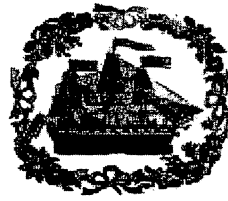


# BALTIMORE

## CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Volume 2, Number 2

Fall 2003

### Third Mayor's Reception Will Honor Historians at Clifton Mansion

The Third Annual Mayor's Reception of the Baltimore City Historical Society will be held Sunday, September 21, from 12:30 to 2 PM at Clifton Mansion, featuring a brief history musicale. Mayor Martin O'Malley will be asked to play for his lunch and two historians, five historical figures and two in memoriam will be honored. Sun columnist Michael Olesker will speak and sign copies of his *Journeys to the Heart of Baltimore*.

Tickets are \$30 in advance and \$35 at the mansion, which is in Clifton Park on Saint Lo Drive, just east of Harford Road at the Alameda. Fifteen dollars of the fee is tax deductible and is destined for the Society's history programs. Indeed, choice of the reception site is intended as a show of support for restoration of this one-time summer home of Johns Hopkins. It is now the headquarters of the federally funded Civic Works that is assisting in renovation of the mansion. Attendees will be given a tour of the landmark.

Among the honored guests to receive Living History Awards at the reception is civic leader Samuel Hopkins, who is the oldest living collateral descendant of Johns Hopkins, the philanthropist who founded the university bearing his name. The awardee also is a philanthropist, with a focus on Clifton Mansion.

The two Historian Award recipients are Dr. Suzanne Ellery Chapelle, writer on Baltimore's and blacks' history, at Morgan State University, and Frank R. Shivers Jr., co-editor with Mary Ellen Hayward of *The Architecture of Baltimore*, being published by The Johns Hopkins University Press in Association with the Maryland Historical Society, the Baltimore Museum of Art, and the Baltimore Architecture Foundation. Shivers also is known for his *Walking In Baltimore, an Intimate Guide to the Old City*.

The other Living History awardees, in addition to Hopkins, are Dr. Nathan Carter, chair of Morgan's Department of fine Arts and director of its Choir; George L. Russell Jr., who is responsible for the new African-American Museum being constructed on President Street; maker of movies on Baltimore, John Waters, whose "Hairspray"

now is on Broadway, and Walter Sondheim Jr., a civic leader often referred to as "Mayor Sondheim" for his role over half a century in downtown redevelopment.

Articles in The Sun by Frederick N. Rasmussen on February 5 and 8 inspired the two In Memoriam Awards, the first one to Edward A. Chance, who died January 30 and who led the effort to open to blacks Baltimore's Gwynn Oak amusement park in 1963. A former chairman of the Baltimore Chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality, he presided over a memorial service for William Lewis Moore, who is the second awardee. The Baltimorean civil rights worker was murdered in Alabama in 1963.

Last year, the Mayor's Reception was held at the Peale Museum, giving a large

crowd of attendees a chance to visit the historic structure whose closing in 1997 was a primary motivation for formation of the BCHS three years later under the aegis of retired Judge John Carroll Byrnes, who is now chair of the Board of Directors. The Peale had served as the defacto city historical society, eventually becoming part of the City Life Museums that fell victim of budgetary shortfalls. Its collection devolved to the Maryland Historical Society. BCHS heard a report on the collection at its membership meeting June 29 (**Story on Page 2**).

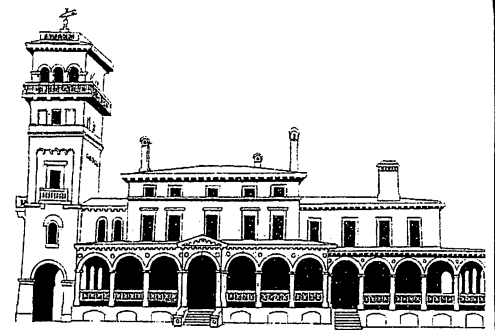
The Society's next program, following this month's Reception, will be held on October 29 at the Great Blacks in Wax Museum, 1603 E. North Avenue, at 5:30 PM, to explore the city's African-American heritage.

### Mansion Battling to Restore Glory of Johns Hopkins Era

Clifton Mansion, the site of BCHS's Third Mayor's Reception on September 21, certainly has a history and lately a future as well. It was built as a two-story farmhouse in 1803 by Baltimore merchant Henry Thompson, then sold to philanthropist Johns Hopkins in 1836. Hopkins transformed the farmhouse to an Italianate villa by adding a third story, tower, porches, Italian marble mantles, painted ceilings and a grand entry. The property devolved to the city as part of Clifton Park and recent decades saw its accelerating decline.

The Mansion is on the mend. The restoration's major benefactor is Samuel Hopkins, who will be an honoree at the reception. He is also the sponsor of an exposition on Baltimore philanthropy, which attendees can see in the Mansion's main hall. Indeed, he underwrote restoration of the hall.

Civic Works, funded by the federal Americorps program, is now headquartered in the mansion and also is dedicated to its restoration. A staff of 40 has been working with 100 to 200 young people, aged 17-25, who seek job skills and, often, the equivalent of a high school diploma or credits to apply to college. Christopher Wilson of Civic Works said cutbacks in



Americorps funding have forced a 40 percent layoff of staff. Although the Mansion's dining room is again as elegant as in Hopkins' time, money for further work is slow in coming. While a \$50,000 grant from the Maryland Historical Trust recently came through, about \$2.3 million in federal grant requests are still pending.

"Placement of the mansion on the National Historic Register would help," Wilson added, and BCHS is looking for a way to lend a hand. That cause gained another adherent last month with a visit by the newly installed executive director of the preservationist Baltimore Heritage Inc. His name: Johns Hopkins, who is, as he told the Baltimore Sun, "not a direct descendant, but same general family."

## EDITORIAL

### *Uphold the Course of History*

Convinced as we are that Baltimore's future will be built on its past, BCHS is alarmed by a turn of federal legislation and state application that could jeopardize the very teaching of history in Maryland public schools. The 2002 U.S. act known as "No Child Left Behind" laudably mandates rigorous testing of reading and math performance as a condition of funding. But while evidence of appalling ignorance of history helped inspire the act, "History and social studies are not included in the Federal mandate."

The quote is from a paper by the Maryland Humanities Council, which sounds the alarm and is receiving broad support by historical organizations including BCHS. It goes on to point out that "Maryland no longer requires statewide testing of history or social studies in grades K-8." The likely consequences for history courses are obvious. Our plea is plain: Look to history. What a loss should public education, trying to right reading instruction, encumber access to history. After all, it's in the books.

## **McNally's Museums: Living History Finding Venues**

Edited by Christopher M. McNally

The BCHS is working with George Piendak in City Hall on plans to come up with a Baltimore Day whose creation will involve the broad museum community. As chronicled in the Spring Newsletter, historian Wayne Schaumburg favors August 8, to mark that date in 1729 when the act creating the new town was signed by the colonial governor.

Meanwhile, we offer a sampling of programs, particularly those in the category of living history, provided by museums affiliated for the most part with the Greater Baltimore History Alliance:

**EVERGREEN HOUSE, 4545 N. Charles Street, 410.516.0341.** Monday through Friday, 10 AM-4 PM, Saturday-Sunday 1-4 PM. Guided tours begin on the hour, \$6 for adults, \$5 for seniors and \$3 for students and children over 6. Museum members free. [www.jhu.edu/historichouses](http://www.jhu.edu/historichouses)

**October 7, noon-2:00 PM—Maryland Sports with authors Paul McMullen, Bob Scott, James Brady and Ted Patterson**

Carriage House lunch discussion on history and memorabilia of basketball, lacrosse, baseball and football in Maryland; \$20 per person. Reserve by October 1 with Joann Willats at 410.516.0341 or [jwillats@jhu.edu](mailto:jwillats@jhu.edu).

**December 14, 12-4 PM—Greater Baltimore History Alliance Holiday Open House**

In conjunction with the Greater Baltimore History Alliance, Evergreen House will be decorated for the holidays and open for tours, during which guests can enjoy light refreshments,

holiday music. Admission \$1.

**FORT McHENRY National Monument and Historic Shrine, 962.4290.** Volunteers sought to work as educators, rangers, and historic preservation specialists. Volunteers

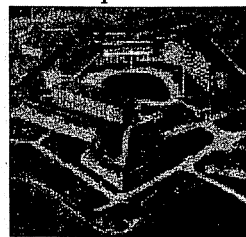


Photo by National Park Service

also can assist in maintaining the historic grounds and remove debris from the seawall and tidal wetlands on **September 27 and December 6.** The park living history unit, The Fort McHenry Guard, consists entirely of volunteers. All training and equipment are provided by the park schedule is flexible. Contact Ranger Vince Vaise, VIP Coordinator, for an application, log on to [www.nps.gov/fomc](http://www.nps.gov/fomc)

**November 8 Veterans' Day Commemoration** Begins with wreath-laying. Guard explores the fort's role in the War of 1812 through World War II. Presentation will include ranger talks, drills, authentic uniforms, rare artifacts and photographs.

**USS CONSTELLATION Museum, Pier 1 East Pratt Street, 539.1797.** Proceeds benefit the museum's ongoing restoration projects and future exhibits. Call for ticket prices. [www.constellation.org](http://www.constellation.org)

**October 4 Sailor Slang, 2-3 PM**

Al Karasa, author of *Fire Head's Malice*, discusses salty language and how seafaring terms have become a part of every-day language.

## **Peale Collection Settling In With Maryland Historical Society**

By James D. Dilts

Writer on Baltimore's Railroads and Architecture

Maryland Historical Society Director Dennis Fiori gave an audience of about 50-60 people at the Baltimore City Historical Society annual membership meeting an account of the fate of the Peale Museum collection. The membership meeting was held June 29 at the former Enoch Pratt Free Library, Branch No. 2, near Hollins Market; it is now the Neighborhood Design Center. The MdHS acquired the Peale collection following the demise of the Baltimore City Life Museums, of which the Peale was a part, in June 1997. It's in "very good hands," Fiori said. "We're a research institution."

The City Life Museums' financial condition and the nature of its properties

made a contemplated merger with the MdHS unfeasible, Fiori continued. The City Life Museums had substantial operating expenses and was in debt. The Fava Building, the 1870s Baltimore iron front re-erected as a Museums exhibition center on President Street, had too many windows to be suitable for MdHS exhibit purposes, he said. "We pulled back." Instead, the MdHS used \$2 million in city bond money to acquire the former Home Mutual Insurance Co. building at Park Avenue and Centre Street and stored the bulk of the Peale collection there. "We are integrating [it] into our system," Fiori said. "It really augmented our collection."

The Peale collection consists of books, paintings and photographs, and some 27,000 artifacts (including an archaeologi-

cal collection). The library and photos are stored in the insurance company building. There is also a Mencken collection, housed in a separate warehouse. Some of the Peale materials will be displayed in November when the MdHS opens new exhibits in its new facilities, Fiori said.

Ann Pomykala, head of the 1840s Corporation, which has taken over the operation of some of the former City Life properties, including the Shot Tower, Carroll Mansion, and the Fava Building, spoke of her ambitious plans for the properties. Dr. Hilbert Stanley, BCHS trustee, talked about Baltimore's African-American community; and member Robert Thieblot about the Mencken House. The members welcomed Romain S. Somerville as their new president.

# Baltimore's Identity Takes On Clarity With Its 19th Century Legacy

By John Dorsey

Writer on the Arts and Architecture

New Orleans is known for the French Quarter, of course. Williamsburg is known for embodying the 18th century, of course. In the case of Baltimore, there is no of course, for our city has no universal identity.

What should that identity be? The 19th Century. Not the 19th Century history of Baltimore, but Baltimore as a place where those who live here and those who come here can learn a great deal about the arts and architecture of the 19th Century. Actually, Baltimore should become known for the extended 19th Century, a period lasting from 1800, the height of the Federal period, to about 1930, when the second classical revival period was giving way to modernism.

A symposium on April 3 and 4, 2004, sponsored by the Garrett Jacobs Mansion, will examine that period as "The Golden Age," and explore Baltimore as America's essential 19th Century city, and Mount Vernon Place as its heart.

Baltimore is a museum of architecture styles from 1800 to 1930.

A few examples:

- ♦ First Classical Revival: Basilica of the Assumption, Washington Monument, Battle Monument, Evergreen House, Hackerman House. Federal: Homewood, one of America's greatest houses.
- ♦ Italianate: Eastern Female High School, Camden

Station.

- ♦ Gothic Revival: Mount Vernon Place United Methodist Church, First and Franklin Street Presbyterian Church, Grace and St. Peter's Episcopal Church.

- ♦ Tudor Gothic: former Franklin Street Presbyterian Church, City Jail Gatehouse.

- ♦ First Renaissance Revival: Peabody Institute, Asbury House.

- ♦ French Second Empire: City Hall.

- ♦ Romanesque Revival: former Mercantile Safe Deposit and Trust Company, Maryland Club.

- ♦ Chateausque: Graham-Hughes House.

- ♦ Colonial Revival: Gilman Hall.

- ♦ Second Renaissance Revival: Walters Art Gallery, Maryland Institute main building.

- ♦ Beaux-Arts: Belvedere Hotel, Washington Apartments.

- ♦ Early Twentieth Century Adamesque: Charlcote House, Furness House.

- ♦ Second Classical Revival: Baltimore Museum of Art.

In terms of 19th Century arts, the Maryland Historical Society and the Baltimore Museum of Art have exceptional collections of decorative arts, and certain historic houses including Homewood, Evergreen and Hampton have 19th Century decorative arts furnishings. The Maryland Histori-

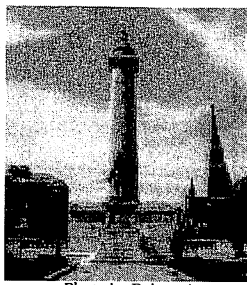


Photo by Robert Armacost  
Mt. Vernon: Period Piece.

cal also has a distinguished collection of American fine arts.

The Baltimore Museum's Lucas collection contains 20,000 works of 19th Century arts and the Museum's Cone Collection is a world-famous residence of late 19th and early 20th Century arts.

The Walters Art Gallery devotes a whole floor of its 1974 building to its superb collection of European and American 19th Century works, and its Asian collection is also partly devoted to 19th Century works.

In terms of landscape architecture, the four parks of Mount Vernon Place were worked on in the 19th Century by Frederick Law Olmsted and then by Olmsted Brothers, and in the early 20th Century by Thomas Hastings of the New York firm of Carrere and Hastings. In addition, Baltimore has several parks developed from 19th Century estates, including Patterson, Clifton, Crimea and Druid Hill, the last an especially handsome park.

Also decorating the city are many 19th and early 20th Century outdoor sculptures, with examples by eminent artists including Antoine-Louis Barye, William Henry Rinehart and Auguste Rodin.

Baltimore is indeed a treasure house of the 19th Century, and it should become known as such worldwide.

## New President Focuses on Society's Ample Agenda

By Romaine Stec Somerville

President, Baltimore City Historical Society

It is often helpful to periodically review an organization's goals. As the new BCHS president, I would like to reacquaint the membership with the following passage from the Bylaws. *The specific purposes for which the Corporation is formed are as follows:*

- To be a clearing house for historical data related to Baltimore City.*
- To encourage scholarship and public interest in Baltimore history.*
- To cooperate with and support The Maryland Historical Society in its mission to preserve and display Baltimore City historical resources.*
- To support and promote the Baltimore museums community.*
- To collect Baltimore-related publications and art.*
- To develop and maintain an internet website and such other electronic or other means of communication to facilitate access by the public to pertinent historical resources.*

The BCHS is citywide. Its unique mission can be realized in a multitude of ways, giving us an opportunity to do many things.

However, as a young organization with a growing membership and limited funds, we must keep the focus for the coming year simple and selective.

**HISTORY HONORS PROGRAM**—Our centerpiece activity, the history honors program, will continue as a key Historian Council and Trustee responsibility, with founding Judge John Carroll Byrnes at its helm.

**JOINT PROGRAMS**—Baltimore has so many historical organizations with interests in specific subjects and historic properties - the Civil War Museum, Friends of the H.L. Mencken House, the Irish Shrine, just to name a few. It is of mutual benefit for BCHS to form enduring relationships with such organizations. Sponsoring joint events is a start. This program year, BCHS activities will feature the Star-Spangled Banner Flag House and immigration history in addition to the winter program at the Great Blacks in Wax Museum.

**PEALE MUSEUM AND READING ROOM** The reopening of the Peale Museum is a

goal dear to all of us. We recently had an encouraging meeting with Kathleen Kortaba and Walter Edward Leon, the Society's liaison with the Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation. A proposal is under consideration to move CHAP offices to the Peale building, thus freeing up space at the city's Burton Office Building. A BCHS reading room for the book collection and offices in the Peale are included in the proposal. Preliminary estimates for updating the building are in the range of \$400,000. The funding source has not been identified.

**WEBSITE**—John Berndt and Marilyn Julius will be working hard to develop a first-rate website, through which BCHS will be able to communicate more conveniently with an even larger audience.

I look forward to working with the directors, trustees, officers and members to further knowledge and appreciation of the history of Baltimore. To this end, we are fortunate to have the continuing counsel and assistance of Chairman Byrnes.

## BCHS Membership Application

Please complete this form and mail with payment to the address to the right.

Name (Please print)

Address

City, State and Zip Code

Home/Office Phone

Email Address

### Dues

- \$100 Charter Member
- \$50 Sustaining
- \$20 Family
- \$15 Individual
- \$10 Student/Senior
- \$5 Associate/Mailing List

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BALTIMORE CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Fall 2003

## Society Thanks Sponsors of Reception, Newsletter

The Baltimore City Historical Society has many to thank for their support, and the Newsletter wishes to begin with a salute to Procter & Gamble for making the publication of it possible as well as for being a supporter of the Society in its other efforts.

Sponsors offer various levels of support for specific purposes, and the Society has delineated the categories of giving as "circles," starting—appropriate to keepers of Baltimore's history—with the most forthcoming sponsorships taking the name of the Fort McHenry Circle, and so on. At this time, sponsors have been most responsive at the upper levels but the Society also welcomes participants in the basic \$100 CHARM CITY CIRCLE and \$200 SHOT TOWER CIRCLE.

For now, we thank the following businesses and organizations:

### Mayor's Reception Sponsors

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## Preservation Course

In conjunction with Johns Hopkins University's Odyssey Program, Homewood House is offering a fall course on Historic Preservation: Learning from Homewood. The course addresses the history and practice of preservation in the United States. Participants learn to recognize and date American architectural styles and meet and listen to preservation professionals.

The course will conclude with a study tour to the Fells Point home of an 18th-century merchant to see preservation in practice and learn the role of small organizations in preservation efforts. Meetings are on Wednesdays from 6:30 to 8:30 PM, October 8 to November 12 at Homewood House and on Saturday, October 25, from 10 AM to 12:30 PM. To register, call 410.516.4842.

## Green Mount Cemetery Tours

Four guided tours of Green Mount Cemetery will be held on October 4, 11, 18, 25. Tours begin at 9:30 AM from the main gate, at Greenmount Avenue and East Oliver Street. The two-hour tours are led by Baltimore historian and educator Wayne R. Schaumburg. Cost \$10 and reservations are required, wschaumburg@earthlink.net.

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