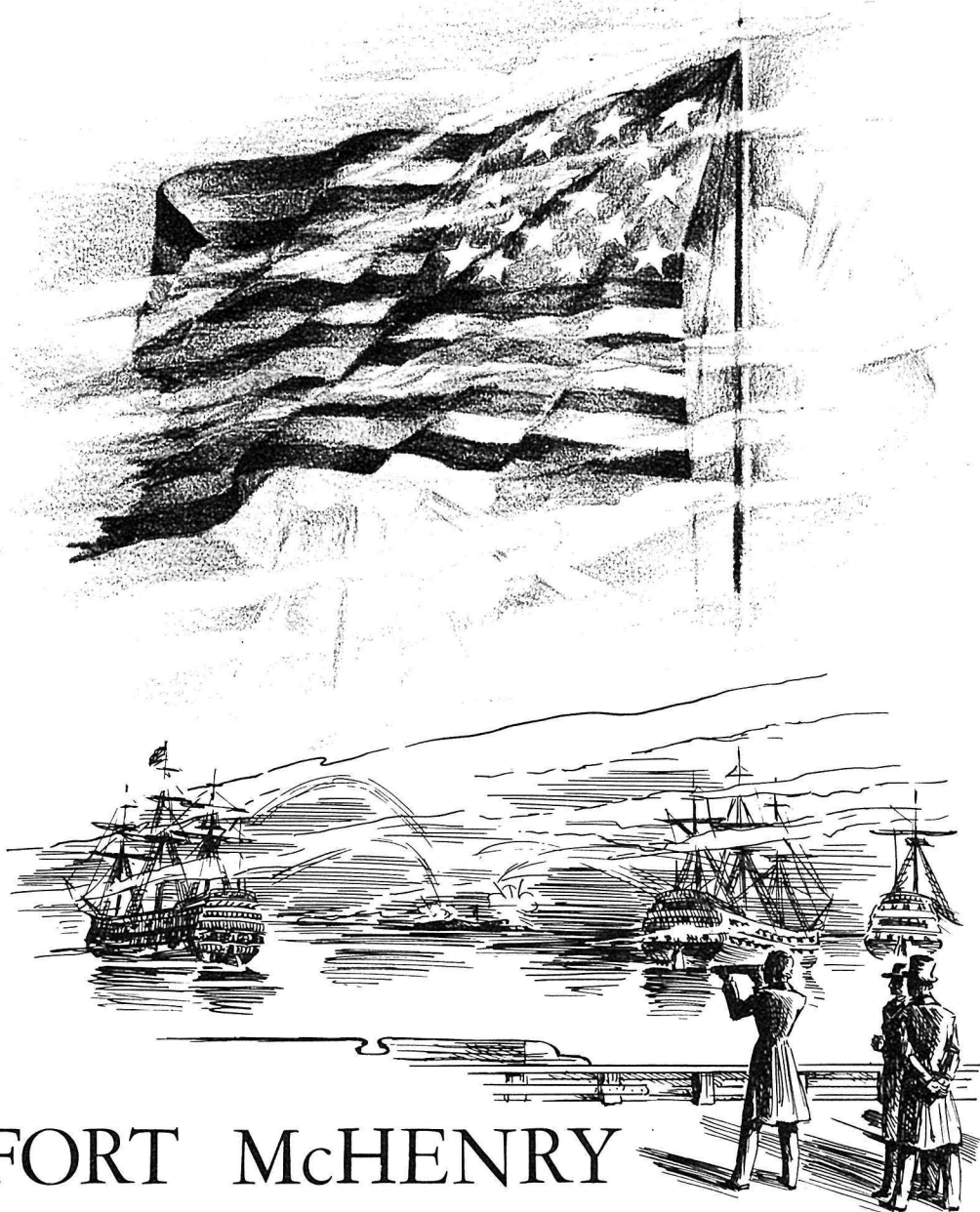


"O'er the land of the free"

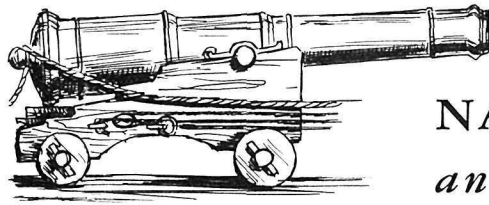


FORT McHENRY

NATIONAL MONUMENT *and* HISTORIC SHRINE

The Birthplace of "The Star-Spangled Banner"

MARYLAND



Fort McHenry

NATIONAL MONUMENT and HISTORIC SHRINE

The successful defense of this fort against a British naval attack in 1814 assisted in the defense of Baltimore and inspired the writing of our national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner."

IT HAS BEEN SAID that the shrines of American patriotism not only reflect the quality of the Nation's gratitude but are ever refreshing and inspiring. These words are especially applicable to Fort McHenry, for here, amid the "bomb bursting in air," and highlighted by the "rocket's red glare," was composed the great paean of American patriotism. Here, where the Stars and Stripes fly over the historic ramparts day and night, a grateful citizenry can sense the surge of patriotism which inspired Francis Scott Key.

EARLY HISTORY

The strategic position of the peninsula, on the tip of which is located Fort McHenry, was recognized as early as the Revolutionary War. In 1776, an 18-gun fort was constructed there for the protection of Baltimore's Harbor. Fort Whetstone, as it was called, never came under enemy fire.

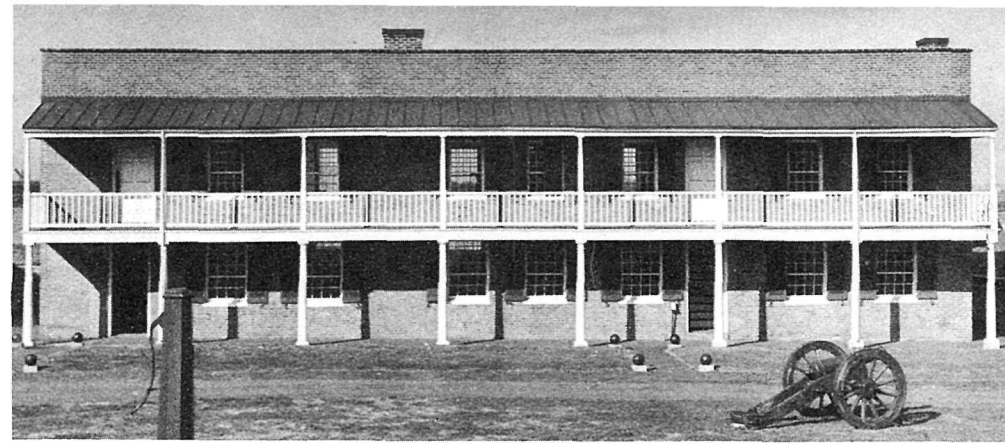
Aerial view of Fort McHenry.



In the 1790's, when it appeared likely that the young nation might become involved in a war with either England or France, it was decided that Baltimore was sufficiently important to merit a permanent harbor defense. Funds were contributed by both the Federal Government and the citizens of Baltimore. Maj. J. J. Ulrich Rivardi designed the fort and supervised its construction on a site in the rear of old Fort Whetstone. It was named Fort McHenry in honor of James McHenry, of Maryland, secretary to George Washington during the Revolution and Secretary of War from 1796 to 1800. The period of construction was from 1794 to 1805.

THE BALTIMORE CAMPAIGN

The inadequacy of American military preparations became evident in 1813, when overwhelming English naval superiority practically converted Chesapeake Bay into a British lake. In 1814, the fleet was joined by a large contingent of troops,



Old Barracks building, now used as museum.

including many of "Wellington's Invincibles," victorious veterans of the Napoleonic Wars. Brushing aside American resistance at Bladensburg, the British captured Washington. Baltimore, larger and more important commercially, was selected as the next objective. The phenomenal success of the Baltimore privateers, small, lightly armed vessels which eluded the enemy blockade to raid British commerce, had infuriated the Royal Navy.

The British plan envisaged a joint land and naval attack on the city. On September 12, a force of about 5,000 disembarked at North Point and moved rapidly toward Baltimore, despite the death of their commander, Maj. Gen. Robert Ross. On the North Point Road, they encountered the Americans under Gen. John Stricker. After a brief, but furious, battle, the Americans retired to previously prepared positions in order to avoid encirclement by the British. On the following morning, the British moved to within 2 miles of the city, and there, deterred by the strong defenses, awaited the arrival of the fleet before attempting to storm the city.

At dawn, on September 13, 16 enemy warships dropped anchor beyond the range of Fort McHenry's guns and for 25 hours subjected the fort to a barrage of 1,500 to 1,800 bombs, rockets, and shells. Maj. George W. Armistead and his garrison of 1,000 men could do little but hope for the enemy to move within range. The critical

hour came shortly after midnight on the 14th, when 1,200 British sailors penetrated the Ferry Branch in an effort to land in the rear of the fort. They were detected, however, and driven off. Admiral Alexander Cochrane notified the Army that he could not enter the Northwest Branch without suffering excessive losses, and, deprived of naval support, Col. Arthur Brooke, who had succeeded General Ross, did not attempt to storm the city, but led his troops back to their transports. Thus, the fort, by frustrating the British plan, contributed materially to the successful defense of Baltimore.

The casualty list at the fort was small—4 men killed, 24 injured. Two of the buildings were damaged.

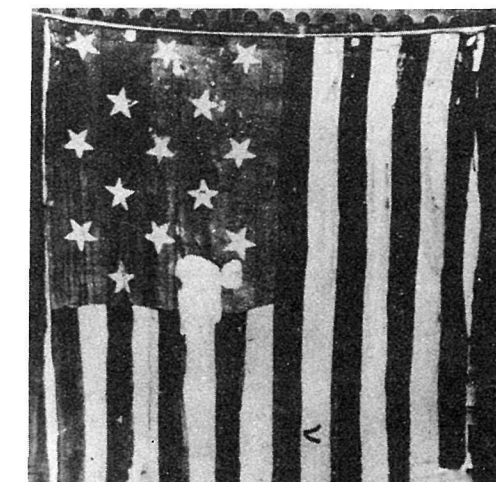
"THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER"

The Star-Spangled Banner is actually an account of the emotions experienced by Francis Scott Key as he witnessed the attack on Fort McHenry. With John Skinner, Federal agent for the exchange of prisoners, he had sailed from Baltimore on a small vessel, and in the bay they met the British fleet. Key's mission, for which he had volunteered, was to secure the liberation of Dr. William Beanes, whom the British had seized. The Americans persuaded the British to release the doctor, but Admiral Cochrane informed them that for reasons of security they would be detained until Baltimore was occupied. Conse-

quently, during the attack, the Americans were placed on their own vessel at the rear of the British fleet, but in a position where they could witness the progress of the assault.

Key remained on deck during the entire 25-hour attack. In the daytime, he was assured by the sight of the flag waving defiantly over the ramparts. At night, he could no longer see the flag, but as long as the British continued to fire he knew that the fort resisted. Shortly after midnight the firing ceased, leaving Key puzzled and alarmed. He was unaware that the bombardment was halted to enable the landing force to approach the fort. For Key it was a period of suspense and anxiety. Finally, at dawn, he again saw the flag. The inspired moment had arrived. On the back of a letter he began his immortal lines. When Admiral Cochrane abandoned the attack, he permitted the Americans to return to Baltimore. As he came up the river, Key completed a rough draft of his poem. At the inn that evening he made certain revisions, and on the following day the revised copy was printed in handbill form.

This flag, known as "The Star-Spangled Banner," was flown over Fort McHenry during the bombardment in September 1814. In this flag were 15 stars and 15 stripes. It is now in the United States National Museum in Washington, D. C. (Courtesy U. S. National Museum.)



Soon the poem was sung to the music of a popular English song, "To Anacreon in Heaven." With the passage of time the song increased in popularity, and in 1931 President Hoover signed a bill making The Star-Spangled Banner our official national anthem.

FORT McHENRY AFTER 1815

Although the strategic importance of Fort McHenry decreased after 1814, it continued to play a part in each of the Nation's emergencies. During the Mexican War, the Maryland Volunteer Artillery was mobilized at Fort McHenry. The fort served as a prisoner-of-war camp in the Civil War. Many prominent residents of Baltimore suspected of being Southern sympathizers were detained there. The officers of Fort McHenry inducted the Maryland National Guard into service at the beginning of the Spanish-American War.

During the First World War, United States Army General Hospital No. 2 occupied the area and at the close of the war it was converted into a convalescent hospital. Restoration of the fort to its original appearance was begun by the Army in 1925. In 1933, Fort McHenry came under the administration of the National Park Service. During the Second World War,

Portrait of Francis Scott Key, by Charles Wilson Peale. (Courtesy the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts.)





'Tis The Star-Spangled Banner, original painting by George Gray, now in museum at Fort McHenry.

the Navy and the Coast Guard utilized part of the area for training purposes.

THE MONUMENT

Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine includes the 5-pointed brick fort and a surrounding area of 47 acres. First established in 1925 as a national park, an act of Congress in 1939 redesignated the area as a national monument and historic shrine. The British units which participated in the Baltimore campaign also were engaged in the Battle of New Orleans, commemorated by Chalmette National Historical Park at New Orleans, La.

HOW TO REACH THE FORT

Fort McHenry is situated in Baltimore, about 3 miles from the center of the city, and is readily accessible, East Fort Avenue leading to it.

SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC

The area is open to the public daily, including Sunday, from 7:30 a. m. to 5:30 p. m. The museum hours are from 9 a. m. to 5 p. m. The buildings within the old "Star Fort," formerly barracks for enlisted men and officers, now serve as museums. They contain relics and exhibits pertaining to the War of 1812 and

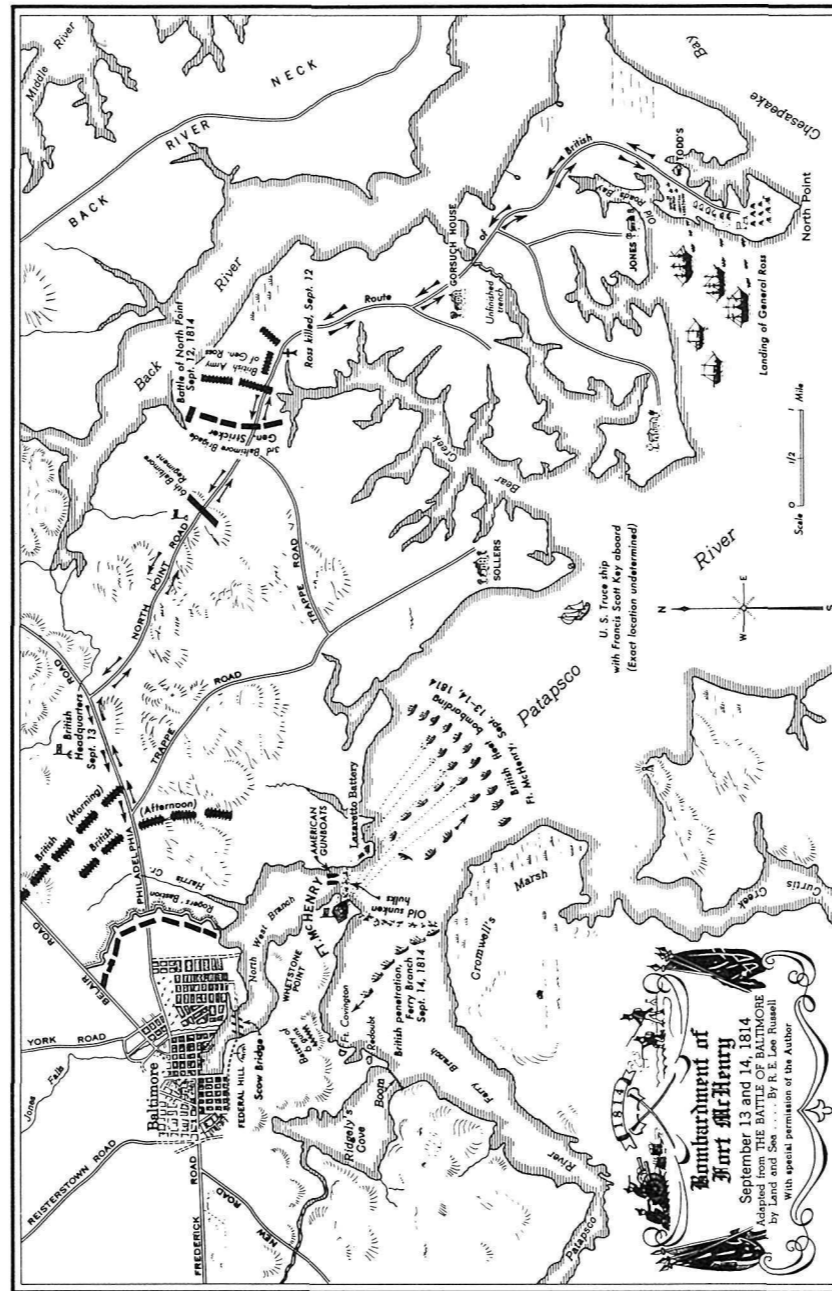
the story of The Star-Spangled Banner. Some of the distinctive exhibits are the E. Berkley Bowie Collection of Firearms; the painting 'Tis The Star-Spangled Banner, presented by the citizens of Baltimore; and The Star-Spangled Banner Room, which houses a collection of original flags.

An admission fee of 12 cents is charged visitors over 16 years of age, except for members of school groups, who are admitted free up to 18 years of age. Organizations or groups are given special service if arrangements are made in advance with the custodian.

In addition to this free folder, a 16-page illustrated booklet on Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine may be purchased at the area or from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D. C., at 10 cents a copy.

ADMINISTRATION

Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine is part of the National Park System owned by the people of the United States and administered for them by the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior. Communications should be addressed to the Superintendent, Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine, Baltimore 30, Md.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

J. A. Krug, Secretary

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

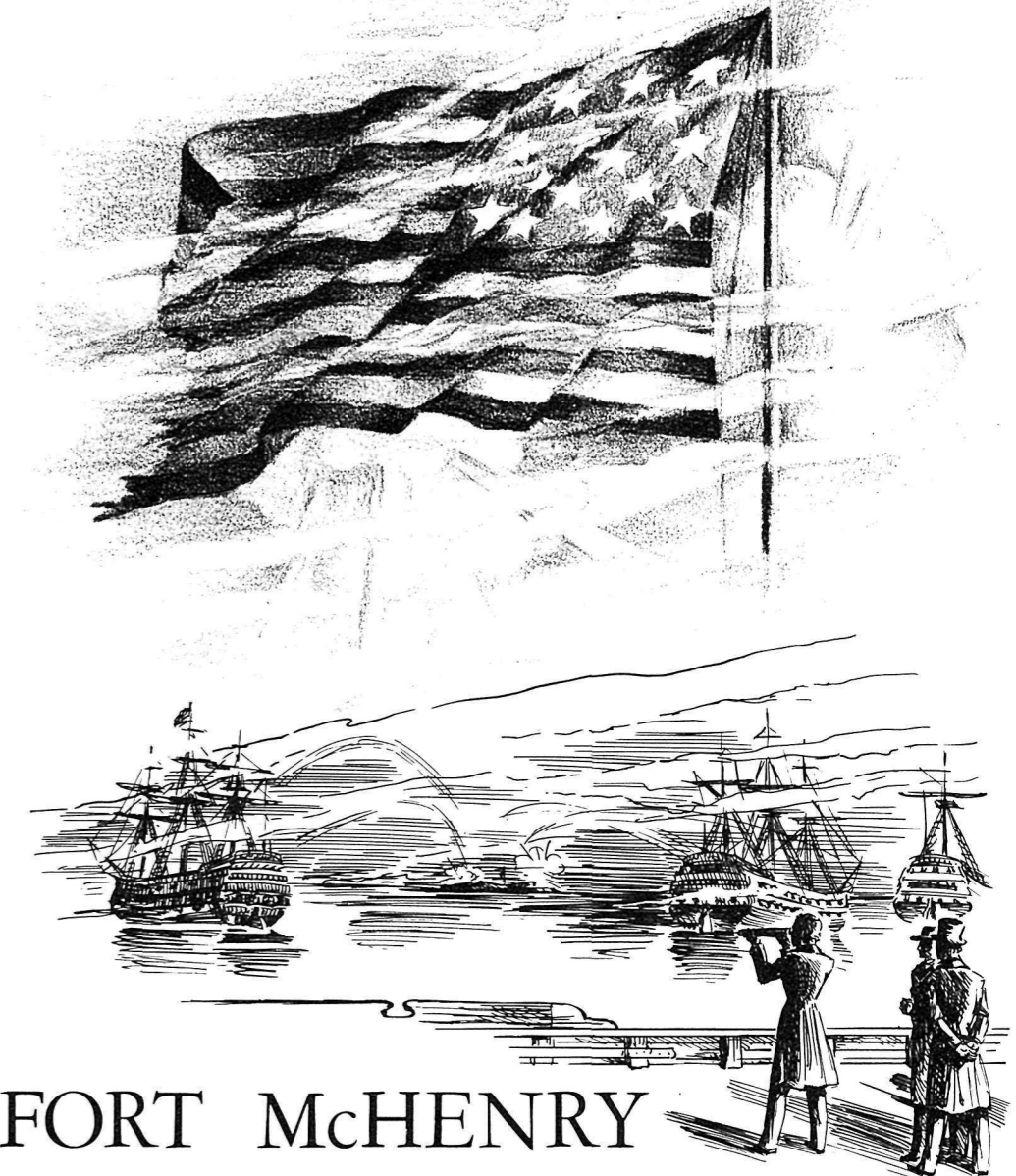
• Newton B. Drury, Director

Revised 1949

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1949 O-823421



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