“Flight on the Wings of Vanity”: Maryland Quakers’ Struggle for Identity, 1715–1760
MILES COVERDALE

A Scandal in Baltimore: The Trials of the Reverend Lorenzo Dow Huston, 1872–1873
PETER H. CURTIS

From “Nature’s Nation” to “Washington’s Playground”: Marshall Hall, Middle-Class Culture, and the Commercialization of Leisure, 1865–1900
REYNOLDS J. SCOTT-CHILDRESS

The Civil War in the Maryland Historical Magazine, 1906–2009
COMPILED BY STEVEN B. RHODES
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CONTENTS

“Flight on the Wings of Vanity”: Maryland Quakers’ Struggle for Identity, 1715–1760 .......................................................... 199

??? COVERDALE

A Scandal in Baltimore: The Trials of the Reverend Lorenzo Dow Huston, 1872–1873 .................................................................................................................. 227

PETER H. CURTIS

From “Nature's Nation” to “Washington’s Playground”: Marshall Hall, Middle-Class Culture, and the Commercialization of Leisure, 1865–1900 .................................................................................................................. 243

REYNOLDS J. SCOTT-CHILDRESS

The Civil War in the Maryland Historical Magazine, 1906–2003 ............................................................................................ 273

STEVEN B. RHODES, COMPILER

Walsh, Motives of Honor, Pleasure, & Profit: Plantation Management in the Colonial Chesapeake, 1607–1765, by Cathy Matson McCurdy, Citizen Bachelors: Manhood and the Creation of the United States, by Amanda Lea Miracle


Ginzburg, Elizabeth Cady Stanton: An American Life, by Amy Feely Morsman

Pustz, Voices from the Back Stairs: Interpreting Servants’ Lives at Historic House Museums, by Sally Stocksdale


Letters to the Editor .............................................................................................................................................................. 328
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A Scandal in Baltimore: The Trials of the Reverend Lorenzo Dow Huston, 1872–1873

PETER H. CURTIS

On Saturday, February 24, 1872, unusual and potentially sensational stories appeared in both Baltimore daily newspapers, the Sun and the American and Commercial Advertiser. Under the heading, “A Sad Story,” the American summarized a number of events that had occurred in the previous weeks. A teacher at Western Female High School had intercepted a note from a sixteen-year-old student, Mary Driscoll, to a young man, agreeing to meet him at “a certain house, the reputation of which will not bear scrutiny.” Commonly called “houses of assignation,” these places provided convenient locations for unmarried couples to meet privately.

Mary was suspended from school. When her mother, Caroline K. Driscoll, confronted her with the note, the girl confessed that the minister of their church, Reverend Lorenzo Dow Huston, had seduced her two years earlier—at the age of fourteen. Convinced that her daughter told the truth, Caroline was horrified and notified other ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church South of Mary’s experience. Several ministers then visited Huston and apprised him of the charges, which he vehemently denied. But by this time, the news had slipped out and thoroughly scandalized the wealthy parishioners of Trinity Church, where Huston then served as minister.

By the time the story showed up in the newspapers, Huston and his family had already left town. Both newspapers ended their stories with the comment that the reverend had an excellent reputation and a large personal following and the Methodist Episcopal Church South would likely initiate a thorough investigation of the charges. In an additional story on the day the news broke, the American offered more detail. A separate editorial clearly implied that the paper believed Huston guilty of the charges. “The sad story is burdened with affliction to many sorrow-stricken hearts, and were it not that the criminal deserves to be held up to the scorn of the world it might be suffered to remain in obscurity.”1

Huston, fifty-two years old in 1872, had a wife and two adult children. Born and raised in Cincinnati, he had studied theology as a young man and had been
admitted to the Kentucky Conference as a Methodist minister. Prior to the Civil War he had served as the editor of the *Christian Advocate*, the newspaper of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, published in Nashville. During the war he had been a strong partisan of the Confederacy. His son, Menefee, had enlisted in the Confederate army and fought in many battles. Lorenzo Huston followed his son throughout the war, serving as an army chaplain. After the war he was transferred to the Baltimore Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, serving as pastor of Winan’s Chapel and its successor, St Paul’s Church. In 1870 he moved on to Trinity Church.2

In March 1872, the Annual Conference of the Baltimore region of the Methodist Episcopal Church South met in Warrenton, Virginia. Samuel Rogers, Presiding Elder of the East Baltimore District, reported on the rumors and accusations. Huston appeared, proclaimed his innocence, and “demanded that the charges against him should be immediately and thoroughly investigated.” After considerable discussion, a committee recommended that an investigation take place to determine if the Reverend Huston should be immediately suspended from his duties and then to report its findings to the next Annual Conference in March 1873. At that time a final and definitive trial would likely be held to determine Huston’s future. Six ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church South conducted the initial investigation, which closely resembled a trial.3

*Mary Driscoll (1856–1931), ca. 1879. Methodist Episcopal minister Lorenzo Dow Huston of Baltimore’s Trinity Church seduced several young girls during his tenure in the city’s churches, including fourteen-year-old Mary Driscoll in 1872. (Private Collection.)*
Historical Context

Victorian-era Baltimore witnessed this sensational and unusual event during the period that New York’s Anthony Comstock led an anti-vice crusade that became a national phenomenon. Fear of the effects on American society of urbanization, industrialization, and immigration drove efforts to suppress abortion, pornography, and free love. Moralists expressed profound concern about “the problem of controlling the sexuality of adolescents and what this problem implied about the state of the family.” The anti-vice crusade and the various vague and general federal and state laws purportedly suppressed abortion, but in practice they prevented any serious public discussion of sexual topics. Articles concerning sexual matters rarely appeared in newspapers or reputable publications in the latter part of the nineteenth century.4

Because Caroline Driscoll notified church rather than civil authorities, the trial took place in an ecclesiastical setting, not a court of law. Why she chose that avenue is unclear, but several possible reasons can be considered. In 1870 the age of consent in Maryland was ten years old. That archaic standard, shared with many other states, dated to English Common Law and the eighteenth-century rural, agricultural society it governed, where early marriages were common and fathers assumed tight control of single adolescents. The practical effect of this statute in the Driscoll case was that it eliminated a charge of statutory rape in civil court because seduction rather than rape was alleged. Also, there can be little doubt that Mrs. Driscoll believed that her church, an institution in which she and her family had been active for many years, had betrayed her. An ecclesiastical trial would give her church a chance to redeem itself. Finally, it is possible that she hoped a religious setting would result in a less intrusive investigation of the matter and thus less publicity.5

If Mrs. Driscoll did indeed hope for reduced public attention, that outcome was soon dashed. Despite the fact that the ecclesiastical trial did not begin until May 21, three months after the initial brief newspaper reports, both of Baltimore’s major papers reflected the intense public interest in the case by printing daily reports on the court proceedings. Covering the proceedings proved challenging, since reporters were barred from the courtroom and had to depend on interviewing persons who were allowed to attend the sessions. Most of those attending sided with either Reverend Huston or his accusers and hence provided biased information. Consequently, the accuracy of the newspaper reports is questionable. After the trial, however, the Baltimore firm of Fisher and Denison published a sixty-four page pamphlet, Trial of the Rev. L. D. Huston, D.D., in which the longest item is a detailed, day-by-day transcript of the proceedings.6 Although the compilers created the document as part of the ecclesiastical leadership’s responsibility to investigate the case for the upcoming 1873 annual conference of the church, how it came to be published in advance of that gathering was never explained. Regardless, it appears to provide a reliable record of the proceedings.

Huston stood formally accused of seducing two young girls, members of his
congregation in Baltimore in 1870, as well as having been “seen in the act of criminal intimacy with a negro woman” in Atlanta in 1865. The court immediately dropped the latter charge, since time and distance precluded pursuing it, then turned its full attention on the reverend’s more recent dalliances. In addition to the fourteen-year-old schoolgirl, Mary Driscoll, Huston was charged with seducing fifteen-year-old Virginia Hopkins, who came from background far different from Mary Driscoll’s. Where Mary was a child of the middle class, Virginia Hopkins was clearly poor, a live-in housemaid for a well-to-do family who belonged to Huston’s church. Virginia was also an orphan; the only local relatives mentioned during the trial were a step-mother and step-father.

Testimony

The investigation first turned to Hopkins’s experience. She testified that she met Huston through the family for whom she worked and described her “ruin” as having been rapidly accomplished. In June 1870, Huston asked her to bring her employer’s baby to his home. She did so, and in the course of her visit the minister made what would be called today, inappropriate comments and suggestions about sexual relations. In Hopkins’s words, “… he talked about girls going with men, and he said that a great many of them were green, and often got girls into trouble. But he had studied all such books, and knew all about such matters, and I could go with him, and no one, not even if I married, my husband could not tell it.” A few days later on the street she encountered his long-time African American maid, Lucy Adams, who asked Virginia to come over to the Huston home that evening to visit her. However, when Virginia arrived, the house was dark and only the reverend was present. In the ensuing hour, she testified, he seduced her, “by persuasion,” not by force. She also told the investigators that at this time Mrs. Huston and the couple’s son and daughter were in Tennessee visiting family and friends.

What followed set a pattern for this rather informal trial. Witnesses for the prosecution testified to Virginia Hopkins’s good character and veracity, and witnesses for the defense described her as a liar who used bad language and “went with” numerous men and boys. The defense called Lucy Adams to the stand, and when asked if Huston ever told her to ask Virginia Hopkins to come over to see him she emphatically replied, “No, sir.” Several other black defense witnesses who knew Hopkins testified, indicating an attempt to show she associated with African Americans, a group some whites viewed as sexually promiscuous.

The portion of the trial involving Virginia Hopkins was brief and fills just nine pages in the transcript. The remainder of the document, thirty-eight pages—is devoted to Mary Driscoll’s charges. Clearly, the investigators were far more concerned with charges from a middle-class girl whose family were active members of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Driscoll’s initial experience with the trial process must have been daunting. Over her mother’s objections, the court forced the sixteen-year-old to
meet the examining committee alone, without her mother or a lawyer accompanying her. Although she had written down a complete account of her experience, she was not permitted to give the document to the investigators. Instead, she replied verbally to the prosecutor’s questions.10 Driscoll’s account of her relationship with Huston offers far more detail than Hopkins’s, and her experience took place over a much longer period of time. Additional verbal testimony from her mother and a written deposition from her older sister Emma reinforced her story. Collectively they testified that Huston began to visit the Driscoll home in the summer of 1870, when Emma was recovering from a broken knee suffered in a fall at the church. Routine pastoral care dictated that he check on Emma’s progress, and indeed he came to the home on several occasions to check on Emma. Each time he examined the knee. During an early September visit, Mary came into her sister’s room and Huston remarked on the strength of her legs, compared to her sister’s. Mrs. Driscoll allowed him to examine the younger girl’s ankles. Later during that visit, Caroline Driscoll testified, Huston told her how impressed he was with Mary’s abilities and urged their mother to allow Mary to spend time with him as the child’s tutor, explaining that in the future he hoped to obtain a college professorship and would like to prepare Mary to be his assistant. He further told them that Mary should cut off relations with most of her girlfriends and devote herself to studying with him when she was not in school. Mrs. Driscoll told the court that she was happy to have such a distinguished minister show an interest in teaching her daughter.

Mary Driscoll, in her testimony, described a series of meetings that followed. The first time she responded to an invitation to visit the reverend she took along several other girls. He took her aside as they left and instructed her to come by herself the next time. From then on she visited alone, but the meetings were not what she had expected. In their first meeting alone she found that he wanted to talk about, and examine, her legs. In later meetings he did the same, and assured her that what he was doing was proper and not a cause for concern. After a “Wednesday night . . . Prayer-meeting he made an appointment for Thursday. This time he went so far as to feel my person. The next time I went I come out of the parlor my virtue was gone.” In response to a question from the investigators, Mary went on to explain that Huston had assured her that what had happened did not warrant concern. “A policeman had told him that nearly all the children that went to the public school did this thing with boys. It was better for me to have men, as they would be more careful, married men were the safest.”11

The remaining extensive interviews in the transcript of the 1872 Baltimore trial are similar in nature to the much shorter testimony that followed Virginia Hopkins’s account of her seduction. The investigators called numerous persons to testify as to Mary Driscoll’s character and truthfulness, which produced a wide range of opinions. Detailed, and often confusing and contradictory testimony came forth on how, where, and when the alleged assignations occurred, the role of the servant
Lucy Adams in facilitating them, and Mary Driscoll’s relationship with other men and boys. Her statement that the seduction occurred in September 1870 provoked much discussion when witnesses testified that during that time Huston was suffering from an infected leg.

Late in the day on June 7, the testimony came to an end. “All night the sleepy [five] preachers pored over the details . . . and it was not until fifteen minutes after 7 o’clock [a.m.] on the 8th day of June . . . [that] the following verdict [was] agreed upon.” The committee found that, “the said charges are not sustained.”

**Influential Advocate**

At this point the entire matter took another unexpected and dramatic turn. Although the *Baltimore Sun* simply reported the outcome without immediate comment, on June 10 the *American and Commercial Advertiser* printed an editorial remarkable for its length and vehemence. The newspaper, and the entire community as well, “were appalled and astonished with the result of the trial.” The editorial denounced the format and operation of the investigation as, “all in favor of the accused and calculated to convict the accusers.” For example, the writer noted that the character of the two girls was, in effect, placed on trial, but without any advance notice of the identity of their accusers or an opportunity for cross-examination. “If such a thing could possibly occur in a court of law the superior court would at once nullify the whole proceeding and order the case to be tried anew.” The editorialist angrily concluded that the committee had branded “these poor children as malicious perjurers. God forgive them for their lack of heart and brain.”

The following day, June 11, the paper published Mary Driscoll’s written account of her experience, a document the investigators had not permitted to be introduced when they questioned her. The girl’s statement, dated March 16, 1872, had been “deposited” with the editor of the *American*, and that editor now directed his readers:

> It will be observed that this little girl did not fix September 24 as the date of Dr. Huston’s first attempt to seduce her. She says that Dr. Huston told her on Thanksgiving Day that it was just two months since their intercourse began. She herself, however, fixes the date with unconscious accuracy in her statement, which was written before it was known what Dr. Huston’s defense would be. Dr. Huston made an engagement to meet her on Friday, October 21. This date is fixed by the funeral of Mrs. Price, which occurred on that day. Dr. Huston met the child on that day as he was returning from the funeral and had some conversation with her. On the next Sunday he made an engagement to meet her on the following Tuesday. One week later (November 1) her ruin was accomplished.

From these articles, it is clear that there was a close connection between the
Driscoll family and the *Baltimore American and Commercial Advertiser*. The owner and editor of the paper, Charles C. Fulton, also served as chief editorial writer. How did Fulton, a titan of Maryland’s publishing industry and one of the most influential persons in Baltimore, become so closely connected with a school teacher and her family? Although no direct link has surfaced during this study, the Driscolls lived just two blocks from Fulton, perhaps they knew him through friends or neighbors. Whatever the relationship, Fulton remained an intense partisan on behalf of Mary Driscoll and her mother as they pursued their case against the Reverend Huston.¹⁵

**Pursuing Justice**

And pursue it they would in the year following the trial that ended in June 1872. It must be remembered that the task of the ministers charged with investigating Huston’s behavior was to determine if he should be immediately suspended from the ministry. Beyond that, the 1872 Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church South instructed them to report their findings to the next Conference, scheduled to be held in Baltimore in March 1873. Thus, for nine months, the guilt or innocence of all parties remained open questions. Although the lull in activity certainly offered hope to the Driscolls and their supporters, it did not resonate well with the American’s local rival, the *Baltimore Sun*. In an angry editorial on June 22, 1872, the *Sun*, which now seemed much more interested in ending all the public discussion of sexual matters, denounced the church for leaving Huston’s future uncertain and, in an obvious criticism of it competitor, “open[ing] the floodgates of all this gross immorality and vileness” in newspapers and general public discourse.¹⁶

The next nine months proved difficult for all involved. Reverend Huston did not attempt to preach in Baltimore. It is likely that he returned to his former home of Cincinnati, because a charge of adultery (probably the only possible charge under the laws of the time) had been filed against him in Baltimore sometime during this period, though it never came to trial. Per Maryland law, “[adultery] is only a misdemeanor [and] he cannot be reached by requisition in another state. If he does not choose voluntarily to appear [in Maryland], he cannot be brought to trial in the Criminal Court.” Moreover, Huston had sued the *American* and Charles Fulton for $100,000 for libel. By March 1873 the libel case had been dismissed, but the criminal case was very much alive. As for the Driscolls and their supporters, per the editorial in the *American*, “they have already suffered almost beyond human endurance.”¹⁷

For Huston, the 1873 Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church South gathered in an unpropitious locale, Baltimore. When at last the conference opened on March 5, 1873, public interest had reached a fevered peak. Despite its proclaimed distaste for the whole matter, the *Sun* gave considerable coverage to the proceedings. The possibility of a criminal trial probably kept Huston away, but friends and a “clerical counsel” provided him with a strong representation. The *Sun* noted that the report of the preliminary investigation:
will be duly presented to [the] conference, and will then be referred to a committee composed . . . of not less than nine nor more than thirteen clerical members. The proceedings of the ecclesiastical court will be conducted behind closed doors, no persons being admitted but the committee, the accused and his clerical counsel and . . . the witnesses. The results will be made known at the end of the trial.\textsuperscript{18}

It is clear that the church wanted no repetition of the constant—and often inaccurate—stories and rumors in the Baltimore papers as the second, more formal trial moved forward. Closed doors, though, could not stop the dailies from reporting on the proceedings.

Despite a paucity of new information, both papers published stories about the ongoing trial every day from March 7 through March 15, reports that provided little more than accounts of simple procedural matters or rumors. Coverage in the \textit{Sun} generally stuck closer to provable facts, but it sometimes printed hearsay. “The committee held a meeting yesterday to arrange for the trial of the case. . . . It is rumored that the prosecution is in possession of testimony of an important character to rebut the testimony advanced by the accused at the preliminary investigation.” On March 10, two days into the second trial, the investigating committee requested that, “none of the members be appointed on any other committee, so that they may devote all their time to the Huston investigation.” A report in the March 12 issue of the \textit{Sun} stated that the paper “understood” that evidence had been presented to the trial that disproved the alibi Huston had given for his condition at the time of Mary Driscoll’s seduction. Further, the committee had, “labored assiduously, holding sessions both day and night.” Both papers reported a strong rumor that “there was testimony before the committee . . . of an attempt on the part of Dr. Huston to take improper liberties with another girl, not included” in the first trial.

As might be expected, rumors and emotional editorial comments peppered the columns of the \textit{American}. For example, many witnesses “flatly contradicted much of the defense testimony from the original trial.” This appeared despite the fact that the paper had no reporters at any of the sessions, for the committee worked privately.\textsuperscript{19}

Ultimately, the \textit{American}’s dependence on unsubstantiated sources caused the newspaper to commit a serious blunder. On Friday, March 14, 1873, the paper printed a front page headline, “Dr. Huston Acquitted.” The story under that dramatic headline began, “It was reported about town that Dr. Huston would be acquitted by the Committee of ministers trying the case.” The next morning the committee reported its verdict to the assembled conference. Both newspapers described the March 15 scene in great detail. A large crowd had assembled and filled Trinity Church. As the committee had finished its work “after a very protracted session, continuing to about 4 ½ o’clock in the morning” it was not until “shortly before 11 o’clock [that] the members of the committee entered”:
Dr. Regester, the chairman, a fine, portly looking elderly gentleman, proceeded forward, upon invitation, and [took] a seat beside the presiding bishop, Rev. Dr. Dogett. . . . [T]he Bishop rapped the Conference to order, and requested all to be seated. He then asked, “is the committee in the case of L. D. Huston ready to report? Dr. Regester answered in the affirmative. . . . Dr. Martin, the
secretary of the Conference then, in a clear, audible voice, amid a silence that seemed almost painful, read the following: “That after calm and patient investigation, they find the charge of immorality unanimously sustained, and that therefore the said Lorenzo D. Huston is solemnly expelled from the Methodist Episcopal Church South.” There was no demonstration of any kind made when the verdict was declared, except a sigh of relief that seemed to escape from some of the members.20

Both newspapers greeted the verdict with praise for the Methodist Episcopal Church South. The American commented that, “The Church had protected its own honor, and was mindful of the protection due to the children under its charge.” The Sun wrote that church “has performed this duty with a manliness and fidelity notably wanting in the Congress of the United States in its efforts at self-purification.”21

Dramatic and emotional events such as this have a profound effect on all involved. How did all the major participants in this sad story feel about their experiences and what happened to them afterwards? Frequently, the barrier of time and a paucity of sources prevent answers to these questions. In this case, however, the prominence of Charles Fulton and Lorenzo Huston permits considerable insight into these issues.

Turning first to Lorenzo Huston and his family, it is possible to address these matters in some detail. In its editorial the day he was convicted, the Sun predicted, “it is not probable, judging from the developments of character in this case, that [Huston] will feel the humiliation of his position.” This opinion proved to be quite correct. At the time of the first newspaper stories and editorials carrying accusations against him, Huston’s reaction had been to blame the newspapers. At the 1872 Annual Conference he had stated, “I shall wait until I have been fully vindicated before this Conference, and from that hour until the last day of my life I shall be in pursuit of the man that blistered that daughter’s cheek with shame, and stabbed that wife to the heart.” When his lawsuit against the American and its proprietor had failed, and the conference, instead of vindicating him had convicted him, Huston announced that he would appeal the conviction to the next General Conference of all branches the Methodist Episcopal Church, in Louisville, Kentucky, in May 1874. When he did so, however, the conference summarily rejected his request for reconsideration.22

Lorenzo Huston found himself in a difficult position. His authority to preach had been revoked and his conviction had been widely publicized. Additionally, he had assumed his son’s debts in 1870, which drastically reduced his personal savings. At this point he took his family and left for a distant and primitive frontier, Daytona Florida. Huston’s sister, Mary Huston Hoag, bought the only hotel in the very small town, and Huston, his wife and their son moved into it, living in two rooms and helping Mrs. Hoag run the business. That was the early Florida, before air-conditioning, mosquito control, and tourists. Daytona counted only about sev-
enty residents and did not incorporate until July 26, 1876. Doubtless because he was one of the few well-educated professionals in the area, or the only one, the people of Daytona elected him their first mayor the same year. He later served, at various times, as justice of the peace, county superintendent of public instruction, and a state railroad commissioner. In November 1887 he and his wife died of yellow fever. Not a breath of scandal appeared to have followed him to Florida. As late as 1976 a history of Volusia County still referred to him as, “The Methodist Episcopal Minister L.D. Huston.” It seems unlikely that in the extremely rural area of Volusia County in this period, living in a single hotel room amidst his immediate family, and with no obedient servant such as Lucy Adams to assist him, Huston had any opportunity to continue seducing young girls.23

We do not know what Huston thought of his “exile” to the wilds of early Florida. In 1993 one of his descendants published his letters, dating from the years before the Civil War through his relocation to Florida. It is remarkable that in all of his correspondence with family and friends far and wide there is absolutely no mention of the accusations, trials, and ultimate conviction by the ecclesiastical court. There is, though, a whisper of the troubles in a letter to his daughter dated January 1, 1873. “In all the darkness I have never lost trust in God, and I am, as I have ever been, thoroughly convinced that, come what will, He will be sure to make it right, in the end.” Huston apparently “compartmentalized” his life, separating his family and his professional responsibilities from his pursuit of young girls. And when he left Baltimore and his pulpit, he went without Lucy Adams, his long-time servant and the woman who enabled the seductions. In dismissing Lucy Adams, it seems likely that Lorenzo Huston finally gave up the illegitimate part of his life.24

What became of those who had spoken out against the Reverend Lorenzo Huston? In the case of Virginia Hopkins, the answers are not detailed or complete. Being a poor servant girl, and an orphan with no immediate family, the only available source of information about her is the United States census. Her entry in the 1880 census is suggestive—and depressing. She lived in a very poor area of Baltimore with two small children, ages three and two, and identified herself as a single housekeeper for shoe fitter Horatio Tuttle. It is entirely possible that she was a prostitute. Hopkins does not appear in later censuses, but Horatio Tuttle does—as an inmate of the Baltimore City Jail in 1900. With no social support structure in the wake of her widely publicized admission of sexual activity outside of marriage, Virginia Hopkins had fallen to the bottom of society.25

The story of the Driscoll family is different and very surprising. Despite the best efforts of family historian Seely Foley, the whereabouts of Mary Driscoll in the years immediately after the second trial cannot be established. It seems most unlikely that she remained in Baltimore where she would have drawn unwelcome attention after the two trials. Ms. Foley suggests that she may have gone either to Boston or to Washington, D.C., to live with relatives. We do know that on May 17, 1879, Mary
Driscoll married Thomas Kenny, a Union army veteran thirteen years her senior, at Foundry Methodist Episcopal Church in Washington, D.C. They were married for over twenty-five years, until his death in 1905, and had six children. For almost all of their married life they lived with Mary’s mother, Caroline, in a house she owned. Perhaps this kind of living arrangement provided Mary Driscoll Kenny with the kind of emotional support she needed after the trauma of her teenage years. In any case, there are no family letters or other records that shed light on the Driscolls’s experiences. It appears that like Lorenzo Huston—but for very different reasons—the family needed to put the entire ugly episode behind them.26

In building a new life, the Driscoll family had a great deal of help from a familiar source—Charles C. Fulton. On September 30, 1879, the newspaper magnate, a long-time widower, married Caroline K. Driscoll. The strong emotional bond between Fulton and the Driscolls was evident in his 1872–1873 editorials, raising the question of why the marriage did not take place earlier. Concern over the disposition of Fulton’s estate offers a plausible explanation. The newspaper owner’s first wife had died in 1868, and together they had four children. In 1883, shortly before his death, Fulton drafted a deed in which he clearly stated that all of his estate, with two exceptions, would go to those children. He then noted that he had made an “ante-nuptial contract or agreement” with Caroline Driscoll on their wedding day that, at the time of his death, would give her $2,000 per year for the remainder of her life, and $1,000 per year to Mary Driscoll Kenny for the rest of her life. Fulton also provided for the Driscoll family indirectly, by employing Thomas Kenny, who subsequently worked as the court reporter for the Baltimore American for more than twenty years. Charles Fulton, during his lifetime and after his death on June 7, 1883, provided a financial safety net to assist the Driscolls as they attempted to put their traumatic, and very public, experience behind them.27

More than 125 years have passed since the trials of the Reverence Lorenzo Huston, and historians have documented additional incidents of clergymen engaged in immoral, probably sexual, behavior. The author of one recent study observed:

A double life is prevalent among all types of sex offenders. . . . Priests, of course, have had a leg up on this business of the double life because the role itself has traditionally been respected. The term “priest,” like “doctor,” carries a connotation of someone who is dedicated to helping others, someone who is there to provide solace and comfort.28

During the investigation, trials, and appeal of Lorenzo Huston, the Methodist Episcopal Church South also disciplined or expelled several other ministers for unspecified immoral behavior. These men did not contest their cases and therefore the types of crimes remain lost to history. Indeed, in a recent study of the relationship between the exclusively male clergy of nineteenth-century America and its primarily
female constituency, Karin E. Gedge has discovered more than two dozen similar cases and twenty-nine pamphlets in which women accused ministers of wrongdoing, usually sexual. In the third quarter of the nineteenth century, society viewed such
incidents as unique and recorded them as individual cases of sinning. Only in the past half-century or so has research in the social sciences recognized the pathological nature of this behavior and the consequent threat to young people.29

Indeed, the social costs of the Huston case go far beyond the lives of the principal players in these events. In her remarkable written account of her experience, Mary Driscoll described Lorenzo Huston’s behavior and attitude toward women and girls.

I was never in his company on the street but what he would make some improper remark about every lady he saw. He said I was not the only person he has stayed with; he had connection with eighty-three before he came to Baltimore; that three of them had children in the image of him. One of these three was in Cincinnati.30

Even if half of Huston’s claims were true, the social and psychological costs of his behavior were extensive, particularly in a society where little in the way of support services were available to the women and girls he abused.

How and why did truth prevail in this case, particularly since Karin Gedge found that eighteen of the twenty-nine ministers accused of similar behavior were found innocent and a number more received light penalties? Men dominated most of those trials—civil or ecclesiastical—as prosecutors, defense counsel, and jurors. This “masculine culture” displayed little understanding of the realities women faced and handed down their verdicts accordingly. That was surely true in the case of Lorenzo Huston, and it is clearly reflected in the verdict of the first trial—but the situation changed when Charles C. Fulton, a powerful, male champion took up the case and spread it across the pages of his nationally recognized newspaper.31

Equally crucial to the outcome of the case were the courageous efforts of two girls and a woman, who pushed to end this tragic story and stop Huston’s predations. It is difficult to convey to the modern reader the social and emotional cost to Virginia Hopkins, Mary Driscoll, and Caroline Driscoll of standing up and publicly testifying about sexual matters in Victorian-era Baltimore. Only Fulton’s intervention and generosity prevented the Driscolls from much more suffering than they endured. The fate of Virginia Hopkins says far more about the status of women in American society at this time, and goes a long way toward explaining why events such as the trials and eventual conviction of Lorenzo Huston did not occur more often.
NOTES

1. Baltimore Sun, February 24, 1872; Baltimore American and Commercial Advertiser, February 24, 1872.
2. Maria M., Clifton, editor, All We Have to Fear is the Lonesome: The Letters of L. D. Huston From Pre–Civil War Days Through his Relocation to the Florida Frontier in 1874 (s.l., s.n., 1993), 8; The Trial of the Rev. L. D. Huston for the Alleged Seduction of Mary Driscoll, Virginia Hopkins, & c (Baltimore: Fisher and Denison, 1872), 3.
4. Nicola Beisel, Imperiled Innocents: Anthony Comstock and Family Reproduction in Victorian America (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 25. Although carefully worded advertisements for aphrodisiacs and “cures” for venereal disease were regularly published in magazines and newspapers, there was no discussion of the social issues these ads reflected.
6. See footnote 2, above. Many of the copies of this document were published on the worst quality, high acid newsprint, and only seven copies are known to have survived.
8. Ibid., 10.
9. Ibid. 18.
12. Ibid., 58.
13. Ibid., 62
15. See, for example, J. Thomas Scharf, History of Baltimore City and County (Philadelphia: Everts, 1881), 610–11, 15. Seely K. Foley, “Kezia Buck and Her Descendants,” unpublished typescript in the author’s possession, 32.
23. The Trial of the Rev. L. D. Huston, 3; Clifton, ed., All We Have to Fear is the Lonesome, 6. Huston’s son operated a school in Baltimore. T. E. Fitzgerald, Volusia County, Past and Present (Daytona Beach, Fla.: Observer Press., 1937), 101; Michael Schene, Hopes, Dreams and Promises: A History of Volusia County Florida (Daytona Beach, Fla.: News Journal Corp., 1976), 101–11; Clifton, ed., All We Have to Fear is the Lonesome, 6.
24. Clifton, ed., All We Have to Fear is the Lonesome, 75.
26. Interview with Seely Foley, Frederick, Maryland, April 10, 2009. The last known record of Lucy Adams is a listing in the 1874 Baltimore city directory in which she was described as a “washerwoman”; marriage certificate in the possession of Seely Foley, Frederick, Md.; “Thomas M. Kenny,” obituary, Baltimore American and Commercial Advertiser, December 4, 1905. See, for example, U.S. Census, Baltimore, 1900, Vol. 17, E.D.189, sheet 1, entry of Caroline K. Fulton, which records three generations of the Kenny/Driscoll family in one household. Baltimore Sun, October 2, 1879, 2.
27. Trust Estate of Charles Carroll Fulton, Copies of Original Deed of Trust and Instruments and supplementary thereto (Baltimore, Md.: s.n., 1921); Thomas M. Kenny obituary.
From “Nature’s Nation” to “Washington’s Playground”: Marshall Hall, Middle-Class Culture, and the Commercialization of Leisure, 1865–1900

REYNOLDS J. SCOTT-CHILDRESS

In the summer of 1880, a committee of private individuals and public officials turned the picnic grove at Marshall Hall, on the banks of the Potomac River across from Mt. Vernon, into an object lesson of middle-class proprieties. They organized an excursion to the site for the Washington, D.C.’s impoverished boys. More than six hundred youths, answering to such monikers as “Jack,” “Shorty,” “Skinny,” “Potato,” and “Ice Cream,” crowded onto the steamer Mary Washington for an all-day vacation from their usual ruts of poverty. There were boys, as the Post reporter snobbishly put it, “of all sizes and complexions, the majority barefooted, dirty and noisy.” They were “boys mainly from the lower strata of society, who knew not the art of putting on company manners.” There was also a sprinkling of young girls and women who, the reporter mused, “looked as if they needed to breathe the pure, fresh air, not for one day only but for many weeks.” On reaching the Marshall Hall wharf, the boys unloaded the horde of food and then doffed their clothes on the sand to cool in waters of the Potomac. The organizers of the excursion (District restaurateur and German immigrant Edward Abner, a newsman named Burkhardt of the Washington Journal, pound master for the Washington, D.C., health department Samuel Einstein, a physician Dr. Walters, and police officers O’Hara and Thompson) served a snack of bread and milk, while others prepared a dinner of “lemonade by the tubful and coffee by the gallon . . . immense hampers of sandwiches,” watermelons, and peaches. On the return trip, a mock battle broke out among the boys as they attacked one another with green apples “harvested” from the orchards surrounding the picnic grove but declared peace when Mr. Abner broke out a fresh round of bread and milk. Similar scenes would be repeated for years to come as Marshall
Hall became the site of an annual orphans’ picnic that brought parentless youths out of their institutions and down the river for a rare experience of open space and middle-class leisure.

This event and the development of the picnic grove at Marshall Hall grew out of a potentially debilitating problem faced by nineteenth-century Americans of the coalescing middle class. In their quest to distinguish themselves from the other significant classes of the period—farmers, laborers, and capitalists—the clerks, lawyers, managers, shop owners, and assorted others immigrating into the cities found it difficult to justify their economic usefulness, define their social status, or establish their historical legitimacy as a group. Farmers, laborers, and capitalists each had ready and socially powerful ways to identify themselves. Farmers and laborers worked with their hands to produce the goods essential to life. Capitalists, akin to modern-day noblemen, controlled property to build vast corporate empires. But middling folks were neither producers of material goods nor masters of vast propertied domains. Beginning in the 1830s, one of the central means through which middling Americans sought class distinction was the appropriation of American nature as their own.

Nature had long played a key role in American nationalism. In a country that
lacked virtually all the vital requisites of a nation—a unique language, a past trailing off into the mists of history, a national culture, a sense of ethnic peoplehood, a single physical environment, a unifying religion—nature was the nation’s one truly distinguishing feature. Americans developed a mythology of the land. Places such as Niagara Falls, the Hudson River Valley, and Virginia’s Natural Bridge became reverential sites where American pilgrims believed nature’s God spoke to them as a chosen people, as Nature’s Nation. Unlike European “nature,” the landscapes of America remained untouched by the works of man and where those schooled in the alphabet of its flora and fauna received the revelations of a higher spirit. Here, as Thomas Cole, founder of the Hudson River Valley school of landscape painters, observed, America provided the “scenes of solitude from which the hand of nature has ne’er been lifted.”

Middling Americans increasingly appropriated the Nature’s Nation mantel. To justify their claims that they best understood its meaning and value, they engaged nature in two related ways. They denied that the power of nature was its productive capacity and they transformed nature into an aesthetic object. That is, the farmer and the capitalist could not appreciate nature because they saw it only as raw material for producing goods for the marketplace and were bent on destroying nature’s “scenes of solitude” with their plows, their railroads, their quarries. With the aestheticization of nature, middle-class folks could separate themselves from the rough amusements and urban culture of the working class as well as the rank materialism of the upper orders. In the emerging culture of the middle class, nature’s significance lay in its ability to provide a spiritual balm for the evil temptations of the city, the fractious divisions of partisan politics, and the fragmentation of religious sectarianism. As Cole put it, nature countered the seemingly endless process of “toiling to produce more toil—accumulating in order to aggrandize.” This middle-class nature provided a secular salvation. As an anonymous writer mused in an 1855 issue of The Circular:

Why is it that trees and flowers touch the strings of our inner nature so thrillingly? There seems to be something about them, aside from their material uses—their fruit and shade-giving functions—that links them to the heart. How often does the eye wander away from the fields and rest unweariedly on some majestic tree, or wood-covered hill. We gaze into their deep green labyrinths, and think and dream of heaven, and picture to ourselves angels dwelling there.

There was no better way to experience this heaven, for the middle class, than an errand into the wilderness for a picnic. But the idyllic picnic proved increasingly difficult to find. Reaching an appropriately picturesque site could take a lot of work. Brush might have to be removed, rocks shoved to the side, or trees felled if they blocked the view. Such work was part
of Eliza Farnham’s first picnic outing in 1846. “On the very pinnacle of the bluff,” she recalled, “we found a little shaded nook, just large enough to admit our number. Here, after the vines and light undergrowth had been cleared away, we spread our white napkins, table cloths, & c. and laid out our simple refreshments.” Another danger was that of drowning. In the middle of the nineteenth century newspapers frequently reported storms or capsizings resulting in the watery deaths of picnickers. Although these picnics were central to the creation of a sense of middle-class social cohesion, there was also a hint of the illicit. On the one hand, a quick look at the numerous picnic genre paintings, such as Thomas Cole’s widely known picture, *The Pic-Nic* (1846), reveals youths in male-female pairs moving toward the margins of the group, speaking in intimate whispers, disappearing from view behind trees, edging deeper into the forest, yearning for what Spencer Kellogg Brown called in his diary “one of your hastily snatched picnic kisses.” Last of all, as picnics became increasingly popular among those who would be middle-class, secluded spots became hard to find.

After the Civil War, entrepreneurs established commercial picnic groves to accommodate middle-class interest, situated on river banks for easy accessibility by steamboat. A well-appointed grove took away the concerns associated with private picnics. The sites required no brush clearing or other manual labor, and as visitors traveled by commercial vessels, the risk of drowning decreased dramatically. Site owners could not assume a clientele but had to present a special appeal through proximity to a unique natural sight or historic locale, and they had to compete with other middle-class “nature” institutions such as urban parks and religious retreats.

Urbanites sought the pleasures of nature near at hand, if they could create them. In 1859, New York City officials began the construction of Central Park, designed by the century’s preeminent landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmsted. In the following decades, many municipalities introduced green spaces among their crowding cityscapes, although rarely on the same scale. Washington, D.C., joined ranks with the park movement when Olmsted turned his sights on the capital city and left his imprint on the U.S. Capitol grounds and the National Zoological Park toward the end of the nineteenth century. His son, Frederick Law Olmsted Jr., succeeded his father as the nation’s premier landscape architect and was instrumental in the development of Rock Creek Park (built after 1890). Those parks helped Washingtonians appreciate the value of green space but lacked a vital component—amusement. Olmstedian parks sought a reverence for nature and aesthetic contemplation, not release from the psychic rigors created by the managerial revolution and corporate compulsions.

Such release, however, posed a threat to commercial venues because they suggested the possibility of illicit behavior. Commercial amusement sites could avoid the taint of immorality by associating themselves with another budding form of rural excursion. Numerous Christian groups adapted the old evangelical practice of tent
revivals to create permanent locales for religious recreation and contemplation. After
the Civil War, camp meeting sites appeared around the country in places such as
Ocean Grove, New Jersey (opened in 1869). There, urban families could retreat from
chaos and metropolitan temptations into natural surroundings under the auspices
of the Methodist Church. Several of the major denominations soon followed suit.

Picnic groves offered a combination of all three influences. Beginning in the
years around the Civil War, a number of entrepreneurs pioneered the development
of permanent picnic sites. Among the earliest of these was Kenny’s Grove, located
along the Monongahela River about ten miles from Pittsburgh. This primitive pic-
nic area may have been instrumental in the transformation of Marshall Hall from
a plantation into first a picnic grove, and later one of the nation’s first modern
amusement parks. Pittsburgh was the home of John M. Little, a man likely familiar
with Kenny’s Grove and its commercial potential. Soon after the Civil War he trav-
eled to Washington and bought Marshall Hall. If Little came to the nation’s capital
looking to establish a picnic grove, he could hardly have found a more appealing
and picturesque site.6

The Pleasures of Middle-Class Nature

Marshall Hall had once been the proud seat of one of the founders of Charles
County’s colonial gentry, Thomas Marshall, who had built a fine dwelling house from
which he managed his tobacco fields. But a combination of mismanagement by his
nineteenth-century descendants and the demise of slavery doomed the property as
a site for the production of agricultural products in the 1860s. The land was worn
out, as was the last Thomas Marshall of Marshall Hall. Already living in the city
of Washington in the 1850s, it seems that he could hardly conceive of the ancestral
home as anything more than a source of capital. By 1865, the land could not support
tobacco and, more generally, seemed to hold little value beyond a dissipated family
heritage, until John M. Little envisioned a new enterprise.7

On September 23, 1867, Thomas and Henrietta Marshall sold Little their 377
acres of Marshall Hall land. The Pittsbourgher agreed to a price of $14,000 for the
property, and paid with a combination of cash and a mortgage to the Marshalls for
$2,400. He paid off the mortgage less than two years later, which apparently gave
him time to consider what he would do with his prize. It is impossible to know
Little’s initial thoughts, whether he saw agricultural or commercial value in the land.
Perhaps he did not even fashion himself an entrepreneur. It is entirely likely that he
bought Marshall Hall with an eye to building up the peach and apple orchards the
family had tried to establish alongside their depleted tobacco fields. Whatever the
case, it is clear that by the middle of the 1870s Little had discovered a way to make
Marshall Hall productive without having to plant a single tobacco seed or pick a
single piece of fruit.8

Little founded his picnic grove at Marshall Hall sometime around 1870, shortly
after he bought the property, and apparently met with an enthusiastic response. By the end of the decade, steamboats such as the *Express*, the *Arrow*, the *Mary Washington*, the *Corcoran*, the *Lady of the Lake*, and the *John W. Thompson* plied the Potomac, bringing visitors downriver on any day or night of the week. Passengers disembarked onto the “narrow and primitive wharf” and walked up the painted wooden stairs onto the wide lawn that stretched out below the grove of trees surrounding the old Marshall mansion and the new picnic pavilion. Some arrived in small groups, such as the three hundred Washingtonians—families, circles of friends, young lovers—who boarded the steamboat *Mattano* on August 4, 1878, to escape the city’s summer heat. Others came as members of teeming excursions.9

All manner of organizations traveled to the Marshall Hall grove. Religious, ethnic, social, labor, political, professional, philanthropic, fraternal, military, and other groups rented Little’s site for celebrations, commemorations, relaxation, merrymaking—and fund raising. An 1878 article in the *Washington Post* about the excursion of the mysteriously named “Departmental Dozen” noted that this was the group’s eighth annual trip to the site. The Dozen “secured exclusive use of the grounds” for more than seven hundred passengers to commemorate Decoration Day (the forerunner of Memorial Day) on May 30. The trip had a dual purpose, to offer select Washingtonians a day of frivolity and to raise money for a charitable cause. Marshall Hall, through the 1870s, served these same two purposes for numerous other groups.10

Some groups picnicked at Marshall Hall with an eye to emphasizing their group solidarity or social exclusivity. The *Post* announced on May 2, 1880, that the following Friday the Supreme Lodge of the Independent Order of Mechanics, with representatives from Washington, Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania, would celebrate the completion of their annual meeting with an excursion to Marshall Hall. There they would deepen their fraternal bonds with a “collation and shad-plank bake” and entertain their wives by dancing to the music of “Pistorio’s fine band.” A very different group secured the picnic grove later that summer. The *Post’s* “Social Intelligence” columnist reported on September 9, 1880, that on the previous Tuesday “lively excursionists embarked on the yacht *Ella Tredwell* for Marshall Hall, and spent the day dancing, singing and flirting, until a later hour.” This well-heeled band of merrymakers included the Umplebys, Dwyers, Vogelsons, and their friends, children, and children’s friends, eighteen in all. Other groups traveled to Marshall Hall to support various philanthropies. Groups such as the Dozen sold tickets for the excursions they organized in order to cover their costs (chartering a steamboat, renting the grounds, providing food and music) as well as to generate philanthropic funds. One group hired out the *John W. Thompson* for a moonlight excursion to Little’s picnic grove on Tuesday, September 17, 1878. The announcement proclaimed that the proceeds from all ticket and bar sales would go to “the benefit of the fever sufferers.” The following summer, the District police sold more than one thousand Marshall Hall excursion
tickets to raise funds for “deserving families of deceased policemen.” Four days after the police excursion, the supporters of “Prof.” Robert Odlum helped him raise funds for a swimming pool in Virginia by holding a water carnival replete with “the game of [water] polo, a four-mile swim by Prof. Donaldson, etc.”

**Marshall Hall, Inc.: A Commercial Property**

By the early 1880s, John Little had grown tired of running a picnic grove. Perhaps he soured on playing host to increasing throngs of city folk. Perhaps he wanted to expand his agricultural production. Or perhaps he wanted to move his growing family to larger quarters. By 1880, ten people crowded into the old Marshall home, his wife Louisa, son John W., daughter-in-law Amelia, three grandchildren under the age of five, his elder brother James (the Marshall Hall postmaster), and an African American servant Rose Brown and her infant daughter Mary. It is also possible that Little received a proposition he could not afford to turn down, a hefty offer to sell the property for nearly double what he had paid for it less than ten years earlier.

Whatever the reason, John M. and Louisa Little sold the 377 acres of Marshall Hall, with the residence and other buildings, in September 1884 for $25,000, a profit of $11,000 (or $500,000 and $217,000, respectively, in 2007 U.S. dollars). The two men who bought the property were hardly strangers to the Little family, and one of them, Levi Lowell Blake, knew well the possibilities of a picnic grove within easy reach of Washington, D.C. He had captained the Mary Washington, which visited Marshall Hall frequently, and, since 1878, he had owned the exclusive right to ferry patriotic pilgrims from the nation’s capital to George Washington’s fabled home at Mt. Vernon.

Blake was apparently concerned about the future of his business in the summer of 1883, as his monopoly on landing passengers at the Mount Vernon wharf was set to expire in June of that year. If he lost the contract, he would need some other enticing destination to prevent the loss of passengers. It seems likely that he set his eyes on Marshall Hall, believing that if he lost the Mount Vernon trade altogether, the spot on the Maryland shore would be a suitable substitute. If he regained the contract and controlled Marshall Hall, his business would be vastly improved. Needing capital to obtain the property, Blake turned to an old friend, Joseph C. McKibbin, adventurer, pioneer, former member of Congress, and Civil War veteran.

Steamboat captain Blake and his partner McKibbin transformed Marshall Hall from a primitive riverside picnic grove into a polished commercial venture. They brought to the project wide experience as men who had traveled far in search of wealth and adventure, from the California gold fields of ‘49 to the halls of Congress. They had become friends in the frenzied West and now, in the late 1870s, both looked to a leisured enterprise in which they could share their ebbing years. They bought Marshall Hall at a historically opportune moment, just as such sites of “rural” entertainment were becoming fixtures of American cities. They ran the business smoothly
and used it to establish themselves as fixtures of Washington’s social scene. By the early 1890s, the Washington Post could proclaim the two of them “so well known in this city and the surrounding country that more than mention of their names is almost superfluous.”

The two men traveled far in life before reaching their exalted status in the nation’s capital. Levi Lowell Blake was born in New Haven, Vermont, in 1830. His father, Abijah Blake, was a tanner-turned-sea-captain who sailed away from home often for as long as a year at a time. Abijah’s voyages took him around Cape Horn to California, where he loaded up with wheat that he then transported to Europe before returning to New England. He must have infected his son Levi with dreams of the West. The Mexican-American War of the middle 1840s drew Levi from the East. Levi soon thereafter traveled to California in the first crushing days of the gold rush, arriving in San Francisco in April 1849. Working gold fields throughout the state, he built and lost fortunes. As Blake recalled his mining days in California, “We made money freely and spent money like rain.” He used the money to travel back east, making it as far as the Mississippi River, where he “secured a berth on the Hannah Moore, a famous steamboat of those days.” He then drifted back west, rambling up to Washington and Montana territories in the years just before the Civil War. He worked for the railroad survey of Governor Isaac Stevens of the Washington territory and helped John Mullen open the first wagon road to Walla Walla. These connections apparently helped him win election to the territorial legislature in 1862, but the lure of gold fields around Boise Idaho distracted him and he never returned to the capital at Olympia to serve his term. Instead, per his obituary, he sat out the Civil War “conquering Montana from the savages” as the Indian agent at Jocko Reservation near Polson, Montana (created through a treaty negotiated by Blake’s friend Governor Stevens). He left Montana on January 7, 1870, settled in Washington, D.C., and, apparently employing skills he gained from his seafaring father and his stint on the Mississippi, set himself up as the shipmaster of the Mary Washington and other steamships.

Joseph Chambers McKibbin (sometimes spelled McKibben) also traveled far before settling at Marshall Hall. He was born on May 11, 1824, in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, where he attended the common schools and grew to an imposing six feet three inches. He may have spent much time in Washington, D.C., as the result of his father’s prominence in Democratic Party circles. He matriculated at Princeton College in 1840 but left in 1842 before completing his studies and drifted for several years before ending up in Sierra County, California, at the time of the gold rush in 1849. There on the Pacific slope, as his obituary put it, he “rose to prominence in that collection of all types and classes.” McKibbin studied law, gained admittance to the California bar in July 1852, and entered politics, winning a seat in the state senate. At some point during this time, he became involved in water transportation, running a steamship line along the coast of California. In 1856, he won election to the U.S.
Congress as an anti-Lecompton Democrat and served for one term, but failed to gain re-election in 1858. On his return to California, McKibbin acted as “second” to state Senator David Broderick in his infamous 1859 duel with Judge David Terry over the issue of slavery in California. Broderick’s death at the hands of the pro-slavery judge gave McKibbin the resolve to join the Union Army at the first call to war in 1861. One of the first six cavalry officers President Abraham Lincoln appointed to the Northern cavalry, he rose to the rank of colonel on the staffs of Henry W. Halleck and William S. Rosecrans. Reports of disturbing drunken behavior cut short his military career and he returned to Washington, reuniting with his forty-niner friend, Blake.17

Blake and McKibbin became steamboat entrepreneurs on the Potomac River sometime in the middle 1870s. Competition among steamboat lines was intense, as numerous ships plied the river between Washington and points south, carrying passengers to leisure sites and transporting produce from farmers’ wharves to markets in the city. The most lucrative trip, however, remained the voyage to Mount Vernon.

Blake and McKibbin secured the exclusive right to convey passengers from Washington to Mount Vernon in the summer of 1878. Blake placed an announcement in the May 29, 1878, edition of the Washington Post that proclaimed, “The steamer Mary Washington, which has been recently refitted and furnished, L. L. Blake, captain, is the only boat allowed to land passengers at Mount Vernon wharf.” J. McH. Hollingsworth, Superintendent of the Ladies’s Mount Vernon Association, which owned (and continues to own) Mt. Vernon, authorized the announcement. Blake and McKibbin replaced the Mary Washington in 1881 with a new boat they had built specifically for the Mount Vernon trade, the W.W. Corcoran, and began looking for ways to expand their business, but apparently a lack of cash hindered their plans.18

Blake and McKibbin approached John Little with an offer to buy Marshall Hall at the end of the 1884 summer season. But the squeeze on their resources is clear in that, of the $25,000 purchase price, the two riverboat men could manage to offer only 25 percent in cash—$18,750 was in the form of a mortgage to Little, payable in three years, a far too optimistic time frame. Although the partners paid off $5,500 in 1886, they still owed $7,506.59 eleven years later in 1897, at which point Little sold the debt to the Central Bank of Washington. Many years passed before the bank cleared its books of the Blake-McKibbin liability.19

Experienced in losing fortunes in the California gold rush, Blake and McKibbin moved to protect their investment in Marshall Hall and their various steamship assets. The two former forty-niners sold their various properties in April 1889 to a new corporation—the Mount Vernon and Marshall Hall Steamboat Company—for a nominal price of $5.00 and privately held the corporation. This legal protection allowed the entrepreneurs to set about developing Marshall Hall, increase their audience, and rebuild their fortunes. It seems that they divided their responsibilities. Blake assumed responsibility for the steamships and McKibbin looked after the park at Marshall Hall, even making the colonial house his personal home from 1888 until
his death. This shift to a corporate status marked the beginning of a process that transformed the Marshall family’s once laconic shoreline property into a frenzied popular amusement park.20

From Picnic Grove to Amusement Park, 1890 to 1905

Blake and McKibbin significantly altered the picnic grove and sought to turn it into something quite unusual in the American landscape of the early 1890s. Adding what one deed called “the appliances of entertainment,” the proprietors of the Mount Vernon and Marshall Hall Steamboat Company (MVMHSC) attempted to provide Washingtonians with a varied experience that included historical sites, a riverboat excursion, and the newest of thrill-seeking rides even as the two managers carried on the recent tradition of the picnic grove. The proprietors transformed the earlier emphasis on the middle-class ideal of nature with attractions that would appeal to both a younger adult clientele and folks beyond the middle class, a move that slowly produced an uneasy mixture of bucolic serenity and carnivalesque revelry. In spring 1892 a Washington Post reporter captured the changed experience:

Everyone knows what an excursion to Marshall Hall is like—a ride down the majestic Potomac in company with the genial Capt. Blake and the other officials of the Macalester, a hearty welcome by the hospitable Col. McKibben to the old homestead of the Marshall family, planked shad, hot from the fire and washed down with foamy extract of malt or fragrant mint juleps, and afterward the various amusements of bowling alleys, rifle ranges, merry-go-rounds, strolling under the trees or loafing quietly in the shade which characterizes the happy-go-easy old hall.21

Ten years later in 1902, another reporter for the Post noted the changing class composition of Marshall Hall’s visitors, even as he or she largely ignored the bowling alleys and carousel in favor of the bucolic sensibility of the riverside site. The reporter languidly described the “magnificent oaks” that shaded the “old colonial mansion,” where “the broad veranda of the old Marshall house” nestled “large comfortable rocking chairs in plenty.” If occupied, a visitor could go in search of other resting places, for “all through the park are seats and swings, hammocks and settees.” This reporter took note of something more than the physical setting, though. He or she turned an artist’s eye toward the people, some meandering and others cavorting through the park:

At Marshall Hall one sees the tired business man, or department clerk, and his family lounging about on the grass and eating the dinner prepared at home and brought with them, while down at the café one observes the young man who has just begun to earn $100 per month [an annual salary of about
$27,000 in current US dollars, suggesting that he is making frugal dining choices], or the man of wealth, enjoying a little outing, dining on sirloin or lobster a la Newburg. As they sit in the arm chairs on the balcony of the Marshall mansion they look at the river and the small craft skimming about over its surface from under the canopy of oaks.22

These two descriptions are notable for the ways they frame the constituencies to whom McKibbin and Blake spoke. Both reporters focused on adults engaging largely in “adult” activities. Children might come to picnic with their parents, as those mentioned above. But the place of children at the amusement park was quite limited. The orphans and poor children were welcomed on the one day set aside for them but were not invited back as individuals. Sometimes special occasions brought a throng of children to the park, such as the 4,500 who attended the “joint excursion” of three Presbyterian Sunday schools.23 But, beyond such singular events, McKibbin and Blake did not think of children as an audience for their park, or more bluntly, as a potential source of income. They did not set up a “kiddy land” (as later park managers would do) to appeal to those visitors largely incidental to the commercial mission. The pleasures of the park, dining out and drinking alcohol, attracted adults.
The second article further underscored adult orientation in its description of the two single men dining according to their distinctive class circumstances.24

The two Post articles also suggest the widening class appeal of the growing number and variety of amusements at Marshall Hall. The 1902 article starkly depicted two men at different ends of the class scale through their food choices, the one eating on a budget, the other splurging on sirloin or lobster. By 1900, the park received its second and third generation of Washingtonians. The young man in the café could easily have been Jake’s or Potato’s or Ice Cream’s son. The years of hosting fraternal and professional organizations also made Marshall Hall a destination for the high and mighty of Washington society. Supreme Court Chief Justice Melville Fuller and associate Justices John Marshall Harlan, David Brewer, and Horace Gray trekked to Marshall Hall year in and year out for the annual Shad Bake River Excursion of the Bar Association of the District of Columbia. They did not bring their grandchildren but played baseball with law clerks, spent time at the shooting gallery, knocked down pins in the bowling alley, swapped stories with lawyers and judges, ate planked shad, sang college songs, and enjoyed their visit “with youthful zest.”25

The early 1890s seemed to augur great things for McKibbin and Blake. They had ensconced themselves in positions of rather exalted status in the District. Their entrepreneurial concern brought them in close contact with residents of all ranks, and they became well known throughout the capital. The beginning of the decade signaled happiness for personal reasons as well. Blake finally married in 1886, at the age of fifty-six, and was blessed with two children by 1890. Colonel McKibbin also took a wife. At the age of sixty-seven he married a young employee of Marshall Hall, twenty-eight-year-old Aldisa Schrack. After a long wedding journey to Niagara Falls, Montreal, Saratoga, New York City, and Boston, among other places, the couple settled in the old Marshall family home. Aldisa enlivened the house with displays of her own oil paintings on the walls. By the end of 1891, Mr. and Mrs. McKibbin had become securely “domiciled in the quaint old mansion” on the banks of the Potomac.26

The uniqueness of these personal events underscored the well-established and leisurely routine of steamboats on the Potomac and summer entertainment at Marshall Hall. Blake’s boats made two stops as they steamed down the Potomac, first Mount Vernon and then across the river to Marshall Hall, and the two sites complemented each other. The home of the first president attracted tourists from across the country and around the world. Visitors approached Mount Vernon in suppressed awe, proceeding in solemn reverence up the hill as patriotic pilgrims stepping on the nation’s holiest ground. As an historic site, however, Mount Vernon did not allow for leisure and social activities such as picnicking, dancing, and sports. Often, excursion groups traveled to Mount Vernon for a somber ceremony of patriotic display and then jumped over to the park for fun, games, and relaxation. As a somewhat historic site in its own right, Marshall Hall offered a sense of continuity with Mount Vernon, as if George Washington had given his imprimatur to mechanized versions of the
hike, riding wooden horses round the carousel, shooting rifles at paper targets, and bowling balls at imaginary armies of wooden pins.

McKibbin made history essential to the Marshall Hall experience. He shrouded the house with historical patina, if not outright myth, to link it to the distant past and posted a history of the property on the veranda of the house. This narrative puffed numerous false claims and gilded commonplace facts. McKibbin’s “memoir of Marshall Hall” ran from the mundane—with claims that the giant May Pole had once been bedecked with spring garlands by “the gentle maidens and the gallant youths of colonial times”—to the fantastic. Thomas Marshall’s hapless uncle Joshua Marshall, for example, became an English gentleman and the first of the Marshalls to emigrate to America. He had purchased the land from Randall Hanson, the original colonial patentee of the land, and built “a very pretentious and stylish log house, a regular castle, in fact.” This Joshua Marshall, according to McKibbin’s spurious history, set up a large slave plantation and, to protect his claim to the land, sought to perfect his title by securing a second deed to the land from the “original and first owners of the tract, the Piscattaway Indians,” who at that time still remained in the area, by purchasing the land that he already owned from John Ackatamaka, “Emperor of the Piscattaway,” for three thousand pounds of tobacco. As proof of these historical claims, McKibbin also displayed a purported “facsimile” of the deed from Ackatamaka for the Potomac shore property. All of this ran counter to the facts: Joshua Marshall was a native Marylander, and although he apparently did negotiate with Ackatamaka, he died a young man before he could actually lay claim to the land around Marshall Hall.27

McKibbin and Blake further added to Marshall Hall’s historical patina with the purchase of the steamer River Queen in 1892. The ship’s history included carrying Abraham Lincoln as he sought respite from the rigors of the Civil War and when he later traveled down the long Chesapeake Bay to Hampton Roads, Virginia, in February 1865, for a conference with Confederate negotiators (including Confederate Vice President Alexander Stevens) looking to end the war. McKibbin removed the chairs, desk, and two Japanese vases that Lincoln and the Southern representatives had used aboard the old steamboat and set them in the living room of the Marshall house as a shrine to the martyred president.28

The use of history enhanced the appeal of Marshall Hall as a site for large gatherings. The authority of the past suppressed the entertainment venue’s potentially depraving influence on innocent youths and adults of weak character. McKibbin trumped up Marshall Hall’s history, then boosted it further with furniture touched by the secular saint Lincoln, to balance the fears of religious and morally upright patrons. This balancing act was crucial in attracting certain groups of visitors. Religious organizations maintained strict limits on leisure behavior at the turn of the century, and long after. Into the 1920s, for example, the Methodist church forbade such activities as “dancing, playing at games of chance, attending theaters, horse-
races, circuses, dancing parties, or patronizing dancing-schools, or taking such other amusements as are obviously of misleading or questionable moral tendency.” The historical patina also drew political groups that could justify use of Marshall Hall as something more than a merely recreational site.29

Yet the site’s success also depended on keeping pace with the latest popular trends in entertainment. McKibbin constantly altered the grounds and the attractions to increase attendance. In 1891, for example, MVMHSC added a dance pavilion to the picnic grounds. The dance floor, 125 by 65 feet, one of the largest in the United States at that time, boasted a surrounding eight-foot-wide gallery promenade. The walls, capped halfway up, maximized comfort and vistas and left long views of the Potomac River for the dancers as they twirled around the spacious interior. McKibbin opened the 1891 summer season by dedicating the new pavilion on May 14 at a reunion gathering of California forty-niners. Apparently, construction was not complete, for he dedicated the pavilion a second time on July 11. On that day, Professor Schroeder’s Orchestra played for dancers all day and into the night. The Washington Mandolin, Banjo, and Guitar Club serenaded voyagers on the Corcoran and a new MVMHSC ship, the Macalester, while also relieving Schroeder’s players at the dance pavilion. The evening was topped off with a grand ball that no doubt was mobbed by excited Washingtonians.30

McKibbin underscored the historical significance of Marshall Hall by hosting numerous military encampments whose soldiers staged mock battles. In the summer of 1893, for example, 140 men of the Third Battalion of the District National Guard set up “Camp McKibbin” on one of the great lawns near the house. They pitched tents, took rifle and drill practice, staged a dress parade for more than two thousand spectators, and held numerous “sham” battles, many recreations of historic events, such as Sheridan’s famous ride to rally Union troops at Cedar Creek in October 1864. Members of the 8th and 9th U.S. Cavalry camped out at Marshall Hall in the summer of 1894 and performed feats of horse-back riding that rivaled those of the most popular entertainments of the day. According to an enraptured reporter for the Washington Post, “The impromptu bareback drills and feats of horsemanship by these troopers surpass even Buffalo Bill’s famous Wild West Show.” These encampments gave rise to some tension with local residents. Members of the Third Battalion failed to locate two local men named Clagett and Depro who had insulted some of the soldiers’ wives and attacked two of the Guardsmen. When camp broke on a Sunday without the “local toughs” having been captured, the Post reported that there was “considerable sorrow in camp that the Sabbath could not be celebrated by a lynching.”31

Groups of all sorts made Marshall Hall the destination of summer excursions, in even greater variety than during the era of Little’s picnic grove. The site became a sort of register of the proliferation of organization-building during the Gilded Age. Memorable dates drew particular types of Washingtonians. The Sons and Daughters
of the American Revolution joined forces to celebrate the 118th anniversary of Ethan Allen’s victory at Fort Ticonderoga and advertised widely to encourage members and their families to sail to Marshall Hall on the Macalester for a series of related festivities. The Knights of Labor sponsored a Labor Day festival in September 1902 for 3,500 of its members, including representatives of numerous trades: carpenters, house painters, musicians, mineral water drivers, bakers, plasterers, mixed clerks, metallic and sheet iron workers, bakers’ drivers, mixed wall scrapers, engineers, metal lathers, and fresco painters. This “distinctively family crowd,” according to the Post, enjoyed a pig chase, an apple race, a three-legged race, a hundred-yard dash, a girls’ fifty-yard race, a boys’ egg race, and a sausage-eating contest. The big event of the day was the pig chase, in which twelve young men battled each other to win both the pig and the token $1.50 prize.\(^{32}\)

Marshall Hall served other groups as well. Aldisa Schrack, Colonel McKibbin’s long-time assistant manager, arranged an annual visit for the city’s orphans, bringing hundreds of young boys out for a day of nature play every July through the early 1890s. In 1892, German immigrants used the services of MVMHSC to celebrate their loyalty both to the fatherland and to their new homeland. The North American Turnerbund (a German-American immigrant/patriotic society that advocated gymnastics
and other physical activities) sailed on the Macalester to Mount Vernon to pay their respects to George Washington. In the shadow of the first president’s home, Hugo Muench, president of the Turnerbund’s national organization, called on all those present to “renew our pledges of unselfish devotion to human liberty and enlightened patriotism.” He urged the audience to hold dear Washington’s example of:

- firm and unswerving devotion to public duty,
- his urbane bearing and kindly consideration toward those whom rank had placed beneath him,
- his modesty of personal demeanor,
- and, last and greatest of all, that grand republican spirit which made him spurn the thought of personal dictatorship or crowned royalty, and to voluntarily retire at the conclusion of two terms at the head of this country’s Government to the no less exalted duties of private citizenship.

After this moment of homage, the assembled throng hopped back onto the Macalester for the short sail across the Potomac to Marshall Hall, and there “they spent the afternoon and evening in a genuine German good time.” The crowd swelled as the River Queen brought down a second boatload of German Americans. The members of the Turnerbund then offered a gymnastics exhibition that included calisthenics, vaulting, and running, and capped off the festivities with the prize bowling contest.
From “Nature’s Nation” to “Washington’s Playground” 259

sponsored by the Washington Saengerbund Bowling Club. Such events apparently occurred with some regularity. Fifteen years later, for instance, more than a thousand German immigrants of the United German Societies, representing some twenty-three different social organizations, traveled to Marshall Hall for a day-long excursion that included singing German songs, eating food from the old country, and traditional games and pastimes.33

The Knights of Pythias used Marshall Hall in the summer of 1893 to raise funds for its mission of fostering universal peace and understanding. To attract a large audience, the Knights staged William Shakespeare’s play As You Like It. Pythian Charles B. Hanford traveled to New York to engage actors for the production, among them Edwin Booth’s nephew Creson Clarke and Alberta Gallatin, a nationally acclaimed actress and granddaughter of Virginian Albert Gallatin, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. A thirty-five member orchestra supported the cast and the outdoor stage was “brilliantly lighted with electricity.” Mary Logan, widow of Civil War general and Republican politician John A. Logan, served as a leading patron of the event, underscoring its social significance.34

Outdoor meals of the nineteenth century often revolved around a local or regional delicacy, particularly at Marshall Hall. The Chesapeake was renowned for its vast production of shad, and McKibbin showcased the famous treat during the month of May. Liverpool, Marshall Hall’s “celebrated negro cook,” used purportedly ancient methods to create a dish that became as crucial to Marshall Hall’s fame as was its proximity to Mount Vernon.35 Liverpool employed “planking,” supposedly an ancient Piscattaway Indian cooking method that Joshua Marshall passed down to succeeding generations. Other reports suggest that the Marshall Hall cook brought the delicious and visually striking dish to the banks of the Potomac. As the Post noted in 1902, “It was not, however, until the captain [Blake] made a summer resort out of the place, and employed ‘Liverpool’ . . . that planked shad became a feature of the place.”36

Shad planking was only one of several ways Marshall Hall visitors could satisfy their gustatory cravings. McKibbin had catered numerous excursions through the late 1880s and early 1890s. Then, in 1893, he opened a permanent restaurant next to the colonial house. The café, as contemporary reports refer to it, offered two styles, the old arrangement of the European plan (food items served à la carte) and a regular dinner available for the flat rate of seventy-five cents. On June 15, 1893, one could choose from a menu of tomato or chicken, Spanish mackerel, trout, salt water tailer [bluefish], roulette of lamb with tomato sauce, prime rib of beef and roasted spring lamb, potatoes, beets, tomatoes, green peas, tea, coffee, and English plum pudding.37

Visitors worked up their appetites playing sports on land and in the river. Amateur baseball teams met on the lawn in civil combat, and swimmers competed for significant prizes. District swim champion Dr. F. W. Greenfell, for example, defeated
the Navy’s former champion, J. J. McCarthy in both the 100- and 250-yard races held on September 5, 1896. Greenfell carried home a gold medal and the $1,000 wager he had made with McCarthy. More than two thousand spectators gathered on the banks of the Potomac to witness the Greenfell-McCarthy races. But most of the contests were spontaneous.38

The most celebrated sporting event at Marshall Hall occurred every year. McKibbin and Blake closed the summer season with a grand entertainment in which they wove together Maryland’s heritage of horse racing with two strands of the state’s history, slavery and Indians, that they invested with mythic sentiment. The gala event was a jousting tournament with youths on horses using wooden lances to collect tiny metal rings hung along a dirt course. These “Gala Days” harkened to symbols of the Old South, with its hoary claims to standing as the last bastion of the chivalric code of armor-clad feudal knights. But to ensure that the gala was thoroughly Americanized, McKibbin also claimed that “Emperor of the Piscattaway,” John Ackatamaka (who supposedly sold Joshua Marshall the second deed to Marshall Hall) had founded the tradition of manly sports at Marshall Hall.39 The Post reported that the emperor:

gathered together on the green lawns the most athletic of the young braves from all the neighboring nations of Indians and gave prizes of rich ornaments, with bows and arrows of elegant workmanship, to those who excelled in feats of strength and expertness. This annual custom, it is recorded, continued throughout the colonial period of Marshall Hall’s history, varied, of course, by the higher civilization of the gentry who came to the green lawns upon the invitation of the Marshall who at the time was proprietary lord of the manor.40

Knights and ladies and the rabble of the Chesapeake realm gathered at the end of each summer (usually the first Wednesday of September) beginning in 1894. They came to see the medieval dress, witness the horsemanship of local young men, and revel in the pomp and circumstance of tournament officials, local politicians, music concerts, and a fancy ball. The day got underway just after noon. As many as twenty young men with noms de guerre such as “Maryland Boy,” “Potomac,” “Sweepstakes,” and the enigmatic “In-the-eleventh-hour” brought their favorite horses and lined up for the competition. Although officials encouraged them to dress in period costume, the riders apparently preferred to wear contemporary clothing. Once on their horses, however, they rode like knights on the ancient lists. They clutched their lances, galloped hard round the course, and tilted at the metal rings that diminished in size each round until less than one inch in diameter. Honored guests officiated over the list—men such as W. T. Dement, a renowned veteran of the Civil War. Dement and his successors dressed in fancifully imagined costumes dripping with plumage and draped with a crimson sash, supposedly reminiscent of King Arthur’s court. The five
knights with the greatest number of rings captured on their lances won the field, a small purse, and, most importantly, the right to crown the “lady” of their choice. Once crowned, the honored orator of the day addressed the time traveling throng. Sometimes they spoke to political issues of the day, but most often they paid homage to the chivalric deeds and legends of the days when dragons challenged knights who sat at vast round tables and pulled swords from stones.41

Judge Edward Stake, for example, gave the 1899 oration in which he “referred to the history of knight errantry from the time of the Crusades to the day of Don Quixote. He passed high compliments on the sport, and advocated the theory that it encouraged chivalry and respect for noble womanhood.” The court led a procession into the pavilion where knights and their ladies danced to a wide variety of songs that Sir Lancelot and Guinnevere could never have imagined, with titles such as such as “The Green Lawns of Marshall Hall,” or “Macalester, Queen of the Waves,” or “I Dreamed I Dwelt at Marshall Hall.” The dancing ceased only once during the course of the evening, when a beplumed official would halt the merriment for a solemn ceremony, charging all present to choose the annual “queen of love and beauty.” The queen chosen, the dancing resumed until the dancers no longer could lift their feet another step. Toward 11:00, all turned their attention to the river. There, McKibbin and Blake concluded the medieval evening with a decidedly anachronistic fireworks barrage.42

The crowds that came to the jousting tournaments were far more diverse than those who had ventured to the picnic grove of the 1870s. As many as eight thousand people thronged Marshall Hall to take part in and witness the festivities in the 1890s. They came not only from the District now, but also from surrounding Charles County, neighboring Prince George’s County, and distant parts of Maryland. For the country jakes, the event marked the highpoint of the year, in effect a harvest celebration. The locals arrived, not by boat of course, but by horse-drawn vehicles. “The Maryland farmer was there with the old family carriage, with its bevy of pretty girls and freckle-nosed boys. The young gallants from the country had their best sidebar bugles and the best-looking damsels of the countryside.” And whether one lived nearby or up the river in the nation’s capital, one of the key draws was the lure of gambling on which knights would capture the most rings. The sons of the Maryland farmer tended to take the city fellows’ cash, because, as a reporter observed, “their knowledge of the skill of the various horsemen made them walking ‘dope books.’” The victorious knights, no matter the level of stakes bet on their skills, took home only a modest prize. The first place finisher in 1899 received, for instance, a modest $43.20.43

The hint of illicit dealings pointed to a larger problem Blake and McKibbin faced in maintaining their audience, contact across the gender divide. The long boat ride and picnic aura (recall the “stolen kisses” of antebellum picnic genre paintings) freed adults from what historian John Kasson called “the normative demands” of
conventional propriety and middle-class probity. McKibbin and Blake well knew that this atmosphere, particularly attractive to young adults still under parental authority, could rapidly descend into license if not licentiousness. The pair constantly feared that they operated one scandal away from disaster. Although their advertisements emphasized that the boats of the MVMHSC and the Marshall Hall site itself were free of rakes and grifters, the danger was ever present.44

New York Representative Amos Cummings was apparently well attuned to the potential for mashers (sexual predators) on the excursion to Marshall Hall. On board the Macalester on the evening of May 1, 1892, the congressman believed that a tall, handsome young man was “trying to flirt” with the women of his party. Cummings’s anger rose until, crying out, “These ladies sir are respectable!” he “struck the stranger a terrible blow,” as the Logansport Daily Pharos reported, and then struck him again. The victim’s companions protested his innocence and proclaimed to be a gentleman. The victim himself warned the congressman that he would soon receive a challenge to a duel. Fortunately for Blake and McKibbin, it seems the challenge was never sent.45

The pair’s luck did not hold through the summer, however, and they must have been chagrinned on seeing the headline in the July 13, 1892, edition of the Washington Post. “Bertha’s in a Plight: So Is Her Sweetheart She Picked up at Marshall Hall.” The article detailed a secret affair between twenty-six-year-old Peter Voight and Bertha Harbaugh, a minor. The pair met during the July 4 festivities at Marshall Hall and apparently fell in love at first sight. They spent the afternoon together, and the next evening as well. But too many prying eyes in the city prevented them from consummating their relationship. So, Bertha lied to her parents the following Sunday and claimed she was going to church. Instead, she met Peter. The two boarded the Macalester and chugged down the Potomac toward Marshall Hall—and into infamy. After disembarking onto the Marshall Hall wharf, giddy with anticipation, the two youths waltzed past the dance pavilion, ignored the picnic tables, and passed up the history lesson that hung from the Marshall family mansion. Then, as the Post report chastely put it, they “took a stroll in the country, and it was here that the young lady took her first downward step.” The following day, Bertha’s mother discovered her daughter’s true Sunday destination and her purpose in going to the park. Within days the police arrested Peter for “carnal knowledge of a female under sixteen years of age.” By early August, the Post reported that the couple had married and that, as a sort of wedding present, Bertha’s mother had dropped the charges against her new son-in-law.46

Yet such scandals paled in comparison to the woes McKibbin and Blake began to face by the mid-1890s. Their attempts to boost attendance at Marshall Hall, while apparently successful in terms of absolute numbers, had only increased their burden of debt. In April 1893, they borrowed $25,000 to shore up their finances in advance of the coming summer season. The next year they were forced to borrow more than
$15,000 to pay off expenses related to building and furnishing the steamboat, the Charles Macalester. Their fortunes worsened, and in March 1896, McKibbin and Blake sold Marshall Hall at auction to satisfy their debts. A syndicate of District businessmen, represented by attorney Henry F. Woodward, bought the site for $46,000. But McKibbin and Blake did not lose Marshall Hall. Woodward’s syndicate actually included Blake and other entrepreneurs who were already invested in MVMHSC. Once the auction was complete, the syndicate turned around and sold Marshall Hall back to Blake for a nominal price of one dollar.47

McKibbin’s battle with Bright’s disease necessitated and complicated these financial maneuvers. Worse, as he sank toward death in the summer of 1896, his young wife Aldisia succumbed to her own months-long illness and died on June 4, 1896, three months shy of their fifth wedding anniversary. Colonel McKibbin, bereft over her death, mired in debt, and ravaged by disease in his kidneys, died four weeks later.

The next several years were rough for Captain Blake. He did not become the sole master of the Mount Vernon and Marshall Hall Steamboat Company and its prime piece of real estate. Rather, he presided over the ruins of the corporation with a new board of directors under the close supervision of an array of creditors. Numerous court documents reveal that the company skirted bankruptcy often, was ensnared in debt, and slipped into receivership by 1897. Levi Blake lived another seven years, but by the time of his death he no longer controlled the company he and McKibbin had built, and the steamboats of the MVMHSC had passed out of his control. The properties would never again have the aura of domestic hospitality the partners brought to their venture. The boats, the mansion, the picnic groves, and the “appliances of entertainment” would be instead merely small parts of larger corporations, investments to be bought and sold and evaluated for their contributions to accountants’ ledger sheets.48

The Nature of Commercialized Leisure

The Marshall Hall amusement park reworked the landscape of the Potomac River. The old colonial house had once stood naked on the riverbank, attended by a handful of outbuildings, visually whispering of a gone world. By 1900, the house was obscured behind an added porch, overgrown trees, and a motley collection of towering entertainment appliances. Where the dock had moored only the occasional skiff at mid-century, it now received throughout the summer daily discharges of thousands of daytrippers. A new set of commercial concerns transformed the antebellum middle-class ideal of nature into one that no longer stood apart from the city but served as an extension of it. People used this nature differently, and the ways they used it raised important questions about the character of American culture.

The formation of crowds at turn-of-the-century amusement parks took place at a moment in which great numbers of Americans worried about the future of the republic. The parks at Coney Island, in particular, stimulated nervous alarm over
the ways Americans related to one another. The formation of crowds around such seemingly empty and worthless activities as those presented at Dreamworld, Luna, Steeplechase, and Sea Lion Parks seemed the perfect example of numerous ills in American society. Some critics worried that a new “mass culture” was subverting the possibilities for individual freedom. Others suspected that labor organizations and masses of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe were overturning well-established social hierarchies. Yet others anxiously feared that “the crowd” became an unreasoning mass that threatened the very foundation of American democracy. James Gibbons Huneker, for example, charged that the crowd unleashed at Coney Island “sheds its civilization and becomes half child, half savage.” The frenzied crowd, he maintained, “will lynch an innocent man or glorify a scamp politician with equal facility.”

Some critics found a positive note in the Coney Island crowds. As historian John Kasson observed, they “applauded Coney Island as a crucible of democratic freedom and equality, a cultural melting pot mingling individuals and races from all segments of society.” Other critics could even see the parks as tools for cultural uplift (or at least as a benevolent form of social control). James Sizer, for one, noted that “Every natural person is interested in some form of amusement.” Amusement parks could thus soak up the non-working hours of “ignorant people who do not know how to use the leisure which is suddenly [in the new industrial society] being thrust upon them.” Education, he lamented, was not a solution. It required too much work. “The only way to uplift people,” he declared, “is along the line of least resistance, by deed rather than by precept and theory. Amusement is this line of least resistance.” In short, the great question raised by the advent of Coney Island crowds in the early twentieth century was whether this new, commercialized leisure was a virtue or a menace to a democratic society.

Historians have continued this debate. Kasson was first into the lists with his seminal book, *Amusing the Million*. Although he offered a nuanced appraisal of the benefits and detriments of Coney Island’s commercial culture, he ultimately condemned it as a harbinger of a “standardized,” “conformist,” and “manipulative” mass culture. More recently, Gary Cross and John Walton counter Kasson by characterizing the assembled throng at Coney Island as “the playful crowd.” Coney Island or the playful crowd? Coney Island provided “the model of the popular amusement resort/park for half a century.” But if that is true, then Marshall Hall stands as a distinct exception, as do the countless smaller, regional, and local parks that dotted the American culturescape throughout the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.
There were numerous, significant differences between the crowds, expectations, experiences, and meanings of Coney Island and Marshall Hall. First and foremost, the Coney crowd was fixated on titillation that was sensual if not sexual in nature. This meant adults only in the Coney parks. It also meant that, where picnic groves such as Marshall Hall or Kenny’s Grove provided release from urban tension through relaxation, at Coney Island visitors found it in physical stimulation. George C. Tilyou, founder of Coney’s Steeplechase Park, explained the allure of the amusements by emphasizing their sensual nature. “What attracts the crowd is the wearied mind’s demand for relief in unconsidered muscular action.” This action was not the mindlessness of physical labor. Rather, in rides such as the “Human Whirlpool,” the “Barrel of Love,” or the “Helter Skelter,” it was the thrill of bodies thrown against other human bodies, strangers in intimate contact with strangers. When Fred Thompson, founder of Luna Park, praised the “carnival spirit,” he just as easily might have called it “carnal sensation.” Thompson and his fellow park founders avoided charges of licentiousness by characterizing their audiences as adult children, engaging in what historian Woody Register called “a dramatic reenactment of their lost juvenile primitivism.” As children, these adults were thereby innocent of any untoward desires. The Coney parks also attempted to overwhelm the senses through “an architecture of pleasure.” Parks such as Steeplechase were completely built environments that created a sort of reverse slumming. For the price of a ticket, Coney patrons could sojourn through gaudy imagined palaces of the well-to-do. Last of all, central to the power of Coney Island was its ability to foster and manage the pleasurable anxiety of crisis and the exotic. The parks competed against each other to produce spectacular calamities such as “Fighting the Flames” or the terrifying “Johnstown Flood,” or imaginary journeys such as “A Trip to the Moon” or “The Streets of Delhi.” Marshall Hall, by contrast, provided a far less overwhelming experience. The amusement park at Marshall Hall entertained a considerably smaller audience. The four Coney parks counted as many as six million visitors each season. Marshall Hall probably took in only a tenth of that number by the early 1900s. The scale of the built environment at Marshall Hall was smaller. The Marshall Hall house stood just two stories tall, and the Ferris wheel located nearby was not much higher. There were no grand spectacles, no symbols of pretended wealth. Instead, McKibbin and Blake added gravitas to Marshall Hall by playing up, and sometimes inventing, its ties to the nation’s history. Where Coney Island was consumed with producing stimulating events, Marshall Hall combined the excitement of mechanical rides with a variety of opportunities for relaxation. These included the boat ride along the river, shaded picnic areas, and the ubiquitous rocking chairs with riparian views. Where bodily contact was encouraged at Coney, sensuousness was a threat at Marshall Hall, as it could quickly scuttle the park’s reputation. Young folks might spoon on the decks of the Macalester, but the proprietors of the Marshall Hall
steamship company remained wary of sexually suggestive behavior and did not buy rides designed to titillate. 53

Coney Island and Marshall Hall differed sharply in the makeup of their respective audiences. The crowd on the Potomac attracted a much wider variety of groups and entertained adults and children, and families. Coney Island drew adults to its playgrounds and allowed grown-ups to enact their juvenile primitivism. Moreover, Marshall Hall served a function quite unlike Coney in hosting large groups, from the throng of German Americans who participated in the North American Turner bund’s 1892 outing to the three thousand union men and their families who ventured out for the 1902 Knights of Labor picnic. The social distance between the bar association and the Knights suggests that perhaps the most important difference between Marshall Hall and Coney Island lay in the range of social classes who patronized the parks.

Luna, Dreamworld, Sea Lion, and Steeplechase appealed to young adults of the working and middle classes, and Marshall Hall catered to virtually the entire population of Washington. If rough-neighborhood kids such as Jake, Shorty, Skinny, Potato, and Ice Cream came out on the charity picnic in the summer of 1880, so did Supreme Court Justices Fuller, Harlan, Brewer, and Gray for the annual D.C. bar association picnic. Whether the interaction of such disparate groups created a leveling effect is unclear. But it certainly made the community of Washington, D.C., up and down the social scale, visible to itself and sometimes resulted in misunderstanding, as with the altercation between Congressman Cummings and the mysterious stranger. At other times, it threw folks of distinctly different stations together. One diner in the Marshall Hall restaurant in 1902 might be on a budget while his neighbor at the next table ordered lobster a la Newburg. But after rising from their respective tables they could sit next to one other in the “arm chairs on the balcony of the Marshall mansion,” as the Post’s reporter observed, and “look at the river and the small craft skimming about over its surface from under the canopy of oaks.” A hierarchy of income did not, at least for a few moments, preclude a democracy of leisure. The one fellow could turn to the other and say with the Scottish poet Robert Burns, “a man’s a man for a’ that.” 54

The proprietors of the Coney Island and Marshall Hall parks attempted to widen the class appeal of their venues, with quite different dynamics. Coney Island first associated with the low life of con games, saloons, repulsive sideshows, rowdynamism, sexual harassment, gambling, brothels, and taxi-dance houses. Tilyou and his fellow Coney Island proprietors had to raise the reputation of their parks in order to draw in a skeptical middle-class clientele. The audience for the picnic grove at Marshall Hall in the 1870s and early 1880s had been middle-class, and McKibbin and Blake had to figure out how to appeal up and down the social scale to ensure their economic survival. Luna and the other Coney parks could limit themselves to a narrower demographic of young working and middle-class adults because New
York City had a much larger population than Washington D.C. Thus, McKibbin and Blake had to create a “socially prismatic” park, diversifying offerings through a wider array of facilities and managing a more complex clientele. The park’s heritage as a picnic grove rooted in the antebellum middle-class project of appropriating nature to its own ends allowed them to succeed.55

Marshall Hall and Coney Island also had vastly different relations to nature. Fences and other visual barriers surrounded the Coney parks, forcing visitors to turn their gaze constantly to the parks’ interiors. New Yorkers who braved the beach outside the parks experienced, not wide expanses of bucolic shoreline but swarms of fellow city folk crawling all over each other to find a narrow sliver of sand. Nature remained ever-present at Marshall Hall. Fence-free, trees inhabited all areas of the park, and visitors could easily stroll from the rides, past the colonial house, into the picnic grove and open fields to the peach and apple orchards beyond. The Potomac park blended with the surrounding countryside as well in the slow procession of steamships that carried passengers on the hour-plus voyage to and from Marshall Hall.

Marshall Hall’s heritage as a middle-class site for finding secular salvation in nature’s nation played a central role in its later commercial successes. Dreamworld and its fellow Coney parks rushed headlong into modernity, but Marshall Hall went forward in two directions. As a commercial enterprise reliant on maintaining a socially prismatic audience and finding new customers, the park had to introduce innovative attractions. McKibbin and Blake’s successors, for example, built a roller coaster and soon thereafter developed an entirely new focus on children as an income-producing constituency, while acknowledging Marshall Hall’s deep roots in nature and history. Where Fred Thompson built Coney Island on the guiding principle that adults long to be children and that “grown-up children want new toys all the time,” the wide expanse of the Potomac River, the old Marshall family home, and the park’s close proximity to Mt. Vernon tempered the desire for novelty. McKibbin’s fancied histories of the site anchored the park in time and endowed it with an ersatz historical tradition—no less charming for its rather tawdry sham, perhaps all the more appealing for its self-evident bluster.56

The merger with commercial enterprise after the Civil War extended and transformed the antebellum middle-class conception of nature as a place of spiritual respite and recreation. Marshall Hall and numerous riverfront parks helped shear off the religious vestiges of salvation from the picnic and played a significant role in secularizing nature and infusing the outdoor experience with amusements for Americans at all levels of society. Amusement, however, did not render the middle-class reverence for nature frivolous but offered it as a restorative, for the physical and not the spiritual of the antebellum version. The summertime outing into nature, whether to an amusement park or a pristine forest, cured the body of its urban ills. As a writer for The World’s Work reported in 1902:
We were alarmed a short generation ago [referring to George Beard’s widely read 1881 treatise *American Nervousness*] lest we should all become nervous wrecks in the great centres of desperate endeavor. But the summer outing came to the rescue. It has added as greatly to the variety of life as to health. It brings hundreds of thousands close to nature who would otherwise regard urban residence as normal.57

By 1900, then, nature had become the guarantor of health, rather than a source of wealth.

Nature interpenetrated all aspects of Marshall Hall and thus fostered a very different experience from that found at the Coney Island parks. As a seat of urban activity surrounded by rural scenes, it served as a mirror to “rural” retreats such as Rock Creek Park surrounded by the city. McKibbin and Blake’s annual jousting matches brought rural and urban people together. The park juxtaposed the bucolic nature of the river with the thrills of mechanized appliances of entertainment. The long slow voyage to the park down the languid Potomac, the murmuring churning of the steamship engines, the un hurried unfolding of the shore line, the honest enduring expanses of sky, the penetrating night stars—all suggested contemplation of the eternal. The park’s rides fused the body to a technological present while throwing the mind out into a rapidly approaching uncertain future. But unlike Coney Island, the return to the river always followed antic play at Marshall Hall.

Coney Island fostered a culture of hedonistic youth. Its descendants have devised ever more awesome machines for hurtling bodies through space with standardized spectacles of splash mountains and kings’ dominions that simulate nature and history while erasing their actual significance. If the proprietors of Marshall Hall sometimes stretched the truth about the site’s own history, they nonetheless told a local history unique to the Potomac and in the shadow of Mt. Vernon. If visitors voyaged to the park on modern steamships, they nonetheless remained in the timeless presence of the great river. Unlike the consumers of today’s theme parks, they could not divorce amusement from American nature.

The amusement park at Marshall Hall never rivaled Coney Island or later theme parks such as Disneyland in size, mass audience, or thrill rides. Rather, it remained relatively small and intensely local in focus and resembled hundreds of small amusement venues strewn across America’s popular-culture landscape, from Kennywood in Pittsburgh to Wonderland in Minneapolis, Olympic Park in Maplewood, New Jersey, or White City Parks in Indianapolis, Shrewsbury, New Orleans, Oshkosh, and beyond. These parks survived at the whim of their small-time owners, the ups and downs of the local and national economy, and competition from other forms of entertainment. Marshall Hall, unlike most turn-of-the-century amusement parks,
survived the Great Depression and two world wars but never turned a great profit.

After Blake and McKibben gave it up, Marshall Hall passed into the hands of a series of commercial operators and consistently skirted financial disaster. The season, a mere four months each summer, left the park unused the rest of the year. Fickle audiences demanded new attractions that the owners could not always afford to add, and the rise of early twentieth-century competitors closer to Washington—Glen Echo, River View, Washington Luna, and Cabin John Bridge parks—remained a constant threat. Throughout the twentieth century, Marshall Hall maintained constants such as the river, the boats, and the end-of-summer jousting tournament. A succession of managers introduced new attractions including a wooden roller coaster in 1899, a Ferris wheel by 1905, new rides to appeal to children in the early 1900s, and a second (steel) roller coaster in 1949.

The heyday of the amusement park followed World War II. The power elite of the nation’s capital continued to frequent Marshall Hall, as did a new generation of children freed from the economic constraints of the pre-war period. Legalized gambling drew their parents to the park, freeing children to scamper about the kid-die rides while grown-ups wandered into the Happyland building and tried their luck at the many “one-armed bandits.”

The Maryland state government outlawed gambling in the early 1960s and activity at the park declined. The interstate road system enabled Americans to travel much farther for vacations and entertainment, and the rise of much larger amusement parks dwarfed what seemed in the “space age” to be the outmoded pleasures of Marshall Hall. These events, combined with the erratic, money-grubbing strategies of the park’s last owner, Joseph Goldstein, doomed the park. The final blow came in 1974 when President Gerald Ford signed legislation that added the Marshall Hall property to the adjoining Piscataway Park to protect Mt. Vernon’s viewshed of the eastern Potomac shore. The park fell into disrepair, the number of visitors plummeted, and on July 21, 1977, the park’s main attraction, the roller coaster, collapsed in a wind storm. In 1979, the National Park Service elected to tear down all the remaining appliances of entertainment and remove all vestiges of the amusement park in order to return the old Marshall Hall mansion to its colonial state. The ghosts of history, though, remained with the property. Fire ravaged the house’s interior and destroyed its roof in 1981 and, twenty years later, an addled truck driver drove his tractor-trailer rig through the hulk of the house. But for the meekly patched up brick walls of the Marshall house, a small outbuilding, and the nearby graveyard, the property—where thousands of city folk had once frolicked, picnicked, cavorted, jousted, gambled, and danced for over a century—is unrecognizable for what it once was. A visitor driving down lonely Bryan’s Point Road would never know that here, not so long ago, was Washington, D.C.’s amusement mecca.
NOTES

3. The Circular (June 28, 1855): 90.
11. “The Order of Mechanics,” Washington Post, May 2, 1880: 1; “Social Intelligence,” ibid., September 19, 1880: 2; “Alexandria Annals,” ibid., September 13, 1878: 3; “A Pic-nic for Charity,” ibid., August 23, 1879: 1; “A Carnival in the Water,” ibid., August 26, 1879: 4; (This charity event ended far more successfully than Odlum’s later attempt to popularize water sports: In 1889, he died in a daredevil plunge off the recently completed Brooklyn Bridge.)
12. U.S. Census, 1880, E. D. 44, Pomona, Charles County, Maryland, National Archive Film Number: T9-0508, Page 463D.
15. McKibbin and Blake first met in California. But the circumstances of their meeting and, indeed, much of their California lives are exaggerated. As a reporter once mockingly complained, the two “are so incessantly guying each other that it is almost impossible to get a connected account of their combined adventures.” As an example, he reported that Blake
claimed the first time he ever saw McKibbin, the latter was “drilling for a blast in a mine shaft and the colonel retorts by telling of seeing the captain seated on a rock, waiting for an Indian to come along that he might have s/t to shoot at” (“Jolly Potomac Captains,” 10). The Gold Rush loomed large in the two men’s personal histories. They hosted annual meetings of the Society of California Pioneers of Washington at Marshall Hall throughout the 1880s and 1890s. See, e.g., “The California Pioneers,” Salt Lake City Daily Tribune, May 15, 1887: 1; “They Sought for Gold,” Washington Post, May 15, 1890: 2; “All Skilled Carvers,” ibid., May 15, 1891: 2 and “The Gold Hunters of ’49: The Surviving Pioneers and Their Friends at Marshall Hall,” ibid., May 13, 1893: 2. McKibbin served for a time as the treasurer of the society; “Jolly Potomac Captains,” 10.


17. A speaker at a reunion of forty-niners at Marshall Hall in 1890 recalled seeing McKibbin in Washington often as a child (“They Sought for Gold,” 2). McKibbin’s father Chambers McKibbin was an assistant quartermaster in Pittsburgh during Andrew Jackson’s presidency and was a postmaster under President Polk. He later became a naval officer during the administration of his close associate, President James Buchanan, and served at the U.S. Mint and in the Department of the Treasury under President Andrew Johnson. For a while, he ran a steamship line between New Orleans and Havana, Cuba. While the exact time period of this exploit is not clear, it seems to have taken place before the Civil War (“Jolly Potomac Captains,” 10). McKibbin’s official biography as a member of Congress is available at bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=M000514. See also, Stephen J. Field, Personal Reminiscences of Early Days in California, with Other Sketches (Printed Not Published, 1893), and Henry Wilson, History of the Rise and Fall of the Slave Power in America (Boston: James R. Osgood, 1874), 2:564–65. On McKibbin’s Civil War service, see, Alexander Kelly McClure, Recollections of Half a Century (1902), 35–36; Military Historical Society of Massachusetts, Campaigns in Kentucky and Tennessee Including the Battle of Chickamauga, 1862–1864 (1908), 248; C. A. Dana to Secretary of War E. M. Stanton, November 1, 1865, The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, ser. 1, vol. 31, pt. 2 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1890), 54; ibid., ser. 1, vol. 52, pt. 1, 494.

18. An article in the Post in May 1878 notes that the Arrow and City of Washington would be sailing to Mount Vernon, thus suggesting that no ship had an exclusive right to the wharf


20. Deed dated April 15, 1889, see Charles County Land Records, Liber JST 2:544ff. Although there is no hard and fast evidence that Blake and McKibbin divided their work strictly to the separate spheres of land and sea, the general sense one gets from reading the numerous articles on the pair in the Washington Post is that the two did indeed divide their responsibilities. This is further underscored by the fact that Blake listed his official residence as Washington, D.C., while McKibbin was a citizen of Charles County, Maryland.


26. “Col. M’Kibben Wedded,” Washington Post, September 18, 1891: 5; “Memorable Close of a Memorable Season,” ibid., October 11, 1891: 7; “A Forty-Niner Married,” Fresno Weekly Republican, September 25, 1891: 4. It seems that Miss Schrack was an orphan from Ohio. She was widely celebrated for orchestrating annual visits to Marshall Hall by the orphans of the District. Among the few wedding guests listed in the announcement of her marriage to McKibbin, none are mentioned as her relatives. Last of all, Aldisa’s 1896 obituary notes that she was thirty-three and had been born in Ohio. The 1880 census lists an Eldisa Schrack, born in 1862, in Ohio living with her grandmother, suggesting that she was orphaned either by the death of or abandonment by her parents.


35. Braden, Leisure and Entertainment, 26; Shad, which typically weighs between two and three pounds, is a type of herring that comes upriver to spawn in the spring, with the season for capturing and cooking shad limited chiefly to the month of May. The late nineteenth century represented the peak in shad production. It has steadily declined since then. “Down the River,” 10.

36. “Obtained Two Deeds,” 26; “All Skilled Carvers,” 2; “Springtime Glory,” Olean (New York) Weekly Democrat, May 12, 1892: 4; “Springtime Glory” was reprinted in Marion (Ohio) Daily Star, May 16, 1892: 4 and the Evansville (Indiana) Intelligencer, May 18, 1892: 2. Liverpool organized a large pyre of oak limbs, each twenty to thirty feet long. He took hundreds of shad caught only hours before just off the shore in the Potomac and stretched them on oak planks that had been used and reused in the planking process for several years. Then, as a Post reporter described the scene, “[a]t intervals two stout colored men, inured by long practice to the heat, moved actively from plant to plank dabbing or basting the sizzling fish with a tempting mixture of sherry and Worcestershire sauce.” (This mixture was Liverpool’s prized recipe: he kept it secret, no doubt to increase the excitement over the dish, but also to retain some measure of power over his employers.) Once the slow cooking process was complete, Liverpool decorated the fish with flowers, such as spireas, yellow roses, and snowballs, and passed the dishes on to waiters who served the desperately hungry throng of visitors.


39. See, for instance, Mark Twain’s famous gripe about Sir Walter Scott’s influence on the South in Life on the Mississippi.


41. Ibid., 3. Marshall Hall advertisements suggest the 1884 date as the first tournament. This would have coincided with Blake and McKibbin’s purchase of the property. But historian Jason Rhodes lists 1895 as the first year of the tournament (Maryland’s Amusement Parks [Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia, 2005], 94). It may be that he obtained this date from that found in the SMSC’s finding aid for Marshall Hall (p. 4). But this document offers no proof for the claim.

43. “Gala Day Down the River,” 4; “All Eager for Prize: Gallant Knights in the Tourney at Marshall Hall,” 5.
46. “Bertha’s in a Plight: So Is Her Sweetheart She Picked up at Marshall Hall,” Washington Post, July 13, 1892: 2; “The Wrong Righted by Marriage,” 6 August 1892:4. The latter article ended on an ominous note, however: Peter and Bertha “were not yet living together, . . . the girl being with her mother, while Voight is stopping at Meyer’s Hotel on Pennsylvania Avenue.”
49. Cited in Kasson, Amusing the Million, 96; ibid., 95.
50. Ibid., 95.
51. Ibid., 105, 112; Gary Cross and John Walton, The Playful Crowd: Pleasure Places in the Twentieth Century (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 63. On the working class at Coney Island, see Kathy Peiss, Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York (Temple University Press, 1987), ch. 5; Cross and Walton, The Playful Crowd, 5. This myopia is endemic in the small universe of histories that have investigated commercial leisure in the U.S. They have focused almost exclusively on two parks: Coney Island and Disneyland.
53. Jon Sterngass, First Resorts: Pursuing Pleasure at Saratoga Springs, Newport, and Coney Island (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 229. This difference underscores the problem with claims such as Cross and Walton’s that Coney Island was the model for amusement parks for the first half of the twentieth century. Marshall Hall provides a stark reminder of the limitations of claims such as Lauren Rabinovitz’s that “The amusement park’s modernity . . . lay not in its specific architecture but in its sensory over-stimulation—its bombardment and exaggeration of sight, sound and kinesthesia” (“Urban Wonderlands:
Siting Modernity in Turn-of-the-Century Amusement Parks,” European Contributions to American Studies 45 [2001]: 85). A key aspect of that modernity was the way it incorporated both the past and its surrounding environment.


In a letter of October 10, 1864, Lincoln expressed support for the new Maryland constitution, especially the provision for the “extinction” of slavery.


An overview of the campaign by the former Chief Ordnance Officer, Army of Northern Virginia. Read before the Maryland Historical Society in 1888. A generally objective overview of the operations of the armies and the decisions of the opposing commanders.


James Anderson was a clerk at the Treasury Department in Washington. His letters to his wife Mary spoke of events in the capital as the nation raced towards war. Mary responded by telling her husband of people’s attitudes in Rockville, Maryland. James worried about money and the possibility that he might be required to take an oath of allegiance to the United States.


A native of Montgomery County, Maryland, Anderson served as a captain in the 35th Battalion of Virginia Cavalry. He was captured in a skirmish near Harper’s Ferry, Virginia in October 1862. Over the years, Anderson had the grand tour of Federal prisoner-of-war camps, being imprisoned...
at Johnson’s Island, Point Lookout, and Fort Delaware. Most of his letters from 1864 describe the conditions—bad—at the prison camps. Also included is a letter from Charles Rozer to James’s sister Mary describing Union actions, confiscations, and vandalism in Fairfax County, Virginia.


With the Civil War in the background, Richard Williams wrote an account of his courtship with Rose Anderson that included references to the war, including sighting J.E.B. Stuart in June 1863. Both Williams and his fiancé were natives of Montgomery County, Maryland, and the story of their romance provides a window to everyday life in the county during the war. The couple married in Rockville, Maryland, on November 15, 1864. Interestingly, Williams was loyal to the Union while his bride was pro-Southern.


Although this article covers the Civil War era, it does not have much to say about the war itself. Montgomery County fairs ceased for the duration of the war, and Union soldiers ruined the fairgrounds by using it as a camp.


A study of the local and national situation prior to the 19th of April, 1861, includes an account of the riot and the aftermath. The final consequence was occupation and martial law for Baltimore.


Primarily a letter from Pvt. Robert R. Moore, a guard at Ft. McHenry, to his mother, describing the fort. There is some description of conditions for the Confederate prisoners of war at the fort. Included is a labeled fold-out map of the fort.


Bailey examines the raid on Cumberland, Maryland, of February 1865, in which Captain Jesse McNeill and sixty partisan rangers captured Union generals George Crook and Benjamin F. Kelley.


A compilation of letters between Pvt. Walter G. Dunn, 11th New Jersey Infantry, and his cousin Mary Emma Randolph of Plainfield, New Jersey.
After being wounded at Chancellorsville, Dunn recuperated in Baltimore. Subsequently, Dunn stayed on in Baltimore to assist surgeons after Gettysburg. Dunn described events in Baltimore including Harry Gilmor’s raid in 1864.


These are the letters to and from Isaac R. Trimble regarding command of Baltimore paramilitary organizations formed after the riot of April 19, 1861, during the period April 21 to May 11. City authorities asked Trimble to take command of these volunteers and coordinate their activities as directed by the Baltimore Board of Police. Included is a list of the organizations he led.


Three days after the Baltimore riot of April 19, 1861, prominent Baptist minister and pastor of the Seventh Baptist Church in Baltimore, Richard Fuller, visited with Lincoln in the company of others. This is an account of Fuller’s conversation with Lincoln as well as Fuller’s conversations and correspondence with Salmon P. Chase.


Excerpts from the diary of Frederick, Maryland, resident and southern sympathizer Catherine Susannah Thomas Markell. Written during the days leading up to the Battle of Antietam, the diary includes accounts of the comings and goings of Union and Confederate troops and leaders such as J.E.B. Stuart. The Markells were friends or acquaintances of many Marylanders in the Confederate army, including Bradley T. Johnson and Stonewall Jackson’s aide Henry Kyd Douglas.


Excerpts from Mrs. Preston’s diary, March to June 1863, with letters to her daughter May. Madge Preston’s full story is the basis for A Private War: Letters and Diaries of Madge Preston.


In late June 1863, the Civil War came to St. Joseph’s Academy and the adjacent convent in Emmitsburg, Maryland. Both armies visited the academy and left the school the poorer. The soldiers requisitioned supplies while cavalry horses grazed the academy’s fields. Soldiers camped in and around the school. After the Battle of Gettysburg, a number of the sisters and one of the chaplains, Father Burlando, went to the battlefield and assisted in caring for the wounded.
One letter each from Maryland soldiers in the Revolution, the War of 1812, and the Civil War. The Civil War letter is from John Eager Howard Post of the 1st Maryland Infantry. In it, Post described Jackson’s Valley Campaign (290–94).

Political maneuvering and developments in Congress from 1862 to 1864 that led to Reconstruction policies. Henry W. Davis has been credited with authoring the Wade-Davis bill. Although it may have reflected his own opinions and ideals, Davis may not have been the author.

An overview of the problems involved in recruiting Maryland slaves into the Union army. Such recruitment was opposed by both the Maryland governor and slave owners. The article describes their efforts to block recruitment. Eventually, the Federals allowed the enlistment of slaves without the master’s consent.

When the Civil War began, Washington City boasted but one theater. The demand for entertainment grew in the capital with the increased military population. As a result the number of legitimate theaters grew as did the number of music halls.

Bombaugh was the surgeon of the 69th Pennsylvania Infantry. He recounted his service and that of the regiment up to and including the Peninsula Campaign. Among other operations, the 69th served around Point of Rocks and Poolesville, Maryland.

In February 1863, Confederates captured the Federal ironclad gunboat *Indianola* on the Mississippi River. Several Marylanders were involved in the action, including Maryland artillerymen and brigadier general Joseph L. Brent of Charles County.

A history of the fort from its origin to 1923. The Civil War period at Fort Frederick is covered on pages 105–6.
An overview of Confederate espionage efforts. The Signal and Secret Service Bureau of the Confederate War Department was directed by Major William Norris, a Baltimore native.

Henri Mercier was the French minister to the United States from 1860 to 1864. The son of a Louis XVIII consul to the United States, Mercier was born in Baltimore. These are his views regarding slavery and the Emancipation Proclamation.

The events leading up to the riot of April 19, 1861. The riot is described as well as the aftermath, ending with the Federal occupation of Maryland.

An extensive and scholarly discussion of politics in Maryland before and during the Civil War. Includes an examination of the issue of slavery as practiced and perceived in Maryland.

An overview of the difficulties faced by state authorities in recruiting for the Union and later, dealing with the draft.

Because of its location and some Southern sentiment, Maryland, and Baltimore in particular, endured a strong Federal military presence for most of the war. Under martial law, Federal authorities arrested leading citizens and law makers, composers and publishers. The focus of the article is how occupation affected Baltimore during the war.

Letters from John Stone to his sister for the period June 1862–July 1863, primarily regaling his sibling with the mundane details of camp life. From late September to December 1862, Stone’s unit quartered near Winchester, Virginia. In December 1862 the unit was ordered to New Market, Virginia. The following June, Stone took part in the Gettysburg campaign.

A letter from Rev. Edward A. Colburn to his father Dr. Harvey Colburn regarding the November 18, 1861 arrest of Jacob Enfield for displaying a Rebel flag. Young Colburn disagreed with the arrest and asked his father if anything could be done.


On January 16, 1862, Dr. Harvey Colburn of Baltimore wrote to his son Rev. Edward A. Colburn of Deer Creek Parish, Harford County, Maryland. In the letter, the judge makes an argument to his son regarding Lincoln’s good points.


A letter dated June 4, 1861, from William E. Colston, Company B, Maryland Guard, attached to the 21st Virginia Infantry in Suffolk, Virginia, to his brother Fred. The letter is followed by the epitaph of William who was killed in a dawn assault on Loudoun Heights, Virginia, January 10, 1864.


Letters to and from Augustus W. Bradford in September 1864 regarding whether or not Bradford thought Lincoln could carry the state in the 1864 election. Bradford did.


Allen C. Redwood served with the 1st Maryland Cavalry and the 55th Virginia Infantry. He was educated in Baltimore private schools and in Brooklyn, New York. After the war, Redwood was a professional illustrator and writer. The cover picture portrays a Confederate boxing match at the Fort Delaware prison camp, one of fifteen Redwood sketches owned by the Maryland Historical Society.


During the war, John Thomas Scharf was in the Confederate navy. While stationed at Savannah, Scharf met and became enamored with fifteen-year-old Anna Wylly Habershon. Unfortunately, the romance was doomed, as Anna felt only friendship for Scharf. Most of the story is told through entries from Anna’s diary. After the war, Scharf became a noted Maryland historian. The article also relates Scharf’s war record in brief.


The response of the Maryland German community to the Civil War, both
political and military. On the whole, Maryland Germans supported the Union.


A description of the events surrounding the nomination of John Bell and Edward Everett as presidential and vice presidential nominees for the Constitutional Union Party. After the split of the Democratic Party, the Constitutional Union Party became the fourth political organization to field candidates in the 1860 race. Their convention was held at the First Presbyterian Church building at Fayette and North Streets in Baltimore.


In May 1861, Murat Halstead, editor of the *Cincinnati Commercial*, reported from Baltimore. Halstead observed Baltimore as an occupied city but deemed it necessary, for he judged one-third of the population to be secessionist. He described the defenses of Baltimore and found the city “strangely quiet.”


At the time of the war, the South was predominantly Protestant. Many Protestant ministers were openly pro-Confederate. Not surprisingly, the war took its toll on Protestant churches. Membership declined, church presses were confiscated, and churches were destroyed. Protestant ministers were arrested, and although most were later released without condition, some were forced to take an oath of allegiance to the United States. Communications between the church hierarchy and ministers were disrupted by carnage, destruction, and poor mail service. At the end of the war, the Protestant denominations faced “major rebuilding.”


Theatre and the entertainment industry thrived in the Confederacy during the war. Professional actors throughout the South, in places such as the Richmond Theatre, entertained audiences despite hardships and growing deprivations. Amateur theatrical groups were popular as well and performed in the home.


During the war, Wood was superintendent of the Old Capitol Prison, a Federal penitentiary. In addition, Wood performed special duties for Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, including apprehending counterfeiters.
In July 1865, Wood was transferred to the Treasury Department and began operating the Secret Service.


Born in what is now West Virginia, and educated at Mount Washington Female College in Baltimore, Belle Boyd won renown as a Confederate spy. The article follows the career of Boyd and concludes that she made valuable contributions to the Southern cause, but was neither superhuman nor the most effective spy for the Confederacy.


Following Lincoln’s assassination, Secretary of War Edwin Stanton charged William P. Wood, superintendent of the Old Capitol Prison, with apprehending John Wilkes Booth. The trail led Wood through southern Maryland, where he interviewed Mary Surratt’s sister Zaddock Jenkins, among others. Although he was on the right track, Wood’s efforts came to naught. Wood later made an unsuccessful claim on the prize money for Booth’s capture.


A discovery of letters to Redwood reveals a close relationship with Sophie Herrick, daughter of Albert Thayer Bledsoe. A former Confederate soldier, Redwood is best known for his work as an illustrator of the war in the years after the conflict. Herrick was an editor of the *Southern Review* magazine (1877–1879) and thereafter a staff member of Scribner’s publishing and *Century Magazine*. The relationship between Redwood and Herrick developed from 1870 when he was her art instructor.


Bishop William Robinson Whittingham of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Maryland opposed secession. Because of this opposition, Whittingham supported some of the more heavy-handed government policies, such as arbitrary arrests and suspension of civil liberties. In spite of his stance, a number of Episcopalian clergymen in Maryland were pro-Southern and some were arrested by Federal authorities.


The war severely disrupted higher education in Maryland. Students and faculty left in droves to fight. Campuses were occupied by Federal troops. Pro-Southern or suspected sympathizers among faculty and students were arrested by government authorities. The 1862 graduation ceremonies at
the University of Maryland turned into a near riot as the audience and students displayed their sympathies.

In the Maryland Methodist church there was disagreement over slavery. Officially, the Methodist Church opposed slavery, following an 1860 decision by the Methodist General Conference in Buffalo, New York. Maryland was a slaveholding state, however, and not a few Methodist parishioners were slave owners.

An overview of Jubal Early’s invasion and Maryland’s response. The raid caused considerable disruption and no small amount of damage. In addition, Early ransomed towns under threat of burning. After defeating Union Gen. Lew Wallace at the Battle of the Monocacy, Early assaulted Washington defenses in Maryland.

Ideological causes of the Civil War, particularly the concept that the government ruled only with the consent of the people. According to Durkin the Northern argument against secession was weakened by attacks on Federal policy and authority including threats by Northern states to secede in the decades preceding the Civil War.

When he fought with Garibaldi in Italy, Richard Thomas of St. Mary’s County took the nom de guerre of Zarvona. Back in the United States in time for the Civil War, Zarvona organized a group of Zouaves for service with the Confederacy. He and his Zouaves took part in a scheme to seize the ship *Saint Nicolas* and other vessels on the Chesapeake. Commissioned a colonel in Virginia forces in recognition of his service, Zarvona was captured trying to repeat the success. He was released from prison in April 1863 in poor health.

Letters from Isaac W. Lashley, 8th Maryland Infantry, to parents after being wounded in the chest, May 1864. Additional letters from nurse Caroline H. Merrick and a friend of Lashley’s informing Lashley’s parents of his death.

In this case republicanism refers not to the political party but to the
concept of a republic. Ellenberger examines the changing political ideals of Baltimore before and after the riot of April 19, 1861. The importance of businessmen and commerce to the city gradually overshadowed the influence of those who still held republicanism to be important. In the wake of the riot, commerce eclipsed this influence.


As part of Jubal Early’s invasion of Maryland in the summer of 1864, Harry Gilmor was to cut the Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad at Magnolia, Maryland. This is a brief study of the campaign followed by a reprint of Gilmor’s official report.


From the Minute Book of the Boundary Avenue Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, the notice of a private communion for Harry Gilmor (January 17, 1883).


A discussion of pro-Union sentiment in Maryland in the years prior to the war. The actions of Gov. Thomas Hicks, as southern states seceded are examined, as is the reaction of Marylanders to Lincoln’s election. Union sentiment in Maryland swelled as the states of the deep South seceded. Given public opinion, Hicks was confident enough that he refused to call up the legislature to debate the possibility of secession for Maryland.


Offers the opinion that John W. Palmer, Baltimore native and war correspondent for the *New York Tribune*, was a Confederate spy. Gaddy’s suspicion is based in part on Palmer’s excellent sources for his stories, his laudatory poem “Stonewall Jackson’s Way,” and the fact that Palmer joined and defected to the Confederacy after a falling out with his editor at the *Tribune* in 1863.


Native Marylander William Norris began his war career as a civilian aide to John Bankhead Magruder. In this capacity, Norris developed a signal system for communicating with troops in the field that involved the use of flags and colored balls. Always impressed by cleverness, Magruder recommended that Norris be commissioned a captain and signal officer of the Army of the Peninsula. When the Confederate Signal Corps was established in 1862, Norris was named as head. In addition to waving flags, signalmen also served as scouts and couriers behind enemy lines. Later
in the war, the operations of the Secret Service Bureau were entrusted to Norris as well.


Two contracts, May and November 1864, between the U.S. Army Quartermaster Department and other parties for the receipt of 500 prisoners and provisions for the Baltimore City jail.


George covers the attempts by the Federal government to link Marylander Surratt to the Lincoln assassination. In the process, George carefully examines the trial testimony providing details of Surratt’s ordeal after he returned to the United States in 1867.


Goddard relates Civil War anecdotes and memories of Judge Hugh L. Bond of Baltimore, Bradley Johnson, Henry Kyd Douglas, Charles Marshall, Charles Phelps, and George Blach, to name a few.


An explanation of how the C&D Canal helped save Washington in the early days of the war by serving as a means of transport and communication. Also its further usefulness to the Union cause throughout the war.


Political maneuvering in the Democratic Party, from the Charleston convention of 1860 to the Baltimore convention the same year. It was during the Baltimore convention that the party split with the Southern Democrats, who left the convention en mass.


A brief overview of Hagerstown during the war from the diary of twenty-two-year-old Miss Mary Louisa “Lutie” Kealhoffer, during the period June 21–August 31, 1863. The focus of the diary is the Gettysburg campaign. Miss Kealhoffer was the daughter of George Kealhoffer, president of the Hagerstown Gas Light Company. She was a Confederate sympathizer.


Initially hard pressed due to disruptions on the B&O Railroad, Maryland coal companies ultimately benefited from the war because government demands for coal increased as the war went on. By 1864 the coal compa-
nies had raised miners’ wages. In 1865, in its second year of operation, the Central Coal Company was paying stock dividends of five percent.

A study of the events surrounding election of the Speaker of the House in 1860. Davis voted for the Republican candidate, William Pennington. According to the author, Davis believed that Pennington’s selection would lead to an alliance between the Republicans and anti-slavery Democratic factions in the South.

The story of how Henry Hollyday of Queen Anne’s County and a friend traveled overland and across the Chesapeake Bay to Richmond, Virginia. A good depiction of the difficulties facing a Marylander attempting to join the Confederate war effort.

This portion of Mrs. Lee’s journal covers the entrance of Stonewall Jackson’s troops into Winchester after months of Federal occupation. Lee gives a very dynamic and colorful account of the Union troops’ departure and the arrival of Confederates. Moreover, enthusiasm for Jackson knew no bounds. During the week covered by the diary excerpt, several Maryland soldiers visited with Mrs. Lee and her neighbors, including “Randy” McKim, Capt. Murray and Gen. Bradley Johnson to name a few. Mrs. Lee had a high opinion of the Maryland soldiers.

James J. Archer was first a regimental and later a brigade commander in the Army of Northern Virginia. As a brigadier general, Archer commanded troops from Tennessee. Captured at Gettysburg, Archer was imprisoned at Johnson’s Island and exchanged in 1864. Archer died in Richmond later that year as a result of his imprisonment. These are his wartime letters including ones written at Johnson’s Island.

Thomas Claggett was a member of the Maryland House of Delegates. On the night of September 17, 1861, Claggett was arrested along with eighteen other members on suspicion of disloyalty to the government. The abstracts are of letters from Claggett during his imprisonment. Claggett was paroled March 29, 1862.

A fine essay assessing the breadth of Southern sympathies in Frederick and identifying soldiers, churches, women, politicians, and newspaper editors of the Southern persuasion. Hurst shows that as a group the pro-Southern block in Frederick were more vocal than Unionists and their opinions remained unchanged to the end of the war, but they accounted for but a third of the county’s population.


Isacsson, Alfred. “John Surratt and the Lincoln Assassination Plot.” *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 52 (1957): 316–42. Briefly explores Surratt’s Civil War service and examines what part, if any, he played in the assassination of Lincoln. Article also details Surratt’s escape from the United States authorities, his discovery in Rome and subsequent apprehension, and his trial.

Ives, William M. and B. Latrobe Weston. “Winchester and Baltimore: A Forgotten Page of History.” *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 29 (1934): 21–24. Reprint of article from the *Winchester News*, October 19, 1866. In the fall of 1864 and the winter of 1864/1865, Baltimore provided Winchester, Virginia, with food and material aid through the efforts of Mrs. J. Harman Brown (Margaret Brown) of Baltimore. Mrs. Brown’s lovely daughter Mrs. John N. Bell lived in Winchester. In addition, financial aid was provided when a number of Baltimore merchants and individuals subscribed and became stockholders in the creation of the Shenandoah Valley National Bank of Winchester.


Keidel, George C. “Jeb Stuart in Maryland, June 1863.” *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 34 (1939): 161–64. Keidel follows Stuart and the cavalry division from the point they crossed the Potomac on the night of June 27, 1863, to their exit from the state on June 30. Unlike most histories of the Gettysburg campaign, Keidel’s narrative does not criticize Stuart for leaving Lee blind. Rather, Keidel focuses on the cavalry’s accomplishments over the three days and emphasizes how often Stuart came in close proximity to Union forces.

The participation of Baltimore steamers in the war included serving as supply ships, transporting troops for both sides, and blockade duty. The federal government purchased, leased, and commandeered the vessels during the conflict.


The story of Lincoln’s trip through Baltimore on the way to Washington for his inauguration in 1861. Allen Pinkerton’s involvement came through the efforts of Samuel M. Felton, president of the Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad. Unable to obtain Federal protection for his railroad, Felton badgered Pinkerton into investigating rumors of rebel espionage. Lincoln traveled on Felton’s line under Pinkerton’s protection.


Using the letters and diaries of the 8th New York Heavy Artillery, Lerch describes the regiment’s service in Baltimore where they spent most of the war quartered at Fort Federal Hill. Their duties included guarding prisoners of war and drill. In February 1864, the 8th left the city to join Hancock’s 2nd Corps, Army of the Potomac. Thereafter the 8th had the second highest casualty rate of all Union regiments.


From 1862 to 1864, the officers of the 8th New York Heavy Artillery presided over almost 300 cases against Federal soldiers, civilians, rebels, and spies. The article describes the organization and procedures of the court and uses ten cases heard by the officers as examples.


Robert W. McCleery of Frederick, Maryland, served as an engineer in the U.S. Navy. As such, he watched the Battle of Port Royal, South Carolina, from the deck of the U.S.S. *Wabash*. He recorded his observations in a letter to his brother, reproduced here, with a hand-drawn map showing the movements of the *Wabash*. Levin offers a concise biography of McCleery and his service.

———. “Who Hid John H. Surratt, the Lincoln Conspiracy Case Figure?” *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 60 (1965): 175–84.

An investigation into the whereabouts of John H. Surratt in April 1865 and his connection to Confederate Brigadier General Edwin Gray Lee, a cousin of Robert E. Lee. In April 1865, Edwin Lee was in Canada.


Charles E. Phelps was colonel of the 7th Maryland Infantry (U.S.). Wounded and captured at Spotsylvania Court House in 1864, Phelps became a prisoner of war, while his diary was taken by a Capt. Richards (C.S.A.). Later the diary came into the possession of Gen. M. L. Smith of the Confederate engineers who used it as a notebook and as his own diary. The article describes how the diary eventually found its way in the collections of the Maryland Historical Society.


Wightman was a member of the 9th New York Infantry (Hawkins’s Zouaves). His letters describe conditions in Washington and the march to Antietam. Arriving after the battle, Wightman viewed the battlefield on September 21, 1862. He described the bodies, the destruction and carnage, debris, downed fences, and “furrows of earth” caused by cannon balls.


The story of the feud between Henry Winter Davis, congressional representative from Baltimore, and Montgomery Blair. Both men wanted a spot on Lincoln’s cabinet, but Blair won out. Davis never forgave Blair. Embittered by Blair’s selection, Davis used his power in Congress to attack Lincoln’s policies, according to Luthin.


A request for information on Patrick Charles Martin that contains some details on his career as a spy, Confederate purchasing agent, and blockade runner during the war.


Freedom of the press did not fare well in Baltimore during the war. The Federal government used a variety of creative measures to suppress the pro-Southern print media. Techniques included the arrest of editors and threats against papers that published anything considered remotely hostile to the Union war effort.

Joseph H. Coit was an Episcopalian clergyman and an instructor at the College of St. James, some six miles south of Hagerstown. As presented here, his diary covers the initial period of the Gettysburg campaign from mid-June to July 1, 1863. Among the topics covered in the diary are events at the college, how the campaign affected the college, and general news of the war.

———. “Men of Maryland Specially Honored by the State or the United States.” *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 12 (1917): 201–53.

The special honors referred to in the title are either an act or resolution passed by either the Maryland General Assembly or by the U.S. Congress. This list of Marylanders gives accomplishments, birth and death dates, and special awards dating from the Revolution to the early twentieth century, including many men from the Civil War era.


Overview of British government policy regarding the American Civil War in the crucial year of 1862. Initially, the British government was firmly neutral, but by the fall of 1862 it was considering intervention by way of mediation. Had the Confederates emerged victorious after Antietam, the British might have recognized the Confederacy as an independent government. Even after Antietam, discussion continued in the British government with Chancellor of the Exchequer Gladstone stating publicly that the South had “made a nation.”


When Union general Benjamin Butler arrived in Maryland in 1861, the U.S.S. *Constitution*, “Old Ironsides,” was a training ship for the U.S. Naval Academy. To prevent Rebels from making an attempt to capture the historic ship, Butler ordered it out to sea.


Henry Clay Mettam was a native of Pikesville, Maryland. He served in the First from 1862 until the end of the war and saw action in Virginia prior to the battle of Gettysburg, but was sick with typhoid during that campaign. Subsequently, Mettam took part in Early’s invasion of Maryland. He was captured in 1864 and sent to Camp Chase, Ohio. This is an overview of his career, written in 1912 for the benefit of his children.


In May 1860, the Constitutional Union Party held its convention in Baltimore and nominated John Bell of Tennessee and Edward Everett of Massachusetts for president and vice president respectively. In June
of the same year, Baltimore hosted the second Democratic convention of the year. Among the delegates was Bradley Johnson of Frederick. The convention turned ugly over sectional disagreements, but eventually John Breckinridge of Kentucky was nominated for president with Joseph Lane of Oregon as his running mate. Much attention in the article is given to the Maryland delegates and the actions of Maryland political figures during the convention.

Maryland’s reaction to the standoff at Fort Sumter and the subsequent bombardment of the fort. The author contends, and rather persuasively, that most Marylanders opposed secession.

Taken from an address by Morison at St. John’s Church in Washington, D.C., on February 26, 1861. A general discussion of Lincoln’s first days in office, particularly February 24, 1861, when Lincoln attended St. John’s. Mentions Lincoln’s passage through Baltimore on his way to Washington as well as the experience of his family through the same city.

Trimble was born in Culpeper, Virginia. Following graduation from West Point, Trimble served in the army but resigned after ten years’ service in 1832 with the rank of lieutenant. After leaving the army, Trimble settled in Baltimore where, save for his service with the Army of Northern Virginia, he resided for the rest of his life. The diary runs from July 14, 1862, to April 1864. Trimble recorded his experiences at Antietam, Second Manassas, and Gettysburg, where he was wounded and captured, and his subsequent imprisonment at Ft. McHenry.

This list was probably compiled to assist the governor in making appointments to state office. Bradford’s list gives name and occupation for each individual. Not stirring reading, but a reminder that political lists are nothing new.

Elder Maryland statesman John Pendleton Kennedy labored mightily to prevent dissolution of the Union through a pamphlet campaign. Kennedy also agreed to chair the Unionist party in Maryland.

Nicholson gives a brief history of the short-lived unit. Formed in February 1860, the Guard disbanded in April 1861. He names the officers and sergeants of the unit and lists known survivors as of the date of publication (1911). Members of the Guard later served in both the Union and Confederate armies.


In September 1862, Edward Paca left Maryland to join the Confederates. This is a diary of his first six months in service (September 1862–January 1863). Paca described his difficulties in getting to the Confederacy and once in Richmond, enlisting in a unit. After serving as an acting Quartermaster, Paca eventually mustered into the Winder Cavalry (January 1863).


A former Confederate artillery officer remembers the final days of the Army of Northern Virginia. Packard was a native of Alexandria, Virginia, who served in the Rockbridge Artillery. After the war he was a lawyer and president of the school board in Baltimore. He died in Baltimore in 1923.


The publication of *The Escape and Suicide of John Wilkes Booth* (1907) caused many to question whether or not Booth survived to 1903 only to commit suicide in Enid, Oklahoma. Pegram responds to the doubters with convincing evidence including a description of viewing Booth’s body with Henry C. Wagner in 1869 after the remains were released by the War Department.


Four African American brothers, Sandy, Stephen, Adam and Wilson Pinkett, of Somerset County, enlisted in the Union Army. They served in the 7th and 9th U.S. Colored Troops. The article follows the Pinketts from enlistment in November 1863 to mustering out in 1866. At the time of their enlistment, slaves could be enlisted without the consent of the master if company quotas were not filled within thirty days. The Pinketts were the sons of a free father and a slave mother.


Biographical sketch of Barbara’s life with a thorough examination of the myth engendered by the Whittier poem. Explores various explanations and sources for the story including the possibility that Barbara was a
psychopathic flag waver. Text is enhanced by a photo of Barbara and a map of Frederick, Maryland, showing the route of the main column of the Confederate army as well as the possible route taken by Jackson. Concludes that the story is fictional, but Whittier believed it to be true at the time he wrote his poem and never formally recanted on that belief.

Reese, Timothy J. “One Man’s Battlefield: George Alfred Townsend and the War Correspondents’ Memorial Arch.” Maryland Historical Magazine, 92 (1997): 357–85. During the war, George Townsend was a correspondent for the New York Herald. After the war he was a respected columnist for various papers and an author. Following the publication of a novel that included scenes from the Battle of Crampton’s Gap, Townsend bought land on South Mountain and established an estate he called “Gapland.” In the 1890s, Townsend solicited funds from colleagues for a memorial arch to the Civil War correspondents. The completed monument has the names of 157 reporters. Included also is the story of Townsend’s life.


Rigby, James H. “Sidelights: Three Civil War Letters of James H. Rigby, a Maryland Federal Artillery Officer.” Maryland Historical Magazine, 57 (1962): 155–60. Rigby was a 1st lieutenant and later a captain in the artillery. Letters include Rigby’s experiences in late 1861 while he was still in Maryland as well as one at Fredericksburg, Virginia on December 12, 1862. Includes Rigby’s description of the Battle of Antietam and aftermath as well as the battle of Crampton’s Gap.

Robinson, Edward Ayrault. “Some Recollections of April 19, 1861.” Maryland Historical Magazine, 27 (1932): 274–79. Robinson was a sergeant with Co. A, 5th Maryland Guard. This is his account of the Baltimore riot on April 19, 1861. During the riot, the 5th
guarded its armory from the mob and was ordered out to quell the riot. A Unionist, Robinson welcomed the arrival of Union general Benjamin Butler to the city in May, 1861.

An overview of the difficulties encountered raising Maryland units in the Confederacy. Bradley Johnson and George H. Steuart put pressure on the Confederate War Department to allow Maryland troops in other units to join the 1st Maryland. Eventually, the Confederate government disbanded the 1st Maryland (May 1862) owing to appeals for discharge from members of the regiment so that they could deal with personal problems at home. Johnson believed that had the 1st existed during the Antietam campaign, it would have received many volunteers.

A letter by an unidentified Maryland woman living and working as a nurse in Charlottesville, Virginia, in 1863. Homesick for her native state, the woman tried to keep in contact with every Marylander in the Charlottesville area.

In 1863, Harry Gilmor resigned his captaincy in the 12th Virginia Cavalry to raise a battalion of Maryland cavalry. The resulting partisan unit operated in the Shenandoah Valley in 1863 and into 1864. At times their behavior was outrageous, including a train robbery in which passengers were relieved of their valuables. The activities of Gilmor’s unit generated a number of complaints from valley residents and others, allegedly embarrassing Robert E. Lee.

A large portion of the Maryland population was prevented from voting in Federal elections during the war, particularly known Southern sympathizers and Confederate veterans. Arrests were made of state legislators, Baltimore city officials, and private citizens. The U.S. Army and state government officials determined the loyalty of potential voters.

Health, food, cleanliness, and the number of laundresses servicing the fort are among the topics examined.

The tale of Fort Washington with numerous references to the Civil War pe-
riod, including units serving in the fort and a list of the artillery. Describes the design of the fort, the grounds, barracks, and other buildings.


Schoeberlein, Robert W. “A Fair to Remember: Maryland Women in Aid of the Union.” *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 90 (1995): 467–88. A strong core of Unionist women in Baltimore provided soldiers with aid and comfort through the war. The Ladies Union Relief Association formed in October 1861. Their activities included nursing, presentation of flags, and providing food. April 1864 saw the Maryland state Fair for U.S. Soldier Relief, or the Baltimore Sanitary Fair. This is the story of the organization of the fair and the event itself, which included a visit by President and Mrs. Lincoln.

———, and Andrew Brethauer, eds. “Letters of a Maryland Confederate.” *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 98 (2003): 345–61. The letters of Franklin Voss begin in July 1860 when he was a student at the University of Virginia. These early letters offer no hint of the coming war. Gradually, their tone changed, and after the war began Voss left the university with several other Marylanders to join the Confederate army. Subsequent letters describe the 1st Bull Run and other engagements as well as camp life. The concluding letter from Samuel Sullivan describes Voss’s death during a cavalry charge outside Columbia, Kentucky.

———. “Second Regiment, Maryland Volunteer Infantry.” *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 12 (1917): 41–45. Much of the article is about Jacob Eugene Duryee, who was colonel of the 2nd Maryland Infantry (U.S.) during Burnside’s campaign in North Carolina and the Virginia and Maryland campaigns of 1862. Included is a list of the dead from Antietam and a list of the four 2nd Maryland officers wounded there.

Semmes, Raphael. “Civil War Song Sheets: One of the Collections of the Maryland Historical Society.” *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 38 (1943): 205–29. Semmes describes the song sheets in the collection, quotes from the songs, and uses the songs as a gage of popular opinion during the war.
In this vignette, Semmes looks at Civil War broadsides in the collection of the Maryland Historical Society. As far as the war was concerned, Semmes found purely political broadsides, such as the call for a Maryland state convention following the secession of the Southern states, satire in verse, and reprints of military speeches.


During the war, Henry Kyd Douglas served as an aide to Stonewall Jackson until the general’s death after Chancellorsville. Later, Douglas wrote a highly regarded memoir of this experience. After the war, Douglas chose to live in Maryland although he was a native of (West) Virginia. Shadel covers Douglas’ postwar career and his desire for reconciliation between the states.


Rose O’Neal Greenhow began life as the daughter of a Port Tobacco, Maryland, planter. Sigaud describes how in the early years of the war Greenhow operated a spy ring out of her Washington, D.C., home.


Kentucky native Montgomery Blair served from 1861 to 1864 on Lincoln’s cabinet as Postmaster General. During that time he alienated a great many people. A trusted advisor to Lincoln, Blair was argumentative, but he was neither mean nor vindictive. Much of Blair’s poor reputation stems from political squabbles with other cabinet members, and certain members of Congress.


A native of Charles County, Maryland, Spalding served in McNeill’s Partisan Rangers during the war. In 1865, Spalding and a number of others followed Jesse McNeill on a raid into Cumberland, Maryland, that resulted in the capture of Union generals Crook and Kelley. This is Spalding’s memoir of that raid.


Serialized life of James A. Pearce, a multi-term senator from Maryland whose career overlapped the Civil War from April 1861 until his death on December 20, 1862. Although Pearce was a native of Virginia, for most of his adult life he lived in Kent County, Maryland.

Steiner recounts the organization of the regiment and its service as a guard unit protecting the Maryland General Assembly when that body convened in Frederick, Maryland at the beginning of the war. A list of members is included in the article. Originally known as the Frederick Home Guard, the unit took its name from its commander, Captain Alfred F. Brengle.


Reprint of an article from the *Washington Post* in the late nineteenth century. During the war, money was raised by the ladies of Baltimore to purchase gold spurs for Lee in the amount of $450. Capt. Charles Caywood of Charles County, Maryland, and some compatriots were entrusted with the mission of delivering the spurs. Caywood and company stayed the night at the plantation of William Joshua Cartwright on the Patuxent River. Pursued by Federal troops, Caywood gave the spurs to Mrs. Cartwright (Martha Maddox) who kept the spurs until Caywood could return.


Letter of Judge Henry Stump of Baltimore to his sister-in-law Mary Stump briefly describing the riot among other subjects.


Letters from Anna Surratt to her friend Elisabeth Louise Stone. The war is mentioned briefly and in passing.


A former editor for the *New York Times*, at the beginning of the war John Williamson Palmer joined the staff of the *New York Tribune* as a feature writer. His articles were published under the pen name “Altamont.” Among the scoops Palmer provided the *Tribune* were a report on the death of Confederate general Turner Ashby and an interview with John Wool, who defended Harper’s Ferry during the Antietam campaign. An authority on Stonewall Jackson, Palmer wrote the poem “Stonewall Jackson’s Way.” There was some question as to Palmer’s loyalties during the war. This and his personal habits ultimately led to a parting of the ways with the *Tribune*.


During the Mexican War, Jackson and the father of the author, one Joseph Pembroke Thom, served as seconds for two dueling U.S. Army officers. Neither participant was killed. Thom relates the history of the incident and
what became of the individuals involved as well as Thom and Jackson’s experiences in the Civil War.

A letter by Mrs. Thurston (Rosalie) to her mother, Elizabeth Gannnt of Washington, D.C. Mrs. Thurston was a native of Cumberland, Maryland. After the raid, she spoke with some Cumberland natives who witnessed the events in Harper’s Ferry and passed their stories on to her mother.

Charles County, Maryland, was largely pro-Confederate, making it ideal for Confederate Secret Service operations. Tidwell believes that many of the county’s leading citizens operated a “Confederate Underground” during the war, one that aided in the escape of John Wilkes Booth following Lincoln’s assassination.

The campus of St. John’s in Annapolis was used by Federal troops as barracks and camp. Many of the faculty and students left the school to join in armies. Enrollment decreased at the college, and the operations of the school did not fully resume until the end of hostilities.

Episcopal Bishop Whittingham asked his clergy to set aside July 19, 1863, as a day of thanksgiving for the Union victory at Gettysburg. Rev. Alfred A. Curtis of Mount Calvary Church in Baltimore refused to comply. This is an exchange of letters between Whittingham and Curtis.

Born in Baltimore and the son of a Massachusetts native, Ernest Wardwell witnessed the riot against the 6th Massachusetts. During the riot, he attached himself to the 6th, joined the regiment, and served until the unit was mustered out.

The “damn rascal” of the title is Samuel Boyer Davis of Baltimore, who had his share of adventures in Confederate service. An aide to Gen. Isaac Ridgeway Trimble at Gettysburg, Davis was captured but managed to escape. Subsequently, Davis joined the staff of Brig. Gen. John Winder at Andersonville, Georgia. Later reassigned to the Signal Corps, Davis carried messages to Canada. On the return journey he was arrested and
condemned to hang as a spy. After appeals to the president, his sentence was commuted and Davis was released at the end of the war.


Trundle was a soldier in the 2nd Maryland Infantry. One letter was written on the way to Gettysburg, one after.


An examination of Davis’s career as congressman from Maryland during the war. A critic of Lincoln and rival of Montgomery Blair for a position in the cabinet, Davis was renowned as an orator of great ability.


Three letters from Lincoln to Gov. Augustus Bradford regarding loyalty tests for Maryland voters, and appeals for clemency from Lt. William Thomas, 1st Regiment, Maryland Infantry (U.S.), and William H. Evans of the same regiment, both confined for violations of army regulations.


With the use of coercion and corruption, pro-Union men were elected to the Maryland legislature, to the office of the comptroller for the state, and to the U.S. Congress from the First District. Federal authorities made arbitrary arrests during the campaign and stationed soldiers at polling places to intimidate voters. Included in the text is a statistical breakdown and tables showing the election results.


A letter from British consul Frederick Bernal to John Russell, M.P. regarding the Baltimore fire department and its response to a fire in the city.


Baltimore native Noah Walker held a commission as a lieutenant with the 44th Virginia Infantry. The letter describes in brief Walker’s service from June 1861 to the winter of 1862–1863.


Describes the political thought and career of Kennedy up to the Civil War. Shows how the war reshaped Kennedy’s opinions regarding slavery and Lincoln. During the war, Kennedy wrote pamphlets supporting the Union, producing a series of ten essays “promoting” the Union in the
National Intelligencer. Later, these essays were published as Mr. Ambrose’s Letters on the Rebellion.

Crisfield serves as a symbol here of the Maryland political scene during the Civil War. A proslavery Democratic congressman, and thus hardly a favorite of the national government, Crisfield’s bid for reelection failed due to Federal interference. A good, concise study of the political realities in Maryland during the war.

Briefly describes Johnson’s life up to the Civil War, his attitudes regarding secession, and his career during the war. The bulk of the article deals with Johnson’s successful efforts to depict Maryland as largely pro-Confederate and how Johnson dealt with the concept of the “New South” after the war.

Data on the membership of the Maryland legislature of 1861 including profession, personal worth, ages.

Wyatt-Brown shows how Booth’s family and the importance of the theater contributed to the mentality that led him to decide upon assassination. In addition, the Maryland political climate prior to the war and Booth’s association with the Confederate Signal Corps, the Rebel secret service, a body willing to commit acts of terrorism in the North, only enforced Booth’s resolve to commit an act of violence.

How the Republicans used Lincoln’s image as a westerner to their advantage and how the Democrats used it to paint Lincoln as a rube. No immediate connection to Maryland history, but an interesting examination of the 1860 race.

Although Martin J. Spalding, Archbishop of Baltimore released a statement condemning Lincoln’s murder, the tone of the message was cool, according to Zanca. Further, many clergy and many Catholic Marylanders in general, did not respect Lincoln in the least. The reaction of the clergy was so subdued that Gen. Lew Wallace, as commander of the Middle
Department, issued a warning to the clergy. In the end, Lincoln’s funeral procession passed through Baltimore without incident.


The story of the convention in Baltimore, replete with an account of behind-the-scene deals and the opposition to Lincoln by party radicals.

**Book Reviews**


Clark, Charles B. *Politics in Maryland During the Civil War*. (Chestertown, Md.: [s.n.], 1952), by F. S., v.48 (1953): 182.


Howard, McHenry. *Recollections of a Maryland Confederate Soldier and Staff Officer*
under Johnston, Jackson and Lee. (Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins Co., 1914), by [Anonymous], v.9 (1914): 377.


McKim, Randolph H. *A Soldier's Recollections: Leaves from the Diary of a Young Confeder- ate, with an Oration on the Motives and Aims of the Soldiers of the South*. (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1910), by [Anonymous], v.6 (1911): 205–6.


Wood, William Nathaniel. *Reminiscences of Big I*, edited by Bell Irvin Wiley. (Jack-