments undoubtedly transformed the Chesapeake region into a more livable and secure society, they also collectively provided the foundation for several constrictions upon the preconditions for economic independence described above. As society stabilized, an exclusive political system emerged, a social elite consolidated its authority, the labor force solidified along racial and gendered lines, mixed farming yielded to the monocultural pursuit of tobacco (and wheat), land grew less available, and a legal system arose to enforce these changes for the benefit of the few. The outcome was an economic environment wherein a small cadre of men successfully pursued great wealth and power at the expense of the vast majority. The result was a world where a man like Anthony Johnson had an assigned place on a plantation, toiling for an owner, legally excluded from the most basic quest to achieve a competence, and without a political voice. It is to this world that we now turn.

## The Constriction of Capitalism, 1700–1760

The emergence of political stability and the corresponding rise of a native elite proved to be essential factors in the region's constriction of entrepreneurial endeavors. Throughout the seventeenth century, men—usually immigrants—be-

came provincial officeholders for short periods. From 1660 to 1680 officeholders in Maryland came from social backgrounds that generally reflected the population at large. Annoyed that a more visible distinction between the people and their representatives was not evident, Cecil Calvert suggested that assemblymen don "medals or otherwise" to designate their status. With three-quarters of the provincial officeholders worth less than £500, and with almost half owning estates under a thousand acres (the mark of a substantial planter), Calvert's concerns were not unfounded. In the 1660s after all, six former servants served as delegates.

After the Glorious Revolution the social composition of the Maryland assembly underwent a dramatic change. As David Jordan explains, "accessibility to high office after 1700 depended increasingly upon one's family name and connections as well as upon high economic status." A "rapidly emerging oligarchy" formed between 1700 and 1715 to restrict political authority to those with wealth, family connections, and status as native creoles. Intermarriage among Maryland's elite families furthered the tightening connection between privilege and politics. Between 1695 and the end of the royal period, only two of the sixteen delegates from Prince George's County owned less than a thousand acres at election time. Throughout the century, these leading families consolidated their authority by passing laws that excluded absentee office-holding and the election of men who had not lived in the colony for at least three years. In its "quest for power" the Maryland assembly established the right to choose its own officers, control its internal organization, and acquire more influence over patronage and finances. These powers more often than not passed to the next generation of sons for whom "posts in the provincial governments would come as almost a natural right."[20]

Virginia followed a similar pattern. Whereas seventeenth-century figures of political authority rose to power by wringing a notable profit from a stubborn wilderness, those in the eighteenth century secured their political positions through their seemingly self-evident social eminence. Whereas Virginians once would have heaped ridicule upon provincials who aped the English political elite, they now respected, rather than emulated, those men whose social pretensions now confirmed their ruling status. Small planters, who once sought political power as a temporary means to secure their immediate interest, now viewed politics as a career and an interest in and of itself. By the end of the seventeenth century, Bailyn writes, "there was an acceptance of the fact that certain families were distinguished from others by riches, in dignity, and in access to political authority." With the emergence of effective lieutenant governors such as Hugh Drysdale and Sir William Gooch, men who "managed largely through the force of their own moral and political leadership," a "rural elite governed unchallenged" in Virginia from 1729 until the end of royal control.[21] Men in positions of authority enjoyed the political deference of their constituents because, as native-born leaders, they remained sensitive to the concerns of the voting populace. They did so while at the same time

exhibiting a gentry-like image of entitlement in the ongoing effort to replicate the political forms of the mother country.[22]

Closely linked to the rise of a political elite was the growing dominance of a social and cultural elite, a group whose monopolization of the powerful public sphere further limited capitalistic pursuits to a few. An exclusive class of men arose whose access to metropolitan cultural and social norms conferred upon them the refined status of provincial gentry. Fully aware that "economic life cannot be separated from the culture that invests it with meaning," these social *arrivistes* commanded and received the respect of the "lesser sort" while explicitly associating their cultural standing with their economic privilege.[23] As Rhys Isaac has demonstrated, these men reiterated their authority by conspicuously making themselves available for displays of sport and deference at ceremonial public affairs like court days, cock fights, horse races, and musters. As men from all social ranks (except slaves) converged upon these public venues, ritualistic displays of friendly competition and cooperation simultaneously stressed the racial bond uniting these men and the class distinctions dividing them, thereby strategically encouraging both deference and identification.

The cock fight perhaps best illustrates the point. Although it might have been considered a "vulgar pastime" by some, it was not "beneath the attention of gentlemen." To the contrary, they traveled great distances to watch their birds fight duels to the death. The Marquis de Chastellux recalled that "when the principle promoters of this diversion [probably gentry] propose to match their champions, they take care to announce it to the public. . . . this important news spreads with such felicity that planters come from thirty or forty miles around, some with cocks, but all with money for betting, which is sometimes very considerable." Why make the trip? Isaac explains, "The gentry, having the means and the assurance to patronize sport and to be seen playing grandly for the highest stakes, were well placed to ensure that their superior social status was confirmed among the many who took part in these exciting activities." Such events gave the gentry a chance to draw a line in the sand that spoke to their essential differences from commoners while still assuring them that both groups shared the same ground. The line, however delicately drawn, could not be crossed without serious social consequences.[24]

A third factor contributing to the constriction of capitalist pursuits among an increasing portion of the population involved the solidification of the Chesapeake's labor force along gender and racial lines. As blacks became more numerous in the Chesapeake, and as tobacco became the crop of choice for more planters, the region's white authorities perceived, as Kathleen Brown explains, "a need for a concept of difference that would transcend shifts in status from slavery to freedom."[25] Slave codes, established from 1660 through 1705, helped instill this difference by legally codifying a category of workers who could not participate in endeavors that they could improve, innovate, expand, and contract according to the

dictates of supply and demand. The legal categorization of slaves as property consigned the possibility of "a genuinely multiracial society" that allowed inhabitants to pursue private initiative in a diverse Chesapeake economy to the status of an item on a tobacco farm's balance sheet. Slaves gradually evolved from "black Englishmen" to chattel. In so doing, it became their "tragic fate" to fuel the economic drive toward a narrow economy that thrived not only on high tobacco prices, but on limiting the number who could reap the benefit of those prices. Paul Clemens describes the process of upward mobility in early Maryland as a series of steps: "forming a household, renting land, purchasing a plantation, and eventually obtaining servants and slaves."[26] The last step, securing slaves, must be appreciated as more than a horrific economic response to labor shortages. It must also be seen as the fatal step that sealed the Chesapeake's fate as a society destined to make a small minority of men wealthy by constricting the quest for capitalist gain to a few large land- and slave owners. The wealthy might have earned their profits through capitalist means, but in forcibly denying a huge portion of the workforce similar opportunities, they helped structure a society that was becoming less capitalistic in orientation.

The range of economic pursuits available to white women similarly declined as the Chesapeake evolved from a society with slaves into a slave society. The social fluidity prevalent during the seventeenth century was due in large part to the Chesapeake's nascent economic condition and families' subsistence needs. With local economies to develop; roads, bridges and ferries to build; farms to establish; and laws to create and impose, colonial authorities had little choice other than to permit women to abandon traditional roles in order to remain solvent in a land chronically short of labor. The early Chesapeake, as Mary Beth Norton explains, was a place where "environmental and economic factors conspired to prevent patriarchal family practices (as opposed to ideals) from taking root." The stabilization of Chesapeake society—a stabilization, as we have seen, directly connected to the rise of slave labor—established the precondition for a reversion to older—more English—ideals. As Norton warns, it may indeed be misleading to describe the transition away from this initially fluid situation as the decline of a "golden age."[27] Nevertheless, with the rise of the tobacco economy, the formation of a tight relationship between the family and the state, and the emergence of working female slaves as a negative cultural contrast—black women working in the field rendered fieldwork anathema to white women—many market-oriented activities once open to women slammed shut. Patriarchal heads of households complemented their customary power over their nuclear families with statutory authority and, in the process, carefully defined the sphere where women could wield influence. Women, in turn, limited their economic endeavors to bartering butter and eggs, producing small manufactures for household use and consumption, and educating their children as productive members of society. Not unlike slaves, white women

had their work routines tailored to the ultimate demands of a tobacco economy dominated by a male planter aristocracy.

The rise of a social elite, political stability, and the constriction of the labor force dominated Chesapeake life between 1700 and 1740, limiting access to capitalistic pursuits. The consolidation of land into the hands of a few and the emphasis and reliance on tobacco figured as well. Talbot County, Maryland, provides a representative look into these linked transitions. Between 1680 and 1704, free Talbot County residents enjoyed extensive availability of land in the back country. Clemens explains that "geographical mobility increasingly became the means by which the lower classes of an older region, such as Talbot, improved their economic condition." These back country "safety valves" structured economic opportunity for indentured servants who managed to live through their indenture, promising them hope for "eventual integration into the community that they served." By 1730, however, land had been consolidated into the jealous grip of a handful of planter-merchants. In the 1680s only one settler could be classified as a "wealthy merchant-planter"; by 1733 that figure had climbed to fifteen, the wealthiest of whom owned £20,000 in real estate compared to the £2,000 high point for 1680s wealth. Whereas a couple of hundred acres was a substantial plantation in the 1680s, the planter-merchants in the 1730s owned estates ranging from three hundred to a thousand acres. The planter elite, according to Clemens, "thus gained even greater control over agricultural production in Talbot."[28] By 1730 former servants who would once have obtained land, settled, built a farm, and pursued a competency through private initiative were shunted out of the coastal regions, where the chances for economic gain were the greatest. These proto-capitalists became, as a result, "of minor importance in the society of Maryland's tobacco coast."[29] They would never have the chances that Robert Cole had in the 1640s to achieve a modestly rising level of wealth by working a diversified farm. The new economic environment had no use for the scrappy innovations of such a man.

The final factor limiting access to capitalist endeavors was the consolidation of the region's legal authority. The Virginia General Court consciously avoided the trappings of formal judicial procedures in favor of an approach that emphasized "determining of everything by the Standard of Equity and good conscience." Such a standard was not grasped by everyone. When a man like Landon Carter declared that cases should be decided by "Good reason and Justice" rather than by the "Mechanical knowledge" of attorneys, we might well suspect that the "impertinineces of Form and Nicety" were jettisoned to the aristocracy's legal benefit. Indeed, as Rhys Isaac explains, planters opposed the "strict, literal application of what was to be found in the law books and assert[ed] a substantial role for the common sense judgements of men of affairs—gentlemen who would bring their experiences of life and the wisdom of a generalized higher learning to bear on the cases before them." The usurpation of legal control by wealthy planters speaks to a

common argument among legal historians that the law in the colonial South emphasized the instrumentalism of the law. That is, as Terri L. Snyder phrases it, "the law was a tool used by planters to fashion an economy of slavery that served their needs and shap[ed] a distinct social structure."[30]

The transitions sketched in this essay are not comprehensive. Nonetheless, they collectively complicate an assumption that has long been central to the historiography of colonial British America. Situating the "transition to capitalism" debate within the impressive scholarly work done on the Chesapeake economy and society over the last twenty years highlights an often forgotten premise. Economic development follows the course it does, not because of the hidden laws of historical change, the workings of an invisible hand, or the "natural order of things," but flows from the decisions that men and women make in the social, cultural, and political environment they have established: decisions to seek political stability through a nascent gentry; to designate a recognizable social and cultural elite; to structure work according to the dictates of race and gender; to allow and perpetuate land consolidation; and to concentrate legal authority in the hands of a few. These choices—made on the periphery of an empire when regulation was lax and the slate was relatively clean—did not establish the preconditions for a capitalistic society but limited capitalist opportunity to the ambitious reach of an elite group of merchants and planters. There was nothing inexorable about the process. Historians who understand American economic development as a steady progress toward capitalism must confront the strong possibility that, throughout the eighteenth century, the colonial society that best captured the essence of colonial British America—the Chesapeake—was one in which, during its early stages, the obstacles to pursuing individual initiative diminished substantially for the vast majority of its people. We should move beyond the "transition debate" and begin to examine the processes behind, and the implications of, this critical transition.

## NOTES

1. Joyce Appleby, "The Vexed History of Capitalism as Told by American Historians," *Journal of the Early Republic*, 21 (2001): 1–18; Michael Merrill, "Putting 'Capitalism' in Its Place: A Review of Recent Literature," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 52 (1995); and Allan Kulikoff, "The Transition to Capitalism in Rural America," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 46 (1989): 120–44.
2. The quotes are from James Henretta, *The Origins of American Capitalism* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1991), 93 and 96; Jack P. Greene, *Pursuits of Happiness: The Social Development of early Modern British Colonies and the Formation of American Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 93.
3. John McCusker and Russell Menard, *The Economy of British America, 1607–1789* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 52, 83; Alice Hanson Jones, "Wealth and Growth of the Thirteen Colonies: Some Implications." *Journal of Economic History*, 44 (1984): 239–54, passim; Alice Hanson Jones, *Wealth of a Nation to Be: The American Colonies on the Eve of the*

*Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980); David M. Potter, *People of Plenty: Economic Abundance and the American Character* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958); Naomi Lamoreaux, "Accounting for Capitalism in Early American History: Farmers, Merchants, Manufacturers, and their Economic Worlds," unpublished paper delivered at the Johns Hopkins University. Jones, in *Wealth of a Nation to Be*, concludes: "Americans of 1774 had attained substantial wealth which compared favorably with that of 'ordinary people' in England and Europe" (341).

4. The history of the colonial Chesapeake has traditionally stressed the region's economic development based on tobacco production. Its history has usually been written as a contrast to the social and intellectual developments transpiring in New England. For the past twenty years, however, historians of the Chesapeake Bay have written scores of important articles and books that investigate the Chesapeake's social, cultural, and intellectual life. Moreover they have adopted what might be called an "economy and society" approach that incorporates an analysis of economic development into its social investigations. The finding to emerge from this relatively new social/economic focus has yet to be analyzed in the context of the long running "transition to capitalism" debate described above.

5. David W. Jordan, "Maryland's Privy Council, 1637–1715," in Aubrey C. Land, Lois Green Carr, and Edward C. Papenfuse, eds., *Law, Society, and Politics in Early Maryland* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 68–69; "Political Stability and the Emergence of a Native Elite in Maryland," in Thad W. Tate and David L. Ammerman, eds., *The Chesapeake in the Seventeenth Century: Essays on Anglo-American Society* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979); David W. Jordan and Lois Green Carr, *Maryland's Revolution in Government, 1689–1692* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974).

6. Jack P. Greene, "The Growth of Political Stability: An Interpretation of Political Development in the Anglo-American Colonies, 1660–1760," in Greene, *Negotiated Authorities: Essays in Colonial Political and Constitutional History* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1994), 139.

7. Bernard Bailyn, "Politics and Social Structure in Virginia," in James Morton Smith, ed., *Seventeenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959), 91, 95–96; Carole Shammas, "English Born and Creole Elites in Turn of the Century Virginia," in Tate and Ammerman, eds., *The Chesapeake in the Seventeenth Century*, 275.

8. Jordan, "Political Stability and the Emergence of a Native Elite in Maryland," 244; J. H. Plumb, *The Growth of Political Stability in England, 1677–1725* (London: Prometheus Books, 1967). The issue of the elite's emergence is addressed in Jack P. Greene, "Foundations of Political Power in the Virginia House of Burgesses, 1720–1776," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 16 (1959): 485–506.

9. Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), xi–xix; Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740–1790* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 88–100.

10. Carole Shammas points out this confusion as it played out after Bacon's Rebellion. "The sympathy accorded Virginia's disturber of the peace," she writes, "was rather remarkable," especially considering the fact that "in post–Civil War England armed rebels generally ranked just above the plague in popularity." See, "English-Born and Creole Elites in Turn of the Century Virginia," 276.

11. Bailyn, "Politics and Social Structure in Virginia," 95.

12. T. H. Breen and Stephen Innes, *"Myne Owne Ground,": Race and Freedom on Virginia's Eastern Shore, 1640–1676* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 7–10. For more information on free blacks in early Virginia see James H. Brewer, "Negro Property Owners in Seven-

teenth-Century Virginia," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 12 (1955): 578; Alden T. Vaughn, "Blacks in Virginia: A Note on the First Decade," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 29 (1972): 468–79; Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1975), 100–15; Douglas Deal, "A Constricted World: Free Blacks on Virginia's Eastern Shore, 1680–1750," in Lois Green Carr, Phillip D. Morgan, and Jean B. Russo, eds. *Colonial Chesapeake Society* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 275–305; Eugene and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, "The Slave Economies in Political Perspective," *Journal of American History*, 66 (1979): 7–23.

13. Kathleen M. Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 25, 79; Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, 120–25. Lois Green Carr and Lorena S. Walsh, "The Planter's Wife: The Experience of White Women in Seventeenth-Century Maryland," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 34 (1977): 542–71. The authors write, "women were less protected but also more powerful than those who remained at home; and at least some of these changes survived the appearance in Maryland of New World creole communities" (543); Mary Beth Norton, "The Evolution of White Women's Experience in Early America," *American Historical Review*, 89 (1984): 600.

14. This decision should not be interpreted as a "pre-industrial" mentality. The quest to build a farm in a settlement society may not have been a hugely profitable venture, but it was a necessary precondition for an economic infrastructure that one day might be the basis for a hugely profitable quest. This stage of economic development, unburdened as it was by capital accumulation by a few elite planters, was in many ways more capitalistic than similar pursuits would be one hundred years later, after the putative transition to capitalism.

15. Paul G. E. Clemens, *The Atlantic Economy and Colonial Maryland's Eastern Shore: From Tobacco to Grain* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), 80–82; James Horn, "Adapting to a New World: A Comparative Study of Local Society in England and Maryland, 1650–1700," in Carr, Morgan, and Russo, eds., *Colonial Chesapeake Society*, 133; Russell R. Menard, P. M. G. Harris, and Lois Green Carr, "Opportunity and Inequality: The Distribution of Wealth on the Lower Western Shore of Maryland," *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 69 (1974): 169–84.

16. Lois Green Carr, Russell R. Menard, and Lorena S. Walsh, *Robert Cole's World: Agriculture and Society in Early Maryland* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 33–49. In Somerset County from 1665 to 1677, only 10.1 percent of household inventories showed tobacco. For Worcester County from 1688 to 1699, that figure is 11.3 percent; and for Wicomico County from 1688 to 1699, 16.7 percent show evidence of tobacco. These figures are from Lois Green Carr, "Diversification in the Colonial Chesapeake: Somerset County, Maryland in Comparative Perspective," in Carr, Morgan, and Russo, eds., *Colonial Chesapeake Society*, 367. Cole was in a region supposedly far different from the Chesapeake: New England. During the 1630s, Massachusetts farmers built mixed farms and prospered as the result of a continued influx of settlers throughout the decade. In their rush to highlight the tobacco transition in the Chesapeake, economic historians have not explored the implications of this local market for the Chesapeake region.

17. Carr, Menard, and Walsh, *Robert Cole's World*, 34; Kevin P. Kelley, "Settlement Patterns in Surry County," in Tate and Ammerman, eds., *The Chesapeake in the Seventeenth Century*, 191; Carr and Menard, "Immigration and Opportunity: The Freedman in Early Colonial Maryland," in ibid., 233.

18. Bradley Chapin, *Criminal Justice in Colonial America, 1606–1660* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1983), 86; Isaac, *Transformation of Virginia*, 113–35; Marylynn Salmon, *Women and the Law of Property in Early America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press,

1986), 4–13; Stanley N. Katz, "The Problem of a Colonial Legal History," in J. R. Pole and Jack P. Greene, eds., *Colonial British America: Essays in the New History of the Early Modern Era* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 457–91.

19. The most pivotal scholarship on the settlers' precapitalist frame of mind includes James Henretta, "Families and Farms: Mentalité in Pre-Industrial America," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 35 (1978): 3–32; Christopher Clark, "The Household Economy, Market Exchange, and the Rise of Capitalism in the Connecticut Valley," *Journal of Social History*, 13 (1979): 169–90; Robert E. Mutch, "Yeoman and Merchant in Pre-Industrial America: Eighteenth-Century Massachusetts as a Case Study," *Societas*, 7 (1977): 279–302; Christopher Clark, *The Roots of Rural Capitalism: Western Massachusetts, 1780–1860* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990). It is no coincidence that every argument in favor of a widespread "pre-industrialist" economy and mentality draws its conclusions from a case study of New England, the least (perhaps) acquisitive region of colonial America.

20. Jordan, "Political Stability and the Emergence of a Native Elite in Maryland," 267–71; Jordan and Carr, *Maryland's Revolution in Government*; Jack P. Greene, *The Quest for Power: The Lower Houses of Assembly in the Southern Royal Colonies, 1689–1776* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1963); Bernard Bailyn, *The Origins of American Politics* (New York: Vintage Books, 1968). It is important to note that, throughout this consolidation of political authority, voters became more sophisticated. Should a delegate ignore the interests of his constituents, no matter what his prestige, he would likely be tossed from office. That said, whereas common planters once had access to direct political authority, the fact remains that after 1700 they no longer did.

21. Bailyn, "Politics and Social Structure in Virginia," 33; Greene, "The Growth of Political Stability," 139–40; Greene, "Legislative Turnover in British Colonial America, 1696–1775: A Quantitative Analysis," in Greene, *Negotiated Authorities*, 215–37.

22. Carole Shammas, "English-Born and Creole Elites at the Turn of the Century," 294–95.

23. Appleby, "The Vexed Story of Capitalism," 11.

24. Isaac, *Transformation of Virginia*, 101–4; T. H. Breen, "Horses and Gentlemen: The Cultural Significance of Gambling among the Gentry of Virginia," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 34 (1977): 239–57; A. G. Roeber, "Authority, Law, and Custom: The Rituals of Court Day in Tidewater Virginia, 1720–1750," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 37 (1980): 29–52; Bushman, *Refinement of America*, 3–30.

25. Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs*, 122;

26. Paul G. E. Clemens, *The Atlantic Economy and Colonial Maryland's Eastern Shore*, 81.

27. Norton, "Evolution of White Women's Experience in Early America," 593–95.

28. Paul G. E. Clemens, "Economy and Society on Maryland's Eastern Shore," 160–65; Lois Green Carr and Russell R. Menard, "Immigration and Opportunity: The Freedmen in Early Colonial Maryland," 235.

29. Lois Green Carr and Russell R. Menard, "Immigration and Opportunity," 241; Menard, "From Servants to Slaves: The Transformation of the Chesapeake Labor System," *Southern Studies*, 16 (1977): 355–90.

30. Isaac, *Transformation of Virginia*, 134–35; Terri L. Snyder, "Legal History of the Colonial South: Assessment and Suggestions," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser. (1993): 18–27.

# Fells Point: Baltimore's Pre-Industrial Suburb

LAWRENCE A. PESKIN

Historians rarely discuss the existence of suburbs in pre-industrial American cities, nor do they show much interest in manufacturing suburbs. By and large the story they tell is that of the rise of residential suburbs, reflecting the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century American dream of the single-family house on a tree-lined street in a neighborhood of prosperous homeowners. These suburbs, historians argue, became possible with improved transportation and the increased separation of work place and residence, both of which were effects of the Industrial Revolution. In this story, pre-industrial suburbs, when they are discussed at all, serve chiefly as a point of contrast, for, unlike residential suburbs, they performed a variety of functions, serving as work places as well as residences.[1] Yet, the existence of pre-industrial manufacturing suburbs such as Fells Point suggests that the currently accepted dichotomy of pre-industrial and industrial cities may be overstated.

Suburbs of various sorts proliferated around the major American cities before 1815.[2] In addition to Fells Point, Baltimore had at least one other, Old Town. Southwark, Northern Liberties, Kensington, Moyamensing, Germantown, and others surrounded Philadelphia. Brooklyn and Out Ward were two early New York City suburbs, and Cambridge, Charlestown, and Roxbury were suburbs of Boston. Although their total population was small, these suburbs contained a significant proportion of the population of American metropolitan areas. By 1790 at least 35 percent of Philadelphia's population lived in suburbs, and nearly one of every five Baltimoreans lived in Fells Point in 1796.

It was not at all unusual for pre-industrial suburbs to function as manufacturing areas. Fells Point was a shipbuilding center, as were Philadelphia's Southwark, New York's Out Ward, and Boston's Charlestown.[3] Baltimore's Old Town was a manufacturing suburb specializing in the leather trades. The Philadelphia suburbs of Germantown, Moyamensing, Kensington, and Northern Liberties also served as manufacturing suburbs before 1815.[4] It therefore would appear that the existence of at least one type of specialized urban district—the manufacturing suburb—was common before the industrial revolution.

Because pre-industrial manufacturing suburbs served an often highly specialized function, they do not fit well into the current view that pre-industrial cities

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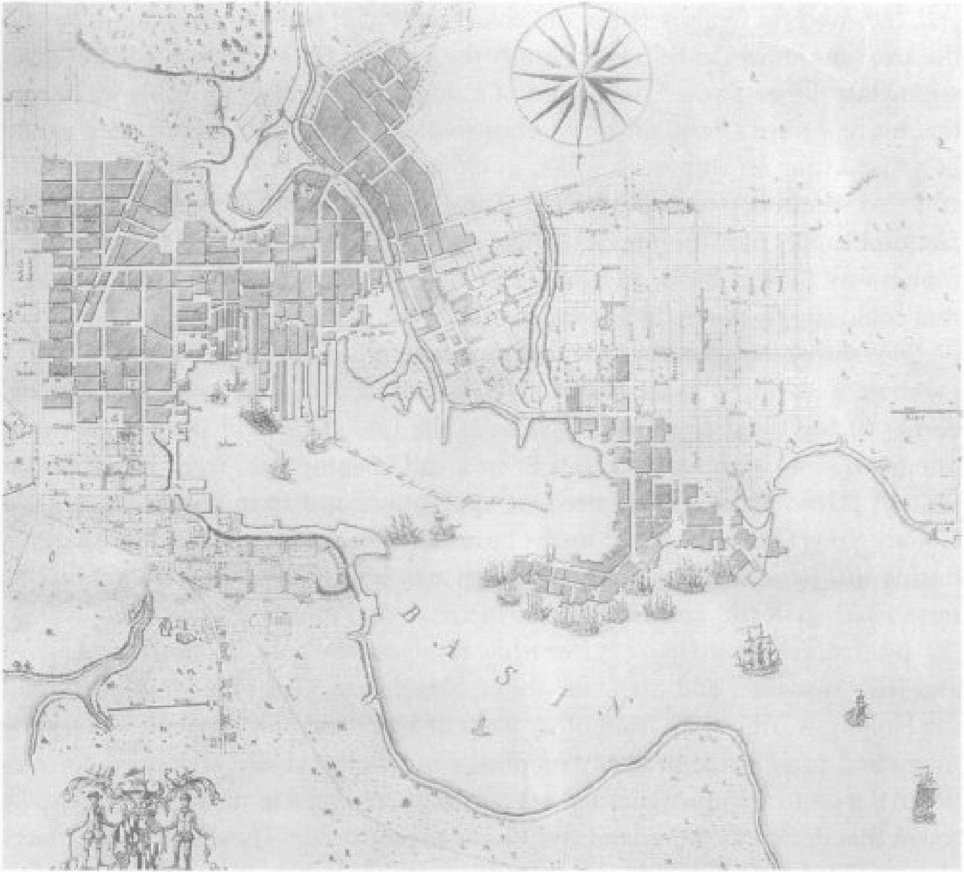
were characterized by non-differentiated urban areas, unlike the highly differentiated industrial cities. Sam Bass Warner captured this dichotomy when he wrote, "Indeed the presence of vast tracts of distinctive character, ethnic ghettoes, bedroom suburbs, a downtown, and so forth, distinguished the industrial metropolis from its more jumbled predecessor, the nineteenth-century big city."[5] In fact, Fells Point had a distinctive character as early as the late eighteenth century: it was a highly specialized manufacturing neighborhood where the economy was dependent to a large degree upon the maritime trades, particularly the building, repairing, and operation of ships.

Recent developments suggest a second, more presentist reason to examine the pre-industrial manufacturing suburb. In the post-industrial world of the late twentieth century a new urban model began to emerge: the large urban core surrounded by a group of smaller "edge cities."[6] Edge cities are quite different from the classic residential suburb. Composed of office towers and apartment buildings as well as single-family homes and townhouses, they serve as both work place and residence for a diverse group of people. In this sense, then, post-industrial suburbs are more closely reminiscent of the pre-industrial suburb with its mix of work place and residence than of the industrial city's bedroom suburbs. The pre-industrial suburb is an important precursor to the modern edge city, just as much in line with the mainstream of American urban history as the more frequently studied residential suburbs.

This essay uses Fells Point as a starting point to examine the general contours of the pre-industrial manufacturing suburb. The urbanization of Fells Point between 1776 and 1796 suggests a four-part definition of the pre-industrial manufacturing suburb. First, pre-industrial manufacturing suburbs were closely connected politically and economically to a nearby urban core. Although physically separated from Baltimore's center by about one mile of marshy land, Fells Point was closely connected to Baltimore politically and economically. It produced ships for the city's merchants and was annexed to Baltimore in 1781.[7] Second, pre-industrial manufacturing suburbs were urban areas. Fells Point's population increased almost five-fold during these twenty years, contributing to Baltimore's status as the fourth largest city in America.[8] Fells Point not only grew during this period, it also became more densely populated.

Third, and perhaps most important, pre-industrial manufacturing suburbs were functionally specialized. That is, their growth stemmed from a specialized function. In the case of Fells Point this function was the building, repair, and operation of water-borne vessels. Functional specialization was the key to Fells Point's rapid growth between 1776 and 1796, because shipbuilding attracted migrant artisans seeking work in their areas of expertise. The influx of artisans and shipyard laborers created forward linkages, demands that provided work for others. In this way, specialization created growth and urban development.



*Although separated from Baltimore by approximately one mile, Fells Point served as the manufacturing hub of the city's shipping industry. A. P. Folie's* Plan of the City of Baltimore and Its Environs, *1792. (Maryland Historical Society.)*

Finally, the case of Fells Point suggests that pre-industrial manufacturing suburbs had a truncated structure of wealth. Virtually no merchant-capitalists or professionals called Fells Point home.[9] Instead, the suburb was dominated by middling artisans, small shopkeepers, and propertyless laborers, many of whom were not free. Although Fells Point's residents were not rich, the evidence suggests that the process of functional specialization did offer them a level of economic opportunity that was not available in the surrounding countryside.

Shipping caused Fells Point to boom. Baltimore's Basin, now known as the Inner Harbor, initially was adequate for the small city, but, as ships became larger and commerce increased, it began to fill up with silt. By 1753 the problem became so severe that Baltimore's commissioners made it an offense punishable by a five-pound fine to throw earth, sand, or dirt into any branch of the Patapsco River or into the shore at any location where it might wash into the river.[10] By 1763, Edward

Fell, the son of a wealthy Baltimore ships' carpenter, had surveyed and patented the area now known as Fells Point under the name of Fell's Prospect, and he began selling lots the next year.[11] As the son of a ship carpenter, Fell probably was aware that his new town's deep, silt-free harbor would be ideal for commerce and would be a fine setting for shipyards, which would have the ability to launch large vessels and also would be accessible for any ships, large or small, in need of repairs. A plentiful supply of the white oak, cedar, and locust timber needed to build ships' frames was close at hand, and Baltimore had thriving iron works and foundries that could supply the materials for the iron work in the vessels' hulls.[12]

Not surprisingly, some of the first men to purchase lots in Fell's Prospect were involved in maritime trades. Benjamin Nelson of Cecil County in the northeastern corner of Maryland appears to have been the first shipwright in the new town, purchasing one of the original lots in 1764 and opening a shipyard in waterfront Philpot Street. Nelson likely brought apprentices and farm youths from Cecil County along with him to start up the business. Other migrants from Cecil County during this period included several merchants: Isaac Grist, Abraham VanBibber, Jesse Hollingsworth, and Hollingsworth's and VanBibber's brothers.[13]

By 1776, Fells Point had 675 free white residents, the bulk of whom had English and Irish surnames and many of whom, like Nelson, Grist, the VanBibbers, and the Hollingsworths, were from other parts of Maryland and Virginia. The nearby towns and countryside probably supplied a number of skilled craftsmen, for earlier in the century shipwrights and other craftsmen settled in the small Chesapeake towns that dotted the Maryland and Virginia countryside. These same rural places also provided a supply of young apprentices for the urban craftsmen.[14]

Of the 409 adult free whites in 1776, 222 (54 percent) were men and 187 (46 percent) were women. There were also 266 free white children.[15] The white population thus appears to have consisted mainly of families. Of the 821 inhabitants, seventy-four were listed by census-taker William Aisquith as servants. These probably were indentured men brought to work in the shipbuilding industry. At mid-century Chesapeake shipbuilders had imported skilled English workers serving prison sentences to work in their yards. Baltimore merchant-manufacturers such as William Lux also imported skilled servants.[16] Of the seventy-four servants, all but twenty were men, indicating that the indentured labor force consisted mainly of single men. There were also sixty-five black slaves on the Point in 1776. They were nearly evenly divided by gender and between adults and children. Seven free blacks were listed in the census.

In the two decades after 1776, Fells Point continued to grow rapidly, despite inflation and the post-war recession. In 1779 the shipbuilding community was considerably enlarged by a group of new residents who moved north from Portsmouth, Virginia, after British forces destroyed the Gosport shipyard. David Stoddard, formerly a shipbuilder in Portsmouth, began to ply his trade in Fells

*Edward Fell (1735–1766), son of a ships' carpenter, saw the economic promise in the tract known as Fell's Prospect. (Maryland Historical Society.)*

Point, and presumably other craftsmen as well as his slaves moved north with him.[17] By 1783 the tax assessor found 1,522 residents on the Point, nearly double the 1776 population.[18] By 1796 that figure had more than doubled again. Growth was slowing a bit, but the area was still a boom town.

Slaves were the most rapidly increasing portion of the population in the 1770s and 1780s. Between 1776 and 1783 the slave population had more than quadrupled, from sixty-five to 276. The use of slave artisans and laborers was a regular feature at southern shipyards, and much of the increase in slaves at Fells Point can be attributed to the growing shipbuilding industry.[19] It is possible, too, that slaves were beginning to replace indentured servants.[20] Shipwrights were among the largest slaveowners. David Stoddard owned twelve in 1783, and John Steele owned eight.[21] Thomas Worthington, whose rope walk supplied rope to the shipyards, owned fifteen slaves. Only Doctor William Hays, with eighteen slaves, owned more than Worthington. He probably rented them to shipbuilders and other craftsmen.

Less information is available about foreign immigrants, but many foreigners, especially Germans and Scots-Irish, migrated to Baltimore in the late eighteenth century (some coming by way of Pennsylvania), and it is likely that some of these also found their way to Fells Point. Also, in 1793 a group of French refugees arrived in Baltimore from San Domingo, fleeing Toussaint L'Ouverture's rebellion. The 1796 city directory indicates that some of the refugees settled in the Point.[22]

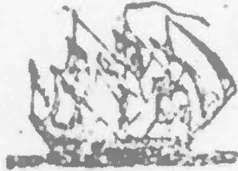
The population boom was accompanied by a remarkably high degree of geo-

# Sale by Auction.

TO MORROW MORNING,

*The 31ſt inſtant, at 11 o'clock, at mr. Nicholas Slubey's wharf, Fell's Point, will be ſold for Caſh.*

The Prize Ship Hope,



With her Tackle and Apparel, as ſhe arrived from ſea.

An inventory will be ſhewn at the time of ſale.

ALSO,

160 hogſheads Building Lime, 30 000 Bricks, 2000 Tile, and 30,000 Hogſhead Hoops.

BARNEY & HOLLINS, Auctioniers.

*Notice of ship sales appeared frequently in local newspapers.* (Federal Intelligencer and Baltimore Daily Gazette, *December 30, 1794.)*

graphical mobility. In the three years between 1773 and 1776, the population nearly tripled, rising from 300 to 821. But of the male taxable residents named on the 1773 tax list, only thirty-six (40 percent) were found in 1776 by the census taker, and only eleven of the 146 heads of household (7.5 percent) listed in the 1776 census were named in the 1796 city directory.[23] Thus, at the same time that large numbers of people were moving into the new community, many also were leaving. Some may have joined the steady stream of Marylanders moving west to Kentucky and the Ohio Valley in this period. Others may have moved from the Point to downtown Baltimore or other urban areas. Overall, the picture is one of tremendous growth and flux.

As new people flooded into Edward Fell's peninsula, they transformed it into a densely built, urban, manufacturing neighborhood. In 1776 the Point was separated from Baltimore by nearly a mile of empty land. It covered a fairly small area, and population densities were relatively low. Even within the settled area there were undeveloped lots, and some residents were still running farms.

The property owned by Isaac Hall and described in an inventory when he died in 1778 suggests the low density of population during this period.[24] Hall owned six lots, four of which were undeveloped. One empty lot stretched a full block from Market Street to Apple Alley and contained twelve thousand square feet. Another empty lot of six thousand square feet was at the corner of Market Street and Aliceanna Street. The existence of such large, undeveloped lots in the heart of Fells Point would appear to indicate that there was still plenty of room for new houses,

and a good deal of open space remained. Further, Hall's own brick house was situated on a two and a half acre lot; no property of that size would exist in the neighborhood in the 1790s.

By 1796 empty lots were being filled in as more houses were built, and the average lot size was only 2,504 square feet, far less than even the smaller of Hall's lots.[25] The suburb remained physically separate from the rest of the city, but the two population centers were fast merging as both expanded their edges of settlement. The influx of shipyard workers and sailors brought on the beginning of residential segregation.[26] Certain streets, particularly the narrow alleys, were noticeably poorer than others. On Apple Alley, for example, seven of twenty-eight residents were mariners, the least skilled and least remunerative classification for sailors. The relative poverty of these people also is suggested by the fact that only three of the twenty-eight heads of household on Apple Alley owned their own homes. These were all small, one-story frame houses valued at $110 each, about the least expensive of any on Fells Point.

Alleys also tended to have fewer inhabitants than other streets of the same length. This apparent anomaly may be due to the fact that the 1796 city directory omitted African Americans. It is quite likely that these seemingly empty alley lots actually were inhabited by free blacks, the invisible people of Fells Point.[27] If that is true, then poor whites and blacks were segregated into these narrow streets to live in cheap, crowded housing.

The rest of Fells Point's streets showed fewer signs of residential segregation. A

*Fells Point merchants supplied the growing town with imported and local food and building materials.* (Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser, *May 20, 1777.)*

TO BE SOLD,

By GEORGE PATTEN,

At his HOUSE, for CASH only,

| | |
|---|---|
| HERRINGS, | Staves, |
| Beans, | Pine Boards, |
| Peafe, | Scantling and Joift, |
| Indian Corn, | Some Queen's Earthen |
| Flour, | Ware, |
| Mace and Cloves, | A Parcel of Hoes, |
| Pepper and Alfpice, | Tar, and |
| Boat-Boards, | A few Pieces of Linen. |

*Fell's Point Baltimore, May 14, 1777.*

street with relatively expensive housing, such as lower Bond Street, contained a wide range of craftsmen, storekeepers, innkeepers, and sea captains. More than likely the craftsmen were master craftsmen, the businessmen were among the neighborhood's more prosperous, and the sea captains had made successful commercial investments.[28] A less successful family would often share a house with another clan on these streets to make ends meet. The waterfront streets tended to be rather more heterogeneous than the inland ways, with a mix of shipyards, wharves, specialty shops, inns, and housing of all types and prices. Shopkeepers and shipwrights here lived side by side with common laborers and dock workers. This mixed neighborhood probably resulted from the need of both rich and poor to be close to the waterfront. Specialty stores could thrive here because these streets at the heart of Fells Point's commerce were the neighborhood's most heavily trafficked.

Between 1776 and 1796 Fells Point had become an urban community. From a thinly settled town with open spaces that reminded residents of Maryland's agricultural heritage, it had evolved into a densely built, complex city neighborhood.

As Fells Point grew and urbanized, it increasingly served the specialized function of a shipping center. As late as 1778 some farming also existed side by side with more urban trades. John Smith, for example, seems to have lived a life more akin to a prosperous rural Chesapeake farmer than to a Baltimore merchant or mechanic judging from the evidence in the probate inventory compiled at his death in that year.[29] He owned a large home with stables and other outbuildings. In his stables were two horses and riding equipment. He also owned two cows, but he does not appear to have had any other livestock. Also in the stable was a good deal of farming equipment, including two plowshares, as well as spades, hoes, a dung fork, and a pitch fork. Fells Pointers continued to own farm animals into the 1790s (especially milk cows), but their inventories do not reveal a comparable quantity of farm equipment and supplies. Even in 1776, Smith's farm was exceptional in Fells

*American privateers and naval vessels, many of them built and outfitted in Fells Point, caused significant damage to the British fleet and economy during the revolution of 1776.* (Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser, *May 6, 1777.)*

BALTIMORE.

*The Captures of ſo many Jamaica Ships, by American armed Veſſels, have cauſed the Stoppage of ſeveral capital Jamaica Houſes in the City of London, where it was expected, ſome Months ſince, that the Price of Sugar would riſe to near Three Pounds Sterling per Hundred Weight. Many more Failures were alſo expected.*

WANTED IMMEDIATELY,

FIVE or six Journeymen ROPE-MAKERS. Constant Employ, and good Encouragement will be given.—Also wanted, two or three LADS, from 14 to 15 Years of Age, as Apprentices to the Rope-Making Business.........Application to be made to WILLIAM WILLIAMS, at Fell's-Point, Baltimore.

*Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser*, May 6, 1777.

Point, but as the neighborhood would continue to urbanize throughout the next two decades, his way of life would completely disappear.

Shipbuilding on the Point benefited from the fact that the Chesapeake Bay remained open to trade through much of the war and that Baltimore, therefore, continued to function as an important port. When, in 1776, Maryland's revolutionary government contracted to have seven galleys built for the new navy, four of them were constructed at Fells Point, two at George Wells's yard, and two at the yard owned by prominent Baltimorean Archibald Buchanan. The frigate *Virginia* and the sloop *Defence* were also built at Fells Point by Wells, and the *Wasp* and *Hornet* were armed and fitted there. Many privateering vessels doubtless also were built and fitted at the Point.[30]

Clearly, Fells Point was becoming an important shipbuilding center by 1776. This growth came at the expense of other Chesapeake shipbuilding areas and Philadelphia. Shipbuilding had not been important to Maryland before 1740, but after mid-century, as the market economy expanded and merchants became more powerful and involved in a wider circle of trade, it became a major industry. Initially shipbuilding was scattered throughout rural areas, especially those where the quality of tobacco was low and the crop not profitable. As Baltimore and other towns began to grow, they attracted much of this trade. Because shipbuilding was a highly labor-intensive industry, and since the flow of orders for new ships was sporadic, it was probably more efficient for several shipyards to be located in a single neighborhood where a large pool of skilled workers would be available and could be funneled into the yard or yards that had work. At mid-century, when Baltimore emerged as the region's largest population center, it became logical for shipbuilding to concentrate at the city's harbor, or in this case at the available waterfront acreage on Fells Point.[31]

A good indication of the influence of shipping in Fells Point is the predominance of shipbuilders and sailors in the 1796 city directory.[32] Ships were large, highly complex products, and building one could easily involve one hundred or

more workers.[33] At least two hundred (34 percent) of the neighborhood's 590 household heads were directly involved in building, fitting, and sailing ships.[34] These people practiced a wide range of occupations, from the sea captains and the shipwrights who commanded the sailing and the building of ships to the ships' carpenters who laid their planks, to the ships' bakers who supplied them with bread, to the pilots who guided them to and from the harbor. Another forty-six Fells Point residents who performed such occupations as cooper, carpenter, and common laborer probably played a part in the shipping industry at least periodically. When these individuals are added, nearly 44 percent of Fells Point's heads of household could have worked in the shipping industry at some time during 1796.

Only sixty-three of the area's 216 craftsmen were involved in trades that were definitely not shipping-related in 1796. The largest number were cordwainers and tailors. Many probably made their living by shoeing and clothing their neighbors rather than by creating products for wider distribution. Likewise, the innkeepers, grocers, and retailers who lived on the Point also served the tertiary function of providing goods and services to local people and to sailors and others temporarily in the area.

Due to its dependence on orders from merchants or the government, shipyard work could come in spurts. Joseph A. Goldenberg found that over a period of one hundred weeks in the 1750s a single Massachusetts shipwright worked only 455 days. He worked anywhere from three to six days a week, presumably depending on the amount of work available.[35] A craftsman living in a small town and working in such a fitful industry would have had difficulty supporting himself on this type of work alone, and he no doubt would have performed other sorts of labor or farmed some land when the demand for shipbuilding labor was low. This no doubt became more difficult as Maryland agriculture became less profitable and the shipyards became concentrated in the city in the late eighteenth century.[36]

In a functionally specialized city neighborhood such as Fells Point, a craftsman would be more likely to find skilled work in the many shipyards, in which several shipbuilding projects might be going on simultaneously. Also, carpenters, masons, and other skilled workers presumably could use their special skills at other sorts of jobs. For example, Fells Point was experiencing a building boom as its population grew, yet only three men were listed specifically as house joiners in the 1796 city directory. Presumably, ships' joiners and even ships' carpenters would sometimes work in house construction during slack shipbuilding periods, constructing houses for themselves or others.

The concentration of specialized craftsmen in the area created a demand for support services, including inns, boarding houses, grocery stores, dry good stores, barbers, and a number of highly specialized luxury crafts such as umbrella maker and furrier. Also needed were watermen and carmen to move goods between port and downtown. Finally, a few government officials and professionals—seven rev-

Baltimore, Feb. 17, 1777.

WANTED, a confiderable quantity of white oak knees, and 60 rifing timbers for fhip-building. The knees muft be 5 feet long in the body-part, and 4 feet in the arm on the infide, to fide 8 inches and a half, to have a proportionable thicknefs in and out, and to be perfectly found.—The rifing timbers muft be from two feet and a half rifing in each arm, with various degrees of rife to a fquare. Thofe of the laft rifing to be 8 feet long in each arm from the throat, and not lefs than 20 inches deep in the throat. Thofe of the greateft rifing to be 7 feet long in each arm, to fide to 12 inches at leaft. They muft be all of the foundeft and beft timber.—Two dollars for rifing timbers, and one dollar for knees anfwerable to the foregoing defcriptions, fhall be paid for them on delivery at Fell's-Point, if delivered within five weeks from the date hereof.—Any perfons inclinable to contract for delivery of faid rifing timbers or knees, may apply to me

GEORGE WELLS.

*Fells Point shipyard owners profited from revolutionary war contracts. (*Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser*, February 18, 1777.)*

enue officers, five schoolmasters, five doctors, and two constables—served the Point's residents.

The initial need for shipbuilders brought skilled workers into Fells Point. New residents, in turn, created a demand for workers to assist them by performing less skilled labor. All of these people created a demand for support services such as inns, groceries, and other businesses of the sort found in any city neighborhood. These were the forward linkages necessary for economic development that shipbuilding created.

Population growth, urbanization, and functional specialization were accompanied by a truncating of the range of wealth in Fells Point and a decline in per capita wealth. This relative impoverishment is illustrated by an examination of probated inventories and property ownership rates during the final quarter of the eighteenth century.

In the 1770s, Fells Point's residents were often quite prosperous. Several wealthy merchants lived there, most notably Jesse Hollingsworth and Abraham VanBibber

# Sales by Auction.

## On MONDAY.

*The 29th instant, at 11 o'clock, at Mr. Sluhey's wharf, Fell's Point, will be sold, for* CASH, *by the puncheon, bale or package, agreeably to the original invoices, the* CARGO *of the ship Hope, from London bound to Grenada, prize to the French privateer brig Les Peuple Francois, captain Pierre Hardy, as follows:—*

Bottled porter, in puncheons; porter, in barrels; bottled claret, in puncheons; do. Port wine, in do. soap, in boxes; candles, in do. tallow, in kegs; ship-bread, in puncheons; pease, in buts; loaf sugar, in puncheons; glass decanters, &c. in do. slops, in do. copper kettles, measures, lanthorns, and pudding-pans, in do. hams, in do. oats, in do building lime, in hogsheads; temper lime for sugar bakers, in barrels; twine, in puncheons; white lead; Spanish brown; oakum; paper; linseed and lamp oil, in jugs; pitch; tar; rosin; pump-leather; canvas; cordage; locks; crow-bars; nails; carpenters' tools; coopers' tools; corn mills; skimmers; hoes; bills; cutlasses; spades; iron hoops; iron pans or teaches; wheel-barrows; lead, in sheets; a complete copper still and head, for 300 gallons, with pewter worm and neck on the head; crates of queen's ware; portmanteau trunks; hyson tea; starch; hair-powder; pomatum; gentlemen and ladies' hats; shoes; boots; playing cards; men's stockings; ribands; linen stripes, and checks; cotton checks, Oznaburgs; brown and bleached Russia sheeting; dowlas; spotted lawns; nankeens; chintzes; cambrick, pullicat, and romall handkerchiefs; Irish linen; muslin cravats; umbrellas; coat patterns, with trimmings complete; waistcoat shapes; cotton bagging, in puncheons and bales; cheese, in baskets; tongues, in half barrels; black pepper; nutmegs; cinnamon and cloves; sweet oil; catsup; quin's sauce; India soy, in bottles; Stoughton's bitters; anchovies; capers; onions; beans; gerkins; walnuts, and piccalille, in cases; mustard, in do. table salt, in baskets; fig blue; hogshead hoops; truss hoops; 30,000 bricks, flat tile; ling fish; one elegant chamber organ, &c. &c.

N. B. The invoices may be seen at our auction-room, the Saturday previous to the sale.

BARNEY and HOLLINS, Auctioniers.

*Baltimore merchants such as William Patterson, right, bought luxury items directly from the ships' captains and auctioneers.* (Federal Intelligencer and Baltimore Daily Gazette, *December 23, 1794.)*

WILLIAM PATTERSON

*Hath for Sale, juſt imported in the brig Rover, Arthur Smith, Maſter, from Malaga,*

French and Spaniſh Red Wine, in pipes, ſuitable for the Weſt-India market; Malaga Wine, in quarter-caſks; freſh Raiſins of the Sun, in kegs, boxes, and jars; Green Grapes, in jars; Lemons and Oranges, in boxes; ſhelled and unſhelled Almonds, in caſks and bags; Filbert Hazle-Nuts, in bags; Caſtile Soap, in boxes;

*Who has on hand, from former importations,*

Old Madeira, Sherry, and Red Port Wines, and a quantity of fine and coarſe Salt.

*Baltimore, November 17, 1794.* mwthm2.

Federal Intelligencer and Baltimore Daily Gazette, *December 23, 1974.*

and their brothers, and a sample of inventories of residents showed an average wealth of £658.[37] In addition, 45 percent of those residents were worth above £225 at their deaths, enough to make them fairly wealthy, and 10 percent were quite rich, worth over £1,000.[38] The largest of these estates was that of George Wells, an important shipbuilder worth £7,626 at his death.[39] Wells owned thirty-seven unimproved lots and four that contained structures. He also owned seven slaves, numerous pieces of mahogany furniture, a large collection of china, and luxury items such as books, pictures, and mirrors. Although his fortune was, perhaps, not comparable to that of Baltimore's merchant elite, it was nevertheless impressively large.

A second indication of the relative wealth of Fells Point in 1776 is the fact that at least 85 percent of Fells Point's residents owned their own homes.[40] The twenty heads of household in the 1776 sample collectively owned a total of sixty-seven lots. When George Wells and his forty-one lots are dropped from the sample, the remaining nineteen people owned a total of twenty-six lots, or nearly 1.4 per person. Thus, nearly everyone who could afford it owned real estate, and many people owned multiple lots as investments in their rapidly developing neighborhood. Even Michael Reardon, a poor boat maker, owned a small house and lot, which was about all that he owned.[41]

By 1796, Fells Point had become distinctly plebeian, with virtually no merchants living there despite a much larger population, and inventories indicate that even the wealthiest residents in 1796 were not truly rich.[42] Average wealth had declined from £658 in 1776 to £260, and only 22 percent of the 1796 residents were

worth more than £225, down from 45 percent in 1776.[43] The two wealthiest men in the sample were Samuel Cleland, with an estate of £2,241, and ships' baker James Fortune, with an estate valued at £1,140.[44]

Neither Fortune nor Cleland lived lavishly. Cleland, who appears to have been a small merchant or a ships' chandler, lived quite modestly. His inventory lists no furniture other than a bed, two desks, and two tables. His most valuable possessions were a slave family and a sloop. Among his few personal luxuries were an umbrella, seventeen books, a guitar and violin, some music books, and a clock. Fortune lived somewhat better, although not opulently. Like Cleland, no real estate was listed in his inventory. Unlike Cleland, Fortune owned a wide variety of furniture, most of it high quality mahogany. Among his more expensive personal possessions were two slaves, a pistol, a sword, a watch, and some books. For the most part his estate was tied up in his business and in debts due. He was without such luxuries as a coach, or even pictures on his walls. Although certainly prosperous, he was not in a league with the merchants of Baltimore Street, or even with George Wells.

Fells Pointers at the bottom of the ladder in 1796 had very few possessions indeed. John Wilson, a rigger, was worth only £24 when he died.[45] The bulk of his estate was in cash, which he kept in the house. The rest consisted almost exclusively of clothing, including six pairs of trousers, five jackets, and three pairs of drawers, as well as shirts, stockings, handkerchiefs, and other items. Since he lived with cabinetmaker Robert Berry, he had no need of furniture or real estate. Possibly he was a young, unmarried man just starting out and trying to save money, or an old man who was no longer able to do much work. At any rate, he probably lived in reasonable comfort. The truly poor may not have appeared in the probate records at all. Neither did the slaves and servants who did much of the heaviest labor and were for the most part without property.

By 1798 the percentage of Fells Point residents owning real estate had dropped to 53 percent, down sharply from 85 percent in 1776.[46] This decline in owner-occupancy is the second piece of evidence of an overall drop in the level of affluence on the Point. As the neighborhood became increasingly urbanized, property grew more expensive and after the initial boom probably appreciated more slowly. Thus it became more difficult for less affluent investors to buy property, and even if they could afford to do so, the relatively slower appreciation of real estate would have made it a less attractive investment. With real estate less accessible to the poor and the Point increasingly dominated by less affluent people, property ownership naturally became more heavily concentrated among the few wealthy people on the Point and among affluent absentee landlords.

Nonetheless, there were still several wealthy Fells point residents who owned large tracts of real estate. Joseph Bias, for example, owned seven houses on the point in addition to his own. And some residents who owned no property were,

nevertheless, relatively wealthy. Some of the men whose inventories showed them to be the area's wealthiest owned little or no property. These and other well-off people must have rented buildings. Renting was certainly not always a sign of financial failure.[47] Shipwright Lewis DeRoachbroom, for example, rented a building despite the fact that he owned two others.[48] Other renters may have been saving to buy a home later. The increase in renting indicates that life in Fells Point was becoming economically more complex at the same time that the level of affluence was dropping.

Overall, by 1796 Fells Point was a community with no truly rich people, a large number of middling artisans and mariners, and with most of the very poor enslaved, apprenticed, or otherwise dependent.

It is important to note that the relative impoverishment and the drop in property ownership in Fells Point as a whole during twenty years of rapid growth do not necessarily indicate that urbanization brought poverty to individuals. Extremely high mobility meant that the more plebeian 1796 inhabitants were almost an entirely different group from those of 1776.

Thus, whether *individual* Fells Pointers of 1796 were better off than those of 1776 is not necessarily the same as whether Fells Point *as a whole* was better off. Without information on the newcomers' lives before they arrived at the Point, one cannot know with any certainty. It is impossible to know for certain where most of the newcomers came from or what their lives might have been like had they not found their way to Fells Point, but the evidence suggests that many of them probably came from the surrounding countryside and from other, smaller, Chesapeake ports. If this is the case, then these newcomers may well have been better off in Fells Point than at home, for in smaller towns they were less likely to find the sort of skilled work they might find in the city, and with Maryland's weak agricultural economy it was not easy to support one's family by farming. Paradoxically, urbanization created increased economic opportunity for some at the same time that it created a generally lower standard of living than had existed in the earlier, less urban environment.

Fells Point grew because of functional specialization. The initial development of Baltimore as a grain processing and shipping entrepôt provided the area with a pool of artisans, laborers, and sailors from the beginning. Additionally, merchants such as Jesse Hollingsworth, Abraham Van Bibber, and Samuel Purviance were able to provide the capital for new maritime ventures on the Point. Blessed with its excellent harbor, a pool of skilled labor, capital, and wartime naval orders, Fells Point boomed, attracting still more workers in the core shipping trades as well as the shopkeepers, innkeepers and others needed to support this new population.

This new, more urban Fells Point was very different from what had preceded it. From a relatively sparsely populated area with a wide range of residents—farmers and merchants as well as sailors and shipbuilders—it had grown into a densely

built manufacturing suburb with a population composed mainly of the lower and middling sorts who worked in shipping-related industries. Although the 1796 population was poorer than that of the 1770s, it consisted in large part of newcomers. These people, except, of course, the growing enslaved population, probably found more economic opportunity in their new home than they had previously in a depressed economy. Living in a shipping center with several shipyards and docks within walking distance, they had more jobs to choose from and were less likely to go without work for long than they were in a town with less activity or in the declining countryside. Their very presence created still more jobs for people who provided support services. Thus, despite the apparent impoverishment of Fells Point, the creation of the pre-industrial manufacturing suburb really offered opportunity.

## NOTES

1. John R. Stilgoe, *Borderland: Origins of the American Suburb: 1820–1939* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988); Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); Sam Bass Warner, *Streetcar Suburbs: The Process of Growth in Boston, 1870–1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962). For a fine full-length study of a pre-industrial English suburb see Jeremy Boulton, *Neighbourhood and Society: A London Suburb in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987).
2. I am here defining a suburb as a non-rural area that is distinct from the city's core but closely connected to the larger city economically, geographically, and socially. A suburban area generally is, or once was, physically separate from the larger city, and it has a distinct character. Here, I am explicitly rejecting a political definition, because suburban areas may easily be annexed by cities, or, as in the case of Baltimore, they may spring up before the larger city is even incorporated. My definition most resembles the French concept of the *faubourg*, an urban area outside of the city proper. On faubourgs see John M. Merriman, *The Margins of City Life: Explorations on the French Urban Frontier, 1815–1851* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991). On the difficulty of defining the suburb see Kenneth Jackson "Urban Deconcentration in the Nineteenth Century: A Statistical Inquiry," in Leo F. Schnore, ed., *The New Urban History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1975), 110–42; and Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, 3–11.
3. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, 12–19; Carl Abbott, "The Neighborhoods of New York, 1760–1775," *New York History*, 55 (1974): 35–53; WPA Writers' Program, *Boston Looks Seaward* (Boston: Bruce Humphries, 1941), 70–71; Joseph A. Goldenberg, *Shipbuilding in Colonial America* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1976), 33–35.
4. Charles G. Steffen, *The Mechanics of Baltimore* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 19–21; Jackson, "Urban Deconcentration"; Cynthia J. Shelton, *The Mills of Manayunk* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 26–54; Stephanie Grauman Wolf, *Urban Village* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976), 96–127.
5. Sam Bass Warner Jr., *The Private City* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968), 177. See also Paul Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815–1837* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1978), 48–55.
6. Joel Garreau, *Edge City* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1992).
7. J. Thomas Scharf, *The Chronicles of Baltimore* (Baltimore, 1874; Port Washington, N.Y.:

Kennikat Press, 1972), 189; Isaac Weld, *Travels through the States of North America*, 2 vols. (London, 1800), 1:44.
8. Everett S. Lee and Michael Lalli, "Population," in David T. Gilchrist, ed., *The Growth of the Seaport Cities 1790–1825* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1967) gives detailed population tables for the major American cities. On the causes of Baltimore's early growth see Carville Earle and Ronald Hoffman, "Staple Crops and Urban Development in the Eighteenth-Century South," *Perspectives in American History*, 10 (1976): 8. See also Clarence P. Gould, "The Economic Causes of the Rise of Baltimore," in *Essays in Colonial History Presented to Charles McLean Andrews* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1931), 225–51 and Jacob M. Price, "Economic Function and the Growth of American Port Towns in the Eighteenth Century," *Perspectives in American History*, 8 (1974): 123–86.
9. Southwark appears to have had a similar, although slightly less truncated structure in 1790. See *Crabgrass Frontier*, 17.
10. Scharf, *Chronicles of Baltimore*, 49.
11. Ibid., 54.
12. Arthur Pierce Middleton, "Ships and Shipbuilding in the Chesapeake Bay and Tributaries," in Ernest M. Eller, ed., *Chesapeake Bay in the American Revolution* (Centreville, Md.: Tidewater Publishers, 1981), 102.
13. Scharf, *Chronicles of Baltimore*, 56–57.
14. Middleton, "Ships and Shipbuilding in the Chesapeake Bay and Tributaries," 101; Tina Sheller, "Artisans and the Evolution of Baltimore Town 1765–1790" (Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, 1990), 35. On rural craftsmen in colonial Maryland see Christine Daniels, "'Wanted: A Blacksmith Who Understands Plantation Work'": Artisans in Maryland, 1700–1810," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 50 (1993): 743–67; Jean B. Russo, "Self-Sufficiency and Local Exchange, Free Craftsmen in the Rural Chesapeake Economy," in Lois Green Carr, Philip D. Morgan, and Jean B. Russo, eds., *Colonial Chesapeake Society* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988).
15. Demographic information is from "Census of Deptford Hundred or Fells Point, 1776," *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 25 (1930): 271–75.
16. On servants in Chesapeake shipbuilding see Goldenberg, *Shipbuilding in Colonial America*, 62. On Lux see Sheller, "Artisans and the Evolution of Baltimore Town," 50.
17. Sheller, "Artisans and the Evolution of Baltimore Town," 126.
18. 1783 House of Delegates Assessment Record for Deptford Hundred (Fells Point).
19. On slaves in southern shipyards see Goldenberg, *Shipbuilding in Colonial America*, 65.
20. Sheller, "Artisans and the Evolution of Baltimore Town," 161.
21. 1783 House of Delegates Assessment Record for Deptford Hundred
22. Sheller, "Artisans and the Evolution of Baltimore Town," 34–37; Gary L. Browne, "Baltimore in the New Nation" (Ph.D. diss., Wayne State University, 1973), 21–22.
23. Compare this to the much lower 33 percent per decade found for Philadelphia during this period in Billy G. Smith, *The "Lower Sort": Philadelphia's Laboring People, 1750–1800* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 136. Those who remained in Fells Point from 1776 to 1796 tended to be affluent master craftsmen and businessmen such as Dr. Jonathan Coulter, one of the neighborhood's most prominent men; William Trimble, one of the original city councilmen under the 1797 city charter; Isaac Grist, a wealthy merchant; and William Jacob, a prominent sailmaker.
24. Isaac Hall inventory, Baltimore County Inventories (1777). Original probate inventories are located at the Maryland State Archives, Annapolis, Maryland.
25. Average lot size is calculated from the 1798 Federal Direct Tax Assessment in Richard M.

Bernard, "A Portrait of Baltimore in 1800," *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 69 (1974): 348.
26. Information for this section comes from the 1796 city directory and the 1798 Federal Direct Tax Assessment.
27. The 1798 Federal Direct Tax Assessment shows a small number of "Negroes" who rented houses, probably free blacks.
28. Evidence indicates that sea captains often would go into business after a career on the water. They probably most often became ships' chandlers or small merchants. James Fortune, for example, is called "Captain Fortune" on a list of debts due, indicating that this ships' baker and small merchant probably began his career at sea. Shipwright Lewis DeRoachbroom also was called "Captain" on the 1798 assessment.
29. John Smith inventory (1778), Maryland State Archives.
30. Middleton, "Ships and Shipbuilding in the Chesapeake Bay and Tributaries," 15; Scharf, *Chronicles of Baltimore*, 140–41, 168.
31. Middleton, "Ships and Shipbuilding in the Chesapeake Bay and Tributaries," 101; Goldenberg, *Shipbuilding in Colonial America*, 118–20.
32. For a list of the occupations of Fells Point residents in 1796 see Appendix 1 below. Attorneys, merchants, and clerks were notably absent in Fells Point society. The neighborhood was home to only five merchants, three clerks, and one attorney in 1796. Merchants and those who helped them run the city's finances lived with few exceptions in Baltimore proper. According to Steffen, four out of every ten merchants lived on a single street, Baltimore Street, in downtown Baltimore (Steffen, *Mechanics of Baltimore*, 19). Fells Point's occupational structure was truncated; it consisted of a wide range of highly specialized middle-class mechanics and craftsmen, but the upper classes and the professional classes were mostly absent.
33. Goldenberg, *Shipbuilding in Colonial America*, 55–56; Smith, *The "Lower Sort,"* 78.
34. Similarly, 26 percent of Southwark's white male household heads were involved in these trades in 1790 (206 of 784 heads of household). This percentage excludes 242 African Americans and 207 white males for whom occupations were not specified. Figures are from Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, 17.
35. Goldenberg, *Shipbuilding in Colonial America*, 70.
36. Daniels, "'Wanted: A Blacksmith Who Understands Plantation Work.'" On Maryland's declining agriculture see Edward C. Papenfuse Jr., "Planter Behavior and Economic Opportunity in a Staple Economy," *Agricultural History*, 46 (1972): 297–311.
37. Based on a sample of twenty inventories of men who lived on Fells Point in 1776. See Appendix 2 for the complete list. The 1776 inventories are of residents listed in the 1776 census who died between 1776 and 1784. All figures in this section have been converted to 1700 prices to control for inflation. Inventories taken before 1777 and those taken after July 1781 were deflated using an unpublished conversion table created by P. M. G. Harris, "Chesapeake Deflators" (unpublished, June 1988). This table is constructed specifically for the purpose of deflating the values of Maryland probate inventories. The author wishes to thank Lorena Walsh for providing a copy of this table. Inventories taken during the extremely inflationary period from January 1777 to July 1781 were first deflated to January 1777 Maryland currency using Table C-2 in Appendix C of John J. McCusker, "How Much is that in Paper Money? A Historical Price Index for Use as a Deflator of Money Values in the Economy of the United States," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, 101 (1991): 356–58. These figures were then further deflated to the standard 1700 prices using the Harris table. Probate inventories tend to be biased toward the rich in that they seldom include the poorest members of society, but, when controlled for inflation, they nonetheless provide valuable insight into wealth patterns. For fur-

ther methodological discussion see Lois Green Carr and Lorena S. Walsh, "Inventories and the Analysis of Wealth and Consumption Patterns in St. Mary's County, Maryland, 1658–1777," *Historical Methods,* 13 (1980): 81–104.
38. Carr and Walsh suggest the £225 figure as the cut-off point between middling and more wealthy status, 87.
39. George Wells inventory (1784), Maryland State Archives.
40. This figure is based on the twenty inventories as no complete figures are available, and it probably underestimates home ownership. Inventories from the years 1796–1798 show 44 percent home ownership, less than the actual figure of 53 percent derived from the detailed and thorough 1798 Federal Direct Tax Assessment (which shows 283 of 538 heads of household owning their homes), indicating that these inventories underestimate home ownership, despite the fact that inventories often somewhat over-represent the wealthier members of society, since the estates of the very poor frequently do not go through probate. Also, real estate was rarely indicated on inventories from other parts of Maryland (see Carr and Walsh, "Inventories and the Analysis of Wealth and Consumption Patterns in St. Mary's County," 82), suggesting that it may also have been omitted from time to time in Fells Point.
41. Michael Reardon Inventory (1778), Maryland State Archives.
42. This process appears to have been well underway by 1783 when the poorest half of Fells Point's population owned only 1 percent of the total wealth, while the top tenth controlled 65 percent (figures from Steffen, *Mechanics of Baltimore,* 23). Although comparable statistics do not exist for the 1770s, the widespread property ownership of that period suggests that the concentration of wealth was less extreme.
43. Based on a sample of twenty-seven estates of Fells Point residents listed in the 1796 city directory who died between 1796 and 1798. Figures are deflated to 1700 standard prices and they include debts due to the decedents. The complete list of inventories is in Appendix 2.
44. Samuel Cleland inventory (1797); James Fortune inventory (1797), Maryland State Archives.
45. John Wilson inventory (1797), Maryland State Archives.
46. Calculated from the 1798 Federal Direct Tax Assessment. Lee Soltow, the historian who has studied this assessment most closely, described it as "remarkable for its comprehensiveness." Lee Soltow, *Distributions of Wealth and Income in the United States in 1798* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1989), 50.
47. On renting see Sharon Salzinger and Charles Wetherell, "Wealth and Renting in Prerevolutionary Philadelphia," *Journal of American History,* 71 (1985): 826–40, and James A. Henretta, "The Study of Social Mobility: Ideological Assumptions and Conceptual Bias," *Labor History,* 18 (1977): 165–78.
48. 1798 Federal Direct Tax Assessment.

APPENDIX 1: Occupations of Fells Point Residents in 1796*

Innkeeper (43)
Sea Captain (43)
Ship Carpenter (38)
Carpenter (21)
Cordwainer (20)
Grocer (20)
Rigger (18)
Laborer (15)
Seamstress (15)
Tailor (15)
Pilot (13)
Tavern/boardinghouse keeper (12)
Carman (12)
Blacksmith (12)
Sailmaker (11)
Shipjoiner (9)
Cooper (7)
Revenue Officer (7)
Waterman (7)
Painter and glazier (6)
Huckster (6)
Baker (6)
Physician (5)
Blockmaker (5)
Washerwoman (5)
Merchant (5)
Schoolmaster (5)
Shopkeeper (5)
Shipwright (5)
Barber (3)
Ship chandler (3)
Boat Builder (3)
Hairdresser (3)
Watchmaker (3)
Drayman (3)
House joiner (3)
Clerk (3)
Bricklayer (3)
Brickmaker (3)
Hatter (3)
Butcher (3)
Potter (2)
Sawyer (2)
Plasterer (2)
Joiner (2)
Constable (2)
Tallow Chandler (2)
Attorney (1)
Cutler (1)
Stevedore (1)
Tobacco Spinner (1)
Rope store (1)
Millener (1)
Locksmith (1)
Mathematical instrument maker (1)
Shipbaker (1)
Waggoner (1)
Surgeon/apothecary (1)
Nailmaker (1)
Chairmaker (1)
Plumber (1)
Porter bottler (1)
Starchmaker (1)
Anchor smith (1)
Nailor (1)
Oysterman (1)
Shingle dresser (1)
Stage driver (1)
Caulker (1)
Turner's shop (1)
Rope maker (1)
Smith and furrier (1)
Street paver (1)
Umbrella and trunk maker (1)
Ship's baker (1)
Justice of the Peace (1)
Inspector (1)
Wharf builder (1)
Cabinet maker (1)
Armorer (1)
Bottling cellar (1)
Mantua maker (1)

*Based on 1796 city directory. Number in parentheses indicates number of people in each occupation.

## APPENDIX 2: Methodology

This project analyzes two sets of inventories: one of residents who lived in Fells Point in 1773 and 1776 and a second of Fells Point residents in 1796. Because of the small number of residents in the 1770s, I was forced to use inventories for some people who lived in Fells Point in the 1770s but died in the 1780s. All of the deceased were white males. The group from the 1770s represents 14 percent of all heads of household in 1776, and the 1790s group represents 5 percent of all heads of household in 1796. Inventories have biases and are not entirely representative of the population of white males; they are biased toward the more affluent (who have estates to be probated), and they are biased toward the more elderly (who often have accumulated more possessions than younger people). Nonetheless, many of these estates belonged to very plain people indeed. The following table lists the names of the deceased and their dates of death. The original inventories are located in the Maryland State Archives in Annapolis, Maryland. Years in parentheses are the year the inventory was taken.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Henry Bride (1781) | Richard Clark (1783) | Thomas Conely (1780) |
| Joseph Cromwell (1782) | Robert Forsyth (1777) | Isaac Hall (1777) |
| Patrick Hannon (1784) | Edward Harriss (1773) | Micajah James (1782) |
| James Kingsbery (1782) | Robert Long (1779) | Thomas Long (1782) |
| Bazil Lucas (1779) | Robert Moreton (1781) | Michael Reardon (1778) |
| Christian Reese (1784) | George Robinson (1784) | John Smith (1778) |
| Philip Smith (1782) | George Wells (1784) | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Michael Allin (1798) | John Bush (1797) | Samuel Cleland (1797) |
| James Dudley (1798) | George Farrel (1797) | James Fortune (1797) |
| William Gardner (1796) | John Hay (1796) | Nicholas Hopkins (1798) |
| Thomas B. Hugo (1798) | Matthew Hulse (1797) | Nathaniel Jenny (1797) |
| William Johns (1797) | Andrew Kelly (1796) | George Knox (1797) |
| John Lawrence (1798) | Jonas Osborn (1797) | John Pannels (1797) |
| Anthony Pons (1797) | James Pratt (1796) | John Smith (1796) |
| Richard Smith (1797) | Thomas Smith (1797) | William Stacy (1798) |
| Pearse Veal (1798) | Francis White (1797) | John Wilson (1797) |

Book Excerpt

# "On Afric's Shore"

RICHARD L. HALL

The following is an excerpt from Richard L. Hall's *"On Afric's Shore": The Story of Maryland in Liberia,* to be published by the Press at the Maryland Historical Society in April 2003. Based on extensive research in the records of the Maryland Colonization Society in the library at the Maryland Historical Society, original manuscripts elsewhere, and scientific sources, the book is an account of the dramatic struggle of a few hundred former slaves to establish a settlement on the coast of Africa at Cape Palmas. This chapter examines the hardships imposed on native African (Grebo) and American settler alike by the realities of African agriculture, and the violence that resulted when food became scarce.

## "A Prey Unto Themselves"

Russwurm* was, as he said, barely over seasickness after his return from Monrovia, when he had to face an unprecedented palaver† brought by the Grebo states in unison. They had met during his absence to discuss trade. Stores of rice had run low in April, which was nothing unusual. Greboes had long since accustomed themselves to shortage as the previous year's crop was consumed and the new one matured. The harvest of 1836 had been poor, though, and the shortfall was unusually severe. Settlers depended on African farmers for rice, their staple, but Greboes would feed themselves first.[1]

Freeman‡ dictated new prices for rice and palm oil, about double what they had been, speciously justified as an attempt to improve the lot of impoverished bush states. Russwurm knew too well that inland towns would receive no benefit from the increase. He was inclined to resist but considered the power arrayed against him. "The prices demanded were most unreasonable," he wrote Latrobe**,

* John B. Russwurm was the first African American governor of the Maryland colony. He was the second black college graduate in the United States (Bowdoin) and had co-founded the first black newspaper in the country, *Freedom's Journal.*

† A pidgin word from the Portuguese meaning a discussion to set policy or resolve disputes.

‡ King Freeman, or Pah Nemah, leader of Gbenelu, the Grebo state centered at Cape Palmas.

** John H. B. Latrobe, prominent Baltimore lawyer and corresponding secretary of the Maryland State Colonization Society.

"but as we had not 10 croos* Rice on hand, with the new emigrants and all the sick who were entirely dependent on the Agent, I saw no way by which I could surmount the difficulty than by partially agreeing to pay it until I could do better." John Wilson† argued on behalf of the colony, but Greboes were unmoved. "They knew we had no rice on hand, or cassadas or potatoes to any extent in the ground: we must therefore either give their prices or starve." Russwurm asked for a small vessel for trade outside Grebo territories. He hoped, vainly, that the higher prices might force settlers to raise more food on their farms.[2]

Prices would normally have fallen off again as the harvest was gathered in October and November, but the crop of 1837 was even worse than that of the previous year. Greboes and Americans alike contemplated the possibility of famine.

During the summer of 1837, the settler Alexander Hance traveled through his old neighborhood in southern Maryland with the Rev. John Kennard, the society's traveling agent. Hance had been a prosperous free farmer in Calvert County before emigrating to Cape Palmas on the *Bourne*, which left Baltimore in December, 1834. When he reappeared, a citizen of Liberia, in equal standing with his white fellow traveler, both of them speaking in religious meetings of a glorious new life waiting in Africa, the appeal was powerful. Many volunteered, and Hance was able to return with eighty-one old friends and neighbors aboard the *Niobe*, which cast anchor off Cape Palmas on January 12, 1838. This was the largest group yet sent to the colony, and twice the number carried on the *Niobe*'s first trip.

Any addition to the populace would normally have been welcome, but the *Niobe*'s arrival caused some difficulty. Russwurm could scarcely provide for those already on shore, much less full rations for the newcomers. He complained of the high proportion of women and children in the group, fearing they would be a burden. The emigrants suffered their fevers in the society's shabby housing with personal attention but little more.[3] Hance they thought had tricked them into coming to this ramshackle, hungry place, though he shared their chagrin. "I with many others am deceived as you promised that Emigrants should be furnished with every thing necessary," he wrote Kennard, telling him to have emigrants bring all they have to Africa, "for every thing is wanted here." He reported the scanty supplies given settlers: "C. Gross, 5 Plates only for seven in family the others got from 2 to 3 plates only no Knives forks nor any thing Else."[4]

The new settlers brought him before the Methodist elders for lying, and he was hard pressed to defend himself. In letters home, he begged Kennard to publish the journal of their travels to prove he had told the truth.

* A croo was roughly equivalent to one-half bushel.

† John Wilson, Congregationalist missionary sent by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to establish a mission in Liberia. He and Russwurm became antagonists almost upon meeting.

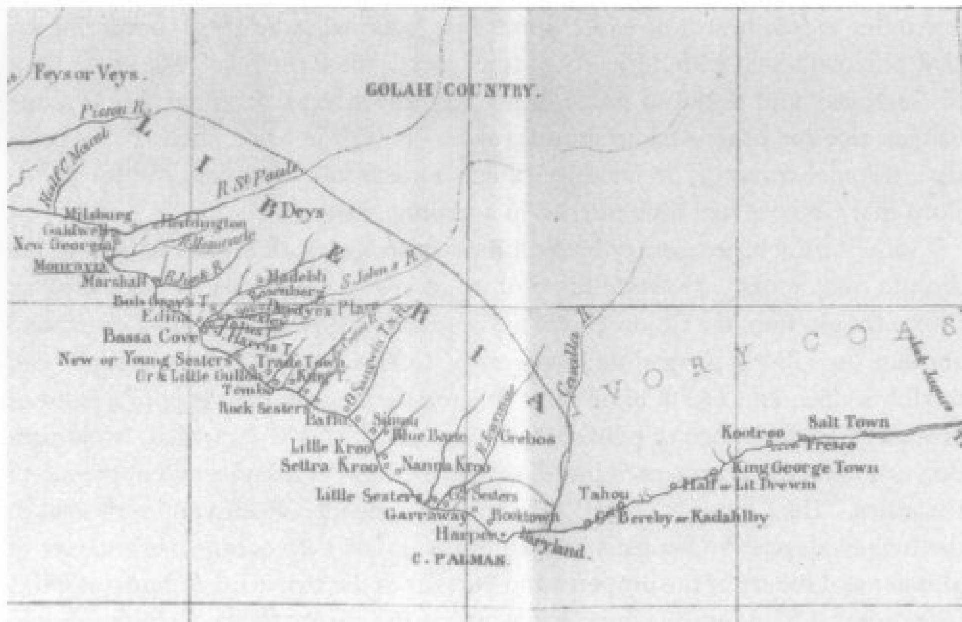
On February 22, 1838, Maryland in Liberia celebrated its fourth anniversary. John Revey gave an address at the Methodist Church, and settlers enjoyed a modest picnic at the Agency House. The following morning, Russwurm left to retrace Hall's* trip up the Cavally River. Denah's King Neh, who had once hosted Hall, had continued to invite the Marylanders to establish a base near his town. Now, with rice scarce and the beach towns exerting pressure on the settlement, Russwurm hoped to expand his sources of food. He took with him King Freeman, Anthony Wood, and twelve Grebo men. Though Freeman was sometimes an adversary, Russwurm thought his presence would enhance the mission's prestige. Gbenelu was also hungry, and a successful venture would certainly promote peace.[5]

The party encountered some delays on the beach, but they got to Grand Cavally about eight at night. A canoe had delivered their baggage earlier in the day. Baphro was hospitable, and they tarried for two days, giving time for news of their expedition to ascend the river. While at Grand Cavally, delegates from Half Cavally earnestly urged Russwurm not to go any farther. They used all sorts of arguments, but they were transparently jealous of the interior trade. Baphro advised Russwurm to ignore them, and they left.

Early Monday, the travelers set out in a large dugout canoe. As they passed up the lagoon, Russwurm relaxed and took in the lush fields and forests on its banks. The Grebo boatmen, accustomed to the ocean, kept a swift pace against the sluggish current. Soon they approached Ploroh, where Hall had encountered some trouble during his exploration. Opposite the first of the satellite villages, a musketeer fired at them. Immediately they heard the deep pounding of war drums in other villages, and at once forty or more canoes, each with three men armed with machetes or muskets, filled the river. They quickly moved around the dugout, which was helpless against them.

For a brief moment, the travelers braced themselves, perhaps to die, or at least to suffer a beating. The brief calm ended when someone snatched a prize. A free-for-all ensued. Freeman, Russwurm, and Wood were all thrown in the water. Wood was severely beaten and almost drowned. King Freeman received similar treatment until his oarsmen could save him. Russwurm, whom Greboes accorded special rank as if he were a white man, fared a little better. Three men pulled him from the water, only to confiscate his clothing, but otherwise they left him unharmed. Somehow, everyone reached shore, deprived of all but a few threads of clothing. They walked up to Ploroh to complain to Toureh, whose subjects had robbed them. He listened politely but pretended that he had no knowledge of the incident and could do nothing about it. He provided a boat to carry them back to Grand Cavally that afternoon.

* Dr. James Hall, first governor of Maryland in Liberia (1834–35).




*Detail of* Map of the West Coast of Africa, *compiled by John Arrowsmith, 1842. (Maryland Historical Society.)*

Baphro received them with apparent sympathy, giving them food and dry clothes. He sent word to Cape Palmas, and called a general palaver for the next day. Freeman and Russwurm remained overnight, hoping to get redress. At the palaver, Grand Cavally and Robookah blamed Toureh for the whole thing. Freeman would rather have believed the story, but Russwurm did not. He thought that Half Cavally and Grand Cavally must have conspired with Toureh to keep the Americans from interloping on the river trade. He regretted giving Baphro opportunity to divert responsibility. In any case, the palaver was inconclusive. Freeman and Russwurm went home and found their constituents united in outrage against Toureh. Many advocated an immediate campaign, but the two leaders successfully opposed so rash a plan. They chose instead to await an opportunity for revenge.[6]

. . .

[In the summer of 1838 the colonial agency was involved in a bitter dispute with missionaries over whether mission staff should have to perform militia duty as all other settlers were required by law.]

The quarrel between Russwurm and Wilson took place in an atmosphere of general irritability and contentiousness as food supplies steadily dwindled. Greboes and Americans alike faced starvation. Had Russwurm's venture up the Cavally River been successful, rice might have been forthcoming from Denah. Garroway, a

few miles to windward, provided some, but factional strife there, bordering on civil war, combined with difficulty of transport, limited the relief. The agent went to Garroway and declared peace, but trade improved scarcely at all. At Cape Palmas, rice and other African produce again doubled in price. Tobacco, the principal colonial currency, declined in value: so much had been paid out for provisions that Greboes had little interest in accepting more.[7]

John Wilson blamed everything on Russwurm. On April 26, on the heels of the dispute over Banks*, he wrote his brother-in-law in Columbia, South Carolina: "Since the election of a Colored man to the office of Governor of this Colony, and another for Liberia proper, the progress of Colonization has been a rapid and fearful decline; and I look upon it, at this moment, as on the verge of a ruinous precipice." He promised to publish an exposé which would show that, "Colonization as conducted at present, is little less than a system of iniquity and oppression." He added, "The Colonists of this place have become idle, vicious and turbulent in the highest degree: and must starve to death unless they commence a career of plunder and robery of the property and persons of the native inhabitants: and this latter event is by no means improbable, unless the natives of the Country, should combine and overwhelm them."[8]

More moderate members of the community believed that the failure of settlers to raise their own food had caused the present difficulties. After more than four years of hard work, the record of settler agriculture was one long disappointment.[9] Many settlers regarded farming as slaves' work, beneath their status as free men. Moreover, their efforts to raise crops often failed miserably. Most settlers, therefore, had to find other employment. Many cut lumber, though they knew the activity was unhealthy and dangerous. Others engaged in petty trade or practiced crafts learned in America. "We have been too negligent about our farms," Oliver Chambers, master of the public school, wrote Ira Easter in a letter of July 10, voicing a popular opinion: "Yes Sir, we have shamefully thrown our Farms A way and Greedily Grasped the hammer and Saw and declare ourselves Carpenters for the sake of a little currency because it is An immediate reward, and depend upon the Natives for our food But we begin to discover that our Natives are not fools, if we buy of them we have to pay *well* for the Article or starve."[10] He hoped that his fellow citizens would learn a lesson from their adversity.

Colonial officials frequently criticized the aversion to agriculture, which they blamed on laziness or improper ideas of liberty, but the causes were deeper. The society tried to recreate agriculture as practiced in Maryland or on southern plantations. They assigned fixed plots of land for intensive cultivation. Many crops that the agency promoted would not thrive at the Cape, or individual settlers could not grow them in sufficient quantity to repay their efforts. Settlers, who did

* John Banks was a settler employed by the mission as a teacher.

not know better, also tried to farm according to their experience, in a manner inappropriate for conditions at Cape Palmas. Cotton required just the right soil and weather to flourish, with extraordinary labor—and for all that, weevils destroyed most of the bolls. Cape Palmas tobacco was inferior. Coffee flourished, and young plants or seeds were available to any settler who applied. Few asked for any quantity, though, because several years were required before a harvest was possible. The oil palm was also plentiful. Greboes gathered enough for domestic use and usually had a surplus to sell to the agency. Russwurm and Hall both advocated its cultivation, but settlers again resisted. The international market for palm oil was just developing, and settlers would not plant and cultivate trees when they could collect the fruit all around them. Until they could identify a crop that would grow without extravagant inputs of labor and money and could find a consistent foreign market, settlers were unlikely to devote more than marginal attention to their farms. This was only common sense.[11]

The failure of colonial agriculture was essentially the result of ecological conditions. Greboes also faced difficulties, which only a few Americans seemed to recognize. Launcelot Minor, an Episcopal missionary, addressed a letter on the subject to Latrobe in 1838. He noted that acquaintances had "entered into a series of calculations to prove that this country is incapable of supporting more than the native population." He apparently accepted the contention, but he thought that improved technology and more suitable crops would alleviate scarcity and permit higher population densities.[12]

Paradoxically, Americans found Greboes in possession of a country that seemed to be fertile and underused. Yet now, with the addition of only about four hundred individuals, chronic food shortages were developing. Geography and the ecology of food production help to explain what was happening. A successful agricultural system must produce enough to meet the needs of a community consistently over years and generations. These needs are related to the size of a population, its dietary preferences, and its economic habits. Overpopulation is a relative term, having ecological significance primarily in terms of land degradation, which occurs by any of a number of processes in which the physical structure or chemical composition of the soil is altered, resulting in destruction of the numbers and variety of living things or in reduction of productive capacity of the soil. For example, the coastal savannahs are a product of degradation: where once had been forest, agriculture had worn out the soils and left barren scrub.[13]

Scholars have argued that precolonial Africa was generally underpopulated, and that the land could have supported larger populations, but did not largely because of the slave trade.[14] This may have been the case in many areas, devastated by slave-raiding campaigns, but the historical record for Cape Palmas indicates overpopulation instead.[15] The beaches offered economic advantages that tended to draw larger concentrations of people. At the same time, the salt air and poor

marine soils made them less productive than areas farther inland. This is reflected in the keen struggle for land among the Grebo towns, and seasonal hunger. The Grebo states were sparsely populated, but their system of agriculture could not have supported many more people than it did when the Americans landed in 1834.

Using nineteenth-century estimates of Grebo population and of the extent of their territory, in combination with modern information on nutritional requirements and the production of upland rice under shifting cultivation, some crude calculations, perhaps along the lines of those mentioned by Rev. Launcelot Minor, are possible. Sources estimate the Grebo population between twenty and twenty-four thousand, tending toward the latter figure.[16] The total area occupied by the several Grebo states was about ninety square miles—about twenty-three miles along the coast from Fishtown to the Cavally River, with a boundary about four miles inland.[17]

Grebo farmers grew rice and other crops in a system of bush fallow rotation, which required extensive tracts of land but also maintained sustained yields. Their farming achieved an ecological equilibrium, nevertheless, yields were probably not very high. Horatio Bridge, who visited Cape Palmas in 1843, learned that Grebo farmers planted about two bushels of rice per acre, hoping to harvest thirty. Greboes generally planted their rice on hillsides and riverbanks rather than swamps and marshes, despite the fact that upland rice produces substantially less than lowland varieties. Lowland rice typically produces forty or fifty bushels for every two planted, though disease and parasites associated with the lowlands make their cultivation less attractive. Only a fraction of the Grebo territories were suitable for rice, for the seacoast soils were less fertile. Grebo farmers concentrated their activities two or three miles inland, along the northern edges of their states, or on isolated hilltops closer to the coast.[18]

The principal goal of shifting cultivators is to grow enough to feed themselves, with a surplus to offset a poor harvest or to sell for goods that cannot be made in the household. Agronomists estimate that one-third hectare planted in upland rice will sustain an adult for a year, and further that for every five adults an extra one-third hectare must be planted: that is, two hectares are necessary to support five adults.[19] Greboes of the nineteenth century probably planted similar proportions. If we take the lower population figure of twenty thousand, then eight thousand hectares of upland rice would produce the necessary subsistence and a small surplus. Shifting cultivation demands territory. With a fallow period of ten years, ten times more land would be needed to support a population over the long run than would be needed to feed it for one year. Eight thousand hectares annually in an area of ninety square miles would allow field rotation in a period of between six and seven years. This is fairly fast: agronomists agree that eight to ten years of fallow is generally necessary to avoid degradation in a tropical rainforest environment. What is more, the actual area suitable for growing rice would have been

much less than ninety square miles. As noted, Greboes confined rice cultivation to the northern fringes of their territories, where soils were better and the salt spray not so damaging. Perhaps only forty-five square miles were actually available. If this was the case, then fields would have to be reused every three to four years, an unsustainable rate.[20]

Gbenelu was the largest of the Grebo states, comprising about thirty-five square miles, with the highest proportion of interior land. A population of about four thousand was concentrated in three towns. Taking the ratio of two hectares for every five adults, then sixteen hundred hectares would be cultivated every year. If all of Gbenelu territory could be farmed, then farmers would reuse fields every twelve to thirteen years. Deduct one-third as unsuitable, and the cycle must have been closer to eight years, which is still reasonable. On the other hand, if the other Grebo states are taken in aggregate, then fifty-five square miles, much of it close to the beach, would have had to support sixteen thousand people. Thus, 6,400 hectares cultivated every year, and fields recleared every four or five years, at best; or, allowing for unsuitable land, perhaps every two or three years.

These are rough estimates, but they demonstrate that the Grebo states could not have produced all the rice they needed, though Gbenelu may have made enough for bare subsistence. The beach towns sacrificed an easy food supply, and perhaps less hazardous disease environments, for the economic benefits of access to the sea. The Grebo people were not starving. Cassava, bananas, and other crops would make up a large part of their food deficit. Fish, game, and livestock provided more food. Trade with neighbor states in the interior accounted for the rest. For this reason, Greboes were extremely protective of their interests in the bush.[21]

Despite hard times, Russwurm encountered little trouble with Greboes. He and Freeman shared an interest in vengeance upon King Toureh and the Barboes of Cavally River. Lulled by a sense of friendship, Russwurm broached the topic of moving Big Town, which straddled Maryland Avenue between Harper and the village of Latrobe. So many bumptious, heathen Africans upset the sensibilities of straight-laced settlers.[22] The agent thought that a physical separation of the two peoples was a reasonable means of ensuring peace, but he misjudged the issue's sensitivity. "The natives are becoming exceedingly uneasy at the amount of land appropriated by colonists," John Wilson warned Latrobe. "They are apprehensive that they will be crowded out of their reservations." They had asked him repeatedly whether the society would send out an agent to investigate the situation and protect them. Settlers were experiencing the effects of this unrest. Thefts, with their political overtones, increased as the supply of food dwindled. Greboes continually taunted settlers as "slaves" and took advantage where they could.[23]

They picked out some settlers for particular bullying. One was Eben Parker, a freed slave from Queen Anne's County, on Maryland's Eastern Shore. He had

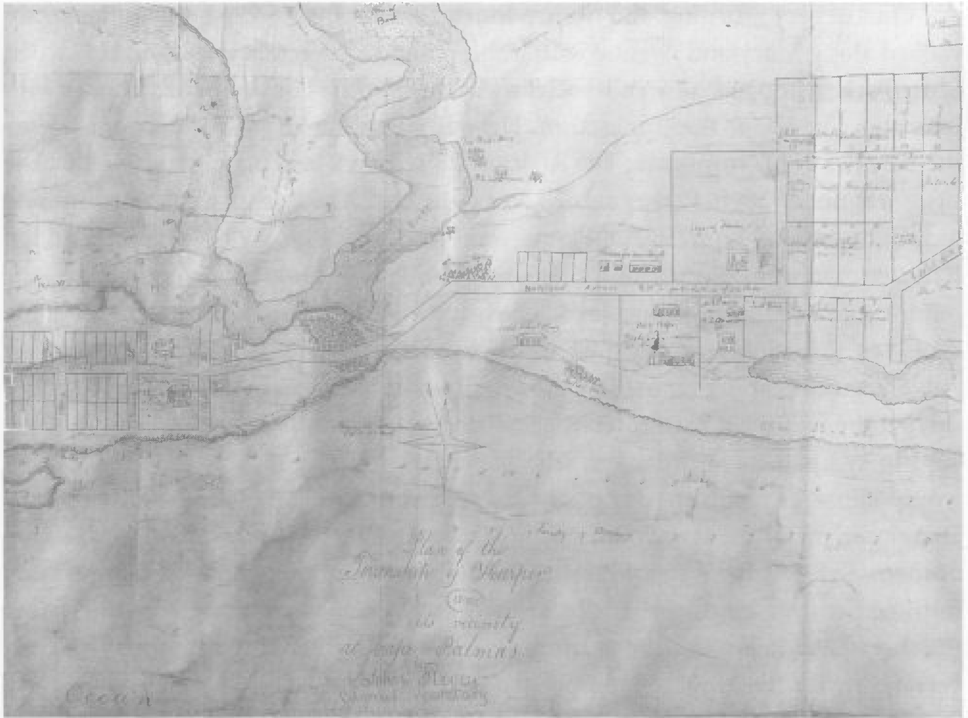
emigrated to Maryland early in 1836 with his wife and five young daughters. In Africa, he had toiled and suffered, crippled with arthritis. Two of his children died.[24] In spite of hardship, Parker was one of the few settlers committed to farming. His neatly cleared, fenced lot on Maryland Avenue, opposite Mt. Vaughan, was a model. Early in 1838, he chose to grow rice for himself rather than buy it. This was too much for Greboes, who regarded the lot as one of their former rice fields, reluctantly ceded in their confrontation with Holmes* in 1836. If Parker could make a success of rice, others might follow and measurably reduce their dependence on African produce. The *sedibo*† decreed that no African could work for Parker, a blow, but the old man made due with the help of his wife and girls. He carried a stool with him, which he put down whenever he needed rest, and weeded whatever lay within arm's reach. Greboes systematically badgered Parker and his family. They stole whatever they could, and when he resisted, they resorted to the colonial courts, repeatedly calling him to answer petty charges. Once, a Grebo woman accosted Mrs. Parker and a child on Maryland Avenue as they returned from visiting a neighbor. The woman menaced them with a billhook, cutting the little girl's arm, then threw the mother into a ditch alongside the road. Eben Parker saw the scuffle, hobbled out, and wrestled with the woman while his family escaped. She went straight to Harper to file a complaint, and Parker was fined for assault. Nor was this the end of his troubles. On another occasion, a Grebo broke into his house and stole a gun. Mrs. Parker followed the thief, satisfying herself of his identity and residence. She went to Thomas Jackson, justice of the peace, to complain. He was sympathetic and went with her to recover the weapon, but the thief was not prosecuted for fear of raising a palaver.[25]

On June 16, the agent and council discussed the growing incidence of thefts. They urged settlers to be more vigilant—empty advice to a community that did not lock doors. More pragmatically, they posted night watchmen throughout the settlement, with instructions to shoot any suspect disobeying orders to halt. Early in July, some palaver among the Grebo states shut off the supply of cassava for a few days, and the prospect of famine grew more vivid.[26]

The schooner *Columbia* anchored off Cape Palmas on July 2, with thirty-six slaves from Savannah, Georgia, the property of Mrs. John Wilson and her brother, Nicholas Bayard. When their opinion of Maryland in Liberia had been more favorable, the Wilsons had arranged to settle them at Harper. Bayard delayed their departure while he rented the slaves to Savannah for public works, but finally he sent them to Baltimore to emigrate.[27] Wilson wrote Bayard in April to dissuade him from the plan, but the letter arrived too late. These new emigrants arrived at the worst possible time. Wilson and Russwurm were hardly on speaking terms,

* Dr. Oliver Holmes was the second governor of the colony, from 1835 to 1836.

† The body of men of military age in a Grebo state.



*Map of Harper from the Maryland Colonization Society Papers. (Maryland Historical Society.)*

though the missionary had to rely on the agent. There were scarcely any provisions on hand: settlers were daily begging for food, and even this small accession was more than the agency could provide for. To his credit, Russwurm did all he could for Wilson's people, and they did not fare too badly. Wilson could only cast blame, however, condemning Russwurm as "short-sighted and improvident." His policies and incompetence had rendered the colony dependent upon African produce. "If the natives should demand *two* dollars this year for a croo of rice instead of one it will not surprise me — and they may make it *five* unless the colonists will render themselves independent by their own industry," he added. "The time was when rice could be shipped from the place, but the demand now exceeds the amount produced."[28]

About the middle of July, a Grebo man broke into a house and stole various articles, including a good hunting gun. Grebo constables detected and jailed him to await trial. The following Sunday afternoon, July 22, Russwurm heard of a plot to free the prisoner. He called the militia to arms and declared martial law for the next three days. He was determined not to be humiliated as in the summer before. War seemed imminent, but settlers were braced for whatever might come. Greboes did not hazard an assault.[29]

On Tuesday morning, the twenty-fourth, a man from a bush town, Barrakah, walked along Maryland Avenue with a sheep and other articles to trade at Harper. Eben Parker stopped him and bought the sheep, then continued his chores with little thought about the transaction. He was surprised late that afternoon to see the Barrawe at his front gate. The African wanted his sheep back, claiming that the price was not enough. Parker argued, but to no end. The bushman was determined to take his animal home again. Parker went into the cabin for his musket, and the Barrawe man walked off with the sheep. When Parker came to the door, they were out the gate. He took aim and fired. The heavy lead slug caught the bushman in the shoulder, throwing him down, seriously but not mortally wounded.

The gun's echoing report attracted Africans and settlers in the vicinity. Greboes carried the wounded man to Harper. Settlers retrieved the sheep and stood in the yard to sympathize with Parker, who was nearly in a frenzy. He declared that he would shoot any officer who might try to arrest him. They shared his sense of abandonment. If the law would not protect them, they were resolved to take care of themselves. At the Agency House, the noisy entry of the wounded man with an outraged entourage disturbed Russwurm and Freeman in a palaver concerning the threatened jailbreak. The agent ordered Parker's arrest, then resumed his conversation with the king.

Sheriff William Hawkins received the warrant early in the evening, but it was too late in the day to act. He was aware that Parker was armed and prepared to defend himself. The next morning, July 25, men of Gbenelu carried the Barrawe man back to his town, where he told an angry story of having been assaulted for no good reason, and without redress. His bearers corroborated the story and embroidered the details, using the chance to raise even more trouble for Parker. Barrakah's *sedibo*, consumed in a flash of rage, quickly decided to send a war party to set the palaver.

An accident that same evening fostered their object. Somewhere in the labyrinthine streets of Gbenelu, a neglected cooking fire spread sparks into a house thatch. In moments, a spectacular blaze, visible miles away, consumed the major part of the town. Few if any lives were lost, though the general panic and destruction of property was immense. Normally, looting would have followed such a misfortune, but agent and king were both anxious to prevent it. The militia mustered once again, to spend yet another wakeful night at their guns—now to protect those whom a few hours before they were prepared to fight.[30]

At dawn on July 26, a troop of some fifty Barrawe men approached the drowsy garrison at Mt. Tubman on Maryland Avenue. They carried clubs and machetes (many of the latter received by trade with the agency), and the united movement of so many men toward Cape Palmas should have aroused suspicion. When the chief officer questioned them, they indicated that they had come to see the damage at Gbenelu and commiserate. This satisfied him, and the pickets let them pass. The

settlement was just then rising to the new day. At Mt. Vaughan, John Payne observed them trotting along the thorn fence in front of the mission. Across the road, Eben Parker also watched, sensing danger, but unwilling and unable to do other than face it. He called a warning to his wife and children, telling them to stay inside the house. The Barrawe soldiers entered the yard. One hit Parker with a club, and another slashed him with a cutlass, and then the rest took turns at his body. Some others went after Parker's wife and daughters. Mrs. Parker climbed out a back window and fled with her youngest in her arms. She managed to escape, though she was wounded. Two other girls were cut down as they ran, one killed and the other left as dead. The Africans rifled the house and set fire to it, then rushed into the bush behind Mt. Vaughan. A column of black smoke marked the ghastly site, a contrast to the lush, vivid green rice field, gray with dew, that grew behind the homestead.

In moments, word passed the length of the settlement, "murder" and "African rebellion" on everyone's lips. The Greboes' terror of the previous night now fell upon settlers. Naturally, the report grew more confused and extreme with repetition, and the news that reached the main garrison at Latrobe was absolutely horrid. The moment he heard the report, without knowing precisely what had occurred, Charles Snetter* picked a small detachment of his men and hastened to Parker's farm. As they approached the spot, they intercepted a group of Grebo men and boys. At least one of them had a musket. They were very likely suspects, in Snetter's opinion, though in fact they were innocent, merely returning from their farms to survey their losses in the previous night's fire. Snetter questioned them but got no satisfactory answer. He ordered them to turn and walk ahead of his men, who carried muskets with fixed bayonets, toward Parker's farm.

Other settlers came up, pointing at the Greboes and identifying them as killers. The captives had good reason to fear that the growing crowd might lynch them. They walked a short distance, but as they reached a cross street, they saw another troop of militia coming toward them from Parker's. In an instant, they darted from their captors and scrambled for the bush. Captain Snetter ordered his men to fire, though he was too late: a volley of musket balls was already leveled at the fleeing Greboes. Three of the escapees were hit in the back. One fell dead, and two wounded, one mortally. The rest got away in the underbrush.

The crackle of gunfire jarred the whole neighborhood. Within minutes, armed settlers and Greboes gathered at the scene, prepared for a pitched battle. For a few moments, war seemed inevitable. Only the concerted efforts of Russwurm and Freeman to calm the crowd averted disaster.

For the next few weeks, the militia was on full alert. The pressure would have been taxing under any circumstances. On the verge of starvation, with no relief

* Charles Snetter, a settler from South Carolina, was the leading military officer in the colony.

likely for another two or three months, the settlers' uncertainty and stress were near intolerable. On two occasions in the first week of August, men of the night watch at Mt. Tubman, under command of Charles Snetter, slaughtered Grebo bullocks. Freeman immediately protested, for livestock were money to Greboes. Russwurm investigated. Some of the Tubmans informed him that Snetter had dined with them—tasting only rice, they said—while the rest feasted on beef-steaks. When questioned, Snetter claimed to know nothing of the affair. The officer left Russwurm and straightaway met a group of sympathetic settlers. He read from the eighth chapter of Joshua, which described the Israelites' destruction of a Canaanite town and the taking of booty and cattle, "for a prey unto themselves."[31]

Charles Snetter was a clever, energetic fellow, and a stirring speaker with an attractive South Carolina lilt. Freely employing Biblical language and analogy, he articulated the anxiety of many settlers who believed that their government capitulated to Grebo demands too easily. Russwurm, who never responded gracefully to criticism, rather disliked Snetter. In his opinion, the man was an ignorant fraud—one who pretended to accomplishments of which he was incompetent. He saw Snetter as a demagogue, whose intention was to mislead and manipulate public opinion for his own benefit, amply demonstrated in the persecution of James Thomson.* Snetter rose to shrill extremes of rhetoric, urging settlers to exterminate their heathen neighbors, just as God had ordered the Israelites to overrun Canaan.[32]

On the morning of Parker's murder, settlers hailed Snetter as a hero. Even Russwurm had to excuse his actions, though mistaken, under the circumstances. In the next two weeks, however, he changed his mind. As those involved in the shooting discussed the incident, a more sinister story emerged. Some speculated that Snetter ordered his men to fire even though he knew that his prisoners were innocent, maybe even before they began to run. Russwurm was predisposed to think the worst of Snetter and grew more disgusted with each report. He suspected Snetter of countenancing the thefts of bullocks but could prove nothing. On August 8, he and the council met to repudiate the shooting and the thefts. It was resolved that any violation of military discipline must be treated with utmost severity.[33] Russwurm appointed a "Court of Inquiry," though the colony's constitution provided for no such thing. A court-martial would normally hear such a case, but the agent apparently believed that no military court would convict so high and popular an officer. He therefore resorted to means outside the normal process of law.

Early on August 18, a Saturday, the court convened. There were ten judges:

* James Thomson, a settler from Monrovia, hailed from British Guiana and had studied at Cambridge. The Episcopal Missionary Society in the United States had hired him to create a mission at Cape Palmas, until dismissed amid scandal.

Russwurm at the head, associated with James Thomson, Alexander Hance, Benjamin Alleyne, John Revey, and other loyal citizens. They first questioned Launcelot Minor, an Episcopal missionary, who had spoken with the party of Greboes just before Snetter's men intercepted them. The soldiers from Snetter's detachment testified, with small differences of detail. They all agreed, however, that Snetter had given the order to fire after the captives had begun to run. Snetter did not testify. Meeting privately on Monday, the court concluded that Snetter had no right to order the shooting of his prisoners. They criticized all such actions on "the spur of the moment" but acknowledged that the excitement and confusion then prevailing mitigated the case. The court then deferred the case to Russwurm for disposition.

The tables had turned completely, and Snetter was now at the mercy of his enemy, Russwurm, delivered by the agent's hand-picked judges, among whom was James Thomson, whom Snetter had nearly destroyed less than a year before. Questions of legal technicality were irrelevant, for Russwurm and the court were determined to ruin Snetter. The agent held the court's resolutions until August 26, when he sent a copy of them to Snetter. He enclosed them in a letter informing the captain that his civil duties were terminated and that he had thirty days to settle his business in the colony. At the end of that period, he must take up residence in Harper and leave Maryland at the first opportunity.[34] The man who had before endeavored to have Thomson banished now found himself under the same sentence.

The proceedings were patently unfair, and settlers reacted angrily. Snetter augmented the fervor, walking the length of the colony to tell his story. In a community in which everyone knew everyone else's business, he was the principal subject of conversation. Early in September, citizens convened at the militia's central station, in the township of Latrobe. Snetter was absent at first, but a group of settlers went to get him. In the meantime, citizens took turns voicing concerns for their personal safety and the future of their country. When Snetter arrived, the crowd received him warmly and listened attentively as he read Russwurm's letter and commented upon it. In response, they nominated five men "to draw up a remonstrance Such and one as their weak abbility will allow to show that a large majorrity of citizens took task at that movement as a high handed measure and Consider it the first move to give the lives of our wives and Children into the hands of the Savages around us who thirsts for our Blood."[35]

The committee set about its task vigorously. None of them were fully literate—three at least could not sign their names—and the document they produced was awkward. Even so, they demonstrated a clear understanding of the colonial constitution and their rights as citizens. They cited, by article and clause, the provisions they believed the agent had violated in Snetter's case. They argued that the law guaranteed citizens due process in prosecution; that citizens were entitled to bear and use arms for their own and their country's defense; that military offenses

must be tried in a court-martial; and that only a court, not the governor alone, could impose a sentence of banishment. Their petition expanded from a defense of Snetter to a critique of Russwurm's administration. They asserted that he had overstayed his term of office, contrary to law. They complained that the governor treated citizens with contempt and showed too much favor to Africans. Though they shared Russwurm's anger over the robbery on the Cavally River, they were more upset that one of their own, Anthony Wood, was nearly killed than for the agent's humiliation. They believed that Greboes had plotted the incident and condemned Russwurm for relying on them to assist his revenge. As an instance, they related that shortly after Parker's murder, the agent sent John Bowen with guides supplied by Freeman to offer King Neh of Denah money to kidnap some of Toureh's people on the Cavally River. On the first evening, the party halted at a town, which Bowen presently suspected was Barrakah. Fearing for his life, he fled back to the Cape. Finally, the committee accused Russwurm of catering to Freeman's whims, namely to sacrifice Snetter, the best military man in the colony, "To oblige this savage who sirround us we are to be deprived of our Right Eye and then to lay down and die. We the undersigned say that we solomnly protest in the name of the Maryland State Society as well as the welfare of this colony (an do plainly say that he is not for us is against us) against Capt Chas Snetters leaving at all under that decree and otherwise untill we are better settled with our affairs." The men presented their report on September 12. Fifty-six attached their names. They handed a copy to Russwurm, posted another publicly, and mailed a third to the board of managers in Baltimore.[36]

Indeed, Russwurm had acted outside of strict accordance with the law, partially to take revenge for Snetter's persecution of James Thomson, but also because the man was a hothead, a dangerous individual in a tenuous community which emotional manipulation could sway. The agent was much more sensitive to the real power of Greboes than were most citizens, who entertained naive ideas of sweeping them away. He had little affection for Grebo culture, yet he realized that settlers must live with it or be destroyed. He therefore did what was necessary to preserve peace without conceding too much.

The turbulence hurt Russwurm's feelings, though there was truth in the settlers' criticisms. He reacted with characteristic choler, adding more enemies to his list. When someone informed Freeman that he was unqualified to be governor—because Russwurm was not really a white man—and the king challenged him, Russwurm reached his limit. He informed the board that he intended to resign as soon as they could find a replacement.[37]

During the months following his conviction, Snetter wandered the colony, offering apocalyptic visions to a receptive audience. At night meetings he was known to pray for the agent's salvation, and when agitated to shout, "Fire, fire! Fire! Fire from heaven!" as he moved on his knees from chair to chair. Major

Anthony Wood made a similar campaign, though with less verve. At length, they went too far, and more sober members of the community rejected their extremism. Wilson expelled Snetter from his congregation, so he joined the Methodists. Francis Burns, their new preacher, took up the case and even preached a sermon portraying Snetter as a martyr for the cause of righteousness.[38] In late January, Snetter at last sailed for Monrovia, leaving debts and an unhappy memory.[39]

## NOTES

1. John B. Russwurm to J. H. B. Latrobe, Feb. 12, 1837 (cntd. on April 10), p. 16, MSCS Archive: "This scarcity will I hope, be a lesson to our colonists not to depend so much on the natives for rice in the future."
2. John B. Russwurm to J. H. B. Latrobe, Nov. 14, 1837, pp. 1–3, MSCS Archive. Henceforth, the prices were fixed at: "3 Romaul Handkerchiefs or 2 yds Satin Stripe or Blue Baft or 3 yds Cloth or 2 bars Iron or crockery for one croo Rice, and 3 bars of every description of goods for one croo palm oil."
3. *Niobe* expedition: Emigrant List; John B. Russwurm to J. H. B. Latrobe, Jan. 18, 1838; Benjamin Alleyne to J. H. B. Latrobe, Jan. 18, 1838; Mathias Appleby to Ira Easter, Jan. 18, 1838, all in MSCS Archive.

Problems caused by *Niobe*: Alexander Hance to J. H. B. Latrobe, April 7, 1838; Alexander Hance to John Kennard, April 7, 1838; John B. Russwurm to J. H. B. Latrobe, April 26, 1838, pp. 1–2; "Annual Election at Cape Palmas," March 6, 1838, all in MSCS Archive.

4. Alexander Hance to John Kennard, April 7, 1838, p. 2, MSCS Archive.
5. John B. Russwurm to J. H. B. Latrobe, April 26, 1838, p. 18 (describes anniversary celebration), pp. 6–10 (recounts the trip to the Cavally River), MSCS Archive.
6. King Freeman to J. H. B. Latrobe, April 27, 1838, MSCS Archive. The King asked for boats to attack the Cavally River towns.
7. References to hard times: John B. Russwurm to J. H. B. Latrobe, April 26, 1838, pp. 3–6, 13, 15; John B. Russwurm to J. H. B. Latrobe, April 28, 1838, p. 3; John B. Russwurm to Oliver Holmes, April 28, 1838, pp. 1, 3, all in MSCS Archive.
8. John L. Wilson to N. L. Bayard, April 26, 1838, as quoted by Bayard in a letter to J. H. B. Latrobe, Savannah, July 10, 1838, p. 2, MSCS Archive.
9. George McGill to J. H. B. Latrobe, Dec. 25, 1837, p. 2, MSCS Archive.
10. O. A. Chambers to Ira Easter, July 10, 1838, MSCS Archive.
11. John B. Russwurm's reports are filled with accounts of activities on the Public Farms, including attempts to introduce new crops, to use draft animals, and to plow the soil. Settlers constantly asked for garden seeds and tools in their letters home, often noting their frustration at not being able to farm the way they had in America. The agent urged settlers to follow the Grebo lead in planting and harvesting times, but many resisted any change.

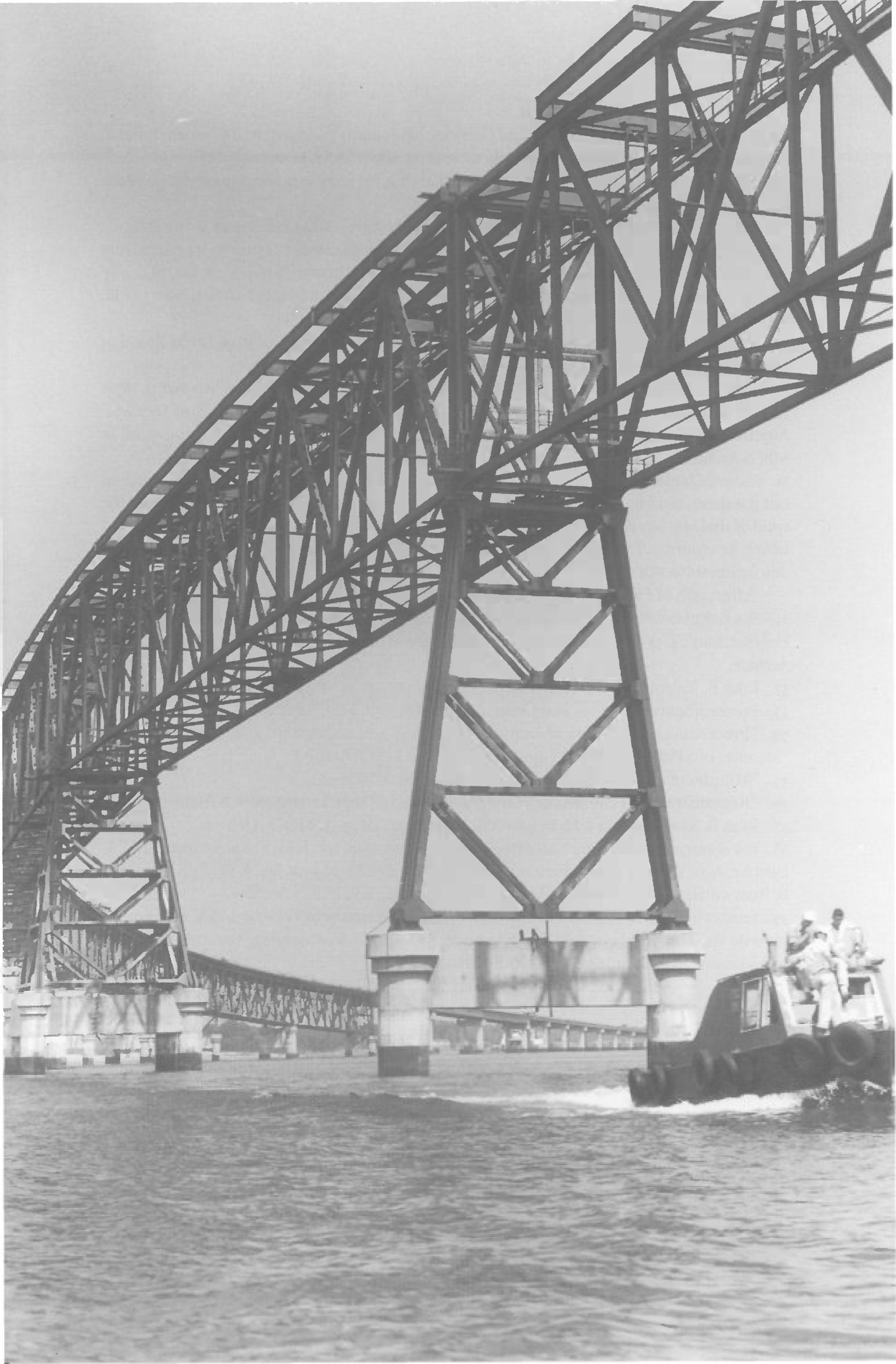
See A. G. Hopkins, *An Economic History of West Africa,* chapter II, especially pp. 27–43 for a good discussion of the political economy of precolonial agricultural production.

12. Launcelot B. Minor to J. H. B. Latrobe and Ira Easter, n.d. but probably April 1838. In a similar vein, Stephen Smith wrote Zachariah Tippett, his old master, on July 6, 1838, that he was "not pleased with the arrange ment of the co[l]oney and the reason is that wee are all among the natives and thear is a nuf of them heare to tend evry foot of land that is heare and

tha heave as much rite to the land as wee heve and as thea become inlightened theare woold requier more room and wheare is it to come from." MSCS Archive.
13. Land degradation is the key to understanding the relative concept of overpopulation.
14. See for example, A. G. Hopkins, *An Economic History of West Africa* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973)
15. Opportunities for estimating critical densities of population in an historical context are scarce. Africa poses particular problems, because its agricultural systems are relatively unfamiliar to Westerners, and specific facts about production in the past are hard to find, as are reliable demographic data. Maryland in Liberia's records are exceptionally detailed, however, and the circumstances they indicate encourage the researcher to consider the problem of chronic systemic food shortage. The analysis of such a situation in Grebo country is based on simple premises which are discussed at length in William Allen's, *The African Husbandman*, and other works, including numerous FAO-UN publications.
16. Estimates of Grebo population: John Payne, quoted in Scott, *Day-dawn in Africa*, p. 55: 25,000; Lynch, *Report*, p. 52: 20,000 in 1853; T. Savage, in *The Spirit of Missions*, Vol. III, p. 148: 60,000 to 70,000 within a fifty mile radius of Cape Palmas in 1838.
17. James Hall to J. H. B. Latrobe, Feb. 9–16, 1834, pp. 4–5. A large manuscript map, "Maryland in Liberia," dated 1839, is in MSCS Archive. Another useful document, "Map of the Grebo Country, Cape Palmas West Africa. 1841," appeared in *The Spirit of Missions*, Vol. VIII.
18. Lowland varieties of rice were probably unknown to Grebo cultivators, never having been developed locally, though the lowland crops typically yield much more (forty or fifty bushels for every two planted). Horatio Bridge, *Journal of an African Cruiser* (repr. London: Dawsons, 1968), pp. 46–47. This is supported by Charles Rockwell, *Sketches of Foreign Travel* (Boston: Tappan and Dennet, 1842), 2:265. See also, Schnell, *Plantes Alimentaires*, p. 78; and V. A. Oyenga, *Agriculture in Nigeria, An Introduction* (Rome: FAO-UN, 1967), p. 194.
19. P. W. Porter, "Liberia," in *The World Atlas of Agriculture* (Novara, Italy: Istituto Geographico de Agostini, 1976), 4:291–92, gives detailed figures on the subject.
20. P. W. Porter, "Liberia," p. 292, reports that the rate observed in Maryland County in the 1970s was sixteen years.
21. John Payne, quoted in *The Spirit of Missions*, Vol. VI, p. 17. Early commentators indicate that the rice trade with the interior was voluminous and jealously guarded. "Unlike the natives of Cape Palmas," John Payne wrote of Grand Cavally, "this people, having no American settlement amongst them — having a poor, exhausted soil to cultivate, situated at the mouth of the river on the seacoast, are in every respect interested in maintaining an extensive and uninterrupted intercourse with the interior natives; while the latter depending upon them for salt, as well as all foreign manufactures, are equally interested in cultivating it."
22. John B. Russwurm to J. H. B. Latrobe, April 28, 1838, p. 1, MSCS Archive.
23. John L. Wilson to Ira Easter, July 5, 1838, p. 4, MSCS Archive. In a letter to J. H. B. Latrobe, dated July 5, 1838, Nathan Lee complained bitterly about the contempt with which Greboes treated settlers: "it is Sir much as ever we can do to pass without being terribly abused. it is the cry of the Natives Most Special these young lads [i.e. mission scholars] calling us Slaves" (p. 2, MSCS Archive).
24. Eben Parker: Emigrant List; Census of 1837, both in MSCS Archive.
25. The most detailed account of Parker's troubles, from which this narrative is drawn is a remonstrance to the Board of Managers, January 8, 1839, pp. 2–3, MSCS Archive. See also, John B. Russwurm to J. H. B. Latrobe, August 21, 1838, pp. 2–3, MSCS Archive, for a more critical account of Parker.

26. Poor relations between colony and Greboes: Minutes of the Agent and Council, June 16, 1838; Benjamin Alleyne to Ira Easter, July 10, 1838, p. 4, MSCS Archive.
27. N. J. Bayard to Ira Easter, Savannah, Ga., March 4, 1837, reports reasons for delaying the emigration of his slaves.
28. John L. Wilson to Ira Easter, July 5, 1838, MSCS Archive. Other references to the difficult times may be found in: E. Byron to Ira Easter, July 4, 1838; Alexander Hance to Ira Easter, July 5, 1838; Jane Wilson to Oliver Holmes, July 5, 1838; John B. Russwurm to J. H. B. Latrobe, July 7, 1838; B. Alleyne to Ira Easter, July 10, 1838; John B. Russwurm to J. H. B. Latrobe, Nov. 1, 1838, pp. 3–4, all in MSCS Archive.
29. John B. Russwurm to J. H. B. Latrobe, Aug. 21, 1838, pp. 2–3; Snetter, et al. to the Board of Managers, Jan. 8, 1839, pp. 2–3, MSCS Archive.
30. Attack on Eben Parker's homestead: "Extract from John Wilson's Diary," August 13, 1838; John B. Russwurm to J. H. B. Latrobe, August 6, 1838; "Proceedings of a Court of Inquiry," August 18 and 20, 1838; John B. Russwurm to J. H. B. Latrobe, August 21, 1838, pp. 2–3, all in MSCS Archive.
31. *Joshua*, Chapter VIII, v. 26–8: "For Joshua drew not his hand back, wherewith he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai. Only the cattle and the spoil of that city Israel took for a prey unto themselves, according unto the word of the Lord which he commanded Joshua. And Joshua burnt Ai, and made it an heap for ever, *even* a desolation unto this day."

Aftermath of Parker's murder: John B. Russwurm to J. H. B. Latrobe, August 21, 1838, p. 2; John B. Russwurm to J. H. B. Latrobe, Nov. 1, 1838, pp. 8–10; John B. Russwurm to Oliver Holmes, May 24, 1839, p. 2; Snetter et al. to the Board of Managers, Jan. 8, 1839, p. 5, all in MSCS Archive.
32. John B. Russwurm to J. H. B. Latrobe, Nov. 1, 1838, p. 9, MSCS Archive.
33. Proceedings of the Agent and Council, August 8, 1838, MSCS Archive.
34. "Proceedings of a Court of Inquiry," August 18 and 20, 1838, p. 7, also transcribed in "Minutes of a Public Meeting," Sept. 5, 1838, both in MSCS Archive.
35. "Minutes of a Public Meeting," Sept. 5, 1838, MSCS Archive.
36. "Remonstrance of Citizens of Maryland in Liberia," Sept. 12, 1838, MSCS Archive.
37. John B. Russwurm to J. H. B. Latrobe, August 21, 1838, p. 3, MSCS Archive.
38. For comments on Snetter's activities after his conviction, see: John B. Russwurm to J. H. B. Latrobe, Nov. 1, 1838, pp. 8–9; Snetter et al. to the Board of Managers, Jan. 8, 1839, pp. 8–9; John B. Russwurm to Oliver Holmes, May 24, 1839, pp. 1–3, all in MSCS Archive.
39. Snetter boarded a ship bound for Monrovia in late January or February, 1839. He rejoined his wife and son, but he would find no peace. As Captain commanding the Rifle Corps, he would soon lead a campaign against an African state.



Portfolio

# Building the Chesapeake Bay Bridge: A Silver Anniversary Salute

The 4.3-mile Chesapeake Bay Bridge is one of the longest over-water steel structures in the world. Two generations of Marylanders have crossed the bridge since it opened on July 30, 1952. This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of that magnificent span.

The Maryland State Roads Commission had plans for a bridge in the 1920s, but the Depression and the Second World War postponed construction. In 1947, the General Assembly again considered building a bridge across the Chesapeake Bay. The project had the support of resort communities, many of which benefited from the postwar economic boom, but other Eastern Shore residents passionately argued against the bridge, fearing that increased traffic and subsequent restaurants, filling stations, and motels would transform their quiet and idyllic countryside. Despite their protests, those in favor of a bridge won the day, and the General Assembly, with the support of Democratic Governor William Preston Lane Jr., passed a $45 million bond issue for construction, to begin in 1949.

During its first year, the Chesapeake Bay Toll Bridge carried 1.1 million vehicles between Sandy Point and Kent Narrows. This year more than twenty-two million people are expected to use the bridge. The spectacular success and popularity of the project soon caused lawmakers and transportation officials to regret that they had only built a two-lane span. In 1966 the General Assembly voted another bond issue for the construction of a second span. The following year, at the request of the assembly, the State Roads Commission renamed the structure the William Preston Lane Jr. Memorial Bridge in honor of the former governor (1892–1967). The second bridge opened on June 28, 1973.

*Above: Some of the 4,000 pilings, 1950. Right: Attaching blocks to the pilings, 1951. Below: The Bay Bridge from Sandy Point, December 1950.*

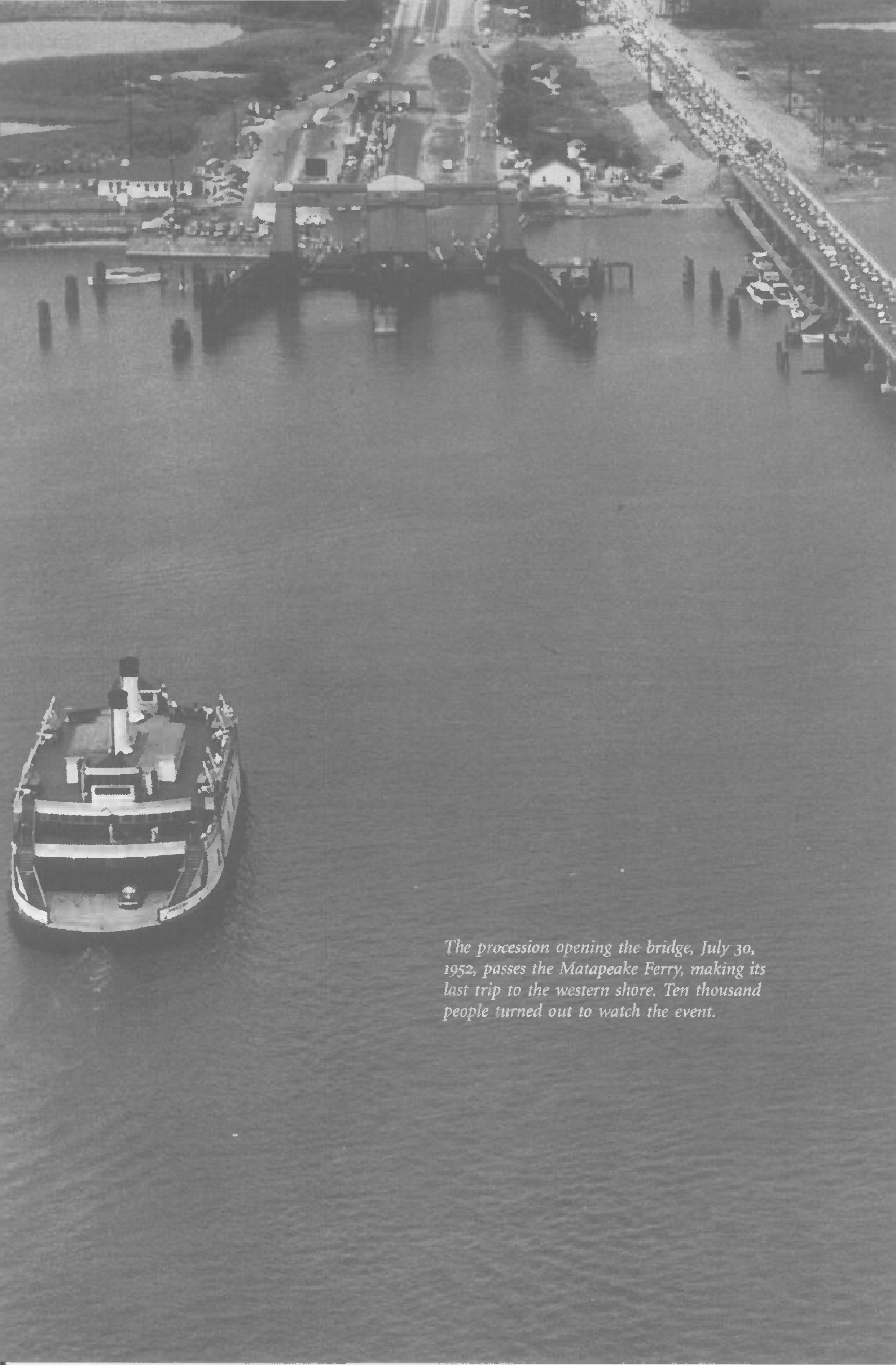
*Above left: Threading cables, 1951. Above and center right: The "high wire gang," 1952. Below: Tug towing pier forms, November 1950.*

*Series of photographs taken between November 1950 (left) and February 1952 (below).*

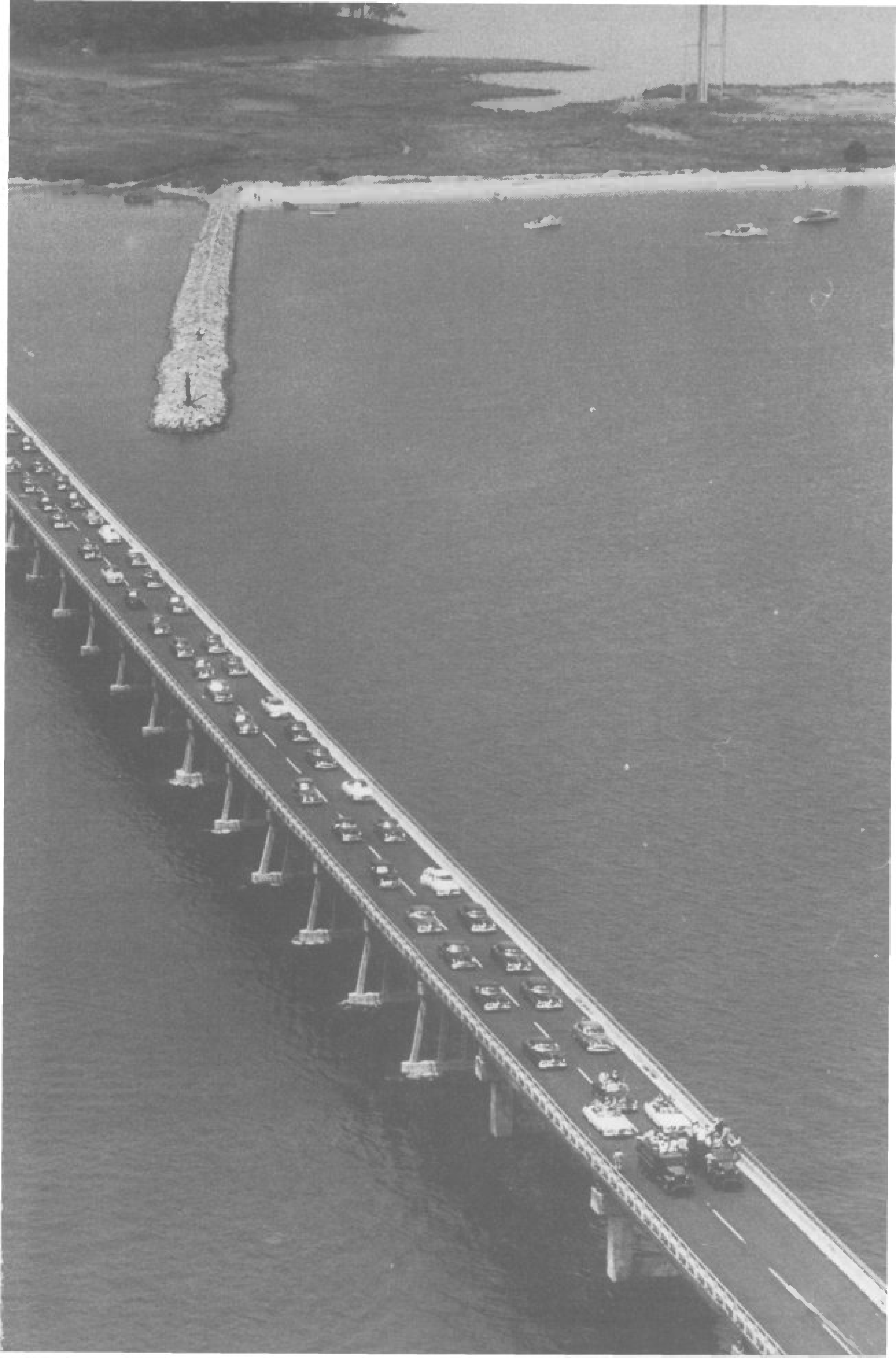
*May 1952*

*February 1952*

*Photographs taken shortly after the bridge's opening show that it swiftly reached capacity. Toll Sergeant Ruth Weston (below right) displays items collected in lieu of cash—wedding rings, watches, tires, radios, tools, and a fire extinguisher.*



*The procession opening the bridge, July 30, 1952, passes the Matapeake Ferry, making its last trip to the western shore. Ten thousand people turned out to watch the event.*



# "The Whirlwind Now Gathering": Baltimore's Pratt Street Riot and the End of Maryland Secession

CHARLES W. MITCHELL

On April 19, 1861, troops from Massachusetts marching from Baltimore's President Street railroad station to the Camden station, en route to Washington, D.C., clashed with an angry mob that had assembled along the city's streets. This episode, known variously as the "Pratt Street Riot" or "Baltimore's Civil War Riot," left sixteen dead and scores wounded along the mile route between the stations, forever marking Baltimore as the site of the Civil War's first fatalities. Many Baltimoreans believed these and other soldiers passing through their city to be the vanguard of a northern assault on the southern states that had seceded from the Union, and for three days following the riot, smoldering anger against the federal government threatened to propel Maryland into the Confederacy. That the mission of these soldiers was to protect the nation's capital from what President Abraham Lincoln feared was an imminent attack by rebels massed across the Potomac River was lost in the volcanic emotions that flowed from the deaths of Baltimoreans at the hands of Bay State militiamen.[1]

The Massachusetts troops were responding to Lincoln's call of April 15 for 75,000 men from the northern states, following the U.S. surrender of Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor three days earlier. By the early hours of April 20, Maryland leaders were devising a plan to keep troops moving toward Washington without re-igniting the Baltimore tinderbox—a difficult proposition given that all rail lines from the north passed through the city. Maryland Governor Thomas H. Hicks and Baltimore Mayor George W. Brown, sometimes unjustly portrayed as southern sympathizers, behaved during this crisis as responsible public officials determined to prevent a recurrence of bloodshed. Their success, combined with a pro-Union stance taken months before by a large majority of Baltimore businessmen and a state legislature out of session, slammed the door on Maryland's most opportune moment to leave the union.[2]

Secession badges and Confederate flags, printed on satin or pasteboard, suddenly were everywhere in Baltimore. Late on April 20, young men took a swivel gun to Federal Hill to fire fifteen shots saluting Virginia's decision to secede earlier

*Charles W. Mitchell is writing a book on the effects of the Civil War on Maryland civilians.*

that week, though after the second shot a group of workmen "drove them off, and capturing the swivel, tumbled it down the hill into the river." The Southern Volunteers raised a Confederate flag and fired a one-hundred-gun salute. The Unionist Minute Men quietly dropped the U.S. flag at their Baltimore Street headquarters and raised the Maryland flag in its place. The following day, writing to his brother, Jabez David Pratt expressed the resolve of his fellow Baltimoreans to keep troops out of the city:

> We, both Lucy and myself, are not disposed to run—much less into the arms of infernal abolitionism. We know there is danger. We have expected for thirty-six hours war to the knife. Possibly all may be slaughtered; but by the God in heaven, we are determined to die in the work, and not a man or woman I have seen or heard of but are so determined. Let any more Northern troops attempt passage of this city and not one will live to tell the story. . . . Thirty-six hours ago a majority of our people were for peaceable separation, and I may say for peace at all hazards, but now the man does not exist in these parts who is not for the defense of our city against the inroads or passage of troops from the North. We are not to be subjugated by Lincoln and his hordes.[3]

Mayor Brown dispatched three emissaries—Hugh Lennox Bond, judge of the Baltimore Criminal Court; Judge George W. Dobbin; and John C. Brune, president of the city Board of Trade and member of the House of Delegates—to the White House to discuss how best to keep Washington-bound troops as far from Baltimore as possible. Railroad officials in Philadelphia, ready to move more troops through Maryland, sought guidance from Secretary of War Simon Cameron: "We are informed here that the troops sent last night have been stopped at Baltimore, and that it is impracticable to send more through that city. Shall we send them by steamer to Annapolis?" Their eyes likely widened at the reply from the War Department. "Governor Hicks has neither right nor authority to stop troops coming to Washington. Send them on prepared to fight their way through, if necessary."[4]

The determination to keep troops out of Maryland was widespread. "Civil War is in our midst," declared the *Baltimore County American*. "A riot has occurred between soldiers from the North and the citizens of Baltimore, and unarmed men have fallen beneath the musket shots of soldiers from another State. We have stood long by the UNION FLAG . . . (but) Northern troops shall not pass unharmed through the State of Maryland for the purpose of subjugating the South," wrote one editor, mischaracterizing the reason for the troops' passage. "It is no longer a time to discuss, but to act," opined the *Baltimore Sun*. "We have through our constituted authorities declared that the Northern troops shall not be passed through our City, and that declaration must now be supported with determina-

*Baltimore's mayor, George William Brown, standing second from the left, with fellow lawyers c.1859. During the crisis, Brown sent Judge George W. Dobbin, seated center, to Washington to negotiate alternative troop movement routes that would keep the Federal army out of the city. (Maryland Historical Society.)*

tion, energy and unanimity. There must be preparation, organization and good counsel. . . . We must keep the war away from our homes."

Men everywhere were ready to fight. The *Sun* reported that "at five minutes before eleven o'clock the bell of the town clock sounded the call to arms, and instantly the people ran in every direction. Boys of fourteen years to hoary headed men of seventy to eighty years appeared on the streets on the way to join their respective companies." Daniel Thomas wrote to his sister that his Maryland Guards "have been under arms all day hot for a fight and most impatiently waiting orders to march. So far however there has been no fight." Southern rights and states' rights men convened. Baltimore County attorney Frederick W. Brune, brother of John C. Brune, saw things as Lincoln did: "if the Fed. Govt. only desires to protect and perfectly secure Washington and will do nothing to excite our people," he wrote to his wife in Boston, "there will be no collision between Maryland & the Government in Washington." Brune later elaborated on this sentiment, noting that "if the Prest. would proclaim that he did not desire *war* with the South & call

INCIDENTS.

Secession badges and flags of the Southern Confederacy have grown with the last 48 hours into universal demand, and their sale brings money to the pockets of scores of boys who cry them vociferously through the streets from morning till night and away into the night. The flags and badges are printed on satin or pasteboard. A great number of Confederate flags have been flung out.

On Saturday evening a crowd collected in front of the Museum as the band were about commencing their outside performance and demanded that "Dixie" and the Marseilles Hymn should be played by the band. The band acquiesced, and from that time the throng would listen to nothing else. Dixie has become the national air of the South already.

During Saturday afternoon and night all the public bars in the centre of the city were closed at the request of the Mayor. Consequently there were fewer intoxicated men in the streets than there would have been had it been otherwise.

Several artists were busily engaged on Saturday and yestorday, sketching the most prominent points along Pratt street, the scene of the terrific street battle on Friday.

Baltimore Sun, *April 22, 1861.*

on the state of Md. to defend the capital until amicable adjustment could be had, I venture 50,000 men would march from Maryland alone to defend Washington."[5]

Emboldened by the chaos of April 19, Confederate sympathizers, secessionists, and those just looking for trouble took to the streets for three days of lawlessness. On April 20 they began looting local shops, searching for weapons. "There was a great rush on Saturday and yesterday for arms, muskets, pistols, Bowie knives, pitchforks, clubs and every other instrument of attack or defense," reported the *Baltimore Sun*. The establishment of J. C. J. Meyer at 14 West Pratt Street, "was broken into by an excited, unarmed crowd, who armed themselves, assuring the

proprietor that his guns would be returned to him, or full compensation made. Mr. Meyer, with tears in his eyes, said he was a poor man, but a Southerner." A crowd broke into the store of Pattison & Woolford, on Dugan's Wharf, and seized thousands of muskets, swords, belts, knapsacks, and cartridge boxes. On Sunday a mob demanded weapons from Merrill, Thomas & Co., where a committee oversaw the distribution of 250 arms. Men set upon F. P. Loney and Duer, Norris & Co., both on Hanover Street, and King & Hoffman's, on Baltimore Street, where a dozen muskets were hurled from an upper-story window. Another crowd barged into Edward Urlaub's establishment on German Street but found no arms. Newspapers reported that "the establishment of Mr. Leonard W. Passano importer and dealer in fancy goods and cutlery, No. 52 Marsh Market Space, was invaded by a mob who broke open the door with the handle of a pump and sacked the place of every weapon it possessed." The hapless Passano, arriving in the midst of the fracas, lost $150 worth of pistols. Cannon balls were stolen from Mohler & Graff's Wharf, near the lower end of Ann Street. "Patent rifles, fowling pieces and revolvers" were taken from the Poultney & Trimble gun warehouse. Cannon balls destined for the beleaguered federal force at Fort McHenry were taken from the foundry of Auton Weiskettel, on Alice Anna Street. The gun shops of J. N. McComas on Pratt Street and A. Jung on Gay Street were broken into, as was another on South Calvert Street. Joseph Boring & Sons pleaded for the police to protect their warehouse containing "some five hundred pieces, firearms, sundry hunting knives, powder flasks, percussion caps, and similar wares." Rifles were seized from the armory at St. Timothy's Hall in Catonsville.[6]

Those believed to harbor Union sentiments became particular targets. The German armory in Turner Hall was looted, thanks to rumors that the German "Turner Rifles" were volunteering men and arms for the Union cause: "The store-

Baltimore Sun, *April 22, 1861.*

Yesterday afternoon a body of men paid a visit to the store of Mr. Leonard Passano, in Centre Market space. The handle of a pump was wrenched out, with which they commenced battering down the door. Mr. Passano happened to come along at the time with some friends and prevented further action on their part, but he opened the door and handed to the crowd about $150 worth of pistols. The impression was that he had a supply of guns on hand. This was a mistake; he has no guns, and the pistols he had are now all gone.

room and cooking-room were sacked, and the dishes and furniture broken to pieces. The bar-room was also visited, the bottles smashed and the pictures thrown out of the windows." On Saturday night the office of the *Wecker*, an anti-slavery German paper, was attacked. William P. Wright's china shop at 41 North Eutaw was looted, ostensibly because of the "proprietor's political sentiments." Leopold Blumenberg, a German-born manufacturer who "answered Lincoln's call for volunteers by retiring from business and starting to recruit a Maryland regiment, was mobbed by Southern sympathizers, and saved from hanging only by the presence of a strong police guard at his house." Police were accused of arresting only unionists in the aftermath of the riot. The offices of *Sinai*, the abolitionist monthly that had called slavery "the cancer of the Union," were attacked on April 20, prompting its editor, Rabbi David Einhorn of the Har Sinai congregation, to flee Baltimore, never to return. The "ransacked china store of North Eutaw Street, the incinerated home of three workingmen on the corner of Sharp and German streets, and the 'threatened' attack on Mechanics Hall were all politically motivated, with the (potential) victims sharing a dedication to the Union," read an account of this partisan violence. "The general sentiment among those of us who have heretofore stood up for the Union, is that it is of no use to struggle for it any longer," wrote one Baltimorean in a tone of resignation.[7]

George N. Moale described the mood in Baltimore to his uncle, wishing "to convey to you a faint idea of the dreadful state of affairs in our midst."

> Public sentiment has taken a complete turn within the last few days, and every man in the community is determined not to allow troops to pass through our city or through the state if possible, to carry out the diabolical plan of this abomination. Men of all classes & ages were under arms yesterday, prepared to risk everything in defense of our city.

Moale mentioned Ross Winans, a wealthy inventor and state legislator who would soon become the first Marylander arrested on suspicion of aiding the rebellion.

> To give you an idea of the state of feeling I will mention a single instance of one of our first men, a man worth a million & almost eighty years of age, shouldering his musket. Winans, the Russian RR contractor, has his men engaged in making cannon & balls, which he *presents* to the city. It is the duty of all Northern men, under circumstances like these, to do everything to check this fratricidal invasion. No matter what name it's done under, it's nothing more than an invasion of Southern homes.

The Baltimore Museum exploited the crisis to promote a march including a pair of cymbals "borne by a member of the Band of Massachusetts Invaders." The audience demanded the band play "Dixie." The city's Episcopal clergymen christened

conditions sufficiently grave to warrant religious services every afternoon of the coming week.[8]

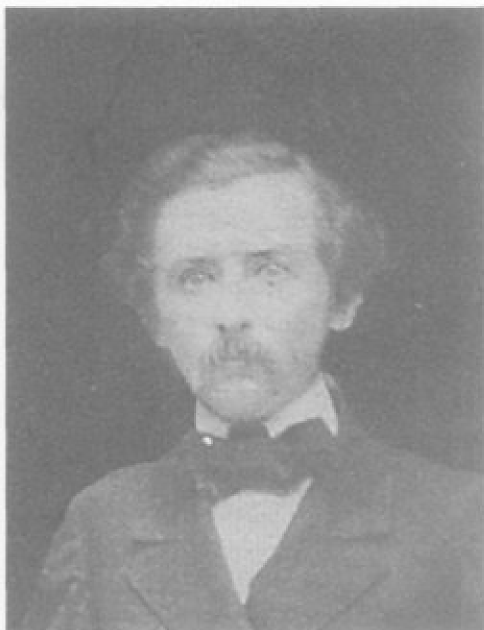
## "The Old Seceders Are Cheering"

"Yesterday was one of the most turbulent Sundays ever experienced in Baltimore," wrote a newspaper of April 21. "It was a bright and beautiful day, and the war excitement drew to our thoroughfares an immense concourse of people." Another claimed that "such a Sabbath as yesterday, perhaps, never dawned upon Baltimore. The weather was fine and the sky clear . . . the ladies became accustomed to the sight of a volunteer rushing along with his musket, and the sight of a firearm caused no more remark than had it been an umbrella. . . . squads of volunteers, armed with muskets and weapons of every description, started out the Hookstown and York roads on horseback and in vehicles, for the purpose of waging a guerilla warfare on the troops." With rumors of Pennsylvania volunteers massed twelve miles to the north,

> the scene of excitement on Baltimore Street was one of extraordinary intensity . . . the news was received that New York and Pennsylvania troops were at Cockeysville, marching steadily towards the city. The number was originally stated at 2,000, but it rose rapidly in the mouth of rumor to five, eight, ten thousand. Instantly the street was in an uproar; the cry to arms rang out; men singly and in groups, with arms of every variety, from patent rifles to fowling pieces, passed hurriedly around to different rendezvous. . . . The unarmed clamored for weapons and rushed to the gun shops on Baltimore Street, which were quickly broken open, and what arms they contained passed out indiscriminately to any who were alert enough to get within reach of the supply. The bells of the church on Second Street rang out a startling alarm, communicating the excitement in every part of the city. . . . a general attack upon the city, a bombardment from Fort McHenry, with all the addenda of horrors that the fertile imagination could depict, presented themselves. Services were interrupted, ladies shrieked and fainted, congregations dismissed themselves, and terrified women hurried to their homes.

Troops at Pikesville were said to be marching toward the city along Reisterstown Road.[9]

"Anxiety, alarm, and rage have taken possession of the town," recorded novelist and former Maryland congressman John Pendleton Kennedy. Mayor Brown described April 20 as a day of "excitement and alarm. . . . The silence became unbearable. Were more troops to be forced through the city at any cost? If so, how were they to come, by land or water? Were the guns of Fort McHenry to be turned upon the inhabitants? . . . Union men and disunion men appeared on the streets



*Maryland congressman Henry Winter Davis (1817–1865) wrote to Samuel F. Dupont about the post-riot chaos in Baltimore. (Maryland Historical Society.)*

with arms in their hands. A time like that predicted in Scripture seemed to have come, when he who had no sword would sell his garment to buy one." William J. Steuart wrote to his father, Colonel George H. Steuart, that "I fear for the worst & bold dash on the part of Davis in the direction of Washington which will bring the war terribly near us." Congressman Henry Winter Davis reported that "on Sunday 21st Baltimore was veritably *crazy*." Railroad officials were on edge. "I think they [B&O officials] were afraid the Baltimore mob would burn them [the cars] and on Sunday only one train passed down and that was loaded with stock," a man wrote to his family. "On Monday nothing went either way. It began to be very lonesome for three or four days after the riot in Baltimore. The passenger trains were crowded with people going north from Baltimore to get out of the way of battle. They went by Frederick and Hagerstown to Chambersburg and then Harrisburg to Philadelphia, New York and Boston." Christopher Columbus Shriver of Carroll County was able to enjoy a respite at six o'clock on Sunday morning, when he wrote to his cousin: "thanks be to the Good Man, we all safe again this morning. The town now seems as quiet as ever, at least up here in Franklin St."[10]

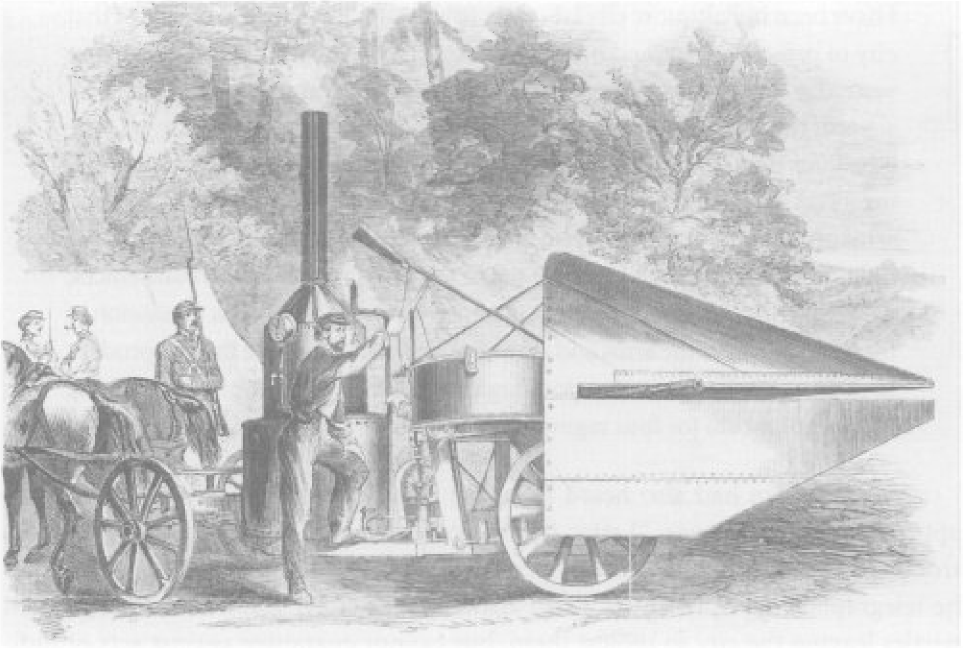
Maryland would never edge closer to the precipice of secession than during those few hours late in April 1861. "For some days it looked very much as if Baltimore had taken her stand decisively with the South; at all events, the outward expressions of Southern feeling were very emphatic, and the Union sentiment temporarily disappeared," recalled Mayor Brown. Henry M. Warfield, president of

the Corn and Flour Exchange, reported upon his return from Richmond that Virginians were "overjoyed at Baltimore's actions." A Virginian wrote to a Baltimore firm expressing his hope that "the greatest fear in your city is over with and I hope we will have enough Southern troops to protect your State from Lincoln's rule." Lawyer William Wilkins Glenn, owner of pro-southern *Baltimore Daily Exchange*, wrote that "Hundreds, I may say, of men who twelve months [ago] were most extreme Union men were now all Southern." One paper described heightened southern feeling: "The hitherto Union men are now crying out for immediate secession. Many are proposing to volunteer for the South. Cheers are given for Gov. Hicks for sending dispatches to President Lincoln to notify him that no more northern troops will be allowed to pass through the State. . . . The old seceders are cheering."[11]

Baltimore appealed for aid. "Streets red with Maryland blood; send expresses over the mountains of Maryland and Virginia for the riflemen to come without delay," read a telegram from Marshal Kane of the Baltimore police to newspaper editor Bradley T. Johnson in Frederick. "Fresh hordes will be down on us tomorrow. We will fight them and whip them, or die." Johnson, destined himself to terrorize Baltimore in 1864 as a Rebel cavalry leader, responded with five iron cannon and seventy "sturdy, active men." From Towsontown, in Baltimore County, came "a splendid and finely equipped horse company." The Forest Rangers of Pikesville arrived, their commander, Captain W. C. Nicholas, "himself a fine specimen of the ideal American Forest Ranger. Lithe, hardy and active in appearance, every expression of his countenance indicating courage." Two companies of the Easton Home Guard sailed into Baltimore's harbor aboard the steamer *Pioneer* and proclaimed their readiness to defend southern honor. Howard County sent three dozen dragoons. Anne Arundel County sent the Patapsco Dragoons, "some thirty young men, a sturdy-looking body of yeomanry, [who] rode straight to the City Hall and drew up, expecting to be received with a speech of welcome from the Mayor," related Brown. "I made them a very brief address, and informed them that dispatches received from Washington had postponed the necessity for their services, whereupon they started homeward amid cheers, their bugler striking up 'Dixie' . . . the first time I heard that tune." One paper wrote how "the war spirit raged throughout the city and among all classes during Saturday with an ardor which seemed to gather fresh force each hour. . . . it is evident that Baltimore is to be the battlefield of the Southern revolution"—noting that its citizens were "united in a determination" to keep northern troops out of Baltimore, but not to induce a Maryland secession. Ross Winans's Mount Clare iron foundry was "engaged in the making of pikes, and in casting balls of every description for cannon, the steam gun, rifles, muskets, etc., which they are turning out very rapidly." Alan Denmead's machine shop "hummed and clashed in the production of arms." Readying the southern slingshot for the northern Goliath, Dickinson's steam gun—reputed to

fire three hundred balls per minute—was tested on Holliday Street: "It is like a steam fire engine," wrote the *Baltimore Sun*. "Plant [it] at the head of the street up which the invading troops attempt to march . . . and sweep the ranks." And in a telling display of loyalty to their state, on April 22 "between 300 and 400 of our most respectable colored residents made a tender of their services to the city authorities. The mayor thanked them for their offer, and informed them that their services will be called for if they can be made in any way available."[12]

Baltimore was placed on emergency alert. The police commissioners ordered volunteers and militia units to assemble under Colonel George H. Steuart, who organized four thousand men into companies of about thirty each, "representatives of all classes and conditions—merchants, mechanics, professional men, gentlemen of leisure and loafers," who began drilling in the wards "with great energy and decision of purpose." (Steuart would later command the Confederate 1st Maryland Infantry and become a brigadier general.) The city council hastily appropriated a half-million dollars "for the purpose of putting the city in a complete state of defense against any description of danger arising or which might arise out of the present crisis." Arms were distributed at the old City Hall; Winans's version of Dickinson's steam gun was readied and fired. Colonel Isaac R. Trimble—a railroad engineer and prominent Baltimorean whose courage at Gettysburg would cost him a leg and a stint in a Union prison—reported more than fifteen thousand men enrolled in the city's militias under his command, "about three-fourths armed with muskets, shotguns and pistols. . . . By this means not only was the inadequate number of the police supplemented," wrote Mayor Brown, "but many who would otherwise have been the disturbers of the peace become its defenders." The Maryland Line took shape under Mexican War hero George W. Hughes, who mustered four hundred men armed with muskets, field pieces, two thousand of Winans's pikes, and "Minie guns [and] uniformed in Garibaldi shirts, black pants and glazed fatique cap." The Maryland Guards "were immediately under arms, and batteries of artillery, with horses in harness, paraded in the streets," while an un-uniformed volunteer company, including the "Bummer's Club, from Hook and Ladder Co., No. 1," appeared for duty. Companies rushed to establish defensive positions at various places around the city's perimeter. Volunteer surgeons were asked to convene at "Dr. A. C. Robinson's office, corner of Charles and Saratoga streets, with such instruments as they may be able to bring"; the good doctors, satin badges on their hats, established quarters in a vacant building across from the old city hall. Wagons with mattresses for the anticipated dead and wounded, bandages, and lint were readied for their ghastly purpose, and citizens arrived with "food and refreshments . . . excellent sugar-cured hams, bread and coffee . . . but no spirituous liquors." Rumors flew that "Pennsylvanians were advancing, skirmishing with the country people who were endeavoring to impede their progress by firing at them from behind hedges; they had cut across the country under the pilotage of a



*The city council's defense plan included readying Ross Winans's version of the Dickinson steam gun. (Maryland Historical Society.)*

Baltimore newsboy." Five hundred men left the city to meet the invaders, whose size and location were revealed by a Pennsylvania deserter arrested "near Texas, coming toward the city in a hack. . . . all that could be learned of him . . . was that he belonged in Baltimore county, enlisted in Pennsylvania, and deserted as soon as opportunity offered." Tempers cooled, however, when at the Pennsylvanians' camp the Baltimore men "were cordially received and entertained . . . one of the companies composing the force—a corps from Lancaster—were earnest in their inquiries after the Baltimore City Guard, with whom they have heretofore enjoyed relations of friendship and of pleasant social intercourse."[13]

## This Consummate Folly

For forty-eight hours the fate of Maryland and the Union were inextricably linked, and much hinged on the frantic negotiations between the state's leaders and the administration in Washington. On Saturday, April 20, Governor Hicks's sudden announcement that Maryland would not supply troops to the U.S. government, following the president's April 15 request, sharpened Lincoln's worry over Maryland. Hicks deemed raising Marylanders for the Union cause unwise at this delicate moment. The timing of his decision was brilliant. "Since I saw you in Washington last," he wrote to Secretary of War Cameron,

> I have been in Baltimore city laboring, in conjunction with the mayor of that city to preserve peace and order, but I regret to say with little success. Up to yesterday there appeared promise, but the outbreak came; the turbulent passions of the riotous elements prevailed, fears for safety became reality. . . . the rebellious element had the control of things. We were arranging and organizing forces to protect the city and preserve order, but want of organization, and arms prevented success. They had arms, and the principal part of the organized military forces and for us to have made the effort, under the circumstances, would have had the effect to aid the disorderly element. They took possession of the armories, have the arms and ammunition, and I therefore think it prudent to decline (for the present) responding affirmatively to the requisition made by President Lincoln for four regiments of infantry.[14]

Mayor Brown had also heard from the president and quickly sought Hicks's approval of his response. "Letter from President and Gen. [Winfield] Scott. No troops to pass through Baltimore, if as a military force, they can march around," he telegraphed on April 20th. "I will answer every effort will be made to prevent parties leaving the city to molest them, but cannot guarantee against acts of individuals not organized. Do you approve?" Hicks answered that he "hoped they would send no more troops through Maryland, but as we have no right to demand that, I am glad no more are to be sent through Baltimore. I know you will do all in your power to preserve the peace." Brown told Lincoln that, were troops to avoid Baltimore, city authorities would endeavor to keep citizens from harassing them. He reminded the president that city officials "have no authority to speak for the people of Maryland, and no means of keeping any promise they might make. They do sincerely & earnestly trust that the government will be warned by the melancholy occurrences of yesterday, & avoid precipitating further disastrous results. Baltimore seeks only to protect herself." In Washington, John Hay noted that "the streets were full of the talk of Baltimore. It seems to be generally thought that a mere handful of men has raised this storm that now threatens the loyalty of a State."[15]

The president's response reached Brown and Hicks in the early hours of Sunday morning, April 21. He asked the Maryland leaders to "come immediately by special train" to Washington, to "consult with you . . . relative to preserving the peace of Maryland . . . ," though "without any military knowledge myself, of course I must leave details to Gen. Scott." It is not clear when Hicks, having left Baltimore for Annapolis, received Lincoln's message, but Brown departed for Washington at 7:30 that morning, accompanied by George Dobbin, John Brune, and Baltimore lawyer Severn Teackle Wallis. At the White House the Baltimoreans pleaded in person that troops avoid their city. The mayor was forced to explain how it was that Baltimore militiamen were destroying railroad bridges spanning the rivers

north of the city. This, he told the president, "was a measure of protection on a sudden emergency, designed to prevent bloodshed in the city of Baltimore, and not an act of hostility towards the General Government; that the people of Maryland had always been deeply attached to the Union . . . but that they . . . regarded [Lincoln's] proclamation calling for 75,000 troops as an act of war on the South, and a violation of its constitutional rights." The president, Brown recalled, said he had been misunderstood; he

> was greatly moved, and, springing up from his chair, walked backward and forward through the apartment. He said, with great feeling, "Mr. Brown, I am not a learned man! I am not a learned man!" that his proclamation had not been correctly understood; that he had no intention of bringing on war, but that his purpose was to defend the capital, which was in danger of being bombarded from the heights across the Potomac.

Brown left the White House for home, only to be stopped in his tracks by a telegram from B&O president John W. Garrett: "Three thousand (3,000) No.[rthern] troops are reported to be at Cockeysville. Intense excitement prevails. Churches have been dismissed and the people are arming en masse. To prevent terrific bloodshed, the results of your interview and arrangements are awaited." Brown replied at 1:25 P.M.: "Be calm, and do nothing until you hear from me again." He returned to the White House for another audience with Lincoln, following which, at 3:15 P.M., he telegraphed Garrett: "We have again seen the President . . . *the troops are ordered to return forthwith to Harrisburg*." Lincoln remained true to his word, and Brown for the moment had accomplished his mission.[16]

U.S. Senator from Maryland Anthony Kennedy and Representative J. Morrison Harris also called on the White House. Lincoln conceded more: Not only would troops avoid Baltimore; they would be on Maryland soil for as little time as possible. Starting by steamer from Perryville, on the Susquehanna River, they would sail down the Chesapeake Bay, south to Annapolis, then go by rail to Washington. Then the Maryland politicians played their ace, revealing a pledge from Garrett that his B&O would move the men on this last leg, despite the railroad's April 20 decree that it would cease moving soldiers into Maryland in the face of threats against its men and property. The day was a success for the embattled Maryland leaders: "I tender you both my sincere thanks for your efforts to keep the peace in the trying situation in which you are placed," wrote the president to Brown and Hicks. "Troops must be brought here, but I make no point of bringing them through Baltimore. . . . By this, a collision of the people of Baltimore with the troops will be avoided, unless they go out of their way to seek it. I hope you will exert your influence to prevent this." Maryland had dodged the bullet. More violence could have yanked the state out of the Union.[17]

*Severn Teackle Wallis (1816–1894) accompanied Mayor Brown and his advisors to a meeting with President Lincoln in which they pleaded that Federal troops not pass through Baltimore. (Maryland Historical Society.)*

Lincoln's decision to keep troops far from Baltimore likely spared the B&O great harm. The railroad's officials had already "put forth every effort to allay disorder and prevent bloodshed" during the troop passage through Baltimore earlier in the week. "They shared police responsibilities with city officers and only good fortune seems to have saved them from harm. Like the police they interposed themselves between the rioters and the soldiers . . . despite the fact that there was growing belief in the mob that the Baltimore and Ohio was in large measure responsible for the presence of the invaders." When the Massachusetts men came under siege on Friday afternoon, a crowd had attempted to storm the company's offices at Camden Station and "warned its officials that the building would be burned if they moved other Northern troops. This spirit was manifest far down the tracks toward Washington. From various points came disconcerting news that unfriendly groups of watchful men were stationed along the line ready to tear up the tracks." Threats hurled at the railroad included an ominous missive to Garrett himself:

> One Hundred of us, Firm, Respectable, Resolute men—have determined & Sworn to each other, to destroy "every" Bridge & tear up your Track on both lines of your Road . . . If you carry another Soldier over either line of your Road after Saturday April 20th. We trust Dear Sir that you will hearken unto the request of your Southern Fellow Citizens & save us this labour which we will very much regret to undertake. . . . Spare us Dear Sir this to us unpleasant

*Baltimore & Ohio Railroad president John Work Garrett (1820–1884). After the April 19 riot, Garrett declared his railroad would no longer move Federal troops through Maryland. He later reversed that decision. (Maryland Historical Society.)*

duty. Many of our Committee know you personally, some intimately, but the nature of our Oaths prevent us from seeing you in person. . . . We have a large force ready to answer our calls.

The company did not survive the weekend unscathed, for Baltimore police seized four of its cars loaded with arms and provisions for Federal troops. A B&O official later described to a congressional committee damage to the company's track along the thirty-one miles between Relay House and Washington.[18]

From Boston, John C. Pratt replied indignantly to his Baltimore brother's letter of April 20.

Would you have us surrender the National Capitol into the hands of that band of mercenary thieves and traitors who rule the "Confederate States?" Men who have stolen the public property? Who have violated their oaths? Shall we not defend the Capitol? Did not Gov. Hicks say in his proclamation on Friday last that he would furnish troops to do that. And was it not this simple mission and nothing more that our troops were engaged in? You speak of the South being subjugated by "Lincoln and his hordes." In the first place there is no attempt to subjugate the South, but simply to maintain the Government. . . . If Baltimore is a "yawning gulf" to bury Northern troops in, the same gulf will bury the last vestige of your beautiful city, for though it cost a hundred thousand lives and "not one stone shall remain upon another" in

> your city, before this contest ends a *full, safe* and unobstructed passage will be opened for our troops to the Capitol. We do not undervalue Southern prowess; neither can you sneer at Northern courage.[19]

Governor Hicks's April 22 message to Lincoln reveals that he still clung to the chimera that troops might avoid Maryland altogether:

> I feel it my duty most respectfully to advise that no more troops be ordered or allowed to pass through Maryland and that the troops now off Annapolis be sent elsewhere, and I most respectfully urge that a truce be offered by you, so that the effusion of blood may be prevented. I respectfully suggest that Lord Lyons be requested to act as mediator between the contending parties of our Country.

The response came from Secretary of State William Seward, who explained that the water route for trans-state troop transit had been devised "upon consultation with prominent magistrates and citizens of Maryland." He chided Hicks: "The President cannot but remember that there has been a time in the history of our country, when a General of the American Union, with forces designed for the defense of its Capital, was not unwelcome anywhere in the State of Maryland, and certainly not at Annapolis." Seward declined to engage the services of Lord Lyons.[20]

On Sunday, April 21—the last of a hellish week that had begun with the surrender of Fort Sumter, in Charleston Harbor—President Lincoln was visited by a group from the Young Men's Christian Association of Baltimore, "a penitent and suppliant crowd of conditional Secessionists, who having sowed the wind seem to have no particular desire to reap the whirlwind," recorded John Hay. "They begged that no more Federal troops should be sent through Baltimore at present; that their mob was thoroughly unmanageable and that they would give the Government all possible assistance in transporting its troops safely across the State by any other route." Hay explained that Lincoln consented, disingenuously omitting that the president had the day before agreed to such a plan with Hicks and Brown. Though no formal record of their session with Lincoln is known to exist, the Baltimoreans' impressions of him were clear. "We were at once & cordially received," reported the Reverend Richard Fuller, pastor of the Seventh Baptist Church in Baltimore, president of the Southern and Southwestern Baptist Convention and a slaveowner. "I marked the President closely. Constitutionally genial & jovial, he is wholly inaccessible to Christian appeals—& his egotism will forever prevent him comprehending what patriotism means. . . . from President Lincoln nothing is to be hoped," he wrote to Treasury Secretary Salmon Chase, whom Fuller hoped would influence Lincoln to let the seceded states "go in peace." Another of the delegation exclaimed, "God have mercy on us, when the government is placed in the hands of such a man!"[21]

"The whining traitors from Baltimore were here again this morning," was how John Hay described the return of the Baltimoreans to the White House the next day. The president chastised them:

> You, gentlemen, come here to me and ask for peace on any terms, and yet have no word of condemnation for those who are making war on us. You express great horror of bloodshed, and yet would not lay a straw in the way of those who are organizing in Virginia and elsewhere to capture this city. The rebels attack Fort Sumter, and your citizens attack troops sent to the defense of the Government, and the lives and property in Washington, and yet you would have me break my oath and surrender the Government without a blow. There is no Washington in that—no Jackson in that—no manhood nor honor in that.

Lincoln again made clear that the northern troops were to protect Washington:

> I have no desire to invade the South; but I must have troops to defend this Capital. Geographically it lies surrounded by the soil of Maryland; and mathematically the necessity exists that they should come over her territory. Our men are not moles, and can't dig under the earth; they are not birds, and can't fly through the air. There is no way but to march across, and that they must do. But in doing this there is no need of collision. Keep your rowdies in Baltimore, and there will be no bloodshed. Go home and tell your people that if they will not attack us, we will not attack them; but if they do attack us, we will return it, and that severely.[22]

That day the president enjoyed a visit from Miss Pollock of Baltimore, who reported on conditions in the "plug-ugly city. She was very pretty and Southern in features and voice and wonderfully plucky and earnest in the enunciation of her devotion to the Stars and Stripes," recorded Hay. "She stated that the mails had been stopped at the Balto. P.O.—arms expected from Va.—Ft. McHenry to be attacked tonight." Some Marylanders understood Lincoln's objectives. "How anyone can compare the revolution down South with the glorious one in which our forefathers rebelled against a government whose very oppressions planted them in America, I am unable to conceive," wrote Frederick A. Shriver of Union Mills, in Carroll County, to his cousin, C.C. Shriver. "This tyrannical Lincoln, as you think, is only trying to save us and our nation from eternal ruin."[23]

Jabez Pratt sent brother John a news clipping describing his visit to the White House with the Baltimore delegation. John's sardonic response revealed the growing hostility between the brothers over the crisis in Maryland.

> Yours of the 24th with the extract from the Sun is received. I have read the

> account of your interview with the President and the result of your mission. . . . We shall now have the song of the six wise men of Baltimore who went all the way to Washington to ask the President to make an infernal fool of himself, and if his boorishness was equal to your consummate folly and impudence, he would deserve a place in Barnum's museum. What an astonishing piece of information it must have been to the President to be told by Dr. Fuller and then to be endorsed by yourself that peace would at once be restored if he would recognize the Independence of the Confederate States, give them up all the property they had stolen, and evacuate Washington. I wonder . . . that instead of smiling with ill concealed contempt he had not grasped your hands and said,— "Gentlemen, you have saved the country", and you should each of you have a monument of brass erected to your memory, that being the only material to perpetuate this great event. Pardon me, my dear brother, if I treat this matter with levity, but I am surprised that you should be a party to this consummate folly.[24]

### Take Your Men Elsewhere

As the deal was being struck to keep troops away from Baltimore, civil unrest in the state continued to escalate. "There has been no arrival from the North. Some one or more bridges have been destroyed; where it is not known; telegraph interrupted," read a message to General Scott from an aide, who reassured his chief that he had sent someone "to find where the trouble is . . . this [rail]road must be under military control at once . . . so must the road between here and Washington. This is absolutely indispensable. Our rapid communication with the North is otherwise cut off." During the night of April 19 and into the early morning hours of the twentieth, raiders from Baltimore had indeed destroyed railroad bridges that spanned the rivers north and east of the city. Captain Boyd and Lieutenant Fisher led sixty policemen to destroy bridges over the Gunpowder and Bush Rivers, while the City Guards, under the command of Captain John G. Johannes, a Baltimore jeweler who would fight in the Union army, burned those of the Northern Central Railroad that connected Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and Baltimore, including one at Cockeysville. The Melvale Bridge in Mt. Washington was doused with camphor and burned, and the Canton Bridge was destroyed. Daniel Thomas provided his sister with an eyewitness account of some weekend bridge burning:

> About half past two that night [April 19] I was aroused by a violent pulling at the street bell, and going to the window was hailed by one of our men with, "All our men are wanted at once at the armory—some more soldiers are coming through." This sounded like battle indeed, and by the time I got into

> the street I found our men were about, hurrying in from all sides. The scene at the armory was splendid—every man at his post and evidently resolved to do some desperate deed. A body of thirty men, of which I was fortunate enough to be one, was immediately detailed to do work which ought to make us famous. In face of the momentary expectation of the arrival of 1700 men from Philadelphia we were sent with about 30 of the police, out to Harris Creek to burn the bridge if possible before the cars got there, and to keep the enemy in play till the bridge was destroyed. After a slapping march of over two miles we reached the bridge, and in less than no time it was making night day with blaze. Before the destruction of it was complete we heard the whistle of the cars and in a moment up they came and halted. I doubt much if any men in our company counted on more than five minutes of life from that time, and yet granite rock could not have stood firmer than they did. . . . we took possession of the train which had just arrived and started off to burn the bridges on the road, *provided* we did not meet the enemy in the meantime. We went on very slowly, till we had passed the farthest bridge [at Bush River] and then we went to work and burnt that down, taking care to place ourselves on the side towards town, then we came down to the Gunpowder Bridge and burnt that and then we started for town thinking we had done a very smart thing. And I can tell you, would think the soldiers and citizens thought so too if you had heard them cheer us as we returned to the armory.[25]

Governor Hicks's role in the destruction of bridges would dog him for the rest of his life. He would stand accused by credible eyewitnesses, including Mayor Brown and former Mayor Enoch Lowe, of assenting to or ordering it. At least one apologist, William Seabrook, commissioner of the Maryland Land Office, defended the governor's methods to keep troops away from Baltimore and Maryland in the Union, claiming that "a lawless mob had followed him on the street threatening violence and crying 'Hang him, Hang him.'" Hicks would later deny publicly that he sanctioned bridge destruction.[26]

Jabez Pratt replied to his brother John, countering the impression that Baltimore was a city aflame and closing with an assurance of affection—a sentiment sorely tested since the nineteenth of April:

> I see the Northern papers filled with inflammable matter and dispatches as to Baltimore which are false. There is no city more peaceable and quiet and not the first particle of "reign of terror." We have in our city Black Republicans and Union men, the latter in large numbers, and who are not fearful in expressing their sentiments, and the B.R. are as safe as in Boston. . . . The excitement of our citizens caused by the shooting of our friends has entirely abated. The mob of Friday is deprecated now that reason has its sway. . . .

> Maryland is not going to be hasty and the feeling which before the trouble was prevalent is again shown, that of a peaceable solution of the dispute between North and South. The whole irritation has been caused by the foolish acts of the administration in declaring war and making enemies of those who were for peace and union for and with the Border States. We hope for peace and will do all we can for peace. Accept my kind regards and best wishes for yourself and be assured that I hold nothing in my heart of bitterness towards you.

Just after mailing that letter, Jabez received John's letter that had mocked his visit to the White House. He answered at once:

> My Dear Brother,
> You are fast driving me to consider that term inappropriate. I have received your letter of the 27th, and if you consider me a "fool and a boor" why so be it. The only answer I have to make is that you are crazy. I will only say further that you entirely misinterpret and misunderstand the mission to Washington and what was asked of Mr. Lincoln. We asked nothing of what you so glibly ridicule. If such is to be your correspondence it had better be stopped till you get your senses.[27]

The authorities attempted to maintain order in Baltimore through the weekend. Bands, flags, marching and parading were banned, and when saloons were ordered closed, the result was "but few persons intoxicated on the street"—though William Lloyd, proprietor of the Union Hotel at Pratt and Charles streets, was arrested when he opened his tavern there. Magistrates imposed fines "under the ordinance prohibiting the throwing of missiles in the streets." Charles Howard, president of the Police Board, instructed Colonel Trimble to "please direct the association under your command, to refrain at the present juncture from using martial music in the streets—the sound of a drum at once collects crowds, and gives rise to the circulation of all sorts of rumours, calculated to produce unnecessary, and mischievous excitement." On Sunday, Mayor Brown advised Trimble that "it is deemed necessary for the safety and protection of the City, that no Steamboat be permitted to leave the harbor without our express sanction." Out in force were the "City Hall Guards," consisting of approximately a hundred men formed early in April "for the defence of the City property of Baltimore, or for such other service as the emergency may hereafter require for the defence of the State of Maryland."[28]

"The (Police) Board are apprehensive that you may be annoyed by lawless and disorderly characters approaching the walls of the Fort to night," wrote Howard to the commander at Fort McHenry. Howard wished to offer him the services of

the Maryland Guard, commanded by Ben Huger, who had just resigned command of the Pikesville Armory. "We propose to send a guard of perhaps 200 men . . . entirely beyond the outer limits of the Fort, and within those of the City. Their orders will be to arrest and hand over to the Civil authorities any evil disposed and disorderly persons who may approach the Fort." Captain John C. Robinson declined the offer, "having made the acquaintance of some of the officers of that organization and heard them freely express their opinions." Testimony of a Maryland Guard member suggested that Robinson's decision had been wise: "The next excitement after April 19, was the determination of the citizens to capture Fort McHenry," recounted Baltimorean Augustus J. Albert, who marched to the Fort with two hundred volunteers, visions of its capture dancing in their heads. At sunrise, though, "we discovered we were there to prevent the mob of the city from doing what we wanted to do ourselves; the authorities wishing to prevent useless bloodshed." The Maryland Guard was shortly thereafter disbanded, explained Albert, who would fight in the Confederate 1st Maryland Artillery. "My brother Taylor and I got a wagon and went to the Armory where we loaded it with muskets and took them to my father's residence, then 81 Monument Street and carried them up to the top of the house and stowed them away in a space between the roof and the ceiling." When Union troops later searched house-to-house for arms, the boys buried theirs in the garden, "where the rusty remains possibly even now are resting undisturbed."[29]

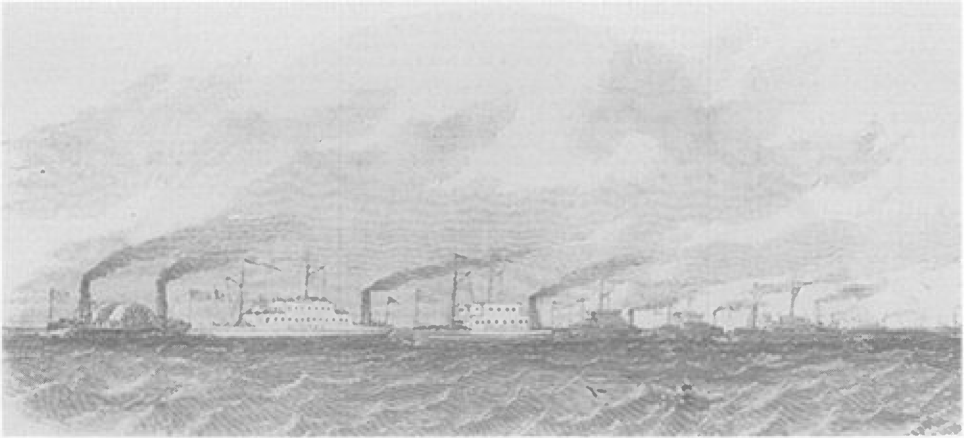
Intrigue stood at every corner. On Sunday night the steamer *Spaulding* anchored under the guns of Fort McHenry and, taking on coal from a lighter, generated rumors that she had delivered a force of eight hundred northern men into the city. Loiterers became suspects: "A number of spies are prowling about Howard county and Ellicott's Mills procuring information for the Lincoln government, and stiffening the backbone of its sympathizers," related the *Sun*. "One was seen near Roxbury Mills on Sunday last . . . whilst busily engaged with paper and pencil platting the Westminister road . . . the spy hastily put his sketching implements into his pocket, and then, Yankee like, began to ask questions of his discoverers as to how much flour was stored in Roxbury Mills, etc." Several were arrested and released. Over the weekend the police seized twenty-one cases of gun carriages, wheels and six-pounder cartridges from a warehouse at Locust Point, destined for Little Rock, Arkansas. Captain Robinson received a visitor to Fort McHenry who bore a letter for him from the Secretary of the Navy. As the man "did not know what might happen to him in Baltimore he had concealed it in a queer place. He then removed his hat, and lifting his wig, drew out the letter from between it and his bald crown. It was rather oily, but, nevertheless, a document I was glad to receive."[30]

By Sunday, April 21, troops were steaming down the Chesapeake for Annapolis, headed for Washington. Hicks, despite the deal with Lincoln, was not reassured by the prospect of thousands of northern soldiers flooding into Maryland's capi-

tal. He protested to their commander, General Benjamin F. Butler of Massachusetts: "I would most earnestly advise you do not land your men at Annapolis. The excitement here is very great, and I think that you should take your men elsewhere. I have telegraphed to the Secretary of War, advising against your landing your men here." Butler, of course, refused: "I am not provisioned for a long voyage," he replied. "Finding the ordinary means of communication cut off by the burning of railroad bridges by a mob, I have been obliged to make this detour, and hope that your excellency will see . . . that there is no cause of excitement in the mind of any good citizen because of our being driven here." With the steamer *Maryland* set to disgorge eight hundred Massachusetts volunteers into Annapolis, alarm in Baltimore grew. There the day's church services were "slimly" attended. "Just as I started for church this morning early at 10 o'clock," wrote George Whitmarsh in his diary, "the alarm spread that 3,000 volunteers from the North were coming in city. All up in arms and with arms—people frightened from church. I went, but many of terrified congregation stood outside." At the First Lutheran Church, "several members of the congregation ascended the pulpit, and informed [Rev. Dr. McCron] that an immense army was about entering the city, and war had commenced. Service was then suspended, after a few remarks were made by the pastor, and the congregation, especially the ladies, hurried out of the edifice with all imaginable haste, and proceeded to their homes." At noon a "party of police in carriages proceeded out the Harford road and cut the telegraph poles for the distance of about a mile," which suspended all telegraph service from Baltimore, except to Washington, "done, as we understand, by direction of the city authorities."[31]

Some sought providential refuge. "The state of affairs is truly alarming," wrote Hester Davis to her daughter. "Our only hope now is in Almighty God, who holds in His hands the destinies of the children of men"; hostile troops from Pennsylvania were expected to "pass through here right past our own door." A hundred Baltimore clergymen declared April 24 a day of fast, humiliation and prayer in Baltimore. Mrs. Davis would no doubt have worried further at a report from General Scott to the President: "1. That there are three or four steamers, off Annapolis, with volunteers for Washington; 2. That their landing will be opposed by the citizens, reinforced from Baltimore; 3. That the landing may be effected, nevertheless, by good management, & 4. That the rails, on the Annapolis road (20 miles) have been taken up." Rumors of bridges destroyed south of the city put Baltimoreans further on edge.[32]

Nervous depositors put a run on the Savings Bank of Baltimore. Federal employees in Maryland—including Captain Chiffelle of the Navy, Captain Elzey and Surgeon Jones of the Army, and Captain Osborne Peters of U.S. Revenue Service—all resigned. Word was out about Virginia's plan to ship arms to the Baltimore men commanded by General George Steuart. And a disquieting letter from Baltimore arrived at the White House:



*President Lincoln agreed to send troops to Washington via the Chesapeake, rather than risk another violent episode in the city.* (Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, *May 18, 1861.)*

> I learn from it [a letter from a friend in Mobile, Alabama] that it is the settled policy to attack the capital by the Southern Confederacy. It is to be done by foes within as well as without. He says there is not a department at Washington that is not well filled with friends of Jeff Davis. And they are ready to strike at any moment. He further states that a large number of the citizens of Washington will be prominent in the move, and that desperate men dressed in citizens garb will infest your city to take their part in the contest against you. This information comes from a high source. It is imparted in that manner that I cannot betray the name, or expose the letter. General Scott believed "the railroad from Harrisburg to Baltimore of no value to us here without a force of, perhaps, ten thousand men to hold Baltimore—to protect the rails and bridges near it."[33]

Lincoln's spirits were bolstered at dinner on April 23 by "old Gen. Spinner who was fierce and jubilant," according to John Hay. "No frenzied poet ever predicted the ruin of a hostile house with more energy and fervor than he, issuing the rescript of destiny against Baltimore. 'We've got 'em,' he said. 'It is *our* turn now.'" Hay described what must have been a colorful meal at the White House that evening. "A gaunt, tattered, uncombed and unshorn figure"—James Lane of Kansas, a friend of John Brown—"appeared at the door and marched solemnly up to the table . . . his neck was innocent of collar, guiltless of necktie. His thin hair stood fretful—porcupine-quill-wise upon his crown. He sat down and gloomily charged upon his dinner. A couple of young exquisites were eating and chatting opposite him. They were guessing when the road would be open through Baltimore. 'Thursday,' growled the grim apparition, 'or Baltimore will be laid in ashes.'"[34]

*Support for the Union emerged quickly in Baltimore after the riots. These shopkeepers posed with the Union flag on April 21, 1861. (Maryland Historical Society.)*

Life retained a degree of normality. Dr. J. R. Marchisi advertised his "Seaweed Tonic" and "Celebrated Catholicon for the Relief and Cure of Suffering Females [at] $2 per bottle, $6 for ten." For the cure of consumption, Dr. Schenck, "The Lung Doctor," pitched his "Pulmonic Syrup and the Respirometer, the only instrument that can to a certainty detect the slightest murmur of the respiratory

organs [keeping] the bronchial tubes free from the putrid matter which impedes their functions." A sailor named Charles Mitchell "under excitement, stabbed himself twice in the breast, and afterwards cut his throat, inflicting an ugly wound," in a suicide attempt. The city health commissioner, in a report showing "a healthful condition of the city," related that eighty-nine Baltimoreans died during the week ending April 21: forty-six male, forty-three female, and forty under the age of ten—twenty-one from consumption; five each from convulsions, catarrh fever, and gunshots; and six from causes unknown. And Daniel Thomas reveled in the achievement of the Baltimoreans: "By one of the most astonishing performances recorded in history, Maryland has fully redeemed her tarnished character, and old Baltimore may now hold up her head again," he wrote to his sister. "That which the united efforts of our statesmen were unable to do has been triumphantly accomplished by the *people* by a sort of spontaneous combustion."[35]

Amid rumors that mobs were preparing to descend on the Naval Academy in Annapolis, just outside whose walls lay the executive mansion, a Colonel Harrison arrived to escort Governor Hicks back to Baltimore on a special train, so that he might inspire law-abiding citizens and mobilize militiamen to maintain order. William Seabrook, with Hicks during the afternoon of April 20, convinced the governor not to go. "I reminded the governor that he was not then fully recovered from the effects of a surgical operation; that his health was by no means robust; that he had been under a great strain the previous day and night and that he might imperil his life by a repetition of that experience. . . . I urged the importance of his life to the Union cause." Seabrook feared that "the avowed secessionist" John B. Brooke, president of the state senate, might stage a palace coup were Hicks to leave the capital. No Colonel Harrison was identified, and Seabrook suggested years later that "Harrison" may have been the alias of a kidnapper sent to murder the governor.[36]

In Boston, John Pratt had written his brother of his joy at learning that Baltimore was calm:

> We are rejoiced to hear as we do this morning that there is a reaction in sentiment in Baltimore and that there is a prospect that our troops will be allowed to pass without a fight. I hope so, for it would be a terrible alternative to be obliged to apply the torch to your city and widen the streets with artillery, for there is no question that if Maryland is obstinate in this matter, she will have to be subjugated. Her secession will amount to nothing: she will not be permitted to go: we like your people too well to part company so easy. The North is just waking up like the "lion from his lair" as there is a force coming down through the South that will crush out, annihilate and sweep away all before it. Let the South look out for its cherished institution, let this war continue a few months, and the whirlwind now gathering will sweep within its vortex the South and slavery, and all will perish together.[37]

During the days following the Pratt Street riot, many feared Maryland lost to the Union cause, regardless of how—or even if—northern troops crossed her soil. Many of Baltimore's businessmen—who, citing a range of reasons, for months had publicly opposed secession—feared more rioting and even northern reprisals, and they plunged into defense of city and livelihood. Bypassing Baltimore by sending troops down the Chesapeake Bay to Washington proved a political masterstroke that deprived leaderless and unorganized Maryland secessionists of their only chance to act. "Without question the decision to send troops through Annapolis prevented Maryland from seceding," wrote William Evitts. "Another clash in Baltimore would have propelled Maryland out of the Union." Hicks would call the legislature into special session on April 26 in Frederick, where—with no federal or military interference—Maryland lawmakers would refuse even to consider an ordinance of secession. By then John P. Kennedy was noting the calm in Baltimore, and unionist Henry Winter Davis that the clash of April 19 "has greatly strengthened us and I feel now more confidence than ever in the resolute loyalty of Maryland." George Whitmarsh recorded in his diary how "the Union feeling is rising again," while Baltimore attorney William Schley reported that "there never was a moment when Maryland could have been forced into secession."[38] The quick restoration of order in Baltimore had precluded the prospect of four years of unimaginable carnage upon the soil of a Confederate Maryland.

## NOTES

1. Vivid accounts of the Pratt Street riot include Matthew Page Andrews, "Passage of the Sixth Massachusetts Regiment Through Baltimore, April 19, 1861," *Maryland Historical Magazine,* 34 (1919): 60–76; George W. Brown: *Baltimore and the Nineteenth of April, 1861: A Study of the War* (1887; repr. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001); Charles Branch Clark: "Baltimore and the Attack on the Sixth Massachusetts Regiment, April 19, 1861," *Maryland Historical Magazine,* 56 (1961): 39–71; Frank Towers: "'A Vociferous Army of Howling Wolves': Baltimore's Civil War Riot of April 19, 1861," *Maryland Historical Magazine,* 23 (1992): 1–27; eyewitness reports at the Maryland Historical Society; and the April 20–22, 1861, issues of newspapers such as the *Baltimore Sun* and the *Baltimore American and Commercial Advertiser.*

2. Late in 1860 more than 6,000 Maryland businessmen signed two petitions endorsing Hicks's refusal to convene a special legislative session that might have resulted in a Maryland secession—the second, with 5,000 signatures, included nine-tenths of the businessmen in Baltimore—see *Baltimore American and Commercial Advertiser,* December 31, 1860, and January 1, 1861.

3. Swivel gun in *Baltimore Sun,* April 20, 1861, and *Baltimore American and Commercial Advertiser,* April 22, 1861; Southern Volunteers, Minute Men, Union club and badges/flags in *Baltimore American,* April 22, 1861; badges/flags also in *Sun,* April 22, 1861. Jabez David Pratt (Baltimore) to John C. Pratt (Boston), April 20, 1861, MS 1860, Manuscripts Division, Maryland Historical Society (hereinafter MHS). Quotations from this and subsequent letters between the Pratt brothers in this article are taken from transcribed originals.

4. George Radcliffe, *Governor Thomas H. Hicks of Maryland and the Civil War (*Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1901), 59; J. E. Thomson and S. M. Felton to Simon Cameron ("We are informed") and L. Thomas to S. M. Felton ("Governor Hicks has"), both April 19, 1861, in *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, I:1, 442 (henceforth *Official Records*).
5. *Baltimore American and Commercial Advertiser*, April 20, 1861, quoted in John Fulton, *The "Southern Rights" and "Union" Parties in Maryland Contrasted* (Baltimore, 1863), 15; Daniel M. Thomas to "My Dear Sister," April 21, 1861, MS 1970, and Frederick W. Brune to Emily Brune, April 21 and May 1, 1861, Brune-Randall Papers, MS 2004, both in MHS; *Baltimore Sun*, April 22, 1861 ("it is no" and southern rights and state's rights). The Maryland Guard was formed in December 1859 by 226 Baltimoreans who paid an initiation fee of fifty cents and monthly dues of twenty-five cents—see "Maryland Guard Constitution and Membership Roster," MS 566, MHS, cited in Kevin Conley Ruffner, *Marylanders in Blue and Gray: A Border State's Union and Confederate Junior Officer Corps* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997), 53. The Guard uniform, modeled after the French Zouave, "made a very brilliant effect on street parade but was totally unsuitable for any active service. To fully adjust it, a man almost required the services of a valet—or a sister or sweetheart." See McHenry Howard, *Recollections of a Maryland Confederate Soldier and Staff Officer Under Johnston, Jackson and Lee*, (1914; repr., Dayton, Ohio: The Press of Morningside Bookshop, 1975), 9–10.
6. *Baltimore Sun*, April 22, 1861 ("there was a," Meyer, Pattison, other gun shops, Passano, cannon balls, McComas and Jung, St. Tim's); Meyer shop also in *Sun*, April 20, 1861; Passano and cannon balls also in *Baltimore American and Commercial Advertiser*, April 22, 1861; Jos. Boring & Sons to Mayor G. W. Brown, April 22, 1861, Box 1, 2380, Provost Marshal "Letters Received" 1861, 8th Army Corps and Middle Department, Record Group 393, National Archives, Washington, D.C., cited in Matthew Ellenberger, "Whigs in the Streets? Baltimore Republicanism in the Spring of 1861," *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 86 (1991): 29.
7. German armory and Wecker offices in both *Baltimore Sun* and *Baltimore American and Commercial Advertiser*, April 22, 1861; Blumenberg in *Cyclopedia*, 477–78, in William B. Catton, "The Baltimore Business Community and the Civil War" (M.A. thesis, College Park, Maryland, 1952), 92; police in *Baltimore Clipper*, April 20, 26, 30, 1861, in Catton, 92–93; *Sinai* and Einhorn in *Baltimore Sun*, April 22, 1861; china store and workingmen in Ellenberger, "Baltimore Republicanism and Politics in 1861," 29; Smith and Chappell to L. Downer, April 29, 1861, Smith & Atkinson Papers, MHS, cited in Catton, 93.
8. George N. Moale to "My Dear Uncle," April 20, 1861, MS 2489, MHS; *Baltimore Sun*, April 20 and 22, 1861 (Baltimore Museum and "Dixie"); *Baltimore American and Commercial Advertiser*, April 22, 1861 (clergy meeting). Winans was arrested by federal soldiers on May 13 and held at Fort McHenry for two days before being released.
9. *Baltimore American and Commercial Advertiser*, April 22, 1861; *Baltimore Sun*, April 22, 1861.
10. John P. Kennedy, Journal, April 20, 1861, Kennedy Papers, quoted in William J. Evitts, *A Matter of Allegiances: Maryland from 1850 to 1861* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 181; Brown, *Baltimore and the Nineteenth of April*, 60; Henry Winter Davis to Samuel F. DuPont, April 29, 1861, Dupont Papers (emphasis his), quoted in Evitts, *A Matter of Allegiances*, 182; Peter F. Shauck of Morgan's Switch to "Family," May 10, 1861, MS 1860, W. J. Steuart to Father [George H. Steuart], April 21, 1861, James Steuart Papers, MS 758, and C. C. Shriver to [Frederick] A. [Shriver], April 20–21, 1861, MS 2085, all in MHS.
11. Brown, *Baltimore and the Nineteenth of April*, 63–64; Catton, "The Baltimore Business Community," 90–91 (Warfield and "hope the greatest"); *Baltimore American and Commercial*

*Advertiser*, April 22, 1861; Marks and Schatz, *Between North and South*, 30 ("hundreds, I may"); *Baltimore Sun*, April 20, 1861 ("the hitherto Union").

12. Brown, *Baltimore and the Nineteenth of April*, 70 ("streets red with"); in *Baltimore Sun*, April 22, 1861 (militia men and steam gun); *Baltimore American and Commercial Advertiser*, April 22 ("the war spirit"); *Sun*, April 23, 1861 ("engaged in the" and "between 300 and 400"); Denmead shop in Catton, "The Baltimore Business Community," 91, and Charles M. Howard, "Baltimore and the Crisis of 1861," *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 41 (1946): 279–80. Brown (p. 70) criticizes Kane's message to Johnson, believing that it increased the likelihood of further violence.

13. *Baltimore American and Commercial Advertiser*, April 22, 1861 ("representatives of all," city council appropriation, "Minie guns," and "were cordially received"); Winans's gun , George Hughes, and doctors in vacant building in *Baltimore Sun*, April 23, 1861; Brown, *Baltimore and the Nineteenth of April*, 60–61 (city council); John C. Robinson: "Baltimore in 1861," *The Magazine of American History*, XIV, no. 3 (September 1885): 264 (Maryland Guards); "Bummer's Club," wagons and mattresses, volunteer surgeons, and deserter in *Sun*, April 22, 1861. The Maryland Line elected as chief surgeon Dr. Horace A. Brooks, professor of Natural Science at the Baltimore Female College. See the *Sun* of April 23, 1861, for a summary of military companies active in Baltimore during the weekend.

14. Thomas H. Hicks to Simon Cameron , April 20, 1861, Executive Letter Book, Maryland State Archives, Annapolis, Md. Similar versions appear in *Official Records*, I:1, ix, 442, and David Mearns, *The Lincoln Papers* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1948), 2:573.

15. George W. Brown to Thomas H. Hicks and Thomas H. Hicks to George W. Brown, April 20, 1861, in Executive Letter Book, Maryland State Archives, Annapolis (also in *Official Records*, I:1, 442); George W. Brown to Abraham Lincoln, April 20, 1861, in Mearns, *The Lincoln Papers*, 2:574; Tyler Dennett, *Lincoln and the Civil War in the Diaries and Letters of John Hay* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1939), 4 (entry of April 20, 1861).

16. Abraham Lincoln to Thomas H. Hicks and George W. Brown, April 20, 1861, in Roy P. Basler, *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1953), 4:340–41; Garrett/Brown telegrams in *Baltimore American and Commercial Advertiser*, April 22, 1861 (emphasis theirs), *Baltimore Sun*, April 22, 1861, and Brown, *Baltimore and the Nineteenth of April*, 74–75; Brown, 74 ("was a measure" and "was greatly moved"); Lincoln's telegraphed reply to Brown and Hicks was also in letter form. The troops at Cockeysville, said to number 3,000, were under the command of General George C. Wynkoop. See Festus P. Summers, *The Baltimore and Ohio in the Civil War* (1939; repr. Gettysburg, Pa.: Stan Clark Military Books, 1992), 56. Summers notes that the original Garrett telegram is in the Garrett Papers; see fn 36, p. 237.

17. *Official Records*, I:1, 442 (B&O refusal to move men); Brown, *Baltimore and the Nineteenth of April*, 63 (Kennedy and Harris); Abraham Lincoln to Thomas H. Hicks and George W. Brown, April 20, 1861, in Basler, *Collected Works*, 4:340. The *Baltimore Sun* of April 22, 1861, contains an account of the meeting between Lincoln and the Baltimore men. Other than Brown's comment that the latter two men composed a committee that "was sent to Washington" (Brown, 63), I have found nothing indicating coordination between Hicks-Brown and Kennedy-Harris regarding their separate visits to the White House.

18. *Report of Committees, 2nd Session, 37th Congress, Vol.* 2, 621, and *Baltimore Evening Patriot*, April 19, 1861 (crowd storming and anonymous letters), both in Summers, *The Baltimore and Ohio in the Civil War*, 54; cars seized in *Baltimore American and Commercial Advertiser*, April 22, 1861.

19. John C. Pratt (Boston) to Jabez David Pratt (Baltimore), April 24, 1861, MS 1860, MHS.

20. Thomas H. Hicks to Abraham Lincoln, April 22, 1861, in Executive Letter Book, Maryland State Archives, Annapolis (also in Mearns, *The Lincoln Papers*, 2:583, and *Official Records*, I: 2, IX, no. 4, 589); William H. Seward to Thomas H. Hicks, April 22, 1861, Executive Letter Book. Hicks wrote also the same day to General Scott, to advise him of his message to Lincoln—see Mearns, *Lincoln Papers*, 2:583.
21. Dennett, *Diaries and Letters of John Hay*, 6, April 21, 1861, entry ("a penitent and"); Fuller quotes in David Rankin Barbee, "Lincoln, Chase, and the Rev. Dr. Richard Fuller," *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 46 (1951): 109, 111, "God have mercy" in Barbee, 116 (an account of this meeting appears in the *Baltimore Sun*, April 23, 1861). Barbee lists eighteen signatories to the letter requesting the meeting with Lincoln, including J. D. Pratt, and explains that Fuller was a southern slaveholder, noting the irony of such a man talking to an "abolition President." He cites the further conversation between the two from the *Sun* of April 27, 1861.
22. Dennett, *Diaries and Letters of John Hay*, 7, entry of April 22 ("the whining traitors"); "Reply to Baltimore Committee," in Emanuel Hertz, *Abraham Lincoln: A New Portrait* (New York: Horace Liveright, Inc., 1931), 2:830–31. Though Hertz gives the date of this reply as April 28, Basler includes the same passage and notes "although the source of Lincoln's remarks as printed by Hertz is probably a newspaper, the editors have been unable to locate it. Hertz dates the event April 28, 1861, but reports in the *Baltimore Daily Exchange* and *The South* of April 23, 1861, indicate conclusively that this reply was made on Monday, April 22. Reports in the Philadelphia and New York papers as well as the Baltimore papers give only fragments of Lincoln's remarks as printed by Hertz, and the editors have reproduced the Hertz text for want of a satisfactory contemporary source." See Basler, *Collected Works*, 4:341–42.
23. Dennett, *Diaries and Letters of John Hay*, 7, entry of April 22, 1861 (Miss Pollock); Frederick Austin Shriver to Christopher Columbus Shriver, June 30, 1861, in Frederic Shriver Klein, ed., *Just South of Gettysburg: Carroll County, Maryland, in the Civil War: Personal Accounts and Descriptions of a Maryland Border County, 1861–1865* (Westminster, Md.: Historical society of Carroll County, 1997), 20.
24. John C. Pratt (Boston) to Jabez David Pratt (Baltimore), April 27, 1861, MS 1860, MHS.
25. D. Wilmot to Winfield Scott, April 20, 1861, in *Official Records*, I:1, ix, 442; bridges in *Baltimore American and Commercial Advertiser*, April 22, 1861; Daniel M. Thomas to "My Dear Sister," April 21, 1861, MS 1970, MHS (italics his). One source refers to a North Central Railroad bridge at Melvale—see Ruffner, *Maryland's Blue and Gray*, 56. In a colorful career in the Federal 8th Maryland Infantry, Johannes was convicted of striking an enlisted man with a stick, "nearly unhorsed but saved," and given a pension for eye disease caused by exploding ammunition on Maryland Heights, across the Potomac from Harpers Ferry (see Ruffner, 381–82).
26. Radcliffe, *Governor Hicks*, 56–58; E. Louis Lowe to John C. Brown, May 10, 1861, in *Official Records*, I:2, IX, no. 3, 14–15 (J. C. Brown and Lowe) and 11–12 (Brown statement that Hicks approved bridge burning); William L.W. Seabrook, *Maryland's Great Part in Saving the Union* (Baltimore, n.p., 1913), 18–19.
27. Jabez David Pratt (Baltimore) to John C. Pratt (Boston), April 29 and May 1, 1861, MS 1860, MHS.
28. *Baltimore Clipper*, April 23, 1861 (flags and bars), in Catton, "The Baltimore Business Community," 90; *Baltimore Sun*, April 22 (bar closures), April 23 (marching and parading, steamboat proscription), and April 20, 1861 ("under the ordinance"); Howard, "Baltimore and the Crisis of 1861," 260–61 (Brown and Howard to Trimble); "City Hall Guards," autograph list of members and charter ("for the defence,"), MS 1860, MHS (members included the comptroller and surveyor of Baltimore City).

29. Howard-Robinson exchanges in Robinson, "Baltimore in 1861," 265–66; Augustus J. Albert: *Civil War Experiences* (Baltimore, n.d.), 3–4, MS 1860, MHS. Albert noted that Ben Huger resigned command of the Pikesville Armory in the wake of the April 19 riot and commanded the Maryland Guard. The *Baltimore Sun* of April 22, 1861, notes also that Robinson refused the services of the Maryland Guard.
30. Robinson, "Baltimore in 1861," 265–67 (*Spaulding*); *Baltimore Sun*, April 23, 1861 (spies and police seizure). No record of the contents of the letter to Robinson is known to exist.
31. Thomas H. Hicks to Benjamin Butler, April 21, 1861, Executive Letter Book, Maryland State Archives, Annapolis (also in *Official Records* I:2, IX, no. 4, 587); Butler reply to Hicks in Benjamin Butler, *Butler's Book* (Boston, 1892), 194; steamer *Maryland*, church services, and "party of police" in *Baltimore American and Commercial Advertiser*, April 22, 1861; George Whitmarsh Diary, April 21, 1861, MS 896, MHS. The *Baltimore Sun* of April 22, 1861, reported that telegraph lines were cut north of the city and seized south of the city.
32. Hester A. Davis to "My Dear Child," April 23, 1861, Allan W. Davis Papers, MS 1511, MHS; *Baltimore Sun*, April 23, 1861 (this clergy meeting, the Rev. Thomas B. Sargent of the M.E. Church presiding, also appealed to Lincoln to avoid civil war); Winfield Scott to Abraham Lincoln, April 22, 1861, in Mearns, *Lincoln Papers*, 2:584; "rumors" in *Baltimore American and Commercial Advertiser*, April 22, 1861.
33. *Baltimore Sun*, April 23, 1861 (federal employees and bank run); arms to Baltimore in *Official Records*, I:1, 442 (April 22, 1861, 1,000 arms from Confederate seizure of Harpers Ferry; 5,000 from the Lexington, Va., arsenal); A. M. Hancock to Abraham Lincoln, April 28, 1861, in Mearns, *Lincoln Papers*, 2:589 (Hancock wrote from Coleman's Eutaw House Hotel in Baltimore).
34. Dennett, *Diaries and Letters of John Hay*, 9, entry of April 22, 1861 (Gen. Spinner and gaunt figure). Jim Lane was "the ally of Montgomery, the King of the Jayhawkers, and the friend of John Brown of Ossawatomie." Lane founded the "Frontier Guards," led the Free State movement in Kansas, and served as major general of the Kansas militia. A Senator from 1861–66, he supported Lincoln and emancipation and arming of slaves.
35. *Baltimore Sun*, April 22 (Marchisi and Schenck) and April 23, 1861 (Mitchell and health commissioner); Daniel M. Thomas to "My Dear Sister," April 21, 1861, MS 1970, MHS.
36. Seabrook, *Maryland's Great Part*, 21–22.
37. John C. Pratt (Boston) to Jabez David Pratt (Baltimore), April 27, 1861, MS 1860, MHS.
38. *Baltimore Exchange*, April 22, 24, 26, 1861, in Catton, "The Baltimore Business Community," 91–92; Evitts, *A Matter of Allegiances*, 183; John P. Kennedy journal, April 26, 1861, Kennedy Papers, and Henry Winter Davis to Samuel F. DuPont, May 5, 1861, DuPont Papers, both in Evitts, 183; George Whitmarsh Diary, April 27, 1861, MS 896, MHS; Schley in *Official Records* 2:1, 610.

# Maryland History Bibliography, 2001: A Selected List

ANNE S. K. TURKOS and JEFF KORMAN, Compilers

From 1975 on, the *Maryland Historical Magazine* has published regular com pilations of books, articles, and doctoral dissertations relating to Maryland history. The following list includes materials published during 2001, as well as earlier works that have been brought to our attention.

Bibliographers must live with the fact that their work is never finished. Please notify us of any significant omissions so that they may be included in the next list. Send additional items to: Anne S. K. Turkos, Archives and Manuscripts Department, Hornbake Library, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, 20742.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# Book Reviews

*Northwest Baltimore and Its Neighborhoods 1870–1970: Before Smart Growth.* By Roderick N. Ryon. (Baltimore: University of Baltimore, 2000. 240 pages. Illustrations, maps, index. $20 paper.)

The University of Baltimore decided over a decade ago that its home town, the quintessential "city of neighborhoods," would benefit from a set of studies that profiled those urban building blocks. The U.S. Census Bureau's Neighborhood Statistics Program provided a list of the 270 neighborhoods into which the federal government divides Baltimore, and the Baltimore Regional Planning Council (today the Baltimore Metropolitan Council) already had grouped these into seven Regional Planning Districts, which seemed to offer a convenient way of clumping neighborhoods into a manageable number of volumes.

How these agencies defined their terms is never really explained, but certainly this was a methodological dream come true, and the editors went for it. However, as often happens with dreams, the focus has shifted with the passage of time, as the project has published first Karen Lewand's *North Baltimore from Estate to Development* (1989), then Roderick N. Ryon's *West Baltimore Neighborhoods: Sketches of Their History 1840–1960* (1993), and now this volume. The Lewand book, partly by the use of very small type and partly by the omission of an index, managed to cover about the same number of neighborhoods as its successors in only seventy-two pages. It was characterized by relatively long neighborhood profiles—thirteen of them had eight or more paragraphs—laid out without much attempt to link one to another. Dr. Ryon's two books, in contrast, while much longer, have noticeably lessened the space devoted to individual neighborhoods—he has only two profiles of eight or more paragraphs—while stressing the factors that combine the Census Bureau's neighborhoods into larger entities.

His goal is to explain how and why the area west of Jones Falls and north of a line formed by West North Avenue and Calverton Road, a quarter of the land area of present-day Baltimore, took on the form and functions that we know. Geography asked the question, how could an area by nineteenth-century standards too far from tidewater to be attractive to heavy industries be developed along the traditional lines of high-density row housing within walking distance of workplaces? Common sense denied that it could be, but technological changes altered both the question and its answer. The development of relatively cheap, fast, and reliable mass transportation in the years after the Civil War enabled developers to market the northwest as a *rus in urbos* with easy access to the places of business and amusement that were concentrated downtown. The middle-class workers who

could afford streetcar commuting wanted larger homes with larger rooms and more greenspace than existed in the older parts of the city, and in the "Annex" or "Belt"—the areas between North Avenue and Cold Spring Lane annexed to the city from Baltimore County in 1886—they got these, with up-to-date utility service included as a matter of course. So successful was this first annexation, which added what might be termed the "old" northwest to the city, that a second one was engineered in 1918, expanding the city to its current limits so as to enable still more people to benefit from what was at that point unquestionably a successful downtown-residential system.

In fact, however, by the 1920s that system was poised for collapse, at least in the "old" northwest (that part lying south of today's Northern Parkway)—which at the time was nearly all the northwest there was. The agent of its destruction was, of course, the automobile, which struck not by choking the northwestern neighborhoods themselves, which thanks to their suburban layout were in fact well-equipped to accommodate it, but by overwhelming the downtown to which the northwest was linked symbiotically. By the end of the period with which Dr. Ryon's work deals, the northwest was still basically as attractive as ever, the public transportation system was mainly intact—but there no longer existed the urban center which both of them had been set up to serve. Businesses and the jobs they generated had fled to the margins of the new interstate highways, where undeveloped and therefore cheap land existed in abundance to be turned into parking, and a large percentage of the northwest's—indeed the entire city's—population, more or less willingly, followed.

Not everyone left, of course; the book makes clear that while the "old" northwest suffered, those areas north of Northern Parkway—the "new" northwest—were developed after World War II in an "auto-centric" fashion that enabled them to take full advantage of their proximity to the Beltway just as the "streetcar suburbs" that had made up the old northwest previously had exploited their proximity to downtown. One major group, Jewish homedwellers, even was able to limit its adaptation to changing times to shifting from the "old" to the "new" northwest. Even the southernmost neighborhoods benefited from the African American movement out of the old city that began in the 1950s, and Dr. Ryon's chapters on this and the Jewish realignment are particularly fine.

Throughout this book as well as its predecessor, the author struggles against an atomistic format in an effort to make clear trends which are citywide, or even just those vital to the area assigned to him which originate outside it. The individual books are what they were intended to be, useful quarries of facts on neighborhoods, but the series of which they form a part, if it continues on its present course, seems in danger of exhausting its strength in a conflict between analytical authors and encyclopedialist editors.

Francis P. O'Neill
*Maryland Historical Society*

*Greenbelt, Maryland: A Living Legacy of the New Deal.* By Cathy D. Knepper. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001. 275 pages. Notes, index. $42.50 cloth.)

Maryland possesses a wide variety of local communities ranging from fishing villages to coal mining towns and upscale suburbs. Among these communities, one of the most unique is the town of Greenbelt located in Prince George's County just outside Washington, D.C. Built during the mid-1930s with federal unemployment relief funds, Greenbelt was carefully planned as a convenient and attractive "new town," a community that its designers hoped would influence the way American suburbs would be built in the future. Until 1953 the town was owned and operated by the federal government. Greenbelt had a regular municipal government and its residents quickly established a large number of clubs and associations including a civic association, but the federally appointed city manager was the key figure. The government was a generous and supportive landlord, helping residents build a strong, cooperative community.

In 1953 the federal government sold the town of Greenbelt, plus a large tract of open land surrounding it, to a locally based housing cooperative led by a number of families already living in the community. The question on people's minds in 1953 was whether the strong sense of community that had developed during the period of federal management could survive the transition to private ownership. Ms. Knepper's excellent study, which focuses on the years from 1953 to the 1990s, answers this question in the affirmative. She traces the post-1953 struggles between the "Greenbelters" and a variety of more or less malevolent individuals and institutions that attempted to pull the town away from its tradition of careful planning and cooperation. The most significant conflicts arose after the town's housing cooperative, having run into financial difficulties in 1955, was compelled to sell off the undeveloped land surrounding the town acreage. That land fell into the hands of some real estate developers who put private gain above community values. A central institution in these contests over land development was the town's newspaper, *The Greenbelt News-Review*. Not only did the *News-Review* serve as the authentic voice of the local community, it became an almost sacred icon after a private developer who owned a large piece of the town's undeveloped land sued the paper for libel in an attempt to silence its editors. The case went all the way to the Supreme Court before the paper was exonerated.

The book encompasses much more than the dramatic story of a local newspaper. Ms. Knepper has done a thorough job analyzing Greenbelt's numerous difficulties, including the sorts of problems faced by many communities as the physical plant and housing ages, population and traffic increase, racial changes occur, and school population shifts force redistricting. Greenbelt's residents faced these potentially divisive issues and dealt with them remarkably well. The way Greenbelters

have solved community problems, and passed on their traditions to new residents through a local historical museum and public programs, provides good evidence that the strong spirit of community cooperation and concern for maintaining a high quality of life is still very much alive. In a huge nation such as the United States, it is difficult to see exactly how we have evolved at the community level during the past half century. Through studies such as this, we can gain at least some sense of how certain communities, carefully planned and well launched, have continued to thrive even in the face of serious problems. Much the same spirit went into the planning and early development of James Rouse's new town of Columbia in Howard County, but it remains to be seen if the "Columbia spirit" can be sustained with the vigor still evident in Greenbelt after more than sixty years.

Joseph L. Arnold
*University of Maryland Baltimore County*

*Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America.* By Daniel K. Richter. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001. 317 pages. Appendix, notes, index. $26.00 cloth.)

For Europeans, the discovery of North America marked the beginning of a new world; for Indians it meant the beginning of the end. At least, this is the way that many scholars have portrayed the history of early America—as a story of European ascendance and native American decline. But in *Facing East from Indian Country*, Daniel Richter argues that native cultures were not so easily undone.

In this book, Richter considers the European invasion from the Indian perspective. He examines how contact affected Indian lives, how natives interacted with newcomers, and what original Americans thought of white-skinned colonists. Looking at Indians living east of the Mississippi, from the Great Lakes to Florida, Richter provides a sweeping portrait of native experience in early America.

To begin, Richter claims that the lives of Native Americans changed little after their first contact with white newcomers. European expeditions in the early sixteenth century, he says, hardly disturbed centuries'-old patterns of native living. Even the first settlements failed to concern most native Americans, for colonists clung to the Atlantic seaboard, which meant that few but coastal tribes ever laid eyes on white immigrants. Eventually, Richter concedes, the European invasion did begin to alter Indian lives, not through regular, face-to-face contact, but indirectly, as a result of trade. Eager to obtain European goods, Indians began to compete for access to deerskins, beaver skins, and any other resource that could be exchanged for coveted foreign wares. The appearance of new markets spurred major migrations and bloody, tribal wars, but Richter claims the upheavals of commerce were quite familiar to native Americans. Richter reminds readers that Indians had long traded among themselves, vying with each other for access to markets centuries before European contact.

Richter also insists that coveted European goods failed to transform Indian lives. Natives used European products according to their own cultural standards, often ignoring their intended uses. For example, an Indian who acquired a European-made copper kettle might melt down the vessel to make arrowheads. In fact, Richter argues, European goods were often used to create Indian products. Natives used European baubles, thread, and needles to fashion beadwork for wampum or ceremonial dress more complex than could have been imagined previously. Richter shows that trade with Europeans, so often said to have destroyed Indian culture, in some ways may have actually enhanced it.

Of course, Richter acknowledges that not all native Americans benefited from European contact. Millions died of foreign diseases, while thousands more met their end in warfare with whites and rival tribes. Tremendous loss of life, loss of land, and the decimation of culture defined the experience of many Indians throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. But Richter feels that for native American history, these accounts of defeat have overshadowed the resilience and vibrancy that many surviving Indian groups demonstrated in early America. Richter's synthesis of native American history offers a corrective to what he sees as the prevailing theme of tragedy in Native American history.

In order to break away from such negative sentiments, Richter challenges readers to consider the experiences that whites and Indians held in common, such as their joint participation in the trans-Atlantic trade network. He argues that white colonists and most natives of the seventeenth century dedicated their laboring lives to securing and producing goods for trade and export, and that Indians, like white colonists, used their wealth to participate in a consumer revolution. Richter also notes that Indian and white populations also became increasingly diverse through the seventeenth century. While French, German, Dutch, and other European settlers mixed with British colonists in America, demographic disruption among native populations resulted in the dissolution of tribal identities and the mixing of Indian groups.

As early America became a melting pot of nationalities and tribes, Richter suggests that Indians and whites more easily commingled than readers might think. Natives, Richter claims, made every effort to incorporate European culture into their lives. Indians accepted some aspects of Christianity, married whites, and adopted certain European mores. Natives took such pains, Richter argues, to ensure a peaceful coexistence with whites and to facilitate trade. And he says that colonists of the seventeenth century had good reason to cooperate with Indians. As European superpowers vied for dominance, none could risk the military or financial cost of native enemies, and certainly no one wanted to miss out on the lucrative Indian trade.

Richter argues that peaceful coexistence among whites and Indians ended by the late eighteenth century. With the French withdrawal following the Seven Years'

War, and the British departure after the American Revolution, natives lost the bargaining power they once enjoyed when Europeans competed for Indian allegiances. As frontier boundaries pressed westward, white Americans began to forge a future without natives. The commonalities that whites and Indians may have shared in the seventeenth century did not help them in the eighteenth as Indian opponents removed eastern tribes west of the Mississippi.

Richter's sanguine view of Indian history will certainly provoke debate, in large part because he glosses over the very real tragedies natives experienced during this period. Richter celebrates the loss of distinct tribal identities and ways of life as opportunities for multicultural fellowship. He presents the trans-Atlantic trade network as a boon to native Americans, but many did not benefit. And he introduces us to Indians who invited white strangers into their lives, while, in fact, many tribes fought to keep white interlopers from tribal lands. Richter admirably provides readers with an alternative interpretation of the existing evidence but may go too far when he suggests that Indians were, for the most part, unharmed by the European invasion until the end of the seventeenth century.

Scholars will debate whether Richter redressed the Indians' place in the master narrative of American history. But in showing that many native Americans employed successful survival strategies and even thrived in cultural exchanges with whites, Richter demonstrates that Indians remained important players throughout the history of early America. Perhaps that is the most striking contribution of Richter's latest work.

TRACEY BIRDWELL
*University of Delaware*

*Witches of the Atlantic World: A Historical Reader and Primary Sourcebook.* Edited by Elaine G. Breslaw. (New York: New York University Press, 2000. 561 pages. Selected bibliography, index. $25.00 paper.)

Including both primary and secondary excerpts from the ever-widening historiography devoted to witchcraft, Elaine Breslaw's edited reader and sourcebook *Witches of the Atlantic World* is a collection that covers a tremendous amount of spatial and temporal ground. Breslaw has broken her topic into eight sections, and she notes in the introduction that "the readings in this anthology are to some extent an idiosyncratic collection" (10) though the focus of the collection as a whole is on "the significance of witchcraft and witch hunts in a variety of cultures that rim the Atlantic Ocean" (1). Breslaw has included only those selections that "students found interesting, and that were most likely to stimulate discussion." She has "omitted material that just didn't seem to work in the classroom or that students described as dull and unrewarding" (xiii). What we see, then, to use her own words, is an "idiosyncratic collection" of "interesting" and discussion "stimulating"

pieces. No spinach here. But that might be exactly what some classrooms need to excite students about the study of history.

The first half of the book is broken down topically and covers "Christian Perspectives on witchcraft" using primary and secondary material, "Non-Christian beliefs" (ranging from Europe to Africa, and Native Americans to African Americans) using secondary documents, "Diabolical Possession" with primary and secondary documents, and "Gender" with primary and secondary documents. The strength of this book clearly lies in the latter sections (parts V–VIII, 355–526) which deal with Breslaw's forte, Salem, using a variety of primary and secondary documents covering the trials themselves, historical commentary on the events, medical and psychological interpretations (including the hotly debated ergot theory), and the legacy left by that late seventeenth-century New England phenomenon.

Throughout the introductory pieces, Breslaw adopts a conversational tone that should appeal to undergraduates and the reading public, though her sometimes fuzzy use of language, time, and place can be confusing. There are also some editorial decisions that Breslaw (or NYUP) has made that limit the volume's use to the classroom and as an introductory tool. The lack of footnotes in the main introductory essay, the tendency for her introductory segments to introduce authors rather than historicize the excerpts, and the stated strategy of producing an "idiosyncratic" collection mean that the volume might work very well in the undergraduate classroom as a way to skim the surface of a rich body on witchcraft. However, the decision to excise all footnotes from the excerpted secondary material and to modernize spelling and punctuation of the primary documents unfortunately work together to sanitize the documents and omit readers from the whole exercise of interpretation.

In choosing her texts, Breslaw has done an admirable job of stretching the boundaries of Western-defined "witchcraft" to include Christian and non-Christian, medieval and early modern, Old and New World, historical and medical views. Non-specialists and scholars should be interested in using the volume to sample the historiography completed on witchcraft, and as a guide to a more intensive study of the topic. For that purpose the selected bibliography at the end of the book will also be very useful to those wanting to dive deeper into the study of witchcraft.

Breslaw has created a volume on witchcraft that should prove useful in introducing students to the variety of authors who have written on witchcraft—from the well known to the up-and-coming—and in doing so she has managed to complete a daunting task.

CATHERINE CARDNO
*Johns Hopkins University*

*The Transformation of American Abolitionism: Fighting Slavery in the Early Republic.* By Richard S. Newman. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002. 268 pages. Appendices, notes, index. $45.00 cloth; $18.95 paper.)

In a democracy, nothing distresses people of conscience more than the gap between their society's words and its deeds. Such a gap compromises a country's commitment to integrity, equality, and compassion. This was particularly true for those early nineteenth-century Americans who found the institution of slavery and its perpetuation abhorrent and a violation of the country's founding creed that all men are created equal.

In *The Transformation of American Abolitionism: Fighting Slavery in the Early Republic*, Richard S. Newman, an assistant professor of history at Rochester Institute of Technology, writes a lucid account of the people of conscience, or abolitionists, who organized a social movement that eventually led to the overthrow of slavery. His critical examination of their strategies and tactics makes a compelling argument that the abolitionist movement underwent a profound change in the first decades of the nineteenth century. Following the American Revolution, the movement advocated the gradual emancipation of slaves. This gradualist approach favored manumission through legislated compensation to owners and lawsuits filed on behalf of individual slaves. Newman points to the substantial but careful work of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society as exemplifying the gradualist or republican approach. This organization, of Quaker origins and dominated by elite lawyers and businessmen, used petitions and legal actions to persuade state and federal authorities to undermine the legitimacy of slavery. Yet by the 1830s, calls for the immediate abolition of slavery had pushed aside Pennsylvanian gradualism.

Crucial to this change was the pivotal role of African Americans. Their personal experiences with the pain and suffering of slavery made them living witnesses to the contradictions in the American democratic promise. In describing black activism in vivid detail, Newman captures the important protest work of such individuals as James Forten of Philadelphia and David Walker of Boston. Slave narratives, public speeches, pamphlets, and mutual aid societies were among the instruments that free African Americans used in their struggle against slavery. They vigorously resisted colonization schemes and demanded their human and civil rights as Americans. For African Americans, the crusade against slavery was a struggle for justice. Newman considers them to be the first immediatists in the abolitionist movement.

The organizational demand for the immediate abolition of slavery took hold most firmly in the Massachusetts Antislavery Society. Unlike its Pennsylvania competitor, the Massachusetts organization adopted tactics and strategies that aimed at galvanizing public opinion to force state and federal governments to act. The destruction of slavery demanded political remedies in addition to legal ones. By

sending its egalitarian, democratic membership of both races and sexes as agents into the countryside, the organization propagated its antislavery message among ordinary people. The agents gave speeches, distributed literature, and organized local antislavery societies with the goal of electing and influencing public officials who would narrow the gap between word and deed, making real the promises of American democracy. The Massachusetts Antislavery Society became the model for the national American Antislavery Society.

At times Newman emphasizes the importance of new political tactics and strategies at the expense of analyzing the dynamic interplay between personal moral compulsions and civil society. Why abolitionists were able to turn thought into action is as significant as how they were able to do it. Nonetheless, this book is an inspiring reminder that American people of conscience have a long history of organizing for justice, that they can devise effective strategies and tactics, and that they can move public opinion for a just cause. The crusade against slavery would need almost another four decades before it witnessed the destruction of the peculiar institution. But in the words of a twentieth-century crusader for racial justice, Martin Luther King Jr., "the moral arc of the universe bends but it bends towards justice."

LESTER P. LEE JR.
*Northeastern University*

*Women and the Republican Party, 1854–1924*. By Melanie Susan Gustafson. Women in American History. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001. 336 pages. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. $34.95 cloth.)

Despite common assumptions to the contrary concerning women's apolitical nature, Melanie Susan Gustafson clearly demonstrates women's long struggle to become truly equal Republican partisans from the party's inception in 1854 through the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment sixty-six years later. Gustafson also argues, against the grain, that notwithstanding their disenfranchisement women were partisans. *Women and the Republican Party* covers the well-known history of the woman-dominated reform movements and their leaders Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Jane Addams, but with a point of view relatively new to the sub-discipline of women's history.

This is a fairly conventional political history that relies upon the official papers of the Republican and Progressive Parties and related reform organizations, as well as the private papers of elite politicos. Gustafson's detailed analysis adds a wealth of information to the historiography by analyzing women's participation in the Republican Party on a national level and illustrating the evolution of the woman question from: Should women be partisan? To could/should women reformers be activists on their own issues and partisans at the same time? And finally

should women run for and hold political office? General readers interested in politics will find her writing accessible, but the student of Maryland history will be disappointed. The major actors in this drama hail from the Northeast and Midwest. Marylanders are conspicuously absent.

Women reformers' first relationships with political parties began when they abandoned moral suasion and petition campaigns for partisanship. The first Republican activities for women were quiet displays of morality and behind-the-scenes organizing during the 1856 presidential campaign. That changed in 1861 with the entrance of Anna Dickinson on the Republican partisan scene.

Many women abandoned partisan politics after the Civil War when their hard work was rewarded with an amendment guaranteeing African American men the right to vote, not women. Third, single-issue parties appealed to women in the1880s, but they were rightfully leery. Reformers recognized that they could not ignore political parties, but success brought failure for individual women. Once a political party transformed a reform issue into a public policy debate, women were excluded from the process.

Republican Party officials courted women's support by creating auxiliaries. Judith Ellen Foster created the first national woman's partisan organization recognized by the Republican Party in 1888. The Woman's National Republican Association coordinated efforts to educate women on government, distribute party literature, and work local elections.

In 1912, after being marginalized by both the Republican and Democratic Parties, many women reformers looked with hope to the newly forming Progressive Party. While the Progressives talked about equality, the party excluded African Americans and kept women's involvement at a miniscule but official level. Jane Addams worked in the party and urged other women to join, but after their defeat and the novelty of women Progressives waned, the party slowly reverted to a nearly all-male organization on the national level. Women on the state level continued to encourage people to consider voting only one small part of their civic duty and to remain active.

Other leading women remained loyal to the Republicans, in 1912 working on voter registration and turnout. Public debate swirled over this perceived dissention within the suffrage camp. One great fear of anti-suffragists was that women would vote as a single block and control elections. Suffragist leaders hoped that the split would help silence that argument and eventually concluded that suffragist organizations should remain non-partisan, but individuals could be partisan. With the issue of partisanship settled, the question of women officeholders now dominated the debate over public women.

For many former Progressives partisanship returned to single issues after the death of the Progressive Party in 1916. A new generation of suffragists radicalized by their experience with English suffragettes created the National Woman's Party

to target Democrats. Jane Addams helped found the Woman's Peace Party to focus attention on ending hostilities in Europe. Republican women were finally rewarded with a suffrage plank in the platform, but their major effort in the 1916 election focused on electing Hughes.

Gustafson details a very long and complicated relationship, proving her thesis and introducing some new woman leaders. My main concerns lie in the book I wanted to read, not necessarily in the strength of Gustafson's argument. I question the real impact these dozen or so women had on the political life of the nation and the daily struggles of their non-elite sisters. Certainly women's issues became public policy, but Gustafson does not show a link between the policy and women's partisanship. Even on the question of woman suffrage the Republican Party moved very slowly. Surely the fact that the first Republican Party suffrage plank was so weak—it called for state support of woman suffrage but no constitutional amendment—and that it appeared so late, fifty-two years after the party was founded, indicates women's partisanship did little to move men toward their goals. The evolution of social history divorced women's history from traditional political history. This new genre of women in politics is very exciting and is the perfect opportunity to combine the best methodologies of both subfields. Gustafson did not take that opportunity, but her work here is a very important step toward connecting women and politics.

Susanne M. DeBerry Cole
*Maryland Historical Society*

*Lee & His Army in Confederate History*. By Gary W. Gallagher. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001. xiii, 295 pages. $29.95 paper.)

For more than a century after his death in 1870, Robert E. Lee enjoyed a sterling reputation among historians. He was an ingenious general who routinely outwitted his enemies, they said. He was doomed to fail only because the North had more men and materiel at its disposal. This take was handed down to us by such craftsmen of the Lost Cause as General Jubal A. Early and Douglas Southall Freeman.

But Lee has been under some fire for the past generation. Not heavy fire, to be sure, but that of some very capable sharpshooters. In 1977 Thomas L. Connelly undertook job of stripping away the sheen around Lee in *The Marble Man,* in which he harshly assessed Lee's decisions as a commander. Fourteen years later, Alan Nolan weighed in with *Lee Considered*, in which he took Lee to task for maintaining an offensive posture even when it bled his army to death. Nolan also argued that Lee committed treason when he left the U.S. Army for the Confederacy.

In this collection of essays, Gary W. Gallagher thoughtfully tries to balance the scales between those historians who idolize Lee and those who have sought to debunk him. Gallagher makes a convincing case that Lee was in fact a great gen-

eral. His talents were apparent enough that once Lee took over the Army of Northern Virginia, Confederate soldiers and civilians alike quickly came to regard him as the best hope for their cause—a view that was reinforced with each failure of the western armies.

Lee's talents, though, extended beyond battlefield tactics. He was able to get along with the difficult and micromanaging Jefferson Davis to a degree other Confederate generals were not. He also had a keen eye for northern politics, regularly writing Davis on the Copperheads and suggesting ways the South might be able to use the peace movement to its advantage. Because Lee and his army became the repository for Confederate aspirations, Gallagher argues that he deserves to be cast as the central character of the Confederate experience.

Gallagher is less convincing in developing his second major theme, that the men and material available to the North "played a crucial—perhaps *the* crucial—role in defeating the Confederacy" (274). Certainly the abundance of men and materiel were a significant factor in the Confederacy's loss, but Gallagher is too quick to dismiss contingency. The North had several close brushes with disaster even with its superior numbers of men and resources. Had General George B. McClellan not been able to fight Lee to a draw at Antietam, for instance, Abraham Lincoln would not have been able to issue the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation so soon. That document was crucial, not only for freeing the slaves in occupied areas but also for keeping France and England from recognizing the Confederacy. Another example is the election of 1864. Had it been held in August, before General William T. Sherman took Atlanta, instead of November, Lincoln almost surely would have lost his bid for re-election. What would McClellan, the Democratic victor, have done to end the war? Would he have granted the South its independence?

Such questions aside, Gallagher is to be commended for producing a thoughtful, nuanced look at one of the leading figures of the war. It is a good time to try to rebalance the scales.

Jennifer L. Weber
*Princeton University*

# Books in Brief

Ronald Hoffman and Sally D. Mason's transatlantic-colonial history *Princes of Ireland, Planters of Maryland: A Carroll Saga, 1500–1782* is now available in paperback. This meticulously researched and finely crafted work is a highly readable narrative of an Irish-Catholic family who rose to power and prominence in the Maryland colony. This book has received multiple awards including the 2001 Library of Virginia Literacy Award, the 2001 Frank L. and Harriet C. Owsley Award of Southern Historical Association, and the 2001 Maryland Historical Society Book Prize.

University of North Carolina Press, $19.95

*The Civil War in Southeastern Virginia: The War Hits Home* is Brian Steel Wills's dramatic story of life on the home front during the Suffolk campaign of 1863. The residents of Suffolk and the surrounding counties of Isle of Wight, Nansemond, and Southampton had already suffered the demands of Southern recruits and advancing Union forces in search of supplies. Wills wove memoirs, letters, and diaries, into a dramatic story that brings the impact of war to life for the soldiers, and civilians of Southside Virginia.

University Press of Virginia, cloth, $34.95

Editors Michael P. Branch, SueEllen Campbell, and John Tallmadge have launched their new series, Under the Sign of Nature: Explorations in Ecocriticism, with Stephen Adams' *The Best and Worst Country in the World: Perspectives on the Early Virginia Landscape*. This study incorporates geological findings, environmental research, and historical and topographical work into a look at the country now known as Virginia. The author followed dinosaur tracks, chronicled early Native American life, and met the Jamestown settlers on the lower shores of the Chesapeake. Their first idyllic impressions and subsequent harsh experiences made this land indeed "the best and worst country in the world."

University Press of Virginia, $55 cloth, $19.50 paper

*From the Attic to Military Museums: How to Honor Your Family by Donating and Preserving Military History* is Robert Parker Fondes' guidebook that offers step-by-step instructions for identifying and donating military memorabilia and artifacts. This volume contains dozens of letters, deeds of gift, photographs, and military orders. Veterans and their families will appreciate these tips for preserving their individual histories for future generations.

IstBooks Library, ebook (www.1stBooks.com), $3.95

# Notices

## Reduced Research Hours

Several Maryland research facilities have been forced to shorten their hours in order to balance their budgets. The Maryland Historical Society Library is now closed to the public Tuesdays as well as Mondays. The Maryland State Archives will be closed one additional day per week effective July 1. Researchers are asked to check the Archives' homepage for an expected announcement in late June (www.mdarchives.state.md.us). The George Peabody Library of the Johns Hopkins University is now open to researchers by appointment only. Contact the librarian at 410-659-8179.

## Call for Papers and Panel Proposals

The Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture invites proposals for its Ninth Annual Conference to be held in New Orleans, June 6–8, 2003. The conference is sponsored jointly by the Institute, the Deep South Regional Humanities Center at Tulane University, and the Historic New Orleans Collection. The meeting will take place on the Tulane University campus and at historic sites associated with the Louisiana Purchase, for which 2003 is the bicentennial year.

The Program Committee welcomes papers and panel proposals that are specifically organized around themes related to the political, cultural, and economic ramifications of the Louisiana Purchase and associated events. Submitters must send nine (9) hard copies of each one-page proposal and a one-page curriculum vitae to Professor Sylvia Frey, Program Chair, Department of History, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA 70118. Proposals must be postmarked by September 15, 2002.

## Conference in Philadelphia

The Program in Early American Economy and Society will host its second conference, "Risk and Reputation: Insecurity in the Early American Economy," October 4, 2002, at the Library Company of Philadelphia. The conference is free and open to anyone interested in its themes. The conference brochure and registration form are available on the society's website, www.librarycompany.org. Conference papers will be available on the website in September.

## First Thursday—Book Event at MHS

Join University of Georgia professor of history and African American studies,

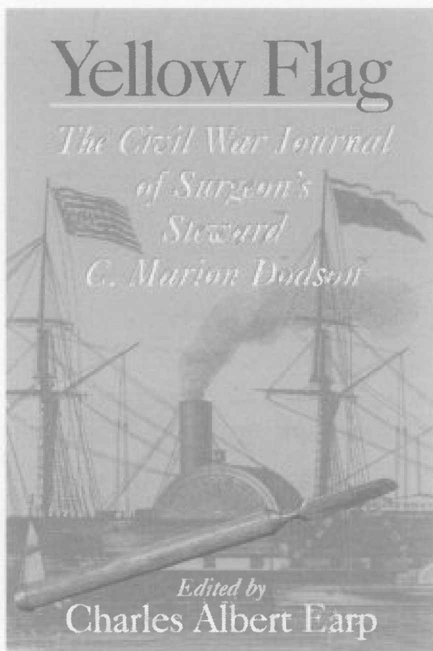
Diane Batts Morrow on Thursday, November 7, at 7 P.M., for an introduction to the Oblate Sisters of Providence. Founded in Baltimore in 1828 with a mission of educating black children, the Oblates are still a vibrant community in our city. Following the talk, Professor Morrow will sign copies of her book, *The Oblate Sisters: America's First Black Catholic Sisterhood.* The event is free; reservations not required.

New! From the Press at the MHS!

# YELLOW FLAG

## *The Civil War Journal of Surgeon's Steward C. Marion Dodson*

EDITED BY CHARLES ALBERT EARP




In March 1864, C. Marion Dodson left his comfortable home on Maryland's Eastern Shore to enlist in the U.S. Navy as a pharmacist. Barely weeks after joining a Union fleet on blackade in the Gulf of Mexico, another ship in the squadron raised the "yellow flag" — the signal that yellow fever had stricken its crew. they desperately needed medical attention, his captain told Dodson. Someone had to go aboard and wager his life against the odds . . .

Discovered in the manuscript collections of the Maryland Historical Society, this lively journal includes accounts of Civil War medical practices, a young Marylander's encounters with a comely Rebel "belle" in New Orleans, and the explosive pursuit of the formidable Confederate ironclad *William H. Webb.*

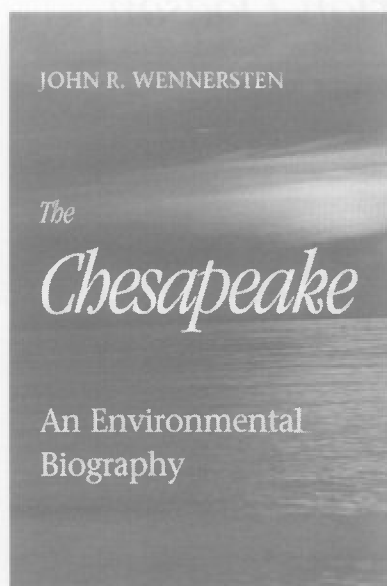
CHARLES ALBERT EARP is most recently co-author with Daniel Carroll Toomey of *Marylanders in Bue: The Artillery and the Cavalry* (1999).

6 x 9; 160 pages, illustrations (b/w)
Notes, bibliography, index
$16.00 paper ISBN 0-938420-79-8

# The Chesapeake

## An Environmental Biography

## JOHN R. WENNERSTEN

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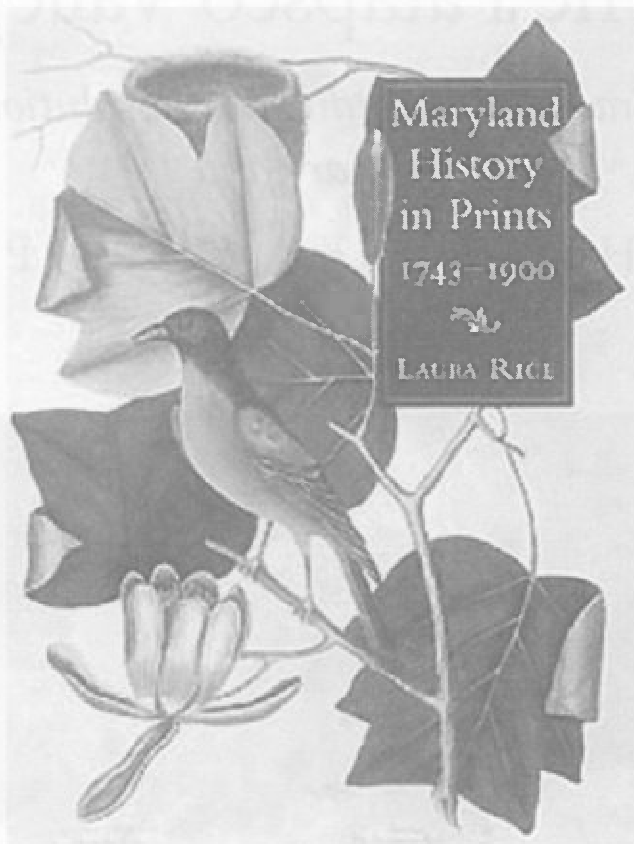


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