

The Maryland State House

Four Centuries 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 to France, the first diplomatic appointment by the new nation.

The State House is a treasure trove of four centuries 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 newly recreated 19th century 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 and where the business of governing the state is carried out every day.

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. It was the first state house to win such designation.

Governor Larry J. Hogan

Lt. Governor Boyd K. Rutherford

President of the Senate Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr.

Speaker of the House of Delegates Michael E. Busch

The 20th & 21st Centuries

As you cross into the newer, 20th century part of the State House, be sure to look up the grand staircase at the monumental painting of *Washington Resigning His Commission* by Edwin White, painted for the Maryland General Assembly in 1858.

You will know you have left the 18th century part of the State House when you cross the black line 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 – 1905, often called the "Annex." It is in this section of the State House that the Maryland Senate and House of Delegates meet for their annual 90-day Session between early January and 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 black and gold of the Maryland flag.



The Senate Chamber

This chamber features portraits of Maryland's four signers of the Declaration of Independence, from left to right going around the room: William Paca, Thomas Stone, and Samuel Chase by John Beale Bordley, and Charles Carroll of Carrollton by Thomas Sully.

Charles Carroll of Carrollton by Thomas Sully, 1833

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 Casper R. Taylor, Jr. and R. Clayton Mitchell, 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.

Maryland State House Facts

- ◆ Capitol of the United States, November 1783 – August 1784
- ◆ America's first peacetime capitol
- ◆ Oldest state house in America in continuous legislative use
- ◆ Declared a National Historic Landmark in 1960, the first state house in the nation to win such designation

18th Century Building

Date of construction: 1772–1779
Architect: Joseph Horatio Anderson
Builder: Charles Wallace

Dome

Date of construction: 1785–1794
Architect: Joseph Clark
Largest wooden dome of its kind in North America

State House Annex

Date of construction: 1902–1905
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

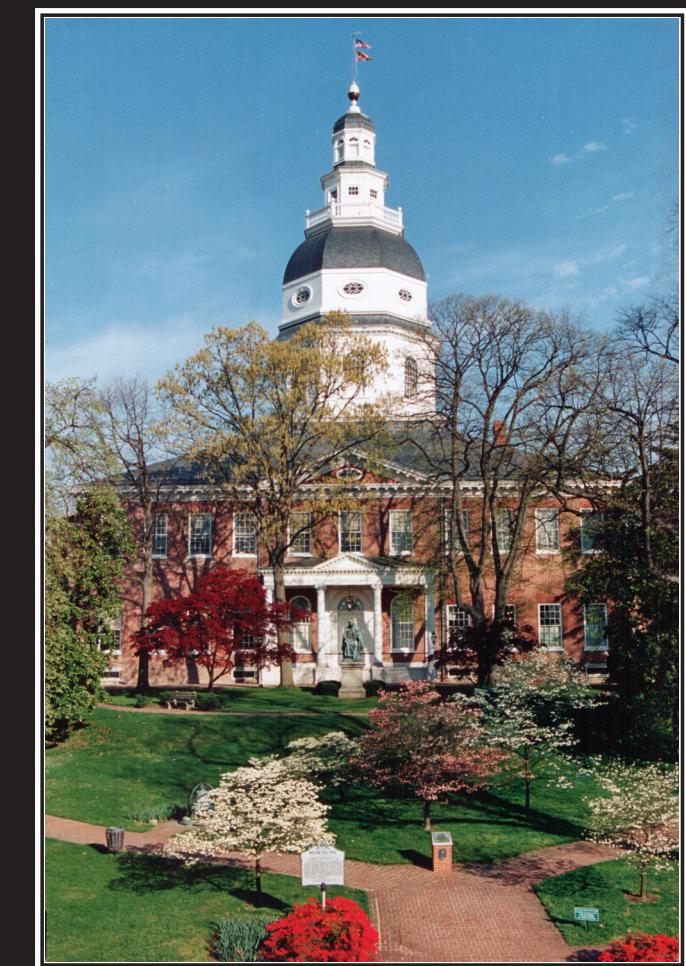
The State House is open every day from 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., except Christmas and New Years Day. To help make your visit to the Maryland State House more enjoyable, and to provide you with an understanding of its rich and historic past, self-guided tour information is available in the Archives Room on the first floor. For information about the Maryland General Assembly's educational programs, which might include a State House tour, see: <http://dls.state.md.us> and click on "Visit Us" or call the Department of Legislative Services Visitors Program Coordinator at 410-946-5400, 301-970-5400 or 1-800-492-7122 ext 5400.

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 welcome. To learn more about the Maryland State House and its history and artwork, please visit our web site 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*

May 2017

The 18th Century State House

The best place to begin your tour is in 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 under the dome and is the center of the 18th century State House, built between 1772–1779. The dome was added to the building between 1785–1794 and is the largest wooden dome in North America. It was built entirely without nails.



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

The Portraits of the Lords Baltimore

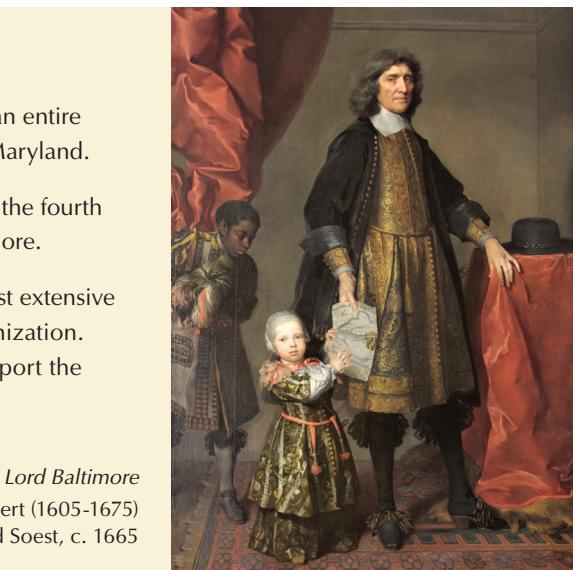
The six full-length portraits of the Calverts in the rotunda and the grand staircase portray an entire dynasty of colonial proprietors, the Lords Baltimore, and bring to life the early history of Maryland.

In the rotunda are George, Cecil, Charles, and Benedict Leonard Calvert, the first through the fourth Lords Baltimore. In the staircase are Charles and Frederick, the fifth and sixth Lords Baltimore.

The Calverts owned the colony of Maryland under a charter that conveyed one of the most extensive grants of power conceded by the crown of England during the period of American colonization. The proprietary rule of the Lords Baltimore ended with the decision by Maryland to support the American Revolution in 1776.

These portraits are on loan from the Enoch Pratt Free Library.

The Second Lord Baltimore
Cecilus (Cecil) Calvert (1605-1675)
Gerard Soest, c. 1665



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 where the president of Congress, Thomas Mifflin, would have been seated. Above Washington is the figure of Molly Ridout, watching from the "Ladies Balcony," as women were not allowed to be present on the Senate floor at that time.

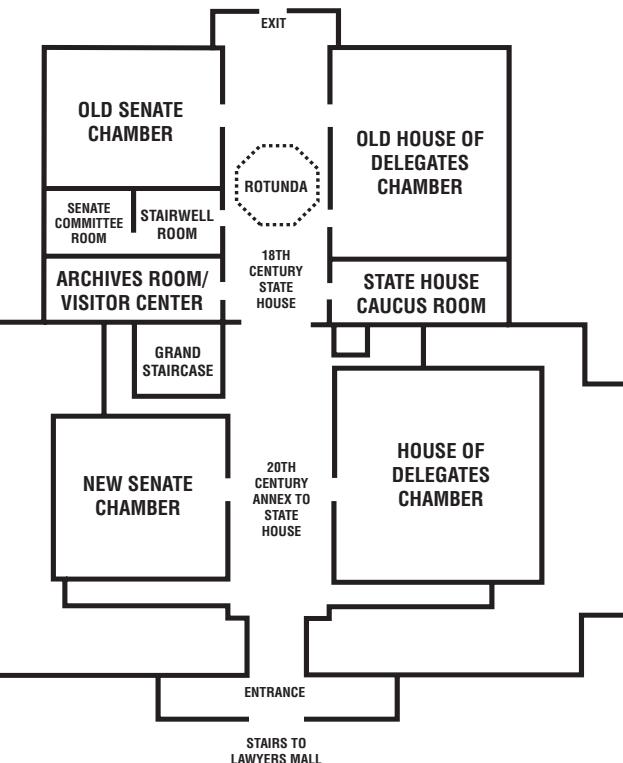


The newly restored Old Senate Chamber with statues of George Washington and Molly Ridout

The Old Senate Chamber

The Old Senate Chamber has recently been restored to its 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.

Plan of the First Floor of the Maryland State House



The Senate Committee and Stairwell Rooms

In these two rooms interactive exhibits interpret the events that took place during the time that Congress met in Annapolis in 1783 – 1784, as well as information about Annapolis in the 18th century and the men and women who played important roles in these events.



Senate Committee Room

Two very important historical portraits hang in these spaces: *William Pitt* 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 been in the State House since the 18th century.

The 19th Century

The Old House of Delegates Chamber

Across the hall from the Old Senate Chamber is the Old House of Delegates Chamber which has recently been returned to its 19th century appearance. The recreation of this space was guided by photographs and documents found at the Maryland State Archives.



The Old House of Delegates Chamber, c. 1880

Two monumental paintings in this chamber were painted in the 19th century 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 Annapolitans of the importation of tea in 1774. The large portrait is of Thomas Holliday Hicks, governor from 1858–1862.

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.

The State House Caucus Room

The USS Maryland Silver Service

The monumental forty-eight piece silver service was commissioned by Governor Edwin Warfield for the cruiser *USS Maryland* from Samuel Kirk & Sons in 1904. Maryland school children helped raise \$5,000 to pay for this service which was completed in 1906. It is on permanent loan from the U.S. Navy to the state of Maryland.

Paintings from the state's collection displayed here include portraits of nine Maryland governors and landscapes capturing the beauty of the state. Three armchairs are from the 1840s Old Senate Chamber and other furniture is on loan from the Maryland Historical Society. This room has served a variety of purposes including the Flag Room where the state's collection of Civil War battle flags was displayed in the early years of the twentieth century.