

The 20th & 21st Centuries

You will know you have left the 18th-century part of the State House when you cross the black band in the floor. Notice the fossils embedded in the black limestone. Once you cross that line, you are in the “new” section of the building, built between 1902–05, and called the “Annex.”

As you cross into the Annex, be sure to look up the grand staircase to see the monumental painting of *Washington Resigning His Commission* by Edwin White, painted for the Maryland General Assembly in 1858.

It is in this section of the State House that the Maryland Legislature meets for its annual 90-day Session starting on the first Wednesday in January and ending in mid-April. Both the Senate and House of Delegates Chambers feature skylights by the studio of Louis Comfort Tiffany, as well as specially selected marble that reflects the red and gold of the Maryland flag.



Verda Welcome

in 2020; Welcome was the first African American woman to become a Maryland state senator, and Miller was the longest-serving state Senate president.

The House of Delegates Chamber

The portraits in this chamber are of former speakers of the House, arranged in chronological order, beginning at the right front. The two most recent speakers featured are Michael E. Busch and Casper R. Taylor, Jr.; their portraits are to the right and left of the rostrum.

The 21st-century interpretation of the State House takes place every day as the governor, lt. governor, speaker of the House and president of the Senate, all of whom have their offices in the building, carry out the business of governing Maryland.

The Senate Chamber

This chamber features portraits of Maryland’s four signers of the Declaration of Independence: Charles Carroll of Carrollton by Thomas Sully and Samuel Chase, William Paca, and Thomas Stone, all by John Beale Bordley. Portraits of Verda Welcome and Thomas V. “Mike” Miller were added to the chamber

The Maryland State House Four Hundred Years of History

The Maryland State House was the first peacetime capitol of the United States and is the only state house ever to have served as the nation’s capitol. Congress met in the Old Senate Chamber from November 26, 1783 to August 13, 1784. During that time, General George Washington came before Congress to resign his commission as commander-in-chief of the Continental Army and the Treaty of Paris was ratified, marking the official end of the Revolutionary War. In May 1784, Congress appointed Thomas Jefferson minister plenipotentiary to France, the first diplomatic appointment by the new nation.

The State House and its grounds embody four hundred years of Maryland and early American history.

17th Century: The Old Treasury Building on the State House grounds, now closed to the public for restoration work, was built in 1735 and is the oldest public building in Annapolis. When reopened, it will feature exhibits relating to the founding of Maryland in 1634 and its first capital at St. Mary’s City.

18th Century: Three rooms within the State House, especially the Old Senate Chamber, are devoted to the important national events that took place in the State House at the end of the Revolutionary War.

19th Century: The recreated Old House of Delegates Chamber interprets the important events that took place in the 19th century, generally organized around the theme of the expansion of rights.

20th and 21st Centuries: This period is represented in the 1905 annex to the building which houses the Senate and House of Delegates Chambers.

The Maryland State House was designated a National Historic Landmark by the Department of the Interior in 1960, on the same day as Mount Vernon and Monticello.

To learn more about the State House, order:

*The Maryland State House:
250 Years of History*, by M.S. Calver

<https://msa.maryland.gov/msa/homepage/html/bookstore.html>
or on Amazon

Maryland State House Facts

- ◆ Capitol of the United States, November 1783–August 1784
- ◆ America’s first peacetime capitol
- ◆ Oldest state house in America still in continuous legislative use
- ◆ Declared a National Historic Landmark in 1960, the first state house in the nation so designated

18th Century Building

Date of construction: 1772–79
Architect: Joseph Horatio Anderson
Builder: Charles Wallace

Dome

Date of construction: 1785–94
Architect: Joseph Clark
Largest wooden dome of its kind in North America

State House Annex

Date of construction: 1902–05
Architect: Baldwin and Pennington

Basic Facts

Square footage: 120,900 square feet
Height of dome, exterior to weather vane: 181 feet
Height of dome, interior: 113 feet

Visiting the State House

The State House is open every day from 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m., except Christmas and New Year’s Day. To help make your visit to the Maryland State House more enjoyable, and to provide you with an understanding of its rich and historic past, self-guided tour information is available in the Archives Room on the first floor. For information about the Maryland General Assembly’s educational programs, visit the Department of Legislative Services website <http://dls.maryland.gov/library/educational-tours>. Curatorial tours *for groups of 10 or more* may be arranged in advance by calling the Maryland State Archives at 410-260-6418.

Please note that security measures are in place at the State House and other state buildings. Picture ID is required for entrance and metal detectors are in operation.

The Office of Interpretation is a program of the Maryland State Archives. Donations to support the interpretation of the building are appreciated and may be made to The Friends of the Maryland State Archives. To learn more about the Maryland State House and its history and artwork, please visit our website at statehouse.md.gov



Welcome
to the
Maryland State House

A Self-Guided Tour for Visitors

Courtesy of the Office of Interpretation
A Program of the Maryland State Archives

The 18th Century State House

The best place to begin your tour is by the Archives Room where you will find brochures and other information. This room also features exhibits about the building and State Circle and their evolution over the centuries. In 1858, this room was made fireproof, including the brick floor, to store and preserve the state's records.

The Rotunda

The rotunda is the space below the dome and is the center of the 18th-century State House, built between 1772–79. The dome was added to the building between 1785–94 and is the largest wooden dome in North America. It was built entirely without nails.



Under the dome is the case displaying George Washington's personal copy of the speech he gave resigning his commission as commander-in-chief of the Continental Army in the Old Senate Chamber on December 23, 1783. Considered by historians to be the fourth most important document in American history, Washington's resignation from power set the important precedent of the military being under

civilian authority. For much more information on this important event, visit the exhibits in the adjoining rooms.

The Old Senate Chamber

The Old Senate Chamber has been restored to its original appearance when the United States Congress met here from November 1783 – August 1784. On December 23, 1783, General George Washington came before Congress to resign his commission as commander-in-chief of the Continental Army. Just three weeks later, on January 14, 1784, Congress ratified the Treaty of Paris, officially ending the Revolutionary War, thus making Annapolis the new nation's first peacetime capital.

The arrangement of the furniture reflects the way the room looked on December 23, 1783 according to carefully researched protocols for important Congressional events in the late 18th century. Washington is shown facing the dais



The Old Senate Chamber with bronze statues of George Washington and Molly Ridout

where the president of Congress, Thomas Mifflin, would have been seated. Above Washington is Molly Ridout, watching from the gallery as women were not then allowed to be present on the Senate floor. Her surviving first-hand account informs our understanding of the ceremony.

The Senate Committee and Stairwell Rooms

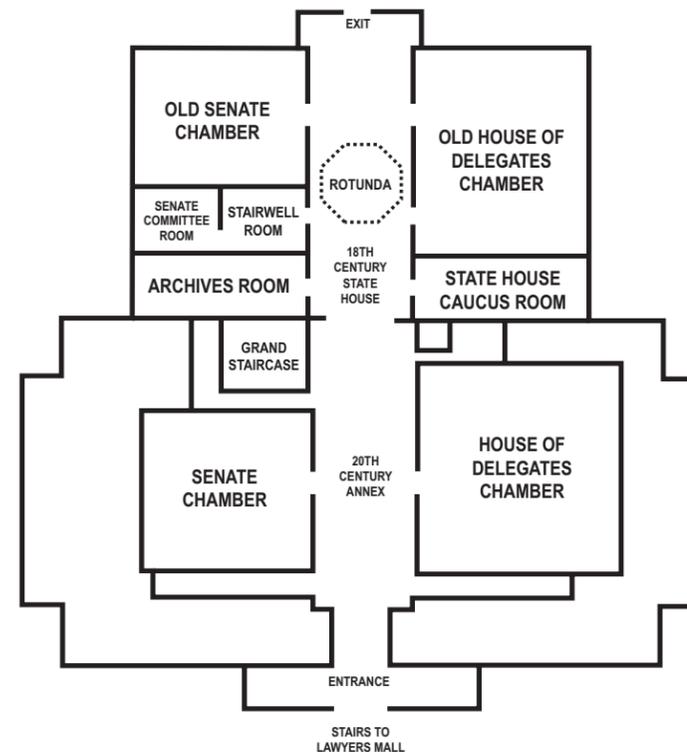
In these two rooms, visitors will find interactive exhibits interpreting the events that took place during the time that Congress met in Annapolis in 1783–84, as well as information about Annapolis in the 18th century and the men and women who played important roles in these events.

Two very important historical portraits are featured in these three spaces: *William Pitt* over the fireplace in the Old Senate Chamber and *Washington, Lafayette and Tilghman at Yorktown* in the Committee Room. Both were painted by renowned Maryland artist Charles Willson Peale and have hung in the State House since the 18th century.



The Senate Committee Room

Plan of the First Floor of the Maryland State House



The Calverts: The Lords Baltimore of the Colony of Maryland

In the rotunda and on the grand staircase are 17th and 18th-century full-length portraits of the Calverts. These portraits portray an entire dynasty of colonial proprietors, the Barons (or Lords) of Baltimore, and bring to life the earliest history of Maryland. The family owned the Colony of Maryland under a charter that conveyed one of the most extensive grants of powers conceded by the crown of England during America's period of colonization. Its proprietary rule ended with the American Revolution in 1776.

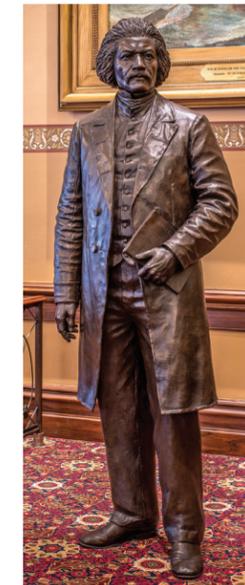


The Second Lord Baltimore Cecilius (Cecil) Calvert

The 19th Century & The Expansion of Rights in Maryland

The Old House of Delegates Chamber

Across the hall from the Old Senate Chamber is the Old House of Delegates Chamber which has been returned to its late 19th-century appearance.



Frederick Douglass



Harriet Tubman

Two historical paintings in this chamber were painted in the 1890s by Francis Blackwell Mayer: *The Planting of the Colony of Maryland*, showing the first colonists celebrating their safe arrival in Maryland in 1634 by planting a cross on St. Clement's Island, and *The Burning of the Peggy Stewart*, which depicts the protest by patriots of the importation of tea in 1774. The large portrait is of Thomas Holliday Hicks, governor from 1858–62.

Interpretation of this room focuses on the expansion of rights in Maryland in the 19th century, including the right for Jews to hold public office, the abolition of slavery in Maryland, and the writing of the state Constitution of 1867 that is still in effect today. Bronze figures of Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass were dedicated in 2020. Both were born on Maryland's Eastern Shore and devoted their lives to securing freedom for those who were enslaved.

The State House Caucus Room

Next to the Old House of Delegates Chamber is the State House Caucus Room that features a display of the USS *Maryland* silver service. This beautiful silver set, made by Samuel Kirk & Sons of Baltimore, was partially paid for by money raised by Maryland school children for the cruiser USS *Maryland* in 1906.