AA-23

Monument to French Soldiers and Sailors of the American Revolution

Architectural Survey File

This is the architectural survey file for this MIHP record. The survey file is organized reverse-chronological (that is, with the latest material on top). It contains all MIHP inventory forms, National Register nomination forms, determinations of eligibility (DOE) forms, and accompanying documentation such as photographs and maps.

Users should be aware that additional undigitized material about this property may be found in on-site architectural reports, copies of HABS/HAER or other documentation, drawings, and the “vertical files” at the MHT Library in Crownsville. The vertical files may include newspaper clippings, field notes, draft versions of forms and architectural reports, photographs, maps, and drawings. Researchers who need a thorough understanding of this property should plan to visit the MHT Library as part of their research project; look at the MHT web site (mht.maryland.gov) for details about how to make an appointment.

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Last Updated: 06-11-2004
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

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.
   city, town Annapolis
   state MD 21401
   county Anne Arundel

3. Classification

   Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use | Present Use
   __ district  | __ public | ___ occupied | ___ occupied | museum
   __ building(s) | x private | ___ unoccupied | ___ commercial | park
   __ structure | ___ both | ___ work in progress | ___ educational | private residence
   __ site | Public Acquisition | Accessible | ___ commercial | ___ religious
   ___ object | ___ in process | ___ yes: restricted | ___ government | ___ scientific
   ___ being considered | ___ yes: unrestricted | ___ industrial | ___ transportation
   ___ not applicable | ___ no | ___ military | ___ 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.
   city, town Annapolis
date

5. Location of Legal Description
   courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Anne Arundel County Courthouse
   street & number Church Circle
   city, town Annapolis
   state MD 21401

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys
   title
   date
   repository for survey records
   city, town
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. 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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### 8. Significance

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

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

Check: Applicable Criteria: **X** A B **X** C **D**

and/or

Applicable Exception: **A** B **C** **D** E **F** **G**

Level of Significance: **X** 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.²

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.³

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.⁴

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²Ibid., 2.


⁴Ibid., 19.
9. Major Bibliographical References


10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property: less than 1 acre
Quadrangle name: USGS Annapolis, MD
Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

UTM References: do NOT complete UTM references

Verbal boundary description and justification:
North corner of St. John's College campus, bounded on northwest by boathouse and College Creek and on northeast by King George Street.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries:

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Nancy Kurtz, Monuments Survey Administrator
organization: Maryland Historical Trust
date: 1 April 1994
street & number: 100 Community Pl.
telephone: (410) 514-7648
city or town: Crownsville
state: MD
21032

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
Shaw House
21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 269-2438
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.
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.  

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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AA-23
Monument to French Soldiers and Sailors of the American Revolution
Anne Arundel County

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)
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of the American Revolution
USGS Annapolis, MD
1:24,000
Anne Arundel County
MONUMENT TO FRENCH SOLDIERS & SAILORS OF THE
AMERICAN REVOLUTION

ANNE ARUNDEL CO., MD

N. KURTZ

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MONUMENT TO FRENCH SOLDIERS & SAILORS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

ANNE ARUNDEL CO., MD

N. KURTZ

9/97

NEG - MD SARO

E. ELEVATION

2/2