

Elizabeth Mengel

## Introducing Baltimore

Host of the 13th ACRL National Conference

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**B**altimore is a constantly evolving city with a rich history. It is a city of neighborhoods and neighborhood institutions, a unique blend of blue collar and academic high tech, of traditional attractions and local funk. The city offers conference attendees a wide array of activities from world-class art, music, libraries, and exciting sporting events to simply sitting on the waterfront picking crabs and sipping cocktails.

The city fans out mostly north of the Inner Harbor, which is a major tourist draw. Directly north of the harbor lies the main business area. A bit further north of the

business district is Mount Vernon, the cultural center of the city. West of the Inner Harbor is the Convention Center and Oriole Park at Camden Yards.

To help you get your bearings, remember that Charles Street divides the city east to west. It is the major north-south thoroughfare of the city, stretching from the harbor to the city-county line. If an address reads “East” it will be east of Charles Street, “West” addresses will be west of Charles Street.

### History

In 1632 George Calvert, the first Lord Baltimore, was granted land north of the Chesapeake Bay. Baltimore County, the first local government, was established in 1659. Baltimore City was established December 31, 1796.

Water was critical to the economic development of the city. Settlers built mills and



A view of the Baltimore Inner Harbor. Credit: Baltimore Area Convention and Visitors Association.

iron furnaces along the many small waterways in the area. Like the other early colonists, Marylanders chafed under British rule and were in the thick of the conflict during the Revolutionary War. For example,

shortly after the Declaration of Independence was signed, Baltimore became the nation's temporary capital from December 20, 1776 to February 27, 1777. The business of the country was handled in Baltimore's Congress Hall.

At the beginning of the 1800s, Baltimore was the nation's third-largest city. The War

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of 1812 found Baltimore in the middle of the action again. Privateers out of Baltimore led water attacks on British ships. When the British attacked Washington, D.C., on August 28, 1814, Baltimore residents could see the smoke billowing from the city. Knowing they would be the next target, the city fortified Fort McHenry.

On September 12, 1814, the Battle of Baltimore Harbor began. Situated on a boat up river, Francis Scott Key watched as the British bombs attacked Fort McHenry. As the smoke cleared and the foggy dawn emerged, Key spotted a tattered American flag still flying over the fort. The “Star-Spangled Banner,” his emotional poem commemorating that sight, eventually became our national anthem. That flag still resides at Fort McHenry.

The next big boom to the city’s economy was the development of the Baltimore & Ohio (B&O) Railroad. Developed by Charles Carroll, the railroad reached the Ohio River in 1853. The railroad not only brought goods and services to Baltimore, it also brought waves of immigrants to the city. You can still see some of the original tracks from the B&O along Key Highway, south of the Convention Center.

Those who know their geography know that Maryland is located south of the Mason Dixon line. The city was divided financially and philosophically between north and south. By 1860, Baltimore City was home to more freed blacks than any other city in the state. The state’s song “My Maryland” depicts a skirmish between citizens of Baltimore and the 6th Massachusetts Infantry as it passed through the city. The skirmish resulted in riots and the first casualties of the Civil War on April 19, 1861. Baltimore was occupied by federal troops for much of the Civil War.

After the war, three acts of great philanthropy deeply changed the city. George Peabody gave \$1.5 million to the city to establish the Peabody Institute, which was to include a scholar’s library, a public lecture series, an academy of music, and an art gallery. Today

as one of the divisions of the Johns Hopkins University, the Peabody Institute comprises the Conservatory and Preparatory divisions. The George Peabody Library (the scholar’s library) is part of the Johns Hopkins Libraries. Peabody’s gift inspired his friend Johns Hopkins to donate \$7 million for the creation of a university and hospital, which today bear his name. The city’s third significant philanthropist, Enoch Pratt, offered a gift to the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore of a central library, four branch libraries, and an endowment of \$1 million. Today, the library system has 21 branches.

During the early morning hours of February 7, 1904, the Great Fire of Baltimore broke out. The blaze caused millions of dollars worth of damage and destroyed more than 70 blocks of prime downtown real estate, but miraculously took no lives. The fire burned for more than 30 hours before it was finally contained. The city rebuilt itself and, by the time of World War I, Baltimore’s protected harbor provided an ideal center for wartime industries. The city’s population continued to grow between the wars as many immigrants looked for work in the steel factories and shipyards. World War II saw Baltimore again provide many of the materials for battle, especially steel for ships and airplanes.

Urban revitalization, which began in the 1970s, culminated in the opening of Harborplace in 1980, followed by the opening of the National Aquarium. Today, redevelopment continues to spread from the Inner Harbor, including the development of Harbor East, the opening of the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture, the renovation and opening of the Hippodrome Theater, and much more.

### **Baltimore firsts and famous residents**

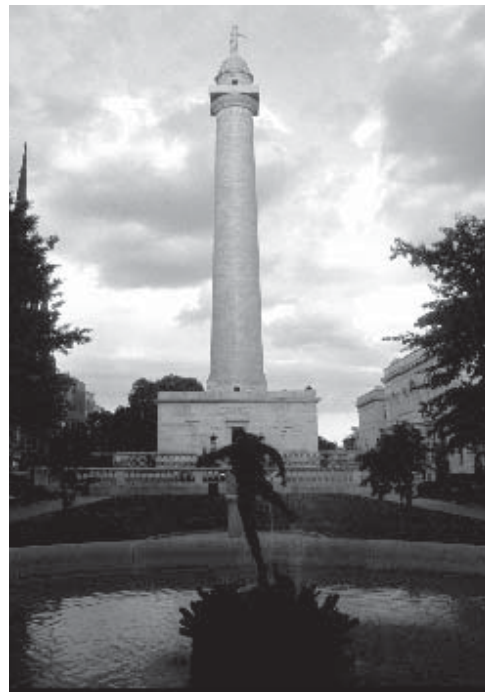
Baltimore is a city of many firsts. In 1774 the first post office system in the United States was inaugurated. In 1800 the first investment house was started. Fort McHenry was the site of the first U.S. Army horse artillery. The

Washington Monument in Mt. Vernon was the first monument to George Washington. The first Catholic Basilica in the United States was built in Baltimore. Designed by Benjamin Latrobe, it recently underwent a total refurbishment. Baltimore was the home of the first publicly supported high school for girls. In 1851 the first commercial ice cream factory was established. The Baltimore Symphony is the first city municipal symphony in the United States. Baltimore is also home to the country's first scheduled water taxi system.

Baltimore lists some impressive firsts in medical care, too—in 1894 Johns Hopkins surgeon William Halsted was the first to wear rubber gloves in surgery, in 1942 Johns Hopkins Hospital was the first to identify the Polio virus. In 1955 Johns Hopkins established the first intensive care unit. In 1961 the first shock trauma unit was developed at University of Maryland Hospital. In fact, the concept of the “golden hour,” which is the timeframe that increases the chances of a person who suffered life-threatening or catastrophic injury of surviving, was developed by the University of Maryland's R. Adams Cowley in 1970.

Many famous folk have called Baltimore home, including film makers Barry Levinson and John Waters; actors Divine, David Hasselhoff, John Astin, Parker Posey, and Jada Pinkett Smith; musicians Frank Zappa, Billie Holiday, Cab Calloway, Eubie Blake, Ric Ocasek, Philip Glass, and “Mama” Cass Elliot; barrier breakers Thurgood Marshall, Reginald F. Lewis, Kweisi Mfume, and Vivien Thomas; athletes Michael Phelps, Babe Ruth, Pam Shriver, Cal Ripken Jr., Johnny Unitas, and Carmelo Anthony; writers Tom Clancy, Anne Tyler, Edgar Allan Poe, and many more. In a future issue of *C&RL News*, we'll introduce you to some of the great literary figures of Baltimore.

Known for the Johns Hopkins institutions, Baltimore has many other educational institutions, large and small. The list of higher education institutions includes: the College of Notre Dame of Maryland; Goucher Col-



The Washington Monument. Credit: Baltimore Area Convention and Visitors Association.

lege; Loyola University-Maryland; Morgan State University; St. Mary's Seminary and University; Coppin State College; Towson University; University of Baltimore; the law and medical schools at the University of Maryland-Baltimore; University of Maryland-Baltimore County; Maryland Institute College of Art (the oldest accredited art school in the country); and Villa Julie College.

## Neighborhoods

Baltimore is a city of neighborhoods. Neighborhoods close to the Inner Harbor are Little Italy, Fells Point, Federal Hill, and Mount Vernon. You may even wander as far as Canton, which can be reached by walking along the Harbor.

Little Italy, just east of the Inner Harbor, is the center of Baltimore's Italian population and is also home to many restaurants and gelaterias. Fells Point (just beyond Little Italy) established in colonial times, has many pubs and dining establishments, making for a lively night life. The popular television show *Homicide: Life on the Streets* was filmed on location on the streets and in the businesses of Fells Point.

Federal Hill is located just southwest of the Inner Harbor. The hill is easily seen from the Harbor. During the Civil War, cannons were stationed here facing the city, reminding the inhabitants to behave. Federal Hill is home to the American Visionary Arts Museum, a fascinating collection of outsider art and one of the country's top museums.

Going further afield, near the Johns Hopkins University campus are several attractions not to be missed. The neighborhood of Hampden, to the west of the campus, is home to some of the funkiest shopping in Baltimore. The Baltimore Museum of Art, which includes the trendy restaurant Gertrude's, can be found on the south end of the campus. And if the tulips are blooming, a trip to the nearby Sherwood Gardens in the stately residential neighborhood of Roland Park is a must.

### **Attractions**

Within walking distance of the Inner Harbor, check out the National Aquarium, the Visionary Arts Museum, the Maryland Science Center, the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture, and the Revolutionary War frigate the USS Constellation.

Not too far from the Inner Harbor are a number of old time markets that are worth investigating. Lexington Market is the world's largest, continuously running open stall food market. It has operated since 1782 at the same location. The Cross Street Market in Federal Hill and the Broadway Market in Fells Point are within walking distance of the Convention Center and will give you a feel of yesteryear.

The cultural district of Mount Vernon, easily identified by the towering Washington Monument, will keep you busy for a day. Visit the Washington Monument, the Walter's Art Museum, the George Peabody Library, the Maryland Historical Society, and the Enoch Pratt Free Library.

In addition to the Walter's Museum, the Baltimore Museum of Art, and the Visionary Arts Museums, there are a number of great

small museums in Baltimore worth seeking out. The B&O Railroad Museum is a railroad buff's paradise, but for those who aren't interested in the largest railroad collection in the Western Hemisphere, the newly restored round house is beautiful to behold for its structural grace.

Evergreen House on North Charles Street is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Once home to John W. Garrett, president of the B&O Railroad, the house offers art, history, and natural beauty in its lovely 26-acre wooded location. Homewood House, located on the Johns Hopkins campus adjacent to the Eisenhower Library, was built in 1801 for Charles Carroll Jr. Homewood House is a National Historic Landmark and is one of the nation's best surviving examples of federal period architecture.

The Fire Museum of Maryland gives visitors a chance to see how fires are fought, including how the great fire of 1904 was contained. The National Museum of Dentistry celebrates the nation's first dental school. The school opened on the Baltimore campus of the University of Maryland in 1839. The Maryland Historical Society in Mt. Vernon area has the original draft of the "Star-Spangled Banner." The Eubie Blake National Jazz Institute and Cultural Center teaches visitors about Baltimore's great jazz legacy. The Babe Ruth Museum, the Museum of Industry, the Public Works Museum, the Baltimore Civil War Museum, and the Baltimore Street Car Museum are all wonderful places to explore.

### **Sports**

Baltimore is the home of Major League Baseball's Baltimore Orioles. They roost in Oriole Park at Camden Yards. Try to take in a tour of the park and learn about the warehouse, which is the longest brick building east of the Mississippi River and now houses the Orioles' business offices.

The National Football League's Baltimore Ravens were winners of Super Bowl XXXV in 2001. Older NFL fans may remember the Baltimore Colts led by the great Johnny Uni-

tas, that team left the city for Indianapolis in 1984. The Ravens name honors the classic Edgar Allan Poe poem. The team plays at M&T Bank Stadium just south of Camden Yards.

Horses and horse racing are part of the city's long history. The Maryland Jockey club was established in 1743, well before the United States was even a nation. Horse racing fans turn their eyes to Baltimore in May each year for the Preakness, the second jewel in horse racing's Triple Crown. The Preakness is a week-long event culminating with the big race run at Pimlico Racetrack in northern Baltimore. Famous horses crossing the finish line at Pimlico were Man o' War, Seabiscuit, War Admiral, Citation, and Secretariat.

In many places spring turns people's thoughts toward romance, but in Baltimore spring means one thing—lacrosse, America's oldest sport. This fast-paced, hard-hitting game is played by boys, girls, men, and women at all levels. The sport has strength in Baltimore at the college and professional level. The Lacrosse Museum and National Hall of Fame is located just north of Johns Hopkins University's lacrosse field. The museum celebrates the history and heritage of the game. The Johns Hopkins University Men's Lacrosse team are eight-time NCAA Division I champions.

### Visiting Baltimore in 2007

Make your plans now to attend the ACRL National Conference. Set aside a few extra days to explore Baltimore and the Chesapeake Bay area, including Annapolis—home of the U.S. Naval Academy. Baltimore is also close to many other east coast attractions in cities, such as Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, and New York City. If you're a history buff, Baltimore is close to numerous Civil War memorials and battlefields, including Gettysburg and Antietam. Into hiking? You can jump on the Appalachian Trail near Frederick, Maryland.

Future issues of *C&RL News* will provide conference attendees with more information

on Baltimore, including its literary history, libraries and special collections, attractions, and shopping and dining. Come see why more than 11 million visitors every year call Baltimore "Charm City."

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