

BALTIMORE

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Immigration Era, Part II: This Is Where We Came In

By Parker D. Pennington

The mission of the Baltimore Immigration Project is to explore, preserve and present to the public the city's largely untold history of as many as 2 million who came ashore here. They had many motivations for leaving home, but a common thread is that sailing into the unknown demanded courage and tenacity. Project planners are exploring ways to honor each of those immigrants through their American descendants.

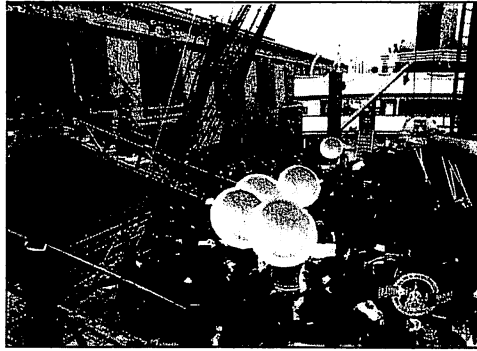
While the first of the Newsletter's articles outlined the history of the post-Civil War influx, this installment is devoted to the efforts of the Baltimore Immigration Project. It is committed to developing and operating sites, programs and events in ways to deliver maximum economic and cultural benefit to the city and state. Project leaders believe that fostering a better understanding of what those who arrived in earlier waves experienced can only bolster Baltimore's ability to attract and assist new immigrants.

Not all aspects of the immigration legacy are positive. European newcomers often endured discrimination at the hands of already established immigrant groups. Over the centuries, people from every part of the globe arrived under daunting conditions. Their stories, including those of involuntarily imported African slaves, also are to be explored.

The idea for commemorating Baltimore's immigration history was introduced nearly a decade ago by local businessman Ron Zimmerman, following a visit to Ellis Island where he was surprised to learn that Baltimore ranked among the nation's top ports of entry. His initiative had to overcome the loss by fire of an historic Locust Point building that was to house an immigration museum.

Since then, leaders have developed a program that includes research, physical sites, an interpretation program, events and a computer database that for the first time will make information about individual immigrants readily accessible:

Research. While hundreds of works



In this B&O Railroad photo, immigrants disembark at Locust Point facility in about 1870.

tell about immigration through Ellis Island, Baltimore's story has received virtually no scholarly or popular attention. The Baltimore Immigration Project is committed to expanding what is known about local immigration history by commissioning research— by BCHS members and others.

An initial study of the immigration facilities at Locust Point and the waves of immigrants who passed through them after the Civil War already has been completed. This work, undertaken by local researchers Dean Krimmel, a member of BCHS, and Wayne Nield, produced a script outline and identified hundreds of photos and graphics that will help guide the design of exhibits. Additional research is to be commissioned, including of the obscure pre-Civil War immigration, and oral histories will be sought.

Interpretation. Exhibits are being planned to introduce Baltimore's story to the general public. These installations will be located in Fells Point, where most immigrants landed prior to 1868, and Locust Point, site of immigration facilities thereafter. While each side of the harbor received perhaps a million newcomers, at Locust Point the influx occurred during a much shorter period, known as the "Great Wave."

This peak inflow will be commemorated at the waterfront Baltimore Immigration Gateway Park. This fall, ground will be broken for it at the Tide Point office complex and adjoining Hull Street Park. The site is significant as (Cont. on Page 3)

Society to Honor Five Historians at Brunch

The fourth annual Mayor's Reception and Historian Honorees Brunch of the Baltimore City Historical Society will be held at the Maryland Historical Society on Sunday, October 10, at Noon, with a tour of the current exhibit commemorating the 1904 Baltimore Fire to follow.

Five historians—Taylor Branch, Robert Bruggen, William V. Elder III, Roland A. McConnell and Gilbert Sandler—will be honored for their published work, and another five will be cited for contributions to the City's "living history." They are Anne Tyler, Roberet C. Embry Jr., Grace Hartigan, James McKay and David Simon. Five others will be honored in memorial. In addition, Frank R. Shivers, a history honoree last year, will sign copies of *The Architecture of Baltimore, an Illustrated History*, of which he is co-editor with Mary Ellen Hayward. It was published this year by The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Open to the public as well as the membership, the reception has drawn sizable turnouts—to Clifton Mansion last year and to the briefly reopened Peale Museum the year before. One function of the event is to raise funds for the Society, which charges \$30 for advance tickets or \$35 at the door. The caterer, Charles Levine, is donating fancy desserts. Mail ticket orders with check to Mrs. Margery Clark, 100 Harbor View Drive #204, Baltimore 21230, or use the membership renewal form on Page 4.

The Maryland Historical Society site offers attendees the opportunity of seeing not only the much acclaimed exhibit on the 1904 fire but also the recently completed expansion of what has become the campus of MdHS. Entry to the reception will be from the Monument Street side, just west of Park Avenue.

The honorees were selected by the BCHS Historians Council, chaired by Dr. Cynthia Neverdon-Morton, and approved by the Board of Trustees. Citations for the historian-scholar honorees note that: **Branch**—"is the author of *Parting the Waters*, the first of a trilogy (Cont. on Page 4)

EDITORIAL: *Tinkering With the City's Soul*

Acronymically, CHAP leaves much to be desired, signifying as it does the Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation yet hinting of a skin rash or perhaps a feckless acquaintance. Both intimations cross the mind, though, as the City's first line in defense of its legacy has become a bureaucratic football. We shouldn't kick it around.

The mayor has declared allegiance to preservation of Baltimore's past even as he tries to endow its future. But through an unsettling present, his absence on the matter of CHAP—failing, for instance, to consult the historically minded on its fate—has been notable.

First, his new director of Planning wrested CHAP from its relative autonomy under the Department of Housing, bringing it into Planning's headquarter despite grave potential for conflict of interest. An incidental casualty was an initiative of BCHS to revive the City's vacant Peale Museum. It included CHAP becoming a lead resident there. As our president notes, at right, a solution may be found absent CHAP. Still, it probably should be there.

On the larger issue of the Commission's autonomy under Planning, the outcome remains clouded. Recently a City Urban Renewal ordinance for the Poppleton-Saratoga Streets area, involving clearance of 554 properties, many from the 1860s, went to the City Council before CHAP even learned of its existence!

Of late, word has come down that a group including a representative of BCHS could weigh the options for CHAP and their consequences. We await that opening, eagerly. In the City's strongly mayoral governance, Martin O'Malley is the primary responsible for protection of Baltimore's heritage. He must strengthen CHAP until it becomes a formidable weapon to carry in that cause, not a bureaucratic castoff.

Society Puts in Place A President-Elect

By Romaine Somerville

President of BCHS

As we approach the Fourth Annual Mayor's Reception and History Honors program, I am pleased to report that the young Baltimore City Historical Society is both growing and thriving. Attendance at programs has doubled and even tripled. The book collection under Jim Dilts has outgrown our office space and is now filling new shelves outside the office.

Plans are well underway for the Society's key long-range project, the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the Peale Museum as the Baltimore City History Center. According to the current plan, the building will be opened to the public and will house the offices of several local preservation and historical organizations. A reading room will be stocked with the BCHS book collection. Exhibitions on the Peale family of painters and on the history of Baltimore will be on the first floor.

To insure continuity on these projects, the board created the position of president-elect. At the Annual Meeting this spring at the Maryland Maritime Center in Fells Point, Robert B. Kershaw was named the Society's first president-elect. Elections are next June.

Mr. Kershaw comes well prepared for the task. He was elected to the Board of Preservation Maryland in 1984 and served as president of that state-wide preservation organization 1988-90. After a brief hiatus, he has recently returned to the Preservation Maryland Board. In addition, he is a gubernatorial appointee to and former chair of the Maryland Humanities Council. He is president-elect of the Baltimore Court House and Law Museum Foundation and is the principal in the civil litigation firm of Ward Kershaw, P.A., with offices in the Mount Vernon historic area.

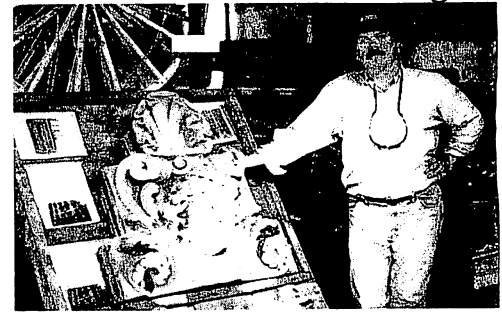
Frank and Romaine Somerville are sponsors of this issue of the newsletter.

Review: *THE Book On City's Architecture*

The Architecture of Baltimore, an Illustrated History, edited by Mary Ellen Hayward and Frank R. Shivers, Jr.

The story started 50 years ago by Richard Howland and Eleanor Spencer in their 1953 volume on Baltimore's architecture. The planning started 15 years ago with the initiation of the Baltimore Architecture Foundation and the Historic Architects Roundtable. This Foundation's subcommittee began meeting regularly, un-

Second Chance Picks Up Pieces of Lost Buildings



Mark Foster and a piece of Mercy Hospital.

BCHS member Mark Foster practices an often anguishing urban archaeology: collecting at his Second Chance Inc. warehouse the mantles and skylights, the paneled doors and wrought-iron railings that once adorned Baltimore buildings.

Foster prefers preservation, but when the demolition ball is about to swing, he steps in with the last-resort alternative of "deconstruction." Owners attracted by tax deductions turn to Second Chance crews, who remove salvageable materials for resale before they clear the site. Demand for the old materials is intense, "supply is the problem," said Foster. "Renovation is very active, more than I expected."

Second Chance, a nonprofit corporation, has been open only a year at 1645 Warner Street south of the Ravens' stadium. Foster trains laborers through a grant from the Mayor's Office of Employment Development and in most cases retains them. The team is up to 30 and growing. It has a big new assignment, as salvage agent for Johns Hopkins' East Side Biotech project, amid desolation north of the Hospital. Foster's hope there is to save cornices and marble steps from houses deemed beyond redemption, for reincorporation in new structures so that at least an aesthetic will survive.

Foster, 47, was a restaurateur in Fells Point but became interested in redeemed materials while working on his house in Roland Park.

covering more information on Baltimore's great buildings and leading architects.

The renewed interest in the city's architectural past sparked the idea of completing the 20th century documentation and exploring how it's architecture came into being. This book represents that effort, which includes the editors' and contributing authors' 10 years of research. Baltimore has a rich architectural heritage and this book chronicles its development and the city's growth. —Walter Schamu, FAIA

Center to Give Offspring Sense of Immigrants' Venture

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the nearest publicly accessible property to the location of the B&O Railroad's 1868 Locust Point immigration piers.

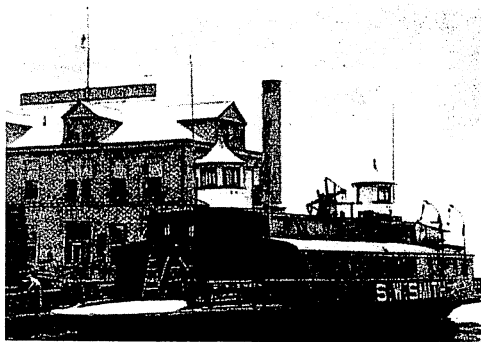
Design is underway of an orientation center to house exhibits, a multi-media production and interactive features. The site is being provided by Struever Bros. Eccles & Rouse, the owner of Tide Point, and will be set in a contemplative area to be called The Liberty Garden. It is to feature a reflecting pool and Wall of Honor that will display nameplates purchased by people wishing to commemorate the arrival of ancestors.

Plans to improve the small, city-owned Hull Street Park, adjacent, include paving, landscaping and lighting. Even the adjacent industrial molasses operation will play a roll. This tank farm visually dominates the surroundings and blocks sight lines to the remnants of the historic immigration piers. Permission has been granted to cover the tanks with giant photo murals of the onetime Locust Point immigration facilities. A boardwalk at the perimeter would provide a view of the remnant piers.

Database. For most people the subject of immigration is not academic but highly personal. To succeed, the Project needs to tap the emotional connection many feel when they explore their family roots. It is estimated that as many as 30 to 40 million people nationwide may be descended from the 2 million who first touched American soil on a Baltimore dock.

As a requirement of state laws enacted during the era of mass immigration, detailed records were kept about those who arrived by ship in Baltimore. These passenger manifests still exist, but only on paper or microfiche. This severely limits the number of people who can physically visit the Maryland Historical Society or National Archives to examine the records. Creation of a computer database of the manifests will make the information readily available. When this large undertaking is complete, the searchable family research resource will be accessible via the Project website, immigrationbaltimore.org.

International. An effort to reach out internationally does not target only individual relatives. Historically, Baltimore had close ties to major European emigration ports, particularly Bremen/Bremerhaven, Hamburg and Liverpool. Already, project leaders are discussing with Bremerhaven officials and leaders of



The ferry once shuttled immigrants from Locust Point to Fells Point.

that city's German Emigration Museum partnership opportunities. The museum is to open in 2005 in conjunction with a major festival of tall ships. Event planners are seeking to have The Pride of Baltimore II and a delegation from Baltimore participate. Project officials hope to foster similar relationships with other emigration cities.

Programs. Interactive programs help to keep attractions fresh and also can aid fundraising and membership efforts. Events being considered would honor ancestors, mark anniversaries of significant events in local immigration history and celebrate the diversity and continuing ethnic traditions that remain among the richest aspects of our shared heritage.

To link past immigrants with newcomers, leaders have discussed with Immigration and Naturalization Service officials the prospect of hosting swearing-in ceremonies. Already, a Project partner, the Preservation Society of Federal Hill and Fells Point, offers an immigration tour. In Locust Point, a brief audio presentation plays aboard the buses that shuttle passengers between the Water Taxi landing at Tide Point and Fort McHenry. The Project has begun a collection of documents and artifacts it seeks to preserve and display. The first item: a c.1850 steamer trunk stenciled "Bremen-Baltimore."

Pennington is senior designer at Xibitz, Inc., a Baltimore exhibiting firm.

OBITUARY: Randolph Wakefield Chalfant

Frederick N. Rasmussen recorded the death of Baltimore architect Chalfant, 85, noting among his accomplishments the curatorship of the Radcliffe Maritime Museum of the Maryland Historical Society and the annual enchantment of his Tuscany-Canterbury neighborhood with a Christmas train garden. He was an authority on the city's first architectural firm, Niernsee & Neilson.

Carroll Mansion Awaits Benefactors and Public

Hard by the east bank of Jones Falls, the Carroll Mansion puts on a proud facade and suffers the indignities of west-bound traffic on Lombard Street—a survivor since 1823, taking in the occasional tour group now while awaiting a few good benefactors.

The mansion is a key element in transformation of the former City Life Museums. It is owned by Baltimore City but leased at nominal rate to a nonprofit foundation, Carroll Museums Inc., which operates it and the Shot Tower Museum a block away. The foundation was set in place by Anne Pomykala, who in a deal with the city two years ago is revamping other buildings in the complex as for-profit restaurant, bed-and-breakfast and hall rental spaces.

Alan Gephardt, director of Carroll Museums, laments that advocates of the mansion who stood by it in past crises are dying off and he has been able to attract only about a third of the 15-member board envisioned to oversee care of the building. Otherwise sound after renovation in 1967, it needs a boiler and a cooling-humidity control system. Accordingly, the period furnishings that once drew visitors up the spiral staircase to vast rooms are now in storage at the Maryland Historical Society. State bond bills can provide up to \$75,000 but the board must come up with matching funds. The City official closest to the transaction expressed hope that such support will be forthcoming.

Charles Carroll of Carrollton gave the land on what then was called King George Street as a wedding gift to his daughter and an immigrant merchant, Richard Caton, who built the house. Carroll later lived and in 1832 died there, at 95, as the last signer of the Declaration of Independence. He lay in state in the second floor drawing room. Carrolls owned it until 1856, after which it was variously a nunnery, nursery, sweatshop, tenement and recreation center.

Gephardt is hopeful that the current trickle of visitors will grow as the emergent cultural center along President Street evolves. For now, many at the mansion's door arrive confused, he said: "They're looking for the Flag House around the corner." His hope is for a board that can make the public aware of this gem long dimmed. The Museum's phone number is 410.605.2954, and its website is www.1840splaza.com.

Mayor's Brunch to Celebrate 5 Historians, 5 Contributors and 5 in Memory

(Continued from Page 1)

that examines the life of Martin Luther King Jr. He resides in Baltimore and is a noted lecturer at educational institutions."

Brugger—"is the acquisitions editor of American history, history of science and technology, and regional books at Hopkins University Press. He is the author or editor of several books, including *Maryland: A Middle Temperament*."

Elder—"was the curator of decorative arts at the Baltimore Museum of Art. He is the author of several exhibit catalogs which place decorative art objects within the context of local history."

McConnell—"is professor emeritus of Morgan State University and has written numerous articles and monographs that focus on the African American experience in Maryland."

Sandler—"has written extensively for the *Baltimore Sun* and *Jewish Times*. He is the author of *Jewish Family Album* and *Small Town Baltimore: An Album of Memories*." Living history citations:

Tyler—"sets most of her novels in Baltimore, where she lives in Roland Park. A Pulitzer prizewinner, Ms. Tyler has ac-

quainted her readers with the many aspects of living in Baltimore."

Embry—"is president of the Abell Foundation. He was recently honored by the Mayor's Office of Employment Development for his work in cultivating employment opportunities for ex-offenders."

Hartigan—"an internationally renowned artist, she has been active in the visual arts since the 1950s. She moved to Roland Park in 1967 and began her involvement with the Maryland Institute College of Art. For many years, she maintained a studio in Fells Point and helped to develop it as an artistic and cultural center."

McKay—"is a former reporter for the *Baltimore Sun* and was for many years a local radio and television personality. He is a minority owner of the Orioles. In 1969, he became the first sportscaster to win an Emmy."

Simon—"is an American realist painter who has also been a musician, composer and educator. He is the founding director of the Baltimore School for the Arts."

In a third, memorial, category, five others were honored: **Beatrice Frankie Fowler "Bea" Gaddy**, famed for running a food

kitchen-pantry, and elected to City Council prior to her death in 2002; **Lillie M. Carroll Jackson**, long-serving president of the Baltimore Branch of the NAACP, died in 1975; Baltimore-born **Thurgood Marshall**, civil rights leader here and nationally, and Supreme Court justice for 24 years, died 1993; **Benjamin Quarles**, historian and teacher at Morgan State University, died 1996; and **Phoebe Stanton**, architectural historian and author who taught at Hopkins and served on the City's Design Advisory Panel, died last year.

The next of the Society's regular free programs will be at 11 AM on December 11 at the Druid Hill Park Conservatory for a tour of the poinsettia exhibit and a history of the park. On June 18, the annual meeting was held at the Maryland Maritime Center in Fells Point and the prior program, a backstage look at the revived Hippodrome Theater, attracted about 75 enthusiasts on May 8.

Shivers, in a spring Newsletter article on Bolton Hill, inadvertently referred to ex-resident Felix Morley as a president of Hamilton College. Alumni of Haverford ask us to repent, and we do forthwith.

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Please reserve ___ tickets in my name fore the Oct. 10 brunch (including \$30 per ticket in your check).

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