

MONUMENT SQUARE
(Government Square
Courthouse Square)
North Calvert Street between Fayette & Lexington Streets
Baltimore
Maryland

HABS No. MD-1126

HABS
MD-1126

PHOTOGRAPHS

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

MONUMENT SQUARE (Government Square) (Courthouse Square)

HABS No. MD-1126

Location: North Calvert Street between East Lexington and East Fayette Streets, Baltimore, Maryland, 21202; UTM coordinates: 18.360929.4350060

Present Owner: City of Baltimore

Present Use: Public square

Significance: Monument Square is the site of the first of the Baltimore monuments that led President John Quincy Adams, in 1827, to refer to the city as “the Monumental City,” a nickname that is still in use. Maximilian Godefroy’s Battle Monument (1815-25) at the center of the square is believed to be the first military monument commemorating the soldiers, rather than the heroes or officers, associated with a battle (in this case, the 1813 Battle of North Point during the War of 1812).

The Battle Monument stands on the site of Baltimore’s first courthouse (1768), and the two succeeding courthouse structures have been erected on the square in deference to this historic location, at the heart of the original 64-acre chartered tract of the city. Throughout the nineteenth century, the square housed prominent citizens, and its hotels hosted prominent visitors. The present courthouse and 1889-94 Equitable Building (southwest corner of Calvert and Fayette) mark the northern boundary of the Great 1904 Fire that destroyed most of Baltimore’s commercial district and, indeed, neighboring buildings adjacent to them on the square.

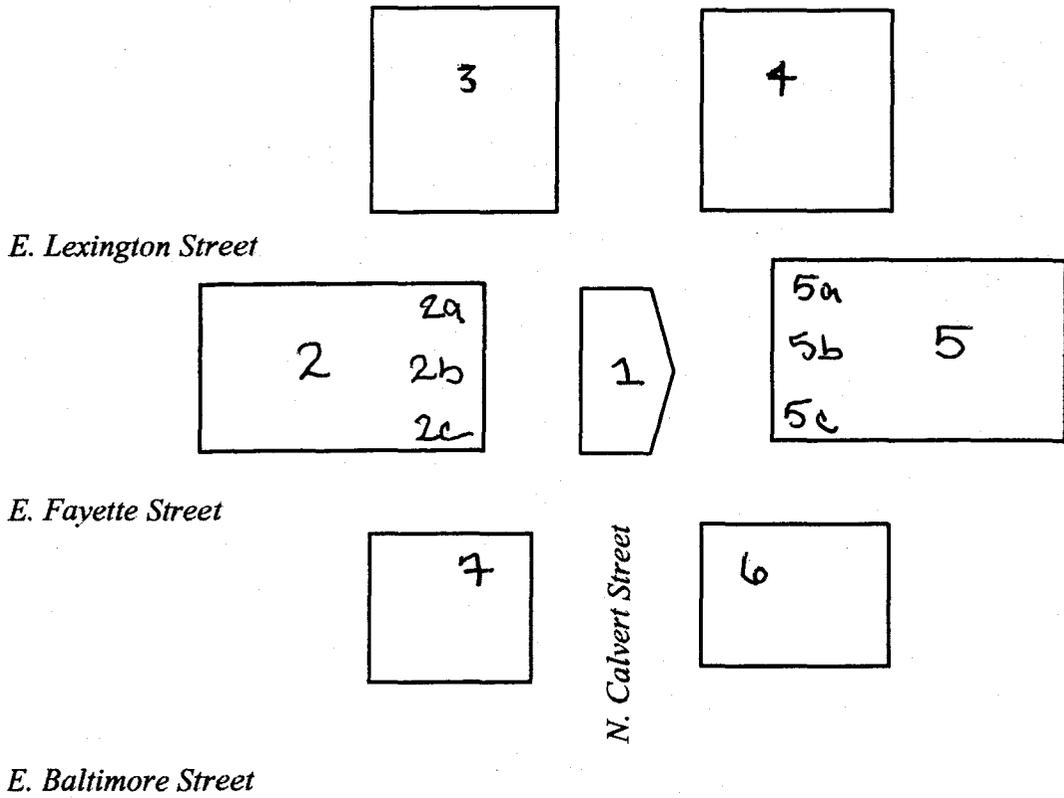
By the early twentieth century, the erection of the Federal Reserve and central Post Office on the square cemented the site’s institutional identity. Sculptor James E. Lewis’s Black Soldier Memorial Sculpture (1985) stands to the immediate north of the 1815 Battle Monument, thereby updating and reinforcing the civic significance of the monument and its square.

Historian: Laurie Ossman, Ph.D., Summer 2001

MONUMENT SQUARE
(HABS No. MD-1126; page 2)

Building sites on the square have been assigned numbers, as follows, for ease of reference.

Map of Sites Referenced in Text (map not to scale)



PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

For the purpose of clarity and organization, the history of Monument Square has been divided into four chronological periods:

- A. The Eighteenth Century
- B. Early Nineteenth Century, 1800-1850
- C. Late Nineteenth Century, 1851-1900
- D. Twentieth Century

A. The Eighteenth Century

1. Topography

In January 1730, when the city grid of Baltimore was superimposed over the initial 60 acres of land chartered to the Baltimore Company by the Maryland State legislature the previous year, the topography was virtually unrecognizable from what is seen today. The area now occupied by Monument Square was a dramatic bluff overlooking a horseshoe curve in the Jones Falls. The site lay several blocks to the north of the focal point of the grid, the intersection of Baltimore Street (running east from a bridge over the falls to as far west as the current Park Avenue) and Calvert Street (which ran from the harbor front, which fell along the line of Water Street, north to the bend in the falls approximately at Lexington Street). Within three days of the original offering of lots in 1730, all waterfront property had been purchased for private piers and only Calvert Street linked inland lots directly to the waterfront for general public use.

In 1768 the Baltimore County jail, court and land records offices were moved into Baltimore Town from Joppa Town in the north. The site chosen within Baltimore for the new civic building was the northern terminus of Calvert Street, the present Monument Square. The falls made the river largely un-navigable at this point, but the elevation made the air salubrious, and there may well have been symbolic significance in the location at the top of the hill overlooking the only public access route to the all-important harbor front.

The sole engraving of this first structure indicates that this area of the town had remained largely unsettled and topographically unaltered at mid-century. A tunnel running beneath the square from Site 3 to Site 5, crossing slightly under the median in Calvert Street, appears to follow the approximate line of the original bluff, as it appeared in the eighteenth century, overlooking the Jones Falls. Its rusticity is attested to by the account of Robert Gilmore, who stated that the falls basin at the corner of Calvert and Lexington was a popular swimming place and “so deep that once a man was drowned

here.”¹

The drama of the site is indicated by a contemporary’s description: “The courthouse stood on a hill sixty or a hundred feet above the level of the basin and about thirty or forty feet above the level of the present [1874] pavements.”²

Although precise measurements are impossible based on one sole image, it would seem that the description is somewhat exaggerated, and that the building likely loomed forty feet above the basin and perhaps twenty above the 1874 pavement level. This would fit with accounts that state the 1780s regrading lopped twenty feet off the rise and twenty still remained. Nonetheless, the account conveys the natural drama of the site in the mid eighteenth century.

By the 1780s, population increases led to geographical expansion. Streets were widened, and Calvert Street was extended northward from the current Lexington Street to Chase Street. A series of ambitious and sometimes ridiculous engineering projects to extend the city grid beyond the natural boundary of the falls led, by 1783, to the raising of the courthouse on piers so that Calvert Street actually ran through the building.³ The approach to the courthouse was re-graded, leaving, “a row of houses like scraggly soldiers stepping down Calvert Street.”⁴ The only vestige of this landscape today is the perceptible rise in grade from the southern end of Calvert Street to the square.

Throughout the 1780s and 1790s, reclamation and infill projects, intended to enable settlement to expand northward along Calvert Street, rerouted the Jones Falls so that, by the nineteenth century, its course no longer bore any relation to the square or to its own natural lineaments.⁵

2. Historical Context

Monument Square stands near the southwest corner of a 510-acre property that was deeded by a series of crown warrants to Thomas Cole in 1668. In 1698 the property passed to James Todd who, in 1701, sold the property to Charles Carroll. This Charles

¹ J. Thomas Scharf, A History of Baltimore City and County (1874. Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1881): I, 60.

²Robert Gilmor, as quoted in Scharf I, 61.

³Olson, 20. Olson notes that Leonard Harbaugh is credited with this feat of architectural levitation.

⁴John Pendleton Kennedy, as cited in Edward Spencer, Celebration of the 150th Anniversary of the Settlement of Baltimore (Baltimore, 1880). Also cited in Olson, 20.

⁵Olson, 20 notes that the filling in of the falls in this area led to disputes over the ownership of the newly created land that resulted.

MONUMENT SQUARE
(HABS No. MD-1126; page 5)

Carroll, with his brother Daniel, in 1729 petitioned the Maryland Assembly for the right to sell 60 one-acre lots within this land by subscription through a privately-held development corporation called the Baltimore Company. Noting that a John Flemming was likely the only occupant of the land at the time, Governor Calvert signed the agreement allowing the laying out of a town in the midst of Cole's Harbor in August 1729.⁶

About 1730, the inhabitants of Baltimore erected a wooden stockade around the original 60-acre charter. It was built and maintained by prominent property owners by subscription and, as it faced landward, appears to have been erected to discourage Native American incursions.⁷ Perhaps because no raid was attempted against the settlement, within a few years the wooden fence was plundered for firewood during a particularly harsh winter.⁸ The future location of the courthouse, on its high bluff and well within the perimeter stockade, may well have been recognized as one of the most secure spots within the settlement.

By 1752, the village still counted only twenty-five houses, one church and two taverns.⁹ But waves of immigrants and successful trade led to the passage, in 1768, of a bill removing the county courthouse and jail from Joppa Town (to the north) to within the town limits of Baltimore. The act specified the site at the northern terminus of Calvert Street.

When, in 1784, the building was raised to allow Calvert Street to proceed northward, the open passageway underneath the building was, "supplied with stocks, pillory, and whipping-post,"¹⁰ in a brutal and literal display of authority. The proximity of the powder-house (seen in the foreground of the engraving) reinforces the notion that the law of the land can and will be defended with force.

Gradual annexation of additional lots of land led, in 1796, to the official incorporation of Baltimore as a town (as opposed to a village or speculative settlement). This sign of official recognition elevated the status of the town, its citizens and, by association, its institutions. Within a decade the elevated courthouse was replaced by a structure that was less novel, but perhaps more in keeping with the dignity and striving

⁶ Scharf I, 48-51, goes into a great deal of detail about the property.

⁷ Scharf I, 37 n. 1, lists the subscribers and defines the layout of the enclosure. Maryland Historical Society maintains four logs in its collections that purport to be remnants of this original stockade (MHS #50.123.16).

⁸ Scharf I, 37.

⁹ Scharf I, 57. An engraving by Moale from 1752 depicts the settlement from the harbor front perspective.

¹⁰ Scharf I, 61.

for gentility that characterized the new town of Baltimore at the turn of the nineteenth century.

3. Architectural Information

The first known man-made structure to define the site of Monument Square was the wooden stockade erected by the first villagers around 1730. Although the barricade did not pass through the site of the square, the fence defined the square as part of the civic precinct, as opposed to “everything else” that lay beyond the manufactured grid and fence of the settlement area.

In 1752, the village contained 25 houses, one church, and two taverns, serving a population of perhaps 200 inhabitants. A directory was published that year, but generally only male heads of household are listed. Still, the creation of a directory suggests that the town had grown to a size where people no longer assumed they would automatically know all their neighbors. Most of the structures were wooden, although there is some indication of the use of brick for large homes and some businesses as well.

In 1776, the town passed an ordinance outlawing new wooden construction (except for shingled roofs). The population at this time had grown to 6,000. By 1784, it had doubled to 12,000, mostly Northern European immigrants. By 1800, the population had reached 30,000. In less than 50 years, Baltimore grew from 25 buildings, nearly all wood-frame construction, to perhaps 6,000 buildings, largely built of brick.¹¹

By 1755, construction had already begun of a brick building on Site 2c, the northwest corner of what was then called East Street (now Fayette) and North Calvert. Supposedly the building began construction with the understanding that it was to be a church. The unfinished building is known to have passed to Edward Fottrell, who used it as a residence prior to 1755. Fottrell is reputed to have sheltered Acadian immigrants (the founders of the area known later as “Frenchtown”) who were in exile from Nova Scotia in this unfinished home in 1755.¹² Fottrell is recorded as having left his dwelling house on this site unfinished to return to his native Ireland, where he died around 1756. In any case, the evidence indicates that the Fottrell-Johnson house was the first structure begun on the site of Monument Square. Circumstance and speculation suggest that the building may have begun as a Catholic Church, but due to the eruption of vehement anti-Catholic

¹¹ Olson, 7-10.

¹² Emily Emerson Lantz, “Do You Know the Street On Which You Live?” Baltimore Sun 4 December 1955 conveys some of this story and identifies the Fottrell house as the one later known as the Reverdy Johnson house. Still, she puts the Acadian refugees in Fottrell’s unfinished house in 1756, after his return to Ireland. Scharf I 59, who places the Acadian exodus in 1755, states that Fottrell (presumably in person) provided shelter for them at his home, although he does not specify the structure.

MONUMENT SQUARE
(HABS No. MD-1126; page 7)

sentiment during the French and Indian War (1752-9)¹³, the Irish Catholic Fottrell took over the property for residential use and, eventually, as an *ad hoc* shelter for the Acadian Catholic refugees in 1755. This theory of anti-Catholicism would suggest the building was begun prior to the French and Indian War (perhaps 1751) and would also explain why Fottrell (who apparently had enough money to acquire such property) abandoned the place and returned to Ireland soon after the Acadian refugee incident. The structure (later known as the Reverdy Johnson house, and discussed as such in the section on the early nineteenth century) stood until it was demolished for the present courthouse building in 1895.

Thus the 1768 courthouse and jail building was, in fact, not the first building on Monument Square. The Courthouse appears, from the sole surviving image (dated 1784), to have been a standard Georgian institutional building, of brick, on a T-shaped plan.

In 1851, civic leader John P. Kennedy recalled the courthouse:

When it was first built it overlooked the town from a summit of the hill some fifty feet or more above the level of the present street, and stood upon a cliff which, northward, was washed at the base by the Jones Falls—in that primitive day a pretty rural stream that meandered through meadows garnished with shrubbery and filled with browsing cattle, making a pleasant landscape from the courthouse windows. ... This was a famous building, this old Court House, which to my first cognizance, suggested the idea of a house perched on a great stand [apparently Kennedy recalls the building after its ‘elevation’ in 1784]. It was a large, dingy square structure of brick, elevated upon a massive basement of stone, which was perforated by a broad arch. The buttresses on either side of the arch supplied space for a stairway that led to the halls of Justice above, and straddled over a pillory, whipping posts and stocks, which were sheltered under the arch as symbols of the power that was at work above.¹⁴

The building’s short axis (the south and north fronts) was three bays wide; the east and west elevations, as illustrated, were four bays in length.¹⁵ The northern two bays project

¹³ Olson, 11

¹⁴ John P. Kennedy, “Address to the Maryland Institute,” 1851, as quoted in Michael S. Greene, “History of the Clarence M. Mitchell Courthouse,” *Celebrating a Century of Service* (Baltimore: Centennial Committee, 2000): 2. Some of Scharf’s information appears to derive from Kennedy’s account.

¹⁵ The caveat “as illustrated” is inserted because it seems possible that the building, in fact, was five bays in length. This would allow the central tower to appear centered when viewed from the side and would preserve a semblance of symmetry to the east and west facades. While not impossible, asymmetry would be an unusual choice for the

MONUMENT SQUARE
(HABS No. MD-1126; page 8)

slightly to the east and west, creating the crossing bar to the T-shaped plan. The building appears to have end chimneys and a Greek cross-shaped ornament is indicated in the north gable pediment. Although scantily documented, the use of this wide northern room may be surmised to have been the courtroom: its axiality, size and the apparent use of an a-b-a fenestration pattern on the rear (north) wall would all fit with traditional, basilica-derived formal usage. The un-punctured basement walls may have originally served as the jail. Whether this use was retained after the passage under the building was created in 1784 is unclear; however, the use of the term “through” rather than “underneath” the building indicates that some function existed adjacent to the pedestrian area. Given the account of stocks and pillories in this area, it seems possible that some jail cells remained in the basement throughout the building’s existence. Furthermore, the second courthouse (built 1805) initially had jail cells in the basement, suggesting that this space allocation was traditional usage.¹⁶

The center of the roof of the 1768 courthouse is marked by a spire, which would have added visibility to the building, enhancing its already-elevated siting. This indicates the importance of the structure and its institutions in the early years of settlement. Clearly, its patrons and designers wanted the representation of the presence of the law to be the most prominent architectural feature of the village.

In the foreground of the image of the courthouse, a small, shoreline structure is pictured. Scharf identifies it as the “powder-house,” presumably used to store the town’s supply of gunpowder safely away from accidental sources of ignition. The conjunction of the two structures illustrates the conjunction of the rule of law and the physical defense of it. Robert Gilmore Jr.’s recollection of the powder-house from his childhood indicates that the building may have dated from the Revolutionary War. To the far left of the image, there appears a mill building with a waterwheel on the north side and a feeder chute on the south side. It appears to adjoin two smaller storage structures. This structure group, most certainly out of scale, seems intended to represent the importance of the city’s waterfront industry. Thus the image of 1784 diagrammatically depicts the city in terms of the rule of law (the courthouse) at its center, with the powder house at its feet (martial force) and an axis linking it to the water-side mill structure (the commercial economy). Curiously, the Fottrell building does not appear.

In scale, materials and siting, the Courthouse of 1768 was Baltimore’s first civic landmark. That precedent of use would be retained throughout the enormous changes and expansion of the nineteenth and twentieth century city.

period and style, especially for a public building of primary civic importance. The engraving appears to hint at openings in a central (fifth bay) but they are not shaded as dark as the true, open bays. Perhaps the fifth, center, bay featured blind openings.

¹⁶ Scharf I, 60-1; in addition, Olson, 20, notes that visitors commented upon the passage “through” the building. Olson, 64 notes the 1812 construction of a jail to replace the one in the courthouse cellar.

MONUMENT SQUARE
(HABS No. MD-1126; page 9)

a. General statement: Monument Square achieved its specific status as a locus of authority in 1768, when the county courthouse and jail building was built on the site.

b. Specific structures: None remaining from this period.

4. Site

a. Historic landscape design: None known.

b. Paving, grading, transportation patterns: As noted above, Calvert Street was laid out in 1730, graded and extended northward in 1784. At that time Lexington Street was realized (as more than a cliffside path) as a street. All were packed dirt, without sidewalks. What is now known as Fayette Street was known as East Street in this area until 1784. This was fitting, as what are now the eastern parts of the city beyond President Street were not yet part of Baltimore Town and Fells Point was a separately chartered settlement. The street name was changed to commemorate The Marquis de Lafayette's visit to the city in 1784. Western parts of East Fayette Street were also known as Pitt, Chatham and Wapping Street. Some accounts state that, at the earliest period, the street was called Governor Tammany.¹⁷ Presumably, that name did not survive the Revolutionary War.

5. Early Views, Maps & Supplemental Material

"View of Courthouse in 1784"¹⁸

"Map of the Tracts of Land Included Within the Present Limits of Baltimore"¹⁹

"Map of Baltimore Town, 1729, drawn from the original." Collection, Maryland Historical Society. Digital Image cat. # Z24.01282

"View of Baltimore, 1752" (1851 engraving by Hoen after 1752 drawing by John Moale. Hoen original in color). Collection, Maryland Historical Society

Detail, Folie's "Plan of Baltimore in 1792," showing downtown area. Collection Maryland Historical Society. Digital image cat. #: Z24.2215

B. Early Nineteenth Century, 1800-1850

¹⁷ Lantz, np, col.1.

¹⁸ Reproduced widely from an engraving in the collection of the Maryland Historical Society attributed to Maximilian Godefroy in 1810. Scharf II, 61; also Celebrating a Century of Service: The Clarence M. Mitchell Courthouse (City of Baltimore, 2000): 3; Carleton Jones, Lost Baltimore Landmarks (Baltimore: Maclay and Associates, 1982): 11.

¹⁹ Scharf I, 49

1. Topography

A series of epidemics made the increasing population of the city seek residential lots in areas of high elevation, where the air circulated more freely. The bluff surrounding the courthouse had this advantage, as well as access to running fresh water from the Jones Falls. Bridges made the area more accessible from the East and Fell's Point, while the extension of the Fayette Street created a direct overland route to the western areas, such as Mount Vernon and Bolton Hill, that were growing in importance. As marshland areas were continually infilled to produce more dock sites, and more buildings, increasingly commercial in use and scale, crowded the streets to the south of the square, the visual relationship of Monument Square to the waterfront began to dissolve. By the time Poppleton published his city view in 1823, the Jones Falls had been cut off at Center Street (which probably contributed to flooding problems throughout the next century). Still, in 1816, the square was re-graded again to elevate the Battle Monument above the city. By this time, all of the city could see the square because of the four-story monument to its soldier citizens, but the square, essentially, could no longer see the city.

2. Historical Context

Between 1800 and 1816, the population of Baltimore doubled again, to reach 60,000. This partly explains the building boom that occurred, especially in the years 1810-16. More than simple need, however, the building boom of this period reflects the increasing social stratification of Baltimore and the desire of its elite to express their status and sophistication through the accouterments of culture, including architecture. In this period, Rembrandt Peale founded a museum; the 1796 Holliday Street Theatre hosted some of the international stage's greatest stars; the city boasted an Atheneum, a Library Association and, soon after, charities for orphans and the poor. In 1798, two blocks east of the courthouse, prominent citizens founded the Assembly Rooms, which essentially functioned as the city's first social club for the "old" landed aristocracy. All these cultural institutions' buildings had, to some degree, some reference to the Neo-Classical taste of the period's most fashionable cities, both European and American. The Courthouse, especially with its walk-through jail, was an obsolete, unsophisticated relic of the frontier town of the previous generation. Not surprisingly, in 1805, construction began for a new, more fashionable courthouse. Located to the west and slightly north of the old one (Site 2a), the new building reflected and reinforced the street grid. It was considered "an immense edifice" for its time, thereby reasserting government's status amidst all the fine new buildings of the town.²⁰ The design (attributed to G. Milleman)²¹

²⁰ Olson, 43. Olson states (p. 423, n.1) that the local weekly Niles' Register is the source for much of her information on building activity in this period.

²¹ Carleton Jones, 21. Jones' drawing does not appear to be particularly accurate representation of the building, as seen in photographs from mid-century and later.

MONUMENT SQUARE
(HABS No. MD-1126; page 11)

was surely intended to impress (and appears to have been modeled on the nearby Assembly Rooms, built 1798-1800).

Raised on a granite foundation, the building stood slightly above the surrounding street level. Pedestrians were required to ascend to it and, by association, to the dignity of the institutions within. Nine bays wide on the north side, the central three bays of the brick structure were defined by giant order Ionic pilasters with angled volutes, capped by a pediment, thereby creating a diagrammatic temple portico at the entry. Lower level windows all featured recessed, blind-arched transom panels. The end bay, facing east, used paired pilasters to define an a-b-a rhythm to the facade. The slightly wider center bay features a Serliana opening on the first level, and a three-light window on the second. The provincialism, notable in the facade's flatness and odd proportion of the order, is most apparent in the superimposition of the blind-arched brickwork over the round-headed central opening of the Serliana, as the two semi-circular elements clearly follow different arcs. The center of the roof is marked with a circular belvedere with a hemispherical domed roof. There was no entry to the courthouse on the east side.

The 1805 Courthouse faced north (over Lexington Street), not east over the square. But, until 1815 and the raising of the Battle Monument, the square did not exist except as a gap in the street grid where the old courthouse straddled Calvert Street. The 1805 courthouse, however, was oriented only toward a narrow street: it did not overlook the harbor front (even symbolically), echo the orientation of the previous structure or even face Annapolis. It appears that the building was simply fit into an existing long, narrow Calvert Street lot. In fact, the choice of site for the monument was probably at least partly pragmatic—after 1809, there was an empty wide space at the crest of Calvert Street. With the refocusing of attention on the site of the old courthouse in the center of the square by the placement of the Battle Monument in 1816, the orientation of the 1805-9 courthouse must have already appeared somewhat perverse.

By the mid-1820s, the houses near the courthouse were known as an elite residential enclave. By working backward from this period, it seems certain that many of the houses were constructed in this area just after the Courthouse was finished. The presence of elite residents may also explain why in 1812, so soon after the new Courthouse facility was completed, a separate jail in another building three blocks west was commissioned.²²

The citizen's concern for their neighborhood is attested to by the fact that, upon the demolition of the old courthouse in 1809:

[T]he property owners of that vicinity, fearing that the ground would be occupied by some unsightly building, determined to memorialize the

²² Olson, 64.

MONUMENT SQUARE
(HABS No. MD-1126; page 12)

Legislature to give them authority to raise one hundred thousand dollars for the purpose of erecting upon the spot a monument to the memory of Gen. George Washington. These memorialists consisted of John Comegys, James A. Buchanan, and David Winchester. The Legislature granted their petition, but the war with England coming on so shortly afterwards, they made no progress. In the mean time it began to be considered that such a tall and isolated column near their houses²³ would be rather dangerous, and at the close of the war they concluded that it was more desirable that the present monument [Godefroy's Battle Monument] should grace the site. The commissioners then decided to raise the [Washington] monument elsewhere.²⁴

Following the War of 1812, the commission for a monument to the soldiers who fell in the Battle of North Point made the Battle Monument Baltimore's first major civic art undertaking (the cornerstone of the Washington Monument was not set until four months later, in July 1815). The prominent citizens who lived near the courthouse saw an opportunity to not only honor their war dead, but to embellish their neighborhood with a Parisian-style sculptural column (of a safe height) as well. James Buchanan, one of the five commissioners appointed to implement the resolution to produce a monument and install it with great fanfare, lived at Site 2c, directly facing the site for Maximilian Godefroy's Neo-Classical battle column.²⁵ On March 1, 1815, a procession led by a hearse bearing a scale replica of the column deposited an array of military and civic dignitaries on the site of the 1768 courthouse in mid Calvert Street, where they placed the cornerstone for the Battle Monument. Delays in material shipments meant the column was not completed until 1817. Antonio Capellano's marble statue of the apotheosis of Baltimore was raised into place, 52 feet above the street, in September 1822. City council decided to further embellish the column by adding inscriptions, bas-reliefs and various urns and accouterments.²⁶ The entire enterprise suggests a growing sense of enmeshed civic and cultural self-consciousness: first, in commemorating the foot soldiers of the battle with a public monument of Imperial Roman ancestry; second, in the notion of a classical figure serving as apotheosis of the 75-year old city; third, in the reluctance of the commissioners to relinquish the decorative aspects of the project, even after it was technically and rhetorically complete. The colonial stockade, which was never challenged by enemy assault, was unceremoniously dismantled for firewood. Less than a century

²³ This comment by Scharf II, 265, clearly indicates that all three influential men lived on the square.

²⁴ Scharf II, 265.

²⁵ Scharf II, 267. Further research may determine whether the other commission members--Samuel Hollingsworth, Richard Frisby, Joseph Jamison and Henry Payson--lived on the square, too.

²⁶ Scharf II, 267-9, provides detailed accounts of the ceremonies and provides transcriptions of all the inscribed text on the monument.

MONUMENT SQUARE
(HABS No. MD-1126; page 13)

later, the same settlement, having survived attack, was consciously creating a heroic, monumental tradition for itself. The Battle of North Point really just provided a pretext for a neighborhood beautification scheme that was in development as early as 1809.

The genteel connotations of a Monument Square address surely prompted the building of Barnum's Hotel on Site 7 (southwest corner, Calvert and Fayette) in 1826. Visiting dignitaries such as President John Quincy Adams, celebrities such as actress Sarah Bernhardt and soprano Jenny Lind and writers such as Frances Trollope, William Makepeace Thackeray, Washington Irving and Charles Dickens were provided with state-of-the-art accommodations, overlooking a monument in a piazza, surrounded by the city's most refined persons. Residents of the square at the time of the construction of Barnum's Hotel included monument commissioner James A Buchanan; William Gilmore (brother of prominent art collector and businessman Robert Gilmore, Jr.) and Benjamin Chew Howard (son of Revolutionary War hero John Eager Howard).²⁷ [Later in the century, the Gilmore and Howard residences followed the lead of Barnum's and became hotels, too.] Structures adjacent to the square were filled with the offices of the attorneys who pled their cases and filed documents in the courthouse.²⁸

Various civic improvements in the 1820s and early 30s—such as street widening programs, major infill areas along the harbor front, bridges and railroad tracks—were intended to support commerce and increase property values.²⁹ Waves of immigrants contributed to the tension of an already dense settlement pattern in working-class areas. Economic crises in the 1830s led to unemployment, lowered wages, and, eventually, a crime wave. In the 1835 Bank Panic (under which the Jackson administration essentially wrested control of the federal monetary system from private banks), there was a rash of arson, as people either acted out their frustrations on the institutions that failed to support their jobs, called in their loans prematurely, seized their deposits and conducted secret transactions that smacked of fraud. The Bank of Maryland went in receivership in March 1834.³⁰ Monument Square's significance as both a locus of governmental authority and as an enclave of the unassailable elite is indicated by the fact that it was the site of the worst riots of 1835. In February, the courthouse was set ablaze and in August, a mob attack in the square resulted in the destruction of most of the contents of the former Buchanan house at Site 2c, then occupied by Reverdy Johnson. "The marble portico was

²⁷ The Howards (Mrs. Howard was William Gilmore's daughter) rented one of four townhouses on the east side of the square from W.W. Taylor in 1825. All information in this report on the Gilmore family courteously provided by Dr. Lance Humphries. It is unknown if Taylor owned other houses in the row or, indeed, lived in any of them himself.

²⁸ Olson, 43.

²⁹ Olson, 64-91, *passim*.

³⁰ Olson, 100, Scharf II, 785. Olson dates the riots to April, but Scharf I, who interviewed witnesses, would seem to be the more reliable source. He specifies detailed incidents occurring 6 through 9 August.

demolished and a great part of the front wall thrown down.”³¹ The symbolism of specifically pulling down the marble portico—an emblem of public trust and, indeed, banking in the Jacksonian Era—suggests the mob’s recognition of the architectural symbols of authority.³²

Other prominent residents of the square, whose houses were “sacked” at that time included John B. Morris, Mayor Jesse Hunt; Evan T. Ellicott, Capt. Bentzinger and Capt. Wiley and Doctor Hintze.³³ The mob’s deliberate targeting of the elite residents (Johnson, Ellicott, Morris and McElderry were all Bank of Maryland trustees) is attested to by the incident in which:

They attacked the new house just built for Mr. McElderry, but on the appearance of the builder, who told them that the house had not yet been delivered to the owner and that the loss would fall on him, they desisted. Dr. Hintze’s house was assailed, but on his wife assuring them that the house belonged to her and not to her husband, they withdrew.³⁴

Johnson, not surprisingly, left his house on the square soon afterward.³⁵ The mob violence on the square may have contributed to the growing appeal of other neighborhoods, progressively further west.³⁶ From the Cathedral area and Mount Vernon in the 1840s to Bolton Hill in the 1850s, by mid-century, the city had a variety of well-elevated options for fine residential buildings. The proximity to power that may have originally attracted landowners to Monument Square became a liability after the riots of 1835. By 1850, when an estimated 20,000 privies drained directly into the Jones Falls, there were 20,000 reasons in addition to mob violence to leave the neighborhood.

³¹ Scharf II, 785.

³² The frequent use of the Greek Revival for government buildings in the Jackson era was further specified when the administration undertook construction of Robert Mills’ temple-form Treasury Building in Washington in 1836, thus co-opting an architectural style associated with private bankers such as Nicholas Biddle of Philadelphia. The portico of Johnson’s house may have been emblematic of the temple form associated with banks and public trust in general, thus specifically targeted by the mob who felt betrayed by the bank and the banker.

³³ Scharf II, 785. Note 1 of this page also provides a fairly detailed summary of the mob’s take-over of Johnson’s house and gives some sense of his possessions.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Olson, 100-2. Johnson must have been a particular target, as Scharf I (I, 785) notes that the mob first threw brick through his windows the night of August 6th, and returned on the 9th to break in, pillage the contents and destroy the facade.

³⁶ Scharf I, 785. Scharf notes that some houses on Mount Vernon square were also attacked, but the Monument Square attacks were clearly the most vicious and the Johnson house destruction the most notable casualty of the rioting.

3. Architectural Information

a. General statement: In this period, following the construction of the second courthouse on the site and the erection of the eponymous Battle Monument (1815-25), Monument Square became a fashionable residential enclave. Following riots in the 1830s, some residents departed and, by the time of the Civil War, the residential character was virtually lost.

b. Specific structures

Site 1: Battle Monument. Design by Maximilian Godefroy (1815); statue and bas relief panels by Antonio Capellano (1822-5)

Site 2a: 1805-7 Courthouse; design attributed to G. Milleman (demolished 1897)

Site 2b: ca.1810 Residence (builder unknown); purchased by William Gilmore in 1825. Gilmore resides there until his wife's death in 1852. Exterior embellished with elaborate ironwork verandas, almost certainly after Gilmore's time.³⁷

Site 2c: Fottrell House (d. 1786), remodeled.³⁸ Residence of James Buchanan, ca. 1824ff. Lafayette's visit to Baltimore in 1824 culminated in a dinner at Buchanan's Monument Square "mansion" at which were used "a brilliant line of the richest plate and glass and the characteristic hospitality of Baltimore."³⁹ By 1836, residence of Reverdy Johnson. Burned and heavily damaged in riot, 1836.⁴⁰ Repaired. Demolished ca. 1897.

Site 3: Unidentified freestanding brick residence, possibly McElderry house of

³⁷ Jones, 38, dates the entire building to 1840, probably on the stylistic evidence of the ironwork additions. The evidence of Gilmore's living there derives from comments in William Gilmore, "Family Record for the use of my Children and Their Successors..." MS 387, Maryland Historical Society.

³⁸ The confidence with which Lantz (n.p. c. 3) discusses the Johnson house as the completed version of the Fottrell house is the basis for the assumption that some part of the Fottrell house survived into the nineteenth century and was not destroyed to make way for new construction on the site after Fottrell's death ca. 1756. It is unclear who owned the property between 1756 and Buchanan's known ownership, sometime prior to 1809. Further research into early deeds and land records might confirm or disprove the survival of elements of the Fottrell building in the subsequent structure.

³⁹ Olson, 88.

⁴⁰ Scharf II, 785.

1836.⁴¹

Site 4: Williams Mansion, 1822.

Site 5a-c: Four brick townhouses, ca. 1815. At least one owned by W.W. Taylor, who rented it to Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Chew Howard (nee Gilmore) ca. 1819-27.⁴² Later converted to a hotel known as "Guy's Monument House." Demolished ca. 1888 for construction of Post Office.

Site 6: Unidentified brick row structures.

Site 7: Barnum's City Hotel, 1826 (razed 1886). Original building attributed to William Small. Like the Gilmore House, the Barnum Hotel is unfairly remembered for its exuberant ironwork and later accretions (captured in photographs) that give a false impression of its original appearance, said to resemble that of Isaiah Roger's Neo-Classical Tremont House Hotel in Boston. Like the Tremont House, Barnum's was also known for its luxurious amenities (such a individual guest baths and central heating), its restaurant and its visitors, both famous (Charles Dickens, Frances Trollope) and notorious. The hotel carries some connotation of Southern sympathy, as during the Civil War era, John Wilkes Booth is reputed to have concocted conspiracies with Samuel Arnold at the hotel. An 1861 assassination plot against Lincoln, known as "The Baltimore Plot," allegedly involved the barber shop in the hotel's basement.⁴³

4. Site

a. Historic landscape design: The earliest known images (admittedly, from mid century) indicate no plantings around the monument's base or even shade plantings adjacent to the residences which, from later Sanborn maps, appear to have had no rear yards to speak of. Since the monument was fit into a pre-existing architectural grouping, there appears to have been no attempt to link it spatially or visually to the perimeter of the square. The monument, set on a spot determined by the building it replaced, provides a monumental centerpiece to the north-south axis of Calvert Street and thus plays a more important formal role in the overall

⁴¹ This identification is purely speculative, based on Scharf I's description of the riot of August 1836. He notes, in reference to other buildings attacked, concern for adjoining buildings, but makes no such mention of buildings adjoining McElderry's house, suggesting that it was freestanding. Furthermore, the four-house row on the east side of the square is known to have been completed prior to the Howard's rental arrangement of 1825 and the west side and southwest corner are all identified.

⁴² William Gilmore, "Family Record," np.

⁴³ Jones, 33.

conception of the city as a series of monumental axes and squares than it does with its immediate surroundings.

b. Paving, grading, transportation patterns: With the erection of the Monument, the landscaping of the square took on an artifice it had not previously had. In 1816, the square was re-graded to set the monument on a rise. The square appears to have been cobbled with granite block pavers (date unknown), and the base of the monument set off, as designed, with wrought iron fence. There appear to have been no benches or streetlights, although Baltimore had some gas street lamps as early as 1816.

5. Early Views, Maps & Supplemental Material

Buildings on the East Side on Monument Square, ca. 1880 [later called Guy's Monument House] copy from Jones 27.

Second Baltimore City-County Courthouse, 1805-9. Image, ca. 1890. Collection, Maryland Historical Society. Digital Image # Z24.1296

Barnum's City Hotel. Collection Maryland Historical Society. Online Digital Image # Z24.309

C. Late Nineteenth Century, 1851-1900

1. Topography: No significant changes.

2. Historical Context

In 1851, the city of Baltimore received permission to cede from Baltimore County, so the courthouse now just served the town, not the entire region.⁴⁴ As the city grew, spurred by the railroad industry, larger commercial buildings dwarfed the once-impressive courthouse. Commerce was vying with government for pre-eminence in architectural image-making in Baltimore.

Baltimore's experience of the Civil War (1861-5) was peculiar. The white population was overwhelmingly sympathetic to the Confederate cause (note that presidential assassin John Wilkes Booth was a native Baltimorean), but because of the city's proximity to Washington and its importance as a railroad hub, its Southern sympathies were contained by Union occupation throughout the War. The economy survived the War (and the loss of the slave economy after 1863) due to the Union's wartime transportation and manufacturing needs. Between 1861 and 1865, more Baltimoreans died of smallpox than in battle or by riot or murder. Infrastructure, such as drainage, sewage and water distribution, remained ongoing civic undertakings throughout

⁴⁴ Olson, 142.

MONUMENT SQUARE
(HABS No. MD-1126; page 18)

the late nineteenth century. Horse car lines and commuter rail-lines opened up suburban areas (most notably Roland Park, after 1889) where the wealthy flocked to build residences. While Mount Vernon Place and North Charles Street saw late-century residential monuments rise in the city center, by the end of the Civil War, no-one lived on Monument Square anymore.⁴⁵

After the war, Baltimore's position as the railroad "gateway to the South" made the Reconstruction Era a boom-time for the city's economy. The city's population was now 350,000, housed or working in 50,000 structures, with 3,500 more (mainly worker housing enclaves) being built each year between 1870 and 1872.⁴⁶ As the railroad economy grew, so did the banking and manufacturing sectors. As happened throughout the industrializing urban United States in the late nineteenth century, Baltimore was constantly suppressing labor unrest or threats thereof (most significantly, railroad strikes of 1873 and 1877). The first large group in the United States to espouse socialist labor principles was founded in 1850 in Baltimore. Labor unrest surely contributed the ex-urbanization of the wealthy.

What kept the square in the forefront of the civic image was its location, the inevitability of the courthouse as a functional entity and, significantly, the Battle Monument itself. While the low-rise buildings of the 1820s disappeared from distant view behind eight- and ten-story commercial behemoths, the Monument on the crest of Calvert Street remained a visual landmark and an emblem of civic pride. Especially after the national centennial celebration in nearby Philadelphia in 1876, Baltimore experienced a new sense of historical self-awareness and the Battle Monument was part of that. Soon after, the institutional heritage of the site was reinvigorated by plans to erect a monumental central post office on the east side of the square. This federal building, standing back-to-back with the Second Empire City Hall, re-established the area near Monument Square as a civic center, both functionally and representationally. With the completion of the Post Office in 1889, it was merely a matter of time before the Courthouse itself came under scrutiny. The concurrent building of tall commercial structures, such as Carson and Sperry's Equitable Building (1884-9) on the square marked the assertive presence of finance and commerce in the center of power. The 1805 courthouse no longer made a worthy architectural statement of the overarching dominance of the rule of law in the city. Plans were drafted as early as 1890 and ground was broken for Wyatt and Nolting's Beaux-Arts megalith, occupying the entire west side of the square, in 1895. While practical considerations may well have played a role in the programs to build the Post Office and new Courthouse, a newfound sense of tradition, for

⁴⁵ The sale of the William Gilmore house in 1863 probably marks the end of private residences on the Square. By the 1867 Sanborn map, the square is surrounded by hotels, shops, and offices. Olson 115 notes that during the 1860s, however, six new residential squares were built in the city. Thus the form, if not the location, of Monument Square remained popular at mid-century.

⁴⁶ Olson, 148-9.

which the Battle Monument stood as an enduring reminder, also spurred the need to build a square that would be architecturally worthy of its own past.

3. Architectural Information

Architectural fashion by mid-century had shifted toward an aesthetic of multiplicity as a demonstration of wealth and power. The Federal-era buildings of Monument Square, as well as its once "impressive" courthouse, began to appear quaint. Several of the structures on Monument Square that were vacated by the city's leading citizens by mid century were converted to hotels, quite possibly on the basis of the square's reputation as an elite residential address. Barnum's City Hotel and the Gilmore House both received ornamental exterior remodeling in the 1850s, including a significant amount of elaborate wrought ironwork, in the attempt to update them. Significantly, the name "Gilmore House" was retained, in reference to the former residents, one of the city's leading "old" families. Three of the four row houses on the east side of the square became Guy's Monument House Hotel.⁴⁷ The inclusion of the word "monument" in the name indicates that the elite residential associations of the address still carried weight at mid century, surviving after the reality had vanished. Site 6 was occupied from 1871 to 1887 by the Rennert Hotel, at which time it moved to Site 5d. Nineteenth-century visitors were likely to stay for weeks, if not months, at a time (in part, to recuperate from long and onerous travel) so the residential association of hotels was stronger than it is today. The tacit implication of the hotel names is that hotel guests were, *de facto*, guests of Baltimore's leading families. By 1870, both sides and a major corner (Site 7, Barnum's Hotel) of the square were occupied by hotels. The hotel period of the square marks an important transition between the residential character of the early nineteenth century and the purely commercial and institutional one of the twentieth.

In 1861, a competition for a new City Hall on Holliday Street at Lexington (not built until 1868-1875) produced a Second Empire style design that dwarfed the courthouse in scale, ornament, mass and grandeur. The restrained classicism of the 1805 courthouse appeared flimsy by comparison. That impression only increased in comparison with late-century structures in the commercial district such as the fortress-like, Romanesque Mercantile Safe Deposit bank building (1886-8) two blocks south on Calvert or the Second-Empire style Baltimore and Ohio Railroad headquarters (1882-5), immediately adjacent to Barnum's City Hotel. When a new central Post Office was built, occupying the entire east side of the square, in 1887-9, the courthouse was absorbed into in the scenographic background. Aside from its sheer massiveness, the Italianate-hybrid Post Office building (James G. Hill, Supervising Architect of the U.S. Treasury, architect), was liberally embellished with towers, further animated by the pavilion-like massing and mansard roof of the French Second Empire style. It was an assertive

⁴⁷ It is unknown what the fourth--southernmost--house was used for prior to its occupation by the Rennert Hotel in 1871.

architectural presence to say the least.

Concurrently, Carson and Sperry's commercial Romanesque-style Equitable Building (1889-93) rose on the former site of Barnum's City Hotel. The bank-owned office building, with its luxurious appointments including a roof garden, Turkish bathhouse and gourmet restaurant, fulfilled the social needs of Barnum's Hotel while adding the novelty of being Baltimore's "first skyscraper." The height and massiveness of the Post Office and the Equitable competed, not only with the old Courthouse but also with the Battle Monument itself, for visual dominance of the square.⁴⁸ The courthouse still shared its block with the Gilmore House Hotel (briefly occupied by Guy's, after its home on the east side of the square was demolished for the Post Office construction) and the old Reverdy Johnson house (now used for offices), which only underscored its pathetically domestic scale. As mentioned above, it is hardly surprising that plans for a new courthouse of equivalent scale and grandeur were being discussed as the construction of the Post Office and Equitable drew to completion. Fortunately, for fashion at least, the project took another five years to begin.

Wyatt and Nolting's Beaux-Arts 1895 courthouse design reflects the aesthetic of the 1893 "White City" at the World's Columbian Exposition. The picturesque massing and effusive visual complexity of the Post Office was already in decline as the architecture of good taste. The relative restraint and reliance on classical forms and ornament, as well as lavish materials, to convey dignity, grandeur and stability, was on the rise and would, by the 1907 Macmillan Commission Plan of Washington, DC, become the *de facto* style to represent governmental majesty.

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, Monument Square had been reborn as a locus of authority, architecturally represented. The century had begun with the courthouse, literally, as the (then future) square's centerpiece. The chic residents came and, with them, the desire for a monumental focus to their neighborhood. The Battle Monument shifted the visual focus of the square from the courthouse to the monument. In the public mind, however, the elite residences were part and parcel of the square's identity as a locus of power and, in 1835, mob violence against the residential buildings initiated a residential exodus. The old houses found adaptive re-use at mid century as hotels, which relied on the traditional associations of the houses with "old money" as a marketing device. After the Civil War, however, a pattern of building larger institutional buildings encroached on the square, challenging and eventually eradicating its residential past. Its monumental past and historic associations, however, only grew in value as time passed.

a. General statement: The square takes on a largely commercial character and is

⁴⁸ Old photographs show that a smaller scale commercial buildings occupied Sites 4 and 6, and Site 3 (still a freestanding house from the early nineteenth century) is listed as "offices" on Sanborn maps.

MONUMENT SQUARE
(HABS No. MD-1126; page 21)

known for its hotels. With the construction of the main Post Office on the east side of the square and the Equitable Building on the southwest corner in 1889, the conjunction of commercial-corporate monuments with those of government supplanted the private residential-governmental conjunction of the early period.

b. Specific structures

Site 1. Battle Monument.

Site 2a. 1805 Courthouse. Demolished ca. 1895 for present building on site.

Site 2b. ca. 1810 Gilmore House. Gilmore vacates structure, ca. 1852.⁴⁹ Photographs soon after show addition of wrought iron entry porch and verandah on second level, presumably part of conversion of structure for use as "Gilmore House Hotel." In 1888, the structure was occupied by "Guy's Monument House Hotel," recently dislocated from Site 5a-c across the square by construction of Post Office. Demolished ca. 1895 for construction of present building on site.

Site 2c. ca. 1751-1810 Fottrell-Buchanan-Johnson House. Damaged in riots of 1835; in use as offices by 1867; noted as offices again on 1890 Sanborn plat.⁵⁰ Demolished ca. 1895 for construction of present building on site.

Sites 2 a-c: 1895-1900. Baltimore City Courthouse. Wyatt and Nolting, architects. Interior decorative program, including murals by John LaFarge and Edwin Blashfield, continued until 1910.

Site 3: Unknown Freestanding brick residence, ca. 1836 (?). Images of the construction of the courthouse show that this building was still standing in the late 1890s. Sanborn map of 1890 lists its function as offices.

Site 4: Williams Mansion, 1882-ca. 1920. Before 1890, building had been taken over by the Metropolitan Savings Bank.

Site 5a-c ca. 1810-1887. Three row houses, known from ca. 1850 to 1887 as "Guy's Monument House Hotel." Southernmost building not part of Guy's Hotel. Demolished 1887.

Site 5d: 1871-87 Rennert Hotel (relocated from former site directly across Fayette

⁴⁹ Gilmore's property was auctioned from another house after his death in 1863. As his wife died in 1852, that date may have marked his relocation. Gilmore, "Family Record," np.

⁵⁰ Sanborn map of Baltimore, 1890, vol. 2 sheet 42a.

Street).⁵¹

Sites 5a-d. 1887-1929 Post Office. James G. Hill, Supervising Architect, U.S. Treasury Department.

Site 6. ca. 1810-1871 Rennert Hotel. Probably built as a residence and converted at mid-century. Demolished 1871 for National Mechanics Bank building.

Site 7. 1826-1887/8 Barnum's City Hotel. 1889-93- present. Equitable Building. Carson and Sperry, architects.

4. Site

a. Historic landscape design: No significant alterations; no plantings. By 1890, photographs show street lamps at the base of the monument, adjacent to the iron fence.

b. Paving, grading, transportation patterns: Undated photographs from ca. 1890 show horsecart tracks in the pavers surrounding the Battle Monument.

5. Early Views, Maps & Supplemental Material

Sanborn Map, 1890, vol. 2, sheet 42a.

East Side of Square ca. 1867 showing "Guy's Monument House Hotel." Collection Maryland Historical Society, digital cat. # Z24.2066; similar view Z24.2065.

West Side of Square with (left to right) former Reverdy Johnson house; Gilmore House Hotel (with ironwork added after 1863) and 1805 courthouse building. Collection Maryland Historical Society. Digital catalogue # Z24.200; Z24.249; Z24.310; Z24.322; Z24.964; Z24. 1850; Z24.1296; Z24.327.

Views of courthouse under construction, collection Maryland Historical Society, digital cat. # Z24.239; Z24.369.

Two views of Reverdy Johnson house, ca. 1893, collection Maryland Historical Society digital cat# Z24.1794 VF and Z24.1795VF.

C. Twentieth Century

1. Topography: No significant alteration to grade.

2. Historical Context

⁵¹ As the Rennert was renowned for its restaurant, particularly its oyster bar, perhaps only the restaurant relocated after 1871 and effectively "merged" with Guy's. The oyster bar "moved" with Guy's, across the square, when this site was cleared for the Post Office building.

MONUMENT SQUARE
(HABS No. MD-1126; page 23)

The development of Monument Square as an institutional enclave was interrupted, but not halted, by the Great Fire of 1904. The Fire, which swept through the commercial district and leveled most of the area of the original 60-acre town charter, stopped at the very edge of the square. It gutted but did not topple Carson and Sperry's Equitable Building. Images taken soon after the fire show the Equitable building with scorch marks on its north facade.

The building boom that followed on the heels of the 1904 Fire took a while to reach the square, perhaps because needs there were not so urgent as in the so-called "burnt district." Growth, as well as the scale precedent of the Post Office and the Courthouse (building completed 1905) meant tall, purpose-built office buildings replaced the straggling remnants of the residential square. Steady economic growth in the first decades of the twentieth century led to a steady increase in Baltimore's population which, in turn, led to a growth in services and in government. The railroad continued to be the foundation of the local economy until mid century, and with that, the manufacturing industry drew immigrants and laborers to work in or near the city. The banking industry grew proportionally and asserted its presence around Monument Square. By the Depression (1929-ca. 1935), tall office buildings to the north and south bracketed the governmental structures at east and west.

The residential associations of the square vanished after the turn of the century⁵² and the Courthouse once again became the focal point of the square's identity (the St. Paul Street entrance features a statue of Lord Cecil Calvert). Urban renewal in the 1950s and 60s decimated parts of the downtown commercial district and created a the anchor elements (in Charles Center and, in the 1970s, Hopkins Place) of a modern office corridor along Charles Street. While this period tended to value efficiency and modernity in urban design over tradition, the Battle Monument and Courthouse, together, made the square an unassailable precinct of historically-based civic identity. The Civil Rights movement of the 1960s had an enormous impact on the city, which at that time was more than 50% black and still largely segregated in settlement.⁵³ Following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King in 1968, riots took place in the city, causing many families (especially white families) to move their residences away from the city center. In 1985, the Courthouse was rededicated to Clarence M. Mitchell, a champion of Civil Rights in the city. By the late twentieth century, the populist implications of the Battle Monument—as the first military monument commemorating soldiers and not a heroic officer—gave it a new relevancy to the community. In 1985, the Black Soldiers Memorial, honoring black soldiers slain in U.S. military conflict, was added to the north end of the

⁵² Although the freestanding brick house at Site 3 survived into the second decade of the century, Sanborn maps noted above show that it was used as offices as early as 1867. Lantz (n.p.) states that it was known as the office of the Baltimore Herald newspaper, which probably had relocate from its Baltimore Street building after the Fire of 1904. In either case, the residual residential character of the square was architectural, not functional.

⁵³ Olson, 370-85.

MONUMENT SQUARE
(HABS No. MD-1126; page 24)

traffic island, adjacent to the Battle Monument. The implication is that the Black Soldiers Memorial amplified, extended and clarified a message of inclusiveness inaugurated in the Battle Monument in 1815.

3. Architectural Information

The most immediate architectural response to the 1904 Fire was the demolition of the house at Site 3, to the immediate north of the courthouse, for replacement by Fire Department Engine Company No. 4.

On the south edge of the square, in 1910-2, the "fireproof" Munsey Building arose on Site 6, replacing the old National Mechanics Bank building.

To the north, following the fire, construction began in 1907 on an updated, mid-rise building to house the Metropolitan Savings Bank on Site 4; the Deco-Gothic Court Square office building there today replaced the bank in 1920. The federal presence in Monument Square increased with the construction of the Federal Reserve building on Site 3. In the last major architectural campaign on the square, in 1930-2, the 1880s Post Office—the building which forced monumentality on the square—was demolished in favor of a replacement structure that combined the post office with the federal courthouse. The federal government's courts followed the lead of the square's civic identity as the "courthouse square." The federal building, in a stripped-down classical mode, is reminiscent of the contemporary Federal Triangle projects in Washington, DC (as befitting a structure designed by the Washington-based Supervising Architect of the U.S. Treasury Department) but almost certainly was specifically designed to reflect the recessed portico massing of the city courthouse. This architectural gesture grants the square a deliberateness of architectural conception and bilateral near-symmetry that belies its humble historic origins.

a. General statement: The square reached its current state by mid-century and is now entrenched in the civic mind as courthouse square, as well as the site of the venerable Battle Monument.

b. Specific structures

Site 1: Battle Monument, 1815-25, Maximilian Godefroy with Antonio Capellano, sculptor. Base altered ca. 1920, 1950. "Black Soldier's Memorial," bronze sculpture by James E. Lewis, erected 1985.

Site 2: Baltimore Courthouse, 1895-1905, Wyatt and Nolting. Rededicated and renamed Clarence M. Mitchell Courthouse in 1985. Various mechanical and minor spatial alterations were made throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Renovated extensively in the 1950s, including subdivision of the original three interior levels; enclosure of the original atrium and upgraded elevators and mechanical

MONUMENT SQUARE
(HABS No. MD-1126; page 25)

systems throughout. Restoration (1978-88) of several significant interiors and installation of "period" lighting fixtures in corridors. Since 1989, the city has been working toward accomplishment of a Master Plan presented by architects Richter, Cornbrooks, Gribble, Inc. in 1989.⁵⁴

Site 3: Federal Reserve Building, ca. 1951. Now Provident Bank of Maryland.

Site 4: Court Square Office Building, architect unknown.

Site 5: Post Office, begun 1887, James G. Hill (Supervising Architect, U.S. Treasury Dept.), architect. Demolished 1930. Baltimore Central Post Office and Federal Courthouse Building, 1930-2, James A. Westmore, (Supervising Architect of the U.S. Treasury Department), architect. Since 1976, when the federal bar relocated, the building has served as Courthouse annex, known as "Courthouse East."⁵⁵

Site 6: Munsey Building, begun 1910, designed by Baldwin and Pennington in association with McKim, Mead and White⁵⁶.

Site 7: Equitable Building, 1889-94, Carson and Sperry. Interior rebuilt 1905ff.

4. Site (historic landscape design)

The Battle Monument, by 1914, was accented with a fountain to the north, probably a response to the 1904 Fire as much as a decorative embellishment.⁵⁷ As automobile traffic along Calvert Street grew in the first decades of the century, an elevated "island" was built around the structure to set it apart and protect it from traffic. The shape of the island, altered and extended in 1978, resembles a ship, with its prow pointed north. Given the nautical imagery of the 1815-25 sculptural program, the choice of shape was certainly deliberate. The iron fence at the base of the column remains much as it was in the early nineteenth century, when it set the monument apart from its pedestrian surroundings. Perhaps significantly, this elevated monument remains fenced off, while the Black Soldier's memorial rests closer to pedestrian level and is not fenced

⁵⁴ For extensive chronology of alterations to the building, see: Richter, Cornbrooks, Gribble, "Master plan for the Restoration and Renovation of the Clarence M. Mitchell Courthouse," published by Baltimore City Administrative Offices, 1989.

⁵⁵ Michael S. Greene, "History of the Clarence M. Mitchell Courthouse," Celebrating a Century of Service: The Clarence M. Mitchell Courthouse, (Baltimore: Courthouse Centennial Commission, 2000): 11-12.

⁵⁶ This is McKim, Mead and White's only high-rise commercial building in the city. Unlike the firm's early commissions, which appear to have been largely managed by Stanford White, this project postdates White's death.

⁵⁷ Sanborn Map, 1914-15, vol.3 sheet 222.

off, and thus invites physical interaction with passers-by.

5. Views, Maps & Supplemental Material

View of Monument Square after the Fire. Maryland Historical Society Collection. Online digital images # Z24.231; Z24.0355.

View of Monument Square after the Fire. Maryland Historical Society Collection. Online digital image # Z24.347

View of Monument Square ca. 1935. Maryland Historical Society. Online Digital Image # Z24.2196

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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MONUMENT SQUARE
(HABS No. MD-1126; page 27)

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B. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated: Early land records, insofar as they exist, might help trace the property ownership of the residences on the square more thoroughly. Additionally, biographies and social histories of the period would probably identify specific residents with their houses on the square in the early nineteenth century.

PART IV: PROJECT INFORMATION

During the summer of 2001, the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) and the Maryland Historical Trust, in coordination with the City of Baltimore's Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP) and Preservation Maryland, recorded ten historic buildings and sites within Baltimore's Central Business District through large-format photography and original historical research. The heart of the downtown area and focus of intensive redevelopment efforts, Baltimore's Central Business District is a designated city historic district and home to a diverse array of historic commercial and civic buildings, churches, theaters and other landmarks. Many of them predate the district's Great Fire of 1904 and chronicle Baltimore's rise as a financial, commercial and civic center. This project, coordinated by Martin Perschler, Collections Manager, HABS/HAER, and Catherine Lavoie, Senior Historian, HABS, and resulting in more than 150 photographs by Baltimore photographer James W. Rosenthal for HABS and ten detailed architectural histories by Laurie Ossman, PhD., also a Baltimore resident, grew out of concern about the recent loss of the Merchants & Miners Transportation Company Building at 17 Light Street and other buildings of architectural distinction in Baltimore.

Ranging chronologically from the Peale Museum (1814) to the Baltimore Trust Company Building (1929), and in function from Old St. Paul's Episcopal Church (1846) to the Gayety Theatre (1906), the ten landmarks selected for this study illustrate the architectural diversity of the district and the myriad forces that have informed the district's growth and evolution over time. The documentation resulting from this project formed the basis of a photographic exhibit that was launched at the Maryland Historical Society in May 2002 during National Historic Preservation Month.

MONUMENT SQUARE
(HABS No. MD-1126; page 28)

The ten historic buildings and sites that were studied during the project are:

Alex. Brown & Sons Company Building (HABS MD-1121)
B&O Railroad Company Headquarters Building (HABS MD-1122)
Baltimore Trust Company Building (HABS MD-1119)
Gayety Theatre (HABS MD-1123)
Mercantile Trust & Deposit Company (HABS MD-191)
Monument Square & the Battle Monument (HABS MD-1126 and MD-185)
Old St. Paul's Episcopal Church (HABS MD-1124)
Peale Museum (HABS MD-398)
Pennsylvania Railroad Company District Office Building (HABS MD-1125)
Vickers Building (HABS MD-1120)