

**FUND-PUBLICATION, NO. 1; HISTORY,
POSSESSIONS AND PROSPECTS OF THE
MARYLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY:
INAUGURAL DISCOURSE, BALTIMORE,
MARCH 7TH, 1867**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649260621

Fund-publication, No. 1; History, Possessions and Prospects of the Maryland Historical Society: inaugural discourse, Baltimore, March 7th, 1867 by Brantz Mayer

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

BRANTZ MAYER

**FUND-PUBLICATION, NO. 1; HISTORY,
POSSESSIONS AND PROSPECTS OF THE
MARYLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY:
INAUGURAL DISCOURSE, BALTIMORE,
MARCH 7TH, 1867**

Fund - Publication, No. 1.

History, Possessions and Prospects

OF THE

Maryland Historical Society:



INAUGURAL DISCOURSE

OF

BRANTZ MAYER,

AS PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY;

Baltimore, March 7th, 1867.

BINDING
No. 2147

F
176
.M37
387489
no. 1
1867
Copy 2

WILSON
UNIVERSITY MICROFILMS
SERIALS ACQUISITION
SERIALS ACQUISITION

PRINTED FOR THE MARYLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY,
BY JOHN MURPHY, BALTIMORE, 1867.

ADDRESS.



WOULD do great injustice to my feelings, gentlemen of the Maryland Historical Society, if I did not, on taking this Chair, avail myself of the earliest moment to offer my thanks for the great honor conferred by electing me your President.

It is about twenty-three years ago, that, on the 27th of January, 1844, some eighteen or twenty gentlemen assembled in the office of the Maryland Colonization Society, to organize an institution "for the purpose of collecting the scattered materials of the early History of this State and for other collateral objects." The room was in what was known at that day as the "Post Office Building," at the north-east corner of Fayette and North streets. It is now torn down. As nearly as I can recollect them, the persons present at that gathering—most of whom had been personally invited to attend—were, our late President,

John Spear Smith, Robert Gilmor, Sr., Charles F. Mayer, Bernard U. Campbell, John L. Carey, William A. Talbott, Fielding Lucas, Jr., John J. Donaldson, Robert Carey Long, and Sebastian F. Streeter, all of whom are dead; while the survivors are John H. B. Latrobe, Dr. James Hall, J. Morrison Harris, John P. Kennedy, George Wm. Brown, Dr. Joshua J. Cohen, Dr. Stephen Collins, Frederick Wm. Brune, Jr., Captain Robert Leslie and myself. At that meeting the organization was completed; for, having considered the matter maturely in advance, we were prepared to adopt a constitution and by-laws, drawn up by me with care, the original draft of which I have the pleasure of presenting to-night to the society. In order to make these fundamental instruments as complete as possible, I obtained printed or written copies of the constitutions and laws of all the Historical Societies I was able to reach by correspondence, and digested them in consultation with Mr. John P. Kennedy and our late Recording Secretary, Mr. Streeter. These documents I have also preserved, and now present to the society. The committee which was appointed, reported the draft as offered, and the document was at once heartily adopted by the citizens present, who saw in it a promising nucleus for the only literary organization of the kind that had ever been formed in our state or city.

The Constitution and By-laws being accepted, our preparatory meeting adjourned to the 1st of February, after selecting a committee to nominate suitable persons as the first officers of the society, to be balloted for at our next assemblage. I remember that much care was taken in this delicate duty by the judicious committee, which consisted of Mr. J. H. B. Latrobe, Mr. George Wm. Brown, and Captain Robert Leslie. Indeed, so heedful were these gentlemen that I find it recorded they re-assembled the originators of the society on the 31st of January, in order to consult over the names they intended to propose to the general meeting on the following day.

Accordingly, on the 1st of February, 1844, John Spear Smith was elected President; John Van Lear McMahon—the Historian of Maryland—Vice-President; Brantz Mayer, Corresponding Secretary; Sebastian F. Streeter, Recording Secretary; and Stephen Collins, Librarian.

This assemblage and vote occurred in the same small room of the Colonization Society in which our first meeting had been held; but as our numbers had already increased, a committee was chosen to obtain ampler accommodations; and, even before we separated that afternoon, the chairman reported in favor of a large adjoining apartment in the second story of the same old Post Office Building, wherein, the survivors of

the original organization will recollect, we met from the spring of 1844 to the spring of 1848, when we took possession of our present quarters. Of course we were as yet entirely without pecuniary means, and the list I present with the other papers deposited by me to-night, shows that a few of us contributed by very modest subscriptions to furnish our first lodgement with commendable economy.

But, gentlemen, it is pleasant to recollect the stimulus immediately given to literary taste in Baltimore by the establishment of this society. The first record of our Membership, published in 1844, shows there was hardly a gentleman in professional or mercantile life, noted for cultivation, who did not join us. I dare not detain you to describe our progress, step by step; or the various high tides and low tides that occurred in our history since 1844; or, the peculiar causes that, at times, have swelled, and, at times, diminished our membership. It is mainly to the institution of this society that we owe the existence of this ATHENÆUM BUILDING, which is held for us in perpetuity by trustees under a charter granted by the Legislature of Maryland at its December session of 1845.

The project of such an establishment had often been spoken of; but the first practical effort to realize it was made—after consultation with

Captain Robert Leslie and myself—by Mr. William Rodewald, who presented a scheme to our society and to the Library Company of Baltimore, of which I had at that time the honor to be President. Mr. Rodewald's plan was not entirely approved, but it initiated the movement, and deserves remembrance. After respectfully considering it, the two corporations thought the project so important that each of them appointed a committee of five of its members to examine it; and, after meeting in joint committee on the 15th of February, 1845, a plan of operations, *founded on public subscription as a free gift*, was adopted, and an address setting forth the objects of the building, signed by numbers of our leading citizens, was published in circulars as well as in the newspapers. It at once engaged public attention and sympathy. Twenty of our wealthy men subscribed five hundred dollars each, and the late George Brown added the one thousand which he had promised to bestow upon the subscription of ten thousand dollars, as a beginning. It is due to the memory of the late Osmond C. Tiffany to say that he was the indefatigable chairman of the committee on subscriptions, and that he was zealously aided in his solicitations by several gentlemen, but, especially, by Mr. Charles J. M. Eaton. Many were doubtful of success, while some openly sneered at the idea that a community like ours would devote forty or