

# BALTIMORE GASLIGHT

Newsletter of the Baltimore City Historical Society

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## Official Song, but Is It Maryland? BCHS Plans Contest for New One

By Michael S. Franch  
President, BCHS

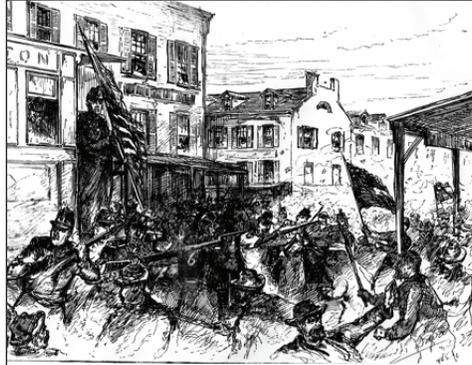
Two songs commemorate violence in Baltimore. The most famous is our national anthem, inspired by the bombardment of Fort McHenry in 1814. The other is our official state song, "Maryland, My Maryland," which commemorates the Pratt Street Riot of April 19, 1861, when a Baltimore mob attacked the Sixth Massachusetts Regiment in passage to Washington. There were deaths on both sides, the first of the Civil War. A Maryland native living in Louisiana, James Ryder Randall, wrote the poem that, set to the carol "O Tannenbaum," was popular during the war and eventually became Maryland's official song—but not until 1939!

If you went to elementary school in Maryland, you probably learned some of its nine over-wrought verses. It begins:

*The despot's heel is on thy shore,  
Maryland! My Maryland!  
His torch is at thy temple door,  
Maryland! My Maryland!  
Avenge the patriotic gore  
That flecked the streets of Baltimore,  
And be the battle queen of yore,  
Maryland! My Maryland!*

That is about all that most remember. Lines such as "Huzza! she spurns the Northern scum!" might stick in the craw, but not in the memory. The official version differs in one regard from the version here. It has a single "Maryland!" in the stanzas' second and fourth lines—not double. This is derided by most critics and generally it is printed and sung as shown. Certainly, there are other reasons to find the song deficient. It offers a one-sided view of a historic event. It treats the long-resolved issue of secession as still open. Many Marylanders then and today find its sentiments repugnant. Perhaps most significantly, it does not promote the state. It says nothing of its natural beauty, many attractions, or the achievements of its citizens. "Northern scum" certainly doesn't welcome visitors or investors from above the Mason-Dixon Line.

Several attempts to replace Randall's verses have failed. (Continued on Page 2)



"Baltimore in 1861" by J. C. Robinson  
Pratt Street Riot of April 19, 1861.

## Union Cannons Reined in City

By Jay Merwin

Within a month after the April 19, 1861, Baltimore riot, federal troops seized the commanding heights of Federal Hill and trained their cannons on much of the southern end of the city. On the low ground, federal authorities followed through with a proclamation to seize any munitions destined for the Confederacy, restrict meetings of armed men and ban display of Confederate flags and other signs of favor toward the rebellion.

Baltimore was the nerve center of the B&O Railroad, which was essential for transporting federal troops to the fight in Virginia, and a hotbed of southern sympathy. Of necessity, the military presence was overwhelming.

The federal government went on to erect more fortifications around town: just east of Patterson Park, near the current site of Johns Hopkins Hospital, near Mt. Clare, and other points. Barracks sprang up in Lafayette Square, Carroll Park and Druid Hill Park. Downtown hotels were commandeered for military headquarters and former slave-dealers' pens in Camden Station served as temporary prisons for unruly Union soldiers and detained southern sympathizers. Fort McHenry, significantly reinforced with troops after the riots, was a way station for captured Confederate soldiers and sympathizers on their way to larger, permanent camps to the north. Federal gunboats patrolled the Chesapeake Bay and the Patapsco River.

Although never reaching the conflagration of the April (Continued on Page 2)

## Hecht-II: 1st Civil War Death Attributed to Fell's Pointers

By Michael J. Lisicky

Most people who study this city's role in the Civil War are familiar with "The Baltimore Riot," also known as "The Pratt Street Riot," that produced, by all accounts until now, the first fatalities of the conflict. Trains then arrived from the north along tracks on Canton Avenue, known today as Fleet Street, which fed into President Street Station. At that point, the railroad cars—in this case bearing federal troops bound for Washington—were removed from the locomotive. Each car was then pulled by horses westward on Pratt Street, off limits to engines, along tracks to Camden Station—now a museum at Oriole Park. The cars joined a locomotive there and continued south to the capital. On April 19, 1861, that routine collapsed into a riot that left at least four soldiers and more than a dozen rioters dead.

But Simeon Hecht, German-born scion of a family of merchants in Fell's Point, tells a different story about that day. Yes, he tells of bloodshed but he insists that the first casualty did not occur on Pratt, near Gay Street, but a dozen blocks east in Fell's Point. On that April 19, a long train, 25 to 30 cars, arrived in Baltimore by way of the tracks on Canton Avenue (Fleet Street). The train carried the Massachusetts 6th Regiment, along with some volunteers from Pennsylvania who were responding to Lincoln's call to arms.

According to Hecht's 1908 memoir, which surfaced recently at the Jewish Museum, his son was playing at recess at Public School #2, Broadway and Bank Street. Suddenly the students heard shots and outcries. They looked down Broadway to see men with guns and axes attacking a train traveling westward along Canton Avenue (Fleet Street). Hannah Hecht went for Simeon's son at school and hustled him home. As Simeon was not home, Hannah huddled with her children in the cellar but watched the conflict. They witnessed, said Hecht, a Union soldier being pulled from the train. He was beaten to death by the mob and his body was left on the (Continued on Page 2)

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## Baltimore Burst Into Song

By Don Torres

Most Marylanders may know the state has an embattled official song, "Maryland, My Maryland," but how many recall Baltimore's official anthem, "Baltimore, Our Baltimore"? When was this song last sung in our schools or elsewhere for that matter?

The song begins in 1915, just 11 years after the Great Baltimore Fire. It was a growing city and civic pride was surging. Progressive Mayor James H. Preston already had achieved a municipal flag, designed by Hans Schuler. It still waves. Preston also wanted an anthem. He offered two considerable prizes, of \$250 each in gold for the best poem on Baltimore and best musical adaptation. Prestigious judges were selected. Entries were received from every state.

In September, the prize for best poem was awarded to a Sun columnist, Folger Mckinsey, known as the Bentztown Bard. Competition for best musical adaptation commenced. On January 5, 1916, this prize was awarded to Emma Hemberger and the song was first performed a month later. Emma, also a pianist and singer, had married Theodor Hemberger in 1903. He became a conductor at Peabody and a member of H.L. Mencken's Saturday Night Club of musicians. According to David Donovan of the Pratt Library's Fine Arts Department, Emma also wrote "Sophie Waltz," dedicating it to Mencken. A copy was found in his effects.

As for "Baltimore, Our Baltimore," City Paper critic Toni Morrison calls it "a pretty song . . . miles better than the dippy state song 'Maryland, My Maryland.'" She said the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra last performed it at Memorial Stadium during the 1969 World Series. Baltimore was the first U.S. city to adopt a municipal anthem, and not many followed. Chicago and New York inspired enduring pop songs. Hoagy Carmichael's "Baltimore Oriole" is more about the bird.

The city anthem has four verses, but most who remember singing it in school in the 1940s and 1950s were confined to the first:

*Baltimore, where Carroll flourished,  
 And the fame of Calvert grew!  
 Here the old defenders conquered  
 as their valiant swords they drew.  
 Here the starry banner glistened  
 In the sunshine of the sea,  
 In that dawn of golden vision  
 That awoke the song of Key:  
 Here are hearts that beat forever  
 For the city we adore;  
 Here for the love of men and brothers--  
 Baltimore, our Baltimore!*

## Maryland - Continued from page 1

The latest was in 2009, when State Sen. Jennie Forehand proposed substituting words that John T. White wrote in 1894 celebrating the state's beauty. (See Robert H. Johnson Jr., "James Ryder Randall and 'Maryland, My Maryland,'" *Maryland Historical Magazine* 105, 2 [Summer 2010], 141-42) for White's lyrics.)

The 150th anniversary of the riot that inspired Randall's poem should offer inspiration to poets and songwriters to find new words and perhaps new music to inspire modern-day Marylanders. Since the inspirational event and subject of the first verse occurred here, the Baltimore City Historical Society is sponsoring a contest to find a song or songs that Marylanders would be proud to sing. Recruiting of judges is underway. Watch our website: [www.historicbaltimore.org/](http://www.historicbaltimore.org/) for details.

In the spirit of the original, here is an invitation to your own creativity:

*From Garrett peak to Eastern Shore, Maryland!  
 My Maryland!  
 Our state song is a yawning bore, Maryland!  
 My Maryland!  
 No wonder patriots ignore the bad poem  
 about Baltimore  
 Let's celebrate our great state's lore, Maryland!  
 My Maryland!*

## Union Cannons - Continued from page 1

riot, violence flared sporadically in the city, especially on the news of significant Union victories. Citizens thought to be aiding the Confederacy occasionally were arrested by city police—who were under control of federal provost marshals. In one instance, attendance at the funeral of a Confederate officer killed in battle was sufficient cause. With suspension of the writ of habeas corpus, some people were held without trial.

Not until early in 1866 did the provost marshal's department go out of business in Maryland. Such was life under "the despot's heel," as the opening line of Maryland's state song still puts it.

The largest Union encampment in Baltimore was at Camp Carroll, overlooking the B&O. It is now a city park. The B&O will be offering rides this season to the ex-camp

This article is based on "Maryland in the Civil War" by Harold R. Manakee; "Maryland: The South's First Casualty" by Bart Rhett Talbert and "Maryland's Blue & Gray: A Border State's Union and Confederate Junior Officer Corps" by Kevin Conley Ruffner. Sources on this topic in the Maryland history room at the Enoch Pratt Free Library, where these books may be found, tend to lean south.

## From the President

### History--More Than a Degree

By Michael S. Franch

Once upon a time, History (meaning "historians") would not have been interested in most of us—people who lead ordinary lives, not armies, political movements, or voyages of discovery. We might own nice things, but not artistic treasures. We have some "movers and shakers" in our Historical Society, but most of us are more shaken than shakers.

Fortunately, the old way of looking at history is history, and historians have discovered and are still discovering new ways of looking at the past and finding new stories to tell. It sometimes comes as a jolt to think that it was just 20 years ago that a group of scholars published "The Baltimore Book: New Views of Local History," a ground-breaking look at the city's labor, African-American, and women's history. Or consider Seth Rockman's "Scraping By: Wage Labor, Slavery, and Survival in Early Baltimore," (2009), on working-class life in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Studies such as these tell us a lot was going on that many people at the time did not notice because they were living it—and historians missed it while looking farther back.

Two studies mine relatively recent (from my perspective) Baltimore past: Antero Pietila's "Not in My Neighborhood: How Bigotry Shaped a Great American City," and Howell Baum's "Brown in Baltimore: School Desegregation and the Limits of Liberalism," (both 2010). These books are about movers and shakers, some still living, but also about community attitudes—and that we are the community and we have "attitudes" that shape history. I suspect future historians will find that we tell them much by where we live and work, by how and if we participate in our communities, the causes we support, and the injustices they see that we are blind to. It will be interesting, for those around when historians study the early 21st century, to find out what history we made.

## Hecht II - Continued from page 1

sidewalk. When the commotion subsided, Hannah had the body brought to her store at Canton Avenue and Regester Street. A mob threatened to attack the Hecht store but police from the Eastern Station arrived and took the body to police headquarters. Hecht concludes by saying this was the location of the first casualty of the Civil War.

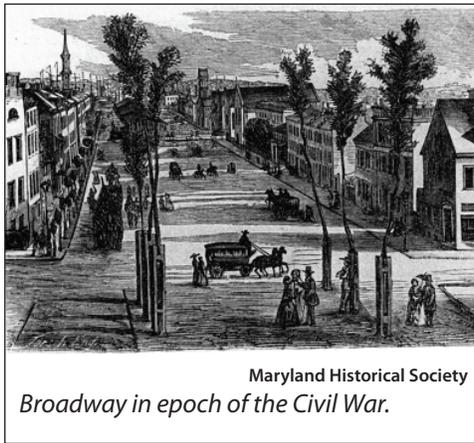
Could that be? All other reports say that Southern sympathizers attacked the Massachusetts troops as they made their journey from President Street Station to Camden Station. How can Hecht see otherwise and be so adamant about it in his writings? He states that the troops on the train in Fell's Point were unarmed. Other accounts say the troops from Massachusetts were armed with muskets, even though they were under strict orders not to shoot.

How do you pull someone from a moving train? At least eight cars made the trip down Pratt Street without incident before the disturbance occurred. Could this long train have been stopped in Fell's Point as the Massachusetts troops received word of the Pratt Street attacks? As stated earlier, at the end of the train was some volunteers from Pennsylvania. These troops were unarmed. They might have been on a stopped train as the rowdy crowd advanced in Fell's Point.

Most accounts of the killings that day include four privates from the Massachusetts militia and about 11 city civilians. Some add a southern sympathizer, perhaps even a soldier, shot dead in Camden Station early on. A memorial displayed by Friends of President Street Station also lists a 26th Regiment Pennsylvania volunteer, shot at the station, who died on return home. The Friends have a data base on the casualties that does not corroborate Hecht. But could his be the real account of the first death? History is usually documented through personal accounts. But Hecht's version makes one wonder if other versions are farther from the facts.

Hecht's narrative continues that after the death of this soldier, a crowd of Union sympathizers in Fell's Point raised the "Stars and Stripes" across Broadway from the Regester St. side to the opposite corner. This suggests the sentiment in Fell's Point might have been more for the Union than the Confederacy--contrary to the general city position. After the riot, Baltimore was held at bay for the course of the war.

Maryland and two other border states, Kentucky and Tennessee, enacted a "Stay Law" that mostly benefited the southern states. If any corporation or citizen owed a



Maryland Historical Society  
*Broadway in epoch of the Civil War.*

debt, the individual or business was protected from suit for nonpayment. This benefited southerners because it helped keep money within the boundaries of the south. It was "death to northern creditors," said Hecht.

Simeon states that the "first person" to take advantage of the Stay Law was his brother, Samuel Hecht Jr. Samuel was the founder of The Hecht Co. that thrived for well over a century. Soon after Sam took advantage of the Stay Law, his other siblings followed suit. Unfortunately, the debt that the Hecht siblings owed was to Simeon. Almost overnight, he lost \$60,000, a huge sum at the time, by his accounting--all due to the actions of his brothers. Simeon had to sell off everything that he had to house and clothe his family.

Before the Civil War, Fell's Point was coming into its own as an established community. Simeon Hecht recalls that in the late 1840s, the residential portion of Fell's Point centered on Fell, Thames and Ann Streets. The makeup of the area began to change due to "the rapid and continuous arrival of the 'foreign element.'" Their "degenerate and immoral

### German Encomium

Dear John [C. Murphy, Chairman],

The German Society wishes to thank you, your editor Lewis H. Diuguid, and your organization for dedicating your fall newsletter to the history of Germans in Baltimore! You have covered several important aspects of this history, of which your members/readers may not have been aware, including the information on Friedrich Raine and "Der Deutsche Correspondent" . . . and the importance of Zion Church . . . While we have provided a link to your web site on our site for our members, we would also like to print some of your material in our future newsletters . . .

Sincerely,  
Brigitte V. Fessenden, past president  
The German Society of Maryland

code of living" forced the area's residents to move to the Broadway area, between Canton Avenue and Baltimore Street.

Broadway became an assortment of commercial and residential buildings. Canton Avenue was home to the tracks of the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad. Originally the rail cars were powered by horses, then steam engines. Citizens complained of being endangered the railroad agreed to hire a flag man to walk in front, warning of moving trains.

In the late 1840s, the art of beer making began to advance here. Brewmaster George Rost made the first keg of beer in Baltimore, said Hecht. Rost's beer was "made in the old country style" (German). He purchased the ingredients at a Hecht family grocery business at Broadway and Shakespeare Street. Rost brought the malt and hops to his property at the foot of Bond Street. Rost's business grew and by the mid 1850s he relocated to Belair Road near North Avenue. Rost's was the famous Standard Brewery. In 1853, he employed John Frederick Wiessner as brewmaster. Wiessner came from Bavaria in 1862. In 1863, Wiessner founded the American Brewery--its 1887 building newly restored.

By 1861, there were at least eight businesses in East Baltimore that Simeon Hecht helped finance. Two were on Broadway. Simeon and his brother Samuel each owned a competing dry goods stores. After organizing his finances, Simeon branched out into fruit- and oyster-packing. He became the first Jew to enter the thriving oyster business. But neither survived. The oyster operation was deeply in debt due to the nonrepayment of business loans by his siblings. Simeon states that "had they acted honestly, [Simeon Hecht] would have been one of the wealthiest men among the Hebrew fraternity in Baltimore."

Samuel Hecht, referred to by Simeon as "the crook," built a business based on credit. In 1879, he opened Hecht's Reliable Store, a popular Broadway retail establishment for almost 80 years. By 1885, Samuel expanded throughout the city. His son Moses helped build the famous Hecht Co. empire. Other members of the family are chastised. It is clear that the businesses that the Hecht families built ended up breaking the bonds of brotherhood. Still, the family grew up with Baltimore until the name finally came off all remaining stores in 2006.

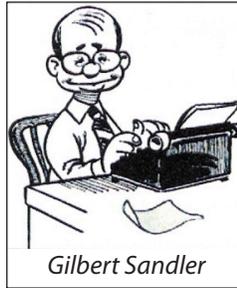
*Lisicky is author of "Hutzler's: Where Baltimore Shops" and "Wanamaker's: Meet Me at the Eagle." He is a musician with the Baltimore Symphony and a member of the board of the Preservation Society of Federal Hill and Fell's Point.*

### History Evenings at Mid-term

The Baltimore City Historical Society and the Village Learning Place are sponsoring their third year of free evening Baltimore history presentations at the Village Learning Place, 2521 St. Paul Street. Each begins with a reception at 7PM, and the presentation at 7:30. On March 17, the topic was "Desegregation, Baltimore, 1954: What Happened?" Baltimore peacefully desegregated its public schools in 1954, but never achieved real integration. Howell Baum, professor of Urban Studies and Planning at the University of Maryland, and author of "Brown in Baltimore: School Desegregation and the Limits of Liberalism (2010)" laid out the shortfall and its consequences.

Still to come, on April 21, is "Gilbert Sandler: A Life in Baltimore." Newspaperman Sandler has told city tales for decades in books, articles, and on the radio, but now he will talk about his own life in journalism, public relations, and exploration of the city.

The May 19 topic will be "Where Do We Go from Here? The 20th Anniversary of "The Baltimore Book: New Views of Local History." This ground-breaking look at Baltimore's labor, African-American, and women's history is still in print after 20 years. What did it tell about Baltimore, and what would a 21st century New Views look like? Presenters will



Gilbert Sandler

include authors of the original and people looking at the same issues anew. A final lecture in the series is to be presented June 16.

The series got off to a swinging start on

January 20, with Loyola Professor Mark Os-teen and students who helped write the book he co-edited with Frank J. Graziano last year, "Music at the Crossroads: Lives and Legacies of Baltimore Jazz." It spotlights careers closely associated with the city, from pianist-writer Eubie Blake and drummer Chick Webb to singers Billie Holiday and Ethel Ennis, as well as Peabody-trained contemporary pianist Cyrus Chestnut.

On February 17, State Archivist Ed Papenfuse took by the throat a long-running city topic, "A Communist Spy in Charles Village, Or the Framing of Alger Hiss?" Laying out the conflict of half a century ago between author and ex-Communist Whitaker Chambers and the Johns Hopkins professor he accused of being a Soviet spy, Hiss, Papenfuse concluded that "Chambers made it all up." Hiss was never exonerated of a perjury conviction and evidence surfacing since the collapse of the Soviet Union has been interpreted as implicating him. But Papenfuse found against the author of "Witness."

### 150-Yr. Commemoration of War

The city-owned President Street Station, which had failed as Civil War museum several years ago, has reopened to commemorate its role 150 years in the bloody passage through the city of Washington-bound federal troops. The Friends of President Street Station, dedicated to maintenance, played a vital role in preventing its demolition in the 1980s. The group has gathered memorabilia and displays in the waiting room to tell the tales of this terminus of the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad, established in 1838.

On Saturday, April 15, one parade will end at the station and a larger one will then start there. The Confederate-oriented Friends of the station will hold their annual parade, forming up on the Square in Fell's Point at 8:30AM for the march to President Street. At 11, a city parade will trace the route taken by the Union soldiers along then-riotous Pratt Street to Camden Station--where the troops boarded the B&O. Curator Patrick McHugh of the Friends exhibit notes that by city rules no Confederate uniforms or flags can be included among the units in the parade. He predicts some rebel yells along the way.

Admission is free at the Station, which is open weekends and is extending hours to 10AM-5PM on April 15-17. The Friends hope for more than weekend hours this summer. Artifacts include arms but also music, including "The Fort Federal Hill Quick-Step."

#### BCHS: Please Renew or Join

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Check type of membership desired:

- Individual (\$15)
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- Family/Household (\$20)
- Sustaining (\$50)
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I wish to be a joint member of the BCHS/MHS (see below)  Individual  Family/Household

**Joint Maryland Historical Society/Baltimore City Historical Society Membership Opportunity!** To the BCHS dues shown above, add \$35 (Individual) or \$50 (Family/Household) to become a member of MHS. (This represents a discount from the \$50/\$65 MHS membership dues.) Your discounted dues will be apportioned on renewal.

Total Amount Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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