

Do You Know The Street On Which You Live?

Thoroughfare Bearing Family Name Of The Lords Baltimore Has Picturesque History

Calvert Street

BY EMILY EMERSON LANTZ.
CALVERT STREET possesses the distinction of bearing the family name of the Lords Baltimore, and was indicated, but not yet christened, when the first plat of the original Baltimore Town was made, in 1729.

The only public wharf that Baltimore knew up to 1783 was at Calvert street, and ancestors of men now resident of this city knew the street well when Baltimore Town was surrounded by a stockade, or at least a stout board fence. The latter had two carriage gates and one pedestrian gate, and was designed as a protection against Indian attack.

FIRST COURTHOUSE.

The first difficulty to be surmounted in Calvert street's struggle for existence was the turbulent waters of Jones' Falls.

Those who catch occasional glimpses of that chastened and diminished stream that in latter days has hidden itself beneath the stone masonry of the arched Fallway, scarcely can conceive of its lusty current, when vessels of considerable burden were built and launched in tidewater, where the City Spring long has flowed, surrounded by tall elm trees and which is now the site of Mercy Hospital. At Lexington and Calvert streets ships anchored, men were drowned and boys rejoiced in swimming.

What is now the bed of Calvert street was then deep water.

At Fayette and Calvert streets, where the Battle Monument now stands, there was then what historians of early Baltimore called "a precipice," 50 or 60 feet high, which overhung Jones' Falls. Upon this hill, in 1757, was built the first Courthouse Baltimore knew.

This was a two-story brick building surmounted by a cupola, which continued to stand there until 1808. The location was called "Court House Hill"; and the falls, when swollen by heavy rains, swept about the base of the hill in stormy violence.

BATTLE MONUMENT BUILT.

This building took the place of the ancient county seat at Joppa; and, during the season, an engineer, Leonard Harbottle, to satisfy the demands of pedestrians for more direct passage to upper Calvert street, performed the then difficult task of tunneling beneath the Courthouse and arching the tunnel, thus giving wayfarers a direct route to their destinations.

Hipped-roof houses clustered about the base of "Court House Hill"—wooden houses, most of them, painted blue, white or yellow, with here and there mansions built of brick with cornucopia of locust trees abounded, making fragrant the days of spring.

Later, when the Battle Monument was erected, in 1814, to commemorate the Battle of North Point and the defense of Fort M'Henry, the hill had been leveled to the street bed and the Plaza became known as Monument Square.

WATER SUPPLY AIDED.

When Calvert street was graded in 1809-1810 the course of Jones' Falls had been diverted. The lot occupied by the City Spring was purchased by the City Council; and under direction of Peter Hoffman and Jesse Hollingsworth, buildings were erected and the grounds improved at a cost of \$27,000.

It was then called North Fountain, and five springs of peculiarly pure water gushed from this source. Being municipal property, its water was free to all, and in a niche in the keeper's house, behind the spring, was a small monument in memory of Col. George Armistead, who so gallantly defended Fort M'Henry during the bombardment by the British fleet in 1814.

Calvert street assisted in overcoming the problem of abundant water in Baltimore. In addition to North Fountain, the waters of Jones' Falls were taken from that stream, a short distance north of the jail, and brought in an open canal to the southeast corner of Calvert and Centre streets.

NUCLEUS OF ACADEMY.

From there it was elevated by water-power to a reservoir at Franklin and Cathedral streets, 84 feet above tide. A second reservoir, 200 feet square and 10 feet deep, was built at Calvert and Madison streets, supplied with water brought from Keller and Forman's Mills, about one-half mile distant. The water company owned works and extensive grounds in the neighborhood.

Baltimore Museum once stood at Calvert and Baltimore streets, where the Emerson Hotel is now. The museum owed its existence to the untiring efforts of a member of the Peale family. A lottery broker named John Clark built the museum in 1829, and in 1830 the Peales rented the upper portion of the building to exhibit pictures and art treasures and also interesting specimens of natural history.

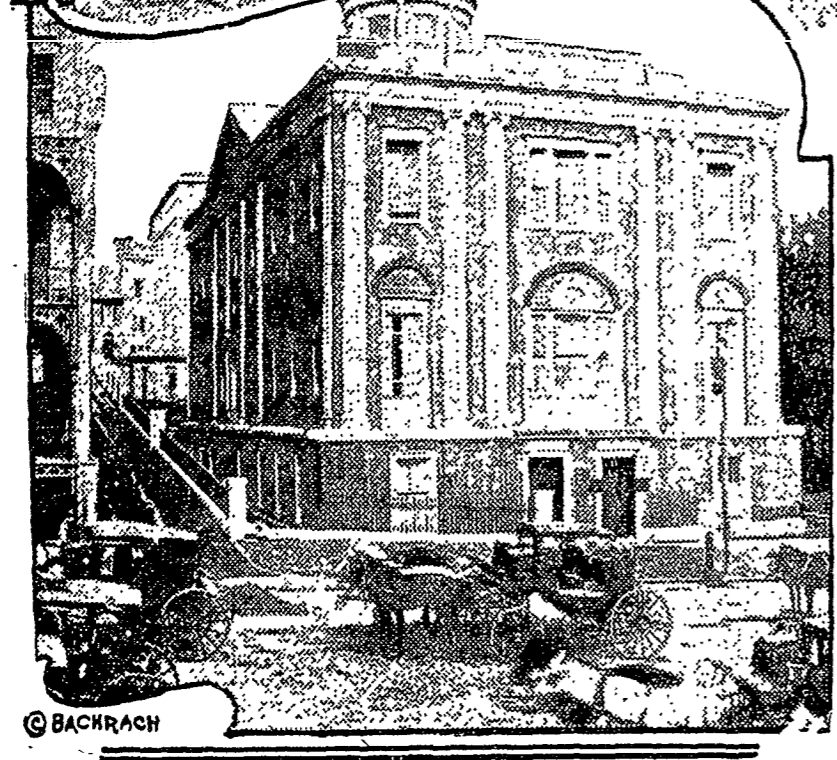
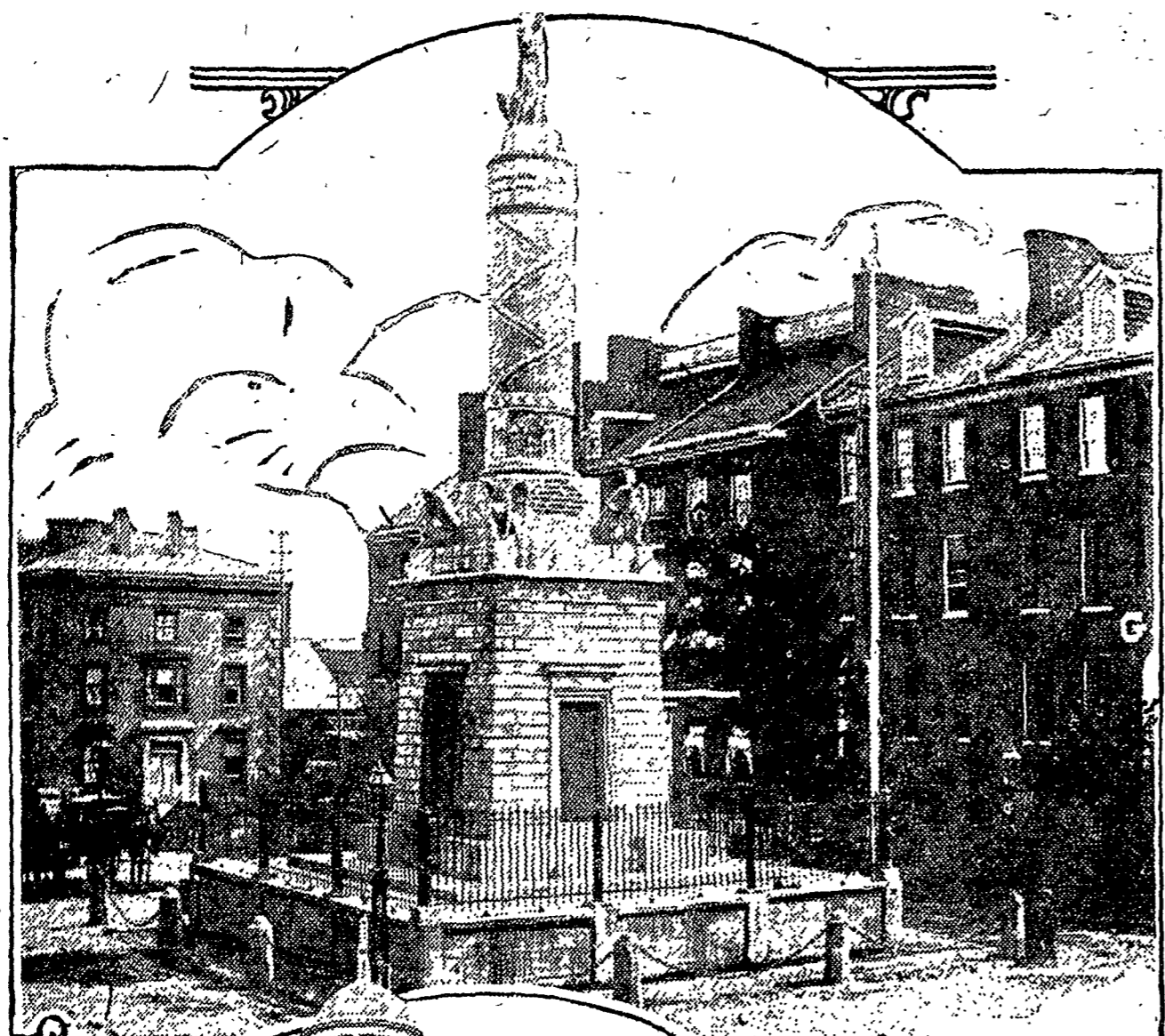
This museum was the nucleus from which there developed the Maryland Academy of Sciences.

RAILROAD USED SITE.

P. T. Barnum, the notable showman, purchased the Baltimore Museum from Edmund Peale, who had become the owner, in 1845; and, after conducting it for a season, sold it to Albert N. Hann, until it finally became the possession of the actor, John E. Owens, in 1850.

Henry C. Jarrett and George Ziegler owned it in turn, and Charles Getz, a scene painter, purchased it last. Its natural wonders were distributed by him to different educational institutions, but the building had a remarkable and brilliant history both as a theater and Baltimore's first gallery of fine arts.

The administration building of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad next occupied the site of the old Baltimore Museum and continued a landmark of which Baltimore was justly proud



And this is a vanished Court House of Baltimore, located on the site of the present structure.

Battle Monument still stands, but the houses on the right have long since disappeared to make way for the present Postoffice, which even now seems venerable and inadequate.

it politely permit strangers to examine it at any time." It cost about \$45,000.

Calvert was a busy street as early as 1833. The American Tract Society, instituted in 1816, had its depository corner Calvert street and Lovely lane, Carroll Hall, a large and costly building erected by private subscription, stood on the northeast corner of Baltimore and Calvert, just across from the Baltimore Museum.

The Farmers and Merchants' Bank was at Calvert street and Bank lane, with Nicholas Brice as president and J. Duer, cashier. The Mechanics' Bank stood at Calvert and Fayette streets, with George Brown as president and W. H. Murray, cashier.

This was before the Baltimore and Ohio had its fine administration building and the offices of the railroad were in the basement of the Mechanics' Bank and P. E. Thomas was president.

BASEMENT POSTOFFICE.

The Postoffice was then in the basement of the City Hotel, at the northwest corner of Calvert street and Bank lane, with J. S. Skinner as postmaster.

It was a "happy-go-lucky" mail station, concerning which it was placidly stated that "Owing to the change of seasons and other causes, no permanent time can be specified for the arrival and de-

parture of the mails." The office was supposed to be open week days "from 7 A. M. until dark, or after the arrival of the Eastern mail." Sundays it was open from 7 until 8 A. M. and in the afternoon for the delivery of Eastern mail.

The street was a newspaper center then, as afterward. The American Farmer, a weekly paper, was published there, and the Temperance Herald had its office at the intersection of Baltimore and Calvert streets.

Barnum's, or the City Hotel—that hostelry where Charles Dickens said he had been more comfortable than in any hotel in America, and where Jennie Lind found cordial entertainment in 1850—was built by David Barnum in 1825. It was 120 feet front, six stories high and 213 feet deep. It was the most fashionable place of entertainment for strangers and a winter resort for Baltimoreans living in country seats near the city.

Pike, Henry & Ward, importers of cutlery, conducted their business at 21 South Calvert street. Others on that street were Foy & Whitelock, hardware dealers, at 63 1/2 South Calvert; Charles B. Austin, general agent for the Union Glass Company, of Philadelphia, at No. 36, and William T. Weston, agent for the Providence Flint Glass Company, at No. 40.

Dorman & Amos, grocers and commission merchants, were at 73 South Calvert, and White & Son, grocers and wine dealers, at No. 67 South Calvert. L. G. Cox & Moir, commission and grain merchants, were at Pratt and Calvert streets.

EXCHANGE AND PRINTING.

John Clark had one of three lottery and exchange offices corner Calvert and Baltimore streets, and Isaac Brooks, iron merchant, was at 74 South Calvert. Ward Sears was agent for the sale of Thompsonian medicines at South Calvert, and D. N. Neilson, a dental surgeon, was found corner Calvert and Pleasant streets.

Books and job printing found favor on Calvert street. John W. Wood was No. 1 North Calvert. He carried books and did job printing. E. J. Cole & Co., importers of foreign books, were at 4 North Calvert, opposite the City Hotel; the Depository of Maryland Sunday-School Union was at 15 South Calvert.

and Houghton & Johnson, paper dealers, were at 47 South Calvert. Thomas B. and C. Deford, tanners, were at 44 South Calvert, and William Wilson, also in the leather business, was at 39 South Calvert.

OTHER BUSINESS.

Jacob Balderston, interested in sheet iron and copper, was at 60 South Calvert street and his neighbors in the same line were Jacob Stahl and William Wallace, on Calvert street, opposite Water street. Robert Skinner conducted a last-finding store, corner Calvert and Water streets; A. Marve conducted a wholesale and retail establishment at 17 South Calvert; Samuel Hunt, merchant tailor and draper, was at 14 South Calvert; John Barker and Son, iron foundries, were on North Calvert, and George McGregor manufactured patent locks on South Calvert street.

J. Irvine Hitchcock had an agricultural and horticultural establishment at 16 South Calvert in connection with a stock and experimental farm, garden and nursery, in the vicinity of Baltimore.

Jesse Comegys was interested in bread stuffs near the City Spring, and hat stores or manufactories were conducted by Clap & Cole, at 5 South Calvert street, and Elder & Boston, at S South Calvert. James Sloan conducted a boot and shoe business in the basement of the City Hotel.

A SOCIAL CENTER.

About Battle Monument clustered the homes of most representative families. Reverdy Johnson regarded the monument from his drawing room windows, and near him were the residences of the Gilmors, the Swans, the Nelsons, the Smiths, the Didders, Whites, Taylors, the Greenways, the Cohens, the Merediths, Beatts, Williams and Wilsons. About Monument Square, indeed, began the fashionable social life of Baltimore, while, later, the elite of the city had homes on Calvert street in the vicinity of Calvert Station.

St. Clair Hotel, Guy's Hotel and the Gilmor Hotel were places of public entertainment associated with Calvert street.

St. Paul street (chiefly patronized by Southern girls) loved to be admitted to the workshop, which was as interesting as a street in some foreign country.

Here the image maker modeled macramés wrapped with blue mantles, and "plaster saints" such as those whose virtues were the despair of Kipling's British soldier. He carried them about the streets for sale, and at the Christmas tide added to them quaint plaster churches, with tall steeples and colorful grass windows. With a lighted candle beside they shone beautifully beneath fragrant Christmas trees.

Old Furechici once modeled for Dr. Jacob W. Houck, a prominent physician of Baltimore, a portrait bust of Dr. Christopher Johnston that was the

northwest corner of Calvert and Fayette streets, or near the lot later occupied by Reverdy Johnson's mansion opposite Barnum's Hotel. Mr. Fottrell lived there until just before the Revolution, when he returned to Ireland.

Among the few old homes still standing, as of old, is that long occupied by the Metropolitan Savings Bank, which purchased it of Thomas Wilson.

Belvedere, the magnificent estate of Col. John Eager Howard, included what is now Calvert street and his mansion stood upon what is now the bed of Calvert street, at its intersection with Chase street. In 1852 the mansion was owned and occupied by John S. McKim. From Belvedere, onward, North street was called Belvedere street, and from the point where it was crossed by Preston, citizens using Belvedere bridge crossed diagonally over Jones' Falls valley to just opposite the entrance of Greenmount Cemetery at Oliver street.

From the bridge a picturesque view was obtained of the valley and one of the reservoirs of the Baltimore Water Company. This dam was swept away in a flood of July 14, 1837, which did enormous damage along Calvert street in that portion known as the Meadows. The Belvedere bridge was removed prior to 1874.

SHOP OF IMAGE MAKER.

Many familiar with Lower Calvert street in olden days will recall an old Italian image maker—Furechici—who had a workshop on Calvert street between Lexington and Saratoga streets. The children who attended Dr. Nathan Brown's Baltimore Female College on St. Paul street loved to be admitted to the workshop, which was as interesting as a street in some foreign country.

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admiration of the latter's medical friends until it was destroyed by fire.

TWO MAYORS' HOMES.

Two Mayors of Baltimore, Robert T. Banks and Joshua Vansant, resided on Calvert street, and Mrs. Emmett Banks of R. W. still resides in the home, 503 North Calvert street, where her honored father-in-law lived and died.

Goldsborough Griffith, identified for many years with the Prisoners' Aid work in Baltimore, was her neighbor. In the 600 block were the Farbers, the Kings, the Marstons, the Mactiers, the Pinkneys, Mr. William George Reed, Hugh Sisson and his family. Dr. Robert Robinson (whose drug store was a landmark opposite Calvert Station), Miss Mary Talbot, Miss Hannah Leitell and others. Mrs. John E. Owens, widow of the actor, lived at a corner of Madison and Calvert streets after she gave up her country home at Towson. The Torrance family, General Anderson and old Mr. Hance, also Miss Helen Kirk, all lived in that vicinity, as well as the Tarrs, the Cunninghams, the Delorays and Professor Currier, long associated with the musical life of Baltimore.

HOMES OF BEAUTY.

The late banker, John B. Ramsey, and his sisters lived on Calvert street; and in a handsome house with a garden in the 900 block lived Samuel Appold and his sons and daughters. On the opposite side Mr. William F. Lucas, Jr., still occupies the residence of the Lucas family and continues to keep the property in the beautiful order peculiar to a past regime.

Belvedere Terrace is a section of representative and fashionable Baltimore homes. In the 1000 block lived for many years I. Freeman Rasin, long associated with the political affairs of the Democratic party. His next neighbor was Mrs. John C. Wrenshall, for many years president of the Woman's Literary Club of Baltimore. Prof. Basil Gildersleeve still is a resident of that block.

Above Belvedere Terrace, Calvert street continues a handsome residence section, and having reached Mount Royal avenue, the street leaps by bridge still further, then cuts its way through the grounds of the Baltimore Polytechnic Institute, and follows its own sweet will to the educational heights of the Johns Hopkins University.

[Next Sunday—Cathedral Street.]