

AA-23

Monument to French Soldiers and Sailors of the American Revolution

Anne Arundel County

Capsule Summary

The Monument to French Soldiers and Sailors of the American Revolution stands in a grove of trees above College Creek at St. John's College in Annapolis. Facing east toward the lawn and playing fields, the monument is a high-relief bronze allegorical figure mounted in a pink granite stele with a gray granite base.

The Monument, erected in 1911, is significant for its commemoration of the contribution the French made in the struggle for American independence. It is also significant as a representative example of Baltimore sculptor J. Maxwell Miller, and as a monumental stele memorial.

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF  
HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. AA-23

Magi No.

DOE  yes  no

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Monument to French Soldiers and Sailors of the American Revolution

and/or common

## 2. Location

street & number St. John's College, 60 College Ave.  not for publication

city, town Annapolis  vicinity of congressional district 4th

state MD 21401 county Anne Arundel

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: commemorative

## 4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name St. John's College (custodian) The General Society, Sons of the Revolution (owner)

street & number 60 College Ave. telephone no.:(410) 263-2371

city, town Annapolis state and zip code MD 21401

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Anne Arundel County Courthouse liber

street & number Church Circle folio

city, town Annapolis state MD 21401

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town state

## 7. Description

Survey No. AA-23

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date of move _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The Monument to French Soldiers and Sailors of the American Revolution stands in a grove of trees above College Creek at St. John's College in Annapolis. Facing east toward the lawn and playing fields, the monument is a high-relief bronze allegorical figure mounted in a pink granite stele with a gray granite base.

The life-sized classical female figure of Memory stands with a laurel branch on her right arm and her left arm supporting the top of a shield which stands at her side. The inscription on the shield reads: "A TRIBUTE OF GRATITUDE TO THE BRAVE SOLDIERS AND SAILORS OF FRANCE BURIED HERE WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN THE STRUGGLE FOR AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE. THE MEMORY OF THEIR DEEDS WILL ENDURE FOREVER 1781-1783."

The figure's gaze is downcast beyond the shield to a small gravestone in the lower right corner of the composition. A similar stone is at her feet in the opposite corner. The stone near her feet reads: "CI GIT UN MARIN DE LA FRANCE." The stone beneath her gaze reads: "CI GIT UN SOLDAT DE LA FRANCE."

The figure stands against a low relief background of the French army marching out of the frame, rifles on their shoulders, "passing as in a dream," noted French Ambassador Jusserand at the dedication.<sup>1</sup> A ship's mast is visible through the rifles. Banners also billow in the active, crowded background, framing the head of the main figure in a more simplified plane.

The head and left arm of the figure stand in three-quarter relief against the background; the high relief is further emphasized by smooth modeling, in contrast to the rougher style of the gown and background. The sculptor has also gained depth by placing a palm frond at the lower right corner of the composition, a few leaves overlapping the stone frame. The curve of the frond draws the eye from the inscription back into the frame.

Below the figure the base of the bronze is inscribed: "ERECTED APRIL 19 1911 BY THE SONS OF THE REVOLUTION." The signature "J. Maxwell Miller '10" is carved directly above the inscription on the right. Carved on the left above the inscription is: "ROMAN BRONZE WORKS NY."

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<sup>1</sup>General Society, Sons of the Revolution, "Rededication and Annual Wreath-laying Ceremony," Program, October 18, 1990, 2.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1911 **Builder/Architect** J. Maxwell Miller; Roman Bronze Works, NY

check: Applicable Criteria:  A  B  C  D  
 and/or  
 Applicable Exception:  A  B  C  D  E  F  G  
 Level of Significance:  national  state  local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The Monument to French Soldiers and Sailors of the American Revolution is significant for its commemoration of the contribution the French made in the struggle for American independence, as a representative example of a prominent local sculptor, and as a monumental stele memorial.

During the war, French troops of Rochambeau camped in Annapolis from September 18-21, 1781 on their way to Yorktown. The General Society, Sons of the Revolution erected the French monument at St. John's College near where the French were camped and on the site where unknown French soldiers and sailors are believed to be buried. It was dedicated on April 18, 1911 by a congregation which included President William Howard Taft and French Ambassador Jean Jusserand.<sup>2</sup>

The monument is a significant sculpture by the Baltimore artist J. Maxwell Miller. Baltimore memorials by Miller include the Baltimore City College War Memorial, the Confederate Women's Monument on University Parkway at Charles Street, and the Star Spangled Banner Centennial Monument at Patterson Park.<sup>3</sup>

The French monument is representative of the sculptor's early work. According to William Sener Rusk, author of Art in Baltimore, Miller was trained in Baltimore and was a Rinehart Scholar at the Academie Julien with Verlet in Paris. Here, as Rusk notes was often the case, Miller has made the inscription a part of the decorative scheme.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 2.

<sup>3</sup>William Sener Rusk, Art in Baltimore: Monuments and Memorials (Baltimore: the Norman, Remington Company, 1924), 131-132.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 19.



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7.1 Description

The pink granite stele is carved in foliated scrolls at the upper front corners with a fleur-de-lis at the center of each scroll. The cornice is stepped with a subtle ogee molding. The granite plinth below the stele has reverse ogee molding and steps down to a low gray granite base, which carries a small circular bronze emblem of the Sons of the Revolution. The reverse of the stele is blank.

Two large cedars flank the monument. A low parged masonry wall curves behind the monument. Sixteen yews were planted in front of the wall in 1990. The monument, trees and wall stand on a terrace; directly in front of the monument is a concrete walk which leads to the edge of the terrace and drops four steps to the lawn. Behind the monument and grove of trees is a boathouse on the creek. King George Street passes north of the monument at a comfortable distance.

In October 1990 the General Society, Sons of the Revolution had the monument lightly cleaned with a walnut shell air abrasive and waxed by conservator Geoffrey Lemmer. The bronze is in good condition as is the granite, which has two small cracks at the southwest corner. The conservation did not affect the historic integrity of the object; none of the historic patina was removed from the bronze before waxing. In October 1993 the Maryland Military Monuments Commission had the monument examined, washed and rewaxed where needed by conservator Nicolas Veloz, prior to the annual rededication and wreath-laying ceremony.

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8.1 Significance

The bronze relief was cast by the Roman Bronze Works, established in 1900 in New York City by Ricardo Bertelli and the first American foundry to specialize in the lost-wax casting process. The company also cast Henry Merwin Shrady's General Ulysses S. Grant Memorial in Washington, DC, the largest bronze casting of its time, completed in 1922.<sup>5</sup>

The French monument embodies the characteristics of the monumental stele, a descendant of the ancient Greek gravestone, and the use of which reflects the influence of the City Beautiful movement on the college. One other example in Maryland of the stele form with a high relief bronze sculpture is Edward Berge's World War I Memorial in Prince Frederick, erected in 1920. Two other stelae, similar in type but sculpted in lower relief, are the World War I monuments at St. John's College in Annapolis (by Schuler) and in Upper Marlboro (by Miller).

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<sup>5</sup>Michael Edward Shapiro, Bronze casting and American Sculpture 1850-1900 (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1985), 137, 175.

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MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

STATEWIDE HISTORIC CONTEXTS

Geographic Organization: Western Shore

Chronological/Developmental Period(s): Industrial/Urban Dominance,  
A.D. 1870-1930

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s): Military and  
Social/Educational/Cultural

Resource Type:

Category: Object

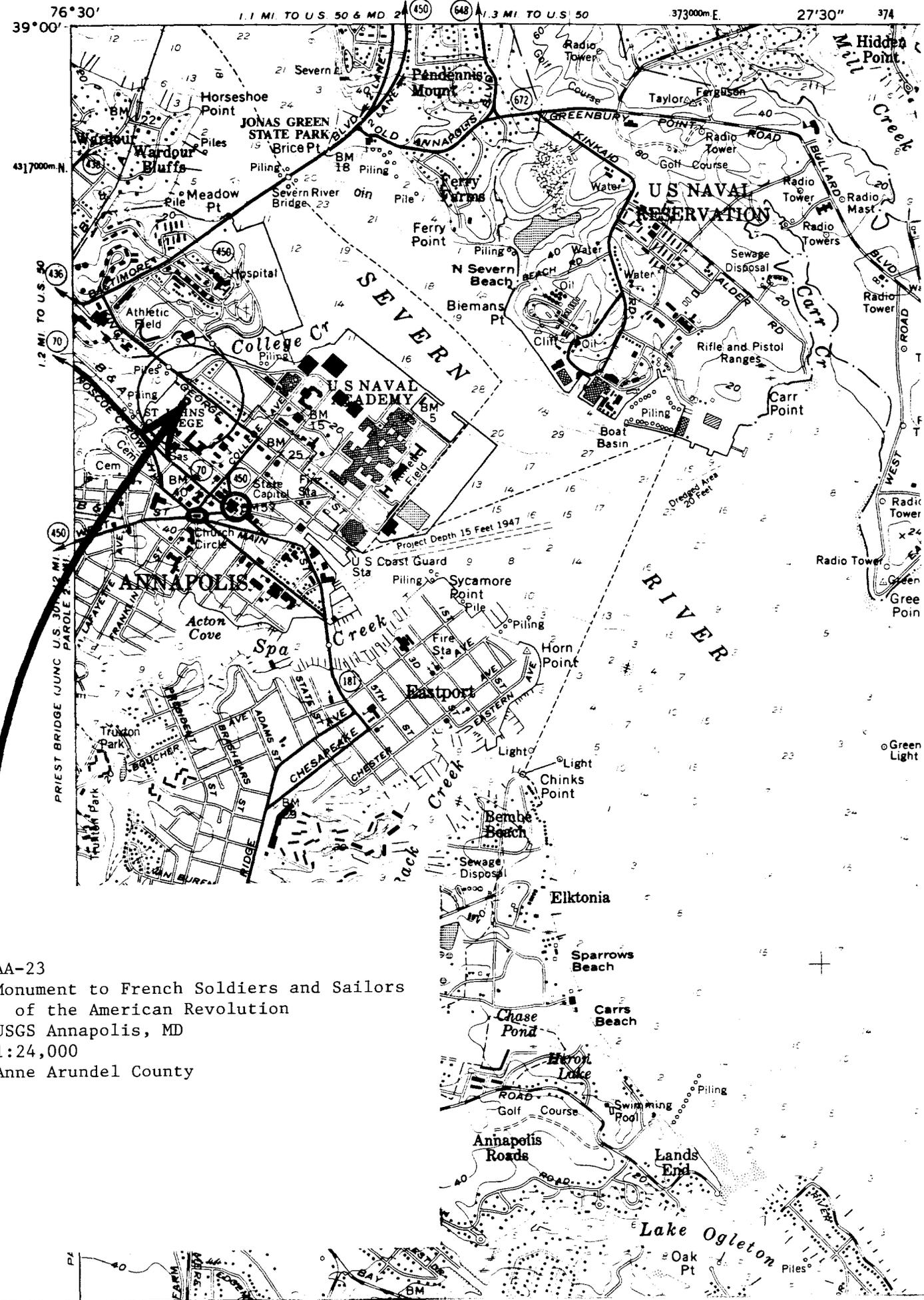
Historic Environment: Urban

Historic Function(s) and Use(s): RECREATION AND  
CULTURE/monument (commemorative)

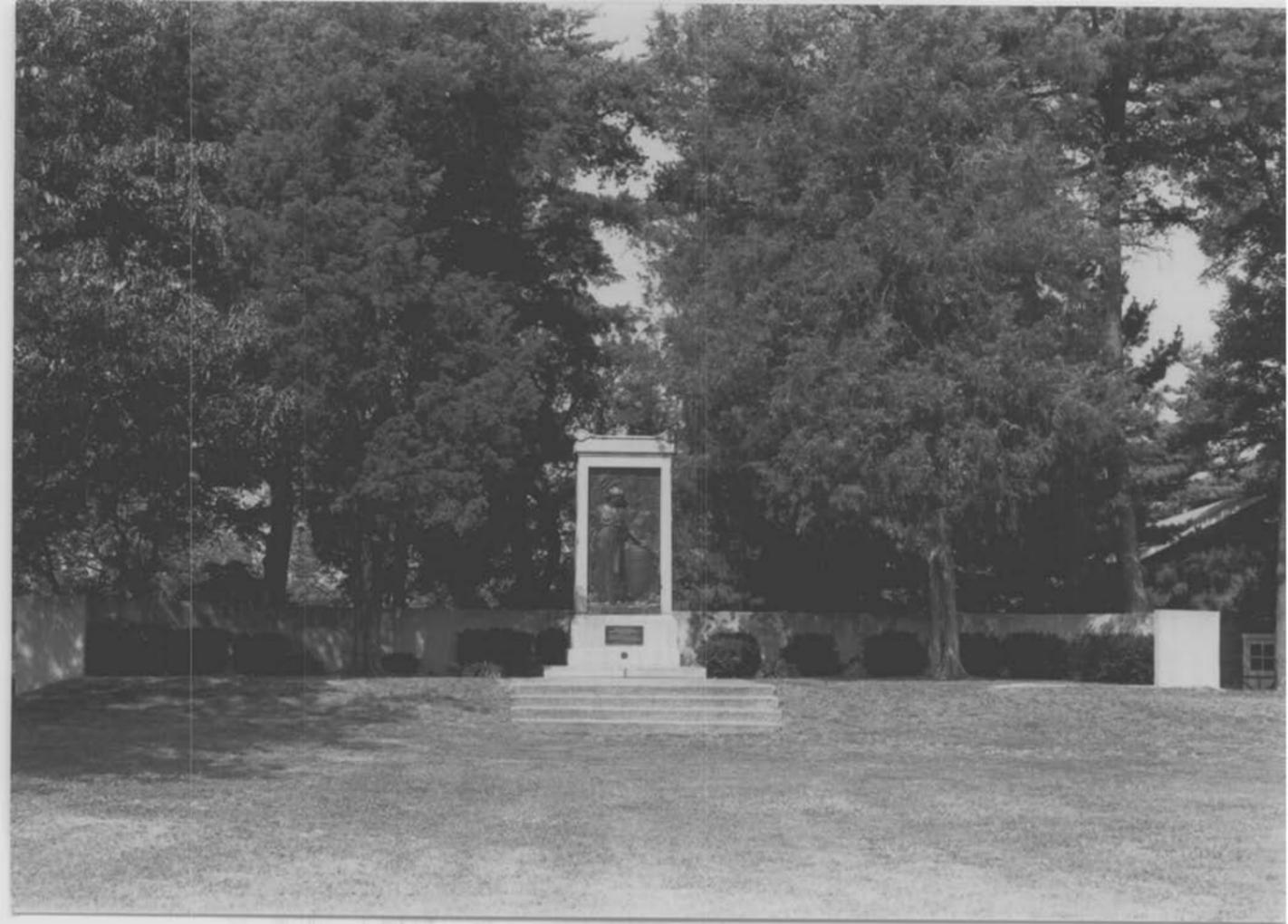
Known Design Source(s): J. Maxwell Miller (Sculptor), Roman  
Bronze Works NY (Foundry)

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

562 11 SE  
ROUND BAY



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of the American Revolution  
USGS Annapolis, MD  
1:24,000  
Anne Arundel County



AA-23

MONUMENT TO FRENCH SOLDIERS + SAILORS OF THE  
AMERICAN REVOLUTION

ANNE ARUNDEL CO., MD

N. KURTZ

9/97

NEG - MD SHPO

1/2



AA-23

MONUMENT TO FRENCH SOLDIERS & SAILORS OF  
THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

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N. KURTZ

9/97

NEG - MD SAPD

E. ELEVATION

2/2