

**MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FORM**

NR Eligible: yes
no

Property Name: Battle Acre Inventory Number: BA-0636
 Address: 3219 North Point Road City: Dundalk Zip Code: 21222
 County: Baltimore USGS Topographic Map: Middle River
 Owner: Baltimore County Is the property being evaluated a district? yes
 Tax Parcel Number: 520 Tax Map Number: 104 Tax Account ID Number: 1800014622
 Project: _____ Agency: Balto County Dept of Prop Mgmt/Planning
 Site visit by MHT Staff: no yes Name: _____ Date: _____
 Is the property located within a historic district? yes no

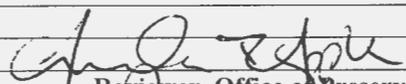
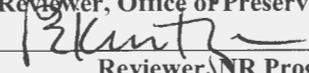
If the property is within a district District Inventory Number: _____
 NR-listed district yes Eligible district yes District Name: _____
 Preparer's Recommendation: Contributing resource yes no Non-contributing but eligible in another context

If the property is not within a district (or the property is a district)
 Preparer's Recommendation: Eligible yes no

Criteria: A B C D Considerations: A B C D E F G None
 Documentation on the property/district is presented in: Maryland Historical Trust

Description of Property and Eligibility Determination: (Use continuation sheet if necessary and attach map and photo)

Battle Acre was established in 1839 on the 25th anniversary of the Battle of North Point on part of the land occupied by the men of the Fifth Regiment who defended Baltimore during the pivotal Battle of North Point during the War of 1812. Deeded to the State of Maryland for \$1 by Dr. Jacob Houck, the site which was once known as "Houck's Acre" did not initially have any monument other than a cornerstone which was laid in 1839. In spite of the attention paid to other memorials of the War of 1812 in Baltimore, it took years of effort to raise funds and interest to establish a permanent monument on the site. Ella Virginia Houck Holloway, granddaughter of Dr. Houck, was instrumental in obtaining the funds required to establish the formal monument. The National Star Spangled Banner Centennial Commission, which was tasked to coordinate the centennial celebration of the War of 1812 in Maryland, responded with the erection of an austere stone block decorated with memorial tablets and topped by a cannon. A 1960's flagstone terrace surrounds the monument along with an aluminum flag pole. Stone pillars delineate each corner of the symbolic acre parcel which is enclosed by an iron fence obtained from the site of the Maryland School for the Blind, later the Polytechnic Institute. A concrete path leads from the flagstone terrace to a pair of iron gates flanked by a pair of additional stone pillars leading to the street. The pillars are topped with cannon balls. Battle Acre is a site that has been identified by the National Park Service as a significant resource associated with the War of 1812 and the Battle of North Point. The acre is a symbol that commemorates the actions of the brave citizen soldiers of the Fifth Regiment that protected the city of Baltimore, and the United States, on September 12, 1814, from the land invasion of

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW	
Eligibility recommended <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Eligibility not recommended <input type="checkbox"/>
Criteria: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D	Considerations: <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D <input type="checkbox"/> E <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> G <input type="checkbox"/> None
Comments: _____	
	7/15/13
Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services	Date
	7/8/13
Reviewer, NR Program	Date

2013-00000

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NR-ELIBILITY REVIEW FORM

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British troops, therefore the site qualifies for eligibility under Criterion A. The parcel also has a strong association with Mrs. Ella Virginia Houck Holloway, who was responsible for numerous preservation efforts of War of 1812 sites, including Battle Acre, and the adoption of the "Star Spangled Banner" as our national anthem. Therefore, the property also qualifies under Criterion B. Battle Acre and its associated monument are also eligible through its significance as a commemorative property. The site and monument have long been a traditional gathering place for citizens to remember the Battles of North Point and Baltimore. The property was not evaluated under Criterion C or D. The significant dates associated with the site include 1814, 1839 and 1914 which represent the year from which the site derives its initial significance, when the acre was delineated and set aside as a memorial and when it was expanded to its present form which includes the existing monument. The recommended period of significance is 1814-1914.

Historical Background:

The battles of North Point and Baltimore have often been overlooked in terms of their importance to the War of 1812 and the history of the United States. The War of 1812 is significant for its role in defining the identity of the new United States of America and would become both the military and diplomatic introduction to the world for the newly formed nation.¹ The battles of North Point and Baltimore serve to demonstrate how citizen soldiers could come together for the sake of their country and their livelihood and form a successful defense despite the odds.² By the turn of the 19th century, the war between France and Great Britain began to have a negative impact on the USA. Britain tried to thwart any trade between the United States and European countries for fear that it would ultimately aid France. Consequently the British engaged in the practice of stopping and boarding US ships, sometimes impressing American soldiers into the war against France. Trade embargos were also initiated which damaged the ability for merchant ships to conduct business.³ In 1807, Great Britain attacked and boarded the USS Chesapeake in the waters outside of Norfolk, Virginia without any subsequent apologies causing anger and outrage of Americans. As a result, the United States Congress passed several embargos limiting trade activities with Europe in order to prevent war. By 1812, the war between France and Great Britain had expanded to Canadian shores with the British commanding control of the Atlantic and the Great Lakes. Fueled by anger and the desire for war, the U.S. government voted to approve a declaration of war on June 17, 1812 in an attempt to protect free trade and sailor's rights. Initially, the United States was not very successful in their attempts to fight the British. In Baltimore, private citizens responded with requests for commissions from the government to outfit schooner ships that would be used to quickly board and seize goods from British merchant ships resulting in the award of prize money. It became so profitable that the ship building industry in Fells Point flourished and Baltimore was called "a nest of pirates" by the London Times.⁴ No other port managed to match Baltimore's success at capturing over 500 British vessels.⁵

By the winter of 1813, the Royal Navy had arrived in the Chesapeake, established blockades and conducted raids all along the coast. Towns including Saint Michaels and Havre De Grace were occupied and vandalized. The British even established naval bases on Tangier and Kent Islands with the intent of capturing and destroying any item that aided or profited from the war. In response to the enemy's presence, the city of Baltimore accelerated the preparations for war. The regular army of the United States was engaged on the Canadian frontier so citizens organized their own companies of militia to defend their financial and personal interests. In 1813, Major General Samuel Smith prepared the Third Division of the Maryland Militia and by September of 1814 as the British sailed up the Chesapeake toward the Patapsco, he had amassed close to 16,000 troops.⁶ The British had just finished burning the United States capital in Washington D.C. and was planning on securing their victory by capturing Baltimore, the prize of the Chesapeake.⁷ The citizen soldiers of Baltimore were preparing to ward off the enemy approaching from either the east or south resting largely on the harbor defense at Fort McHenry.⁸ Knowing that it was likely the British would approach Baltimore from the south, Smith ordered General John Stricker and his 3rd Brigade of about 3200 militia down the North Point Road to the Bread and Cheese Creek in order to stall the British on their march to Baltimore. On the morning of September 12, 1814, the British army, led by Major General Robert Ross, marched up the North Point Road, stopped for breakfast and burned the Todd farmhouse, confident in their believed knowledge that the militia would disperse at their gunfire.⁹ Although the militia did eventually pull back to Hampstead Hill to reorganize after their engagement, the citizen soldiers dealt a significant blow to the British army with the death of Ross from a bullet wound. Stricker's forces also caused the British soldiers to stay on the field and camp for the night which further slowed down their progress so that Ross' boast of being able to "dine in Baltimore" that evening would not come to fruition.¹⁰ The battle of Baltimore climaxed with the bombardment of Fort McHenry on September 13-14 1814 and with it came the poem written by Baltimore lawyer, Francis Scott Key, inspired by the flag still flying at Fort McHenry following the bombardment. The poem called "The Star Spangled Banner" would eventually be adopted as the national anthem in 1931 due to the efforts of Mrs. Ella Virginia Houck Holloway, the granddaughter of Dr. Jacob Houck, whose generous gift of land became Battle Acre.¹¹

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Although the first monument commemorating Baltimore's role in the War of 1812 was erected in 1815, Battle Acre was not established until the 25th anniversary of the war in 1839. The North Point battle had been remembered in 1817 with the erection of the Aquilla Randall Monument located further down North Point Road. President John Quincy Adams also visited North Point in 1827 to see and hear about the battle that had involved so many brave citizen soldiers.¹² Although many subsequent United States Presidents would come to visit Fort McHenry, Adams' visit to the North Point battlefield is the only presidential visit to date.¹³ The celebration in 1839 was grand and although the President and Vice President of the United States could not attend the ceremonies at North Point, several cabinet members, generals and the governor rode the steamboat from Baltimore to Bear Creek in order to participate in the events scheduled that day. They were accompanied by the Fort McHenry flag from 1814. The main event was the cornerstone laying at Battle Acre which was to occupy a 1 acre parcel of land deeded to the State of Maryland for \$1 by Doctor Jacob Houck, owner of the surrounding farm. The deed described the parcel as, "constituting a part of the North Point Battle Ground for the purpose of creating a monument thereon."¹⁴ General McDonald delivered an address to the crowd which was punctuated by the insertion into the cavity of the cornerstone a list of officers and privates involved in the Battle of North Point and Fort McHenry, lists of the present members of the military corps of the city, a newspaper of the day, coins and other miscellaneous items.¹⁵ Although the land had been acquired, no funds were ever secured for the construction of the actual monument. By November of 1860, Benjamin J. Lossing commented about the area occupied by the Battle Ground house that surrounded the cornerstone, "In a field adjoining it we saw a rough-hewn block of granite; with a square hollow in it, which was pointed out as the cornerstone of a monument which it is proposed to erect on the field of strife."¹⁶ As time went on, no formal monument materialized although a memorial was completed in Baltimore City in 1873 for Daniel Wells and Henry Gough McComas, privates in the Maryland Militia and both killed at the Battle of North Point. They were thought to have been the shooters of Major General Ross on the battlefield.¹⁷ John Thomas Scharf noted in his book about the history of Baltimore in 1881 that, "The monument has never been erected, but there is a plain slab of stone marking the spot. Around the stone are the remains of the old intrenchments, and near by is an old log hut bearing the marks of cannon and musket-balls."¹⁸ Attempts to raise money by the old defenders failed to produce enough funds for the actual monument and eventually the cornerstone with its valuable contents disappeared from the spot. It was said that local people often used the acre for their vegetable gardens. In 1898, William F. Pentz tried and failed to have \$10,000 appropriated for a monument on the site and have the land conveyed to the Society of the War of 1812 so that they could complete the task.¹⁹ In 1907, an article in the Baltimore Sun discussed Battle Acre and Dr. Houck's donation to the state leading Mrs. Holloway's sister, Mrs. William F. Pentz, to write a lengthy letter to the editor with the intent of correcting some inaccuracies. "In 1902 my husband, Dr. William F. Pentz, who was a delegate from the First Legislative District, presented a bill for the erection of the monument... it was merely a piece of spite-work that the bill was withheld in the Senate after passing the House."²⁰ In spite of various efforts, nothing happened with the monument until the 1812 centennial celebrations, 75 years after Dr. Houck deeded the acre to the State of Maryland. In 1913, the National Star Spangled Banner Centennial Commission was established in order to coordinate the celebrations scheduled for September 6-13 the following year. The state legislature appropriated \$75,000 with Baltimore City adding an additional \$50,000 for the event.²¹ With the urging of Ella Virginia Houck Holloway, who was also involved with the Daughters of the War of 1812, the state agreed to rehabilitate the Battle Acre site and finish the monument.²²

Steps were taken yesterday to put the North Point battle field in good condition before September. To inclose (sic) the memorial acre owned by the State the city will be requested to donate the iron railing which stood in front of the Polytechnic Institute on North Avenue, but was removed in cutting Calvert street through the block.²³

In July of 1914, the railing was taken down and removed by contractor Samuel T. Wilson at a cost of \$1370. In the place of the old railing at the Polytechnic Institute, it was indicated that the school site would be re-graded and beautified under a plan prepared by Frederick Law Olmstead.²⁴ Lombardy trees and other shrubs were planted around the re-located fence. Plans for the dedication of "Dr. Houck's Acre" was a part of the week long celebrations for the centennial and was scheduled for September 13, 1914. There was also an unveiling of the tablets that detailed the main events of the engagement; they would decorate the monument located in the center of the acre site. According to reports, more than 1000 people attended the event with hundreds lining the road.²⁵ After the dedication ceremony in 1914, Battle Acre again suffered from neglect. In 1939, for the centennial of the Battle Acre site, it was noted that many of the trees and plantings had since died although the Baltimore Sun indicated that the site still "presents sufficient dignity and distinction to induce an occasional traveler along the North Point road to stop, enter the inclosure (sic) and read the inscriptions on the marker reminding him that he is on historic ground."²⁶ Topping the monument was a small cannon that was likely one of the several that had been used for the defense of Baltimore during the war and obtained by the Society of the War of 1812 from Baltimore City.²⁷ A note from the Mayor of

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Baltimore's report on the monuments erected as a result of the centennial indicated, "Battle Acre enclosed by an iron fence contributed by the Public School Commissioners of Baltimore from the Polytechnic grounds, and marked by a War of '12 cannon, with two tablets suitably inscribed. By Centennial Commission."²⁸ The site continued to be the location for annual Defenders' Day observances and other memorial events although a photograph taken in 1946 shows the monument surrounded by tall weeds. The fence had also been allowed to rust and was sagging.²⁹ In 1962, the site was restored by the State Board of Public Works with the directive that the State Roads Commission be the agency responsible for its maintenance. Based on photographs, it appears that it was at this point that the flagstone terrace and paths were added. By 1971, the care of the park was under the management of the military department of the State which had been confirmed by Ben R. Wormer, the president of the Dundalk-Patapsco Neck Historical Society. This led to another organized clean up of the park. It may have been during this time that some new pieces of fencing were integrated to replace sections that could not be salvaged. Issues relating to maintenance persisted despite multiple efforts to hold the State accountable. Baltimore County obtained title to the site in 1977 at the urging of local citizens.³⁰ In 1978, Battle Acre became part of the newly created Baltimore County Landmarks List, the site being among the first designated by the Baltimore County Council.³¹

Site Description:

Situated on the south side of North Point Road, Battle Acre is roughly bounded by Trappe Road to the west, Wallace Road to the east and Wallford Drive to the south. North Point Battlefield State Park is located on the north side of North Point Road slightly northwest of the parcel. A strip mall and parking lot abut the site on the west, a vacant Baltimore County owned lot is located to the south and residential housing is situated on the east side.

The site is an acre which is generally flat and enclosed by an iron fence in fair condition, some sections require repair and others have been replaced with modern fencing. Each corner features a rectangular stone post. The site is accessible from North Point Road via an entrance gate flanked with a pair of concrete gateposts topped with cannon balls. The gateposts have suffered some vehicle damage although they recently have been stabilized. A flagstone sidewalk runs from the entrance to a raised diamond shaped flagstone terrace accessible by two steps that supports the monument. The monument itself is of rusticated stone block and topped by a small cannon. Memorial tablets were once bolted to at least three sides of the block but have been removed. At least one survives and is in storage. An aluminum flagpole is also located to the south of the monument on the terrace.

Prepared by: Teri Rising, Balto Co Dept of Planning

Date Prepared: May 13, 2013

¹ Scott Sheads, *Fort McHenry*. [Baltimore, MD: The Nautical & Aviation Publishing Company of America, Inc., 1995], 14.

² Neil A. Brooks and Eric G. Rockel, *A History of Baltimore County*. [Towson, MD: Friends of the Towson Library, Inc., 1979], 121.

³ Sheads, 11.

⁴ *Ibid*, 16-17.

⁵ Brooks, Rockel, 120.

⁶ *Ibid*, 122.

⁷ Sheads, 30.

⁸ Sheads, 17-18.

⁹ Brooks, Rockel, 123.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 123.

¹¹ Scott Sheads, "Battle Acre: A Deed of Land by Dr. Jacob Houck (1792-1850) 'for the purpose of erecting a Monument thereon....,'" *Maryland in the War of 1812 Celebrating the 200th Anniversary of the War of 1812* <http://maryland1812.wordpress.com/2011/05/17/battle-acre-a-deed-of-land-by-jacob-w-houck-jr-1822-1888-%E2%80%9Cfor-the-purpose-of-erecting-a-monument-thereon%E2%80%A6-%E2%80%9D/> (Accessed November 28, 2011).

¹² John McGrain. Maryland Historical Trust Inventory of Historic Properties Form, *BA-0636, Battle Acre*, Maryland Historical Trust, July 1977, Section 8.

¹³ Scott S. Sheads, Anna Von Lunz, "Defenders' Day, 1815-1998: A Brief History." *Maryland Historical Society Magazine* 93, no. 3 [Fall 1998]: 303.

¹⁴ Baltimore County Land & Will Records, Baltimore County Courthouse, Towson, MD: TK 292:246.

¹⁵ McGrain, 1.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 1.

¹⁷ Ralph E. Eshelman, *A Travel Guide to the War of 1812 in the Chesapeake: Eighteen Tours in Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia*, [Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011], 127.

¹⁸ J. Thomas Scharf, *History of Baltimore City and County from the Earliest Period to the Present Day: Including Biographical Sketches of Their Representative Men* [Philadelphia, PA: Louis H. Everts, 1881], 933.

¹⁹ Special Dispatch to the Baltimore Sun. "New Bills Introduced." *The Sun* (1837-1985), Feb 19, 1898. 8.

<http://search.proquest.com/docview/535925927?accountid=34685>.

²⁰ Bettie Trisler Pentz. "Dr. Jacob Houck and the Battle of North Point." *The Sun* (1837-1985), Sep 16, 1907. 7.

<http://search.proquest.com/docview/537423899?accountid=34685>.

²¹ Sheads, Von Lunz, 309-310.

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BA-6636

²² McGrain, 2.

²³ "Seeks old defenders' graves." 1913. *The Sun* (1837-1985), Jul 19. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/535163610?accountid=34685>.

²⁴ "To use Polytechnic Railing." *The Sun* (1837-1985), Jul 29, 1914. 12, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/535040935?accountid=34685>.

²⁵ "'Enriched by Centenary.'" *The Sun* (1837-1985), Sep 14, 1914. 5, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/535023191?accountid=34685>.

²⁶ "Centennial of 'Battle Acre'." *The Sun* (1837-1985), Aug 20, 1939. SM9, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/543055269?accountid=34685>.

²⁷ "Old Cannon Given City." *The Sun* (1837-1987), Jan 09, 1907. 14, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/537308144?accountid=34685>.

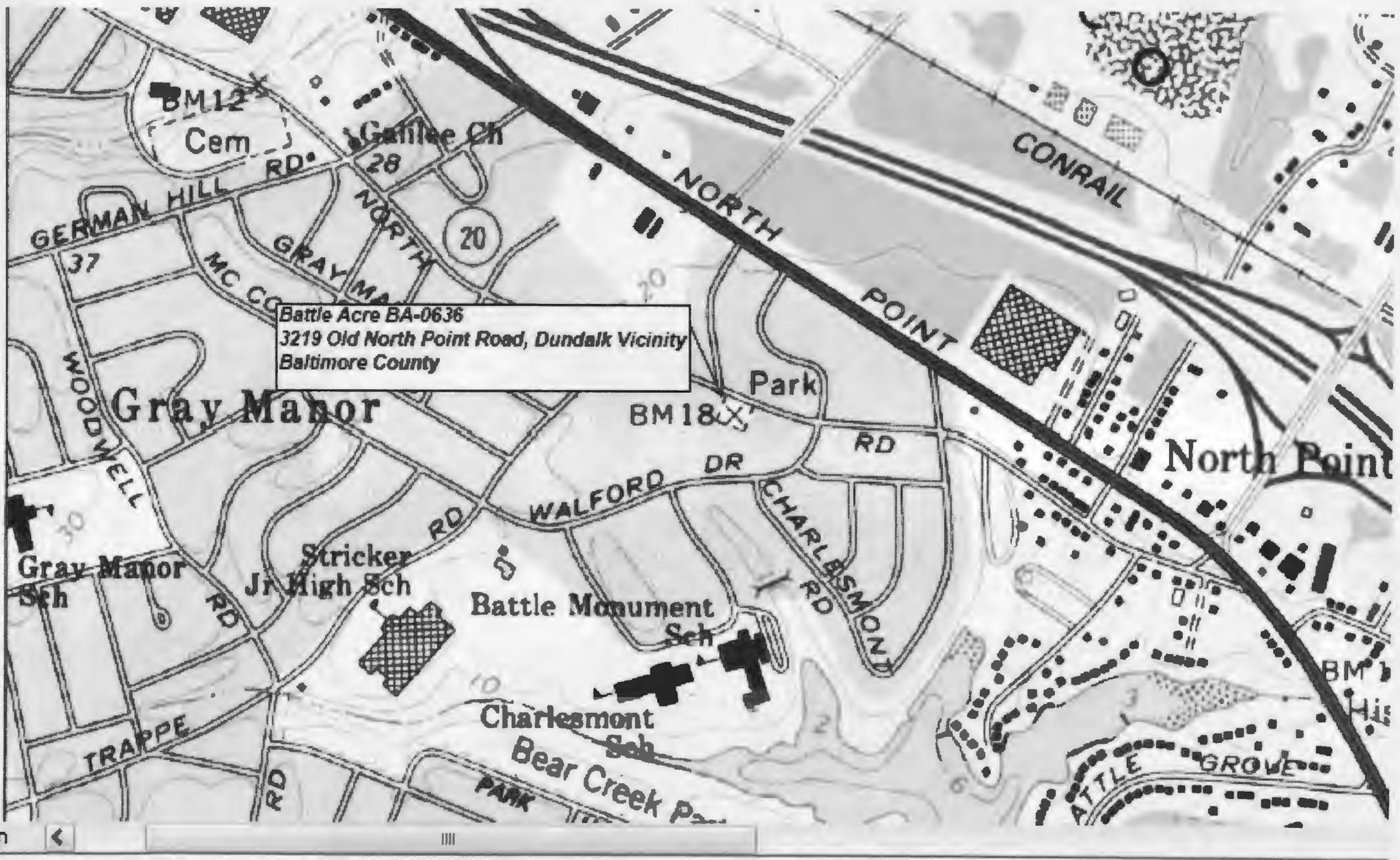
²⁸ "Monuments, Tablets and Other Memorials of a Permanent Nature Resulting from the Centennial." *Reports of the City Officers and Departments Made to the City Council of Baltimore for the year 1918*, [1919]: 159.

²⁹ Harold Williams. "Baltimore's War." *The Sun* (1837-1985), Sep 08, 1946. MZ16, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/538714710?accountid=34685>.

³⁰ McGrain, 3.

³¹ Baltimore County Council Bill No. 101-78, Baltimore County Department of Planning files.

Battle Acre BA-0636
3219 Old North Point Road, Dundalk Vicinity
Baltimore County



0 Battle Acre BA0636
3219 Old North Point Road, Dundalk Vicinity
Baltimore County



Kimberly Rd

North Point Rd

Ally

Wallace Rd

Wallace Rd

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8008

North Point Rd

Alley

Kimberly Rd

P.124
306

Battle Acre BA-0636
3219 Old North Point Road, Dundalk Vicinity
Baltimore County

3219

P.520

P.122

A

Wallace Rd

Road

Alley

8008

8006

7910

**Battle Acre
3219 North Point Road
BA-0636**

Digital Photograph Log

Photographer: Teri Rising/Baltimore
County Dept of Planning

Date: April 18, 2013

1.	3219 North Point Road (Battle Acre)	BA-0636_2013-04-18_01.tif	Park, looking south.
2.	3219 North Point Road (Battle Acre)	BA-0636_2013-04-18_02.tif	Park, looking northwest.
3.	3219 North Point Road (Battle Acre)	BA-0636_2013-04-18_03.tif	Monument, north façade.
4.	3219 North Point Road (Battle Acre)	BA-0636_2013-04-18_04.tif	Monument, west façade.
5.	3219 North Point Road (Battle Acre)	BA-0636_2013-04-18_05.tif	Monument, south façade.
6.	3219 North Point Road (Battle Acre)	BA-0636_2013-04-18_06.tif	Monument, east façade.
7.	3219 North Point Road (Battle Acre)	BA-0636_2013-04-18_07.tif	Monument plaza, looking south.
8.	3219 North Point Road (Battle Acre)	BA-0636_2013-04-18_08.tif	Front gates, looking north.
9.	3219 North Point Road (Battle Acre)	BA-0636_2013-04-18_09.tif	Park, looking west.
10.	3219 North Point Road (Battle Acre)	BA-0636_2013-04-18_10.tif	Park, looking southeast.
11.	3219 North Point Road (Battle Acre)	BA-0636_2013-04-18_11.tif	Park, looking east.
12.	3219 North Point Road (Battle Acre)	BA-0636_2013-04-18_12.tif	Park, looking southwest.
13.	3219 North Point Road (Battle Acre)	BA-0636_2013-04-18_13.tif	Park, looking northeast.



Epson
Professional Paper

EPS

BA-0636
Battle acre
Dundalk, MD
BALCO CO DEPT of Planning
April 2013
Maryland SHPO
Park, looking south
1 of 13

EPSON

Epson
Professional Paper



BA-0636

Battle Acre

Dundalk, MD

BALCO CO DEPT OF PLANNING

April 2013

Maryland SHPO

Park, looking NW

2 of 13



BA-0636
Battle Area
Dundalk, MD
BALTO CO DEPT OF PLANNING
April 2013
Maryland SHPO
Monument, North Facade
3 of 13

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Professional Paper

Epson
Professional Paper

EPSON



BA-0636
Battle Acre
Dundalk, MD
BALTO CO DEPT OF PLANNING
April 2013
Maryland SHPO
monument, west facade
4 of 13



BA-0636
Battle Ace
Dundalk, MD
Bd to Co DEPT of Planning
April 2013
Maryland SHPO
monument, South Facade
5 of 13



BA-0636
Battle Acre
Dundalk, MD
BALTO CO DEPT OF PLANNING
April 2013
Maryland SHPO
monument, East facade
6 of 13



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Professional Paper

EPSON

BA-0636
Bottle acre
Dundalk, MD
Baltimore Dept of Planning
April 2013
Maryland SHPO
Monument Plaza, looking South
7 of 13

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Professional Paper



BA-0636
Battle acre
Dundalk, MD
BALTO CO DEPT OF PLANNING
April 2013
Maryland SHPO
Front gates, looking north
8 of 13



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Professional Paper

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BA-0636
Battle acre
Dundalk, MD
Baltimore Co Dept of Planning
April 2013
Maryland SHPO
Park, looking west
9 of 13



BA-0636
Butteacre
Dundalk, MD
Balto CO Dept of Planning
April 2013
Maryland SHPO
Park, looking SE
10 of 13



BA-0636
Bottle acre
Dundalk, MD
Baltimore Dept of Planning
April 2013
Maryland SHPO
Park, looking East
11 of 13



BA-0636
Battle acre
Dundalk, MD
Baltimore Dept of Planning
April 2013
Maryland SHPO
Park, looking SW
12 of 13



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Professional Paper

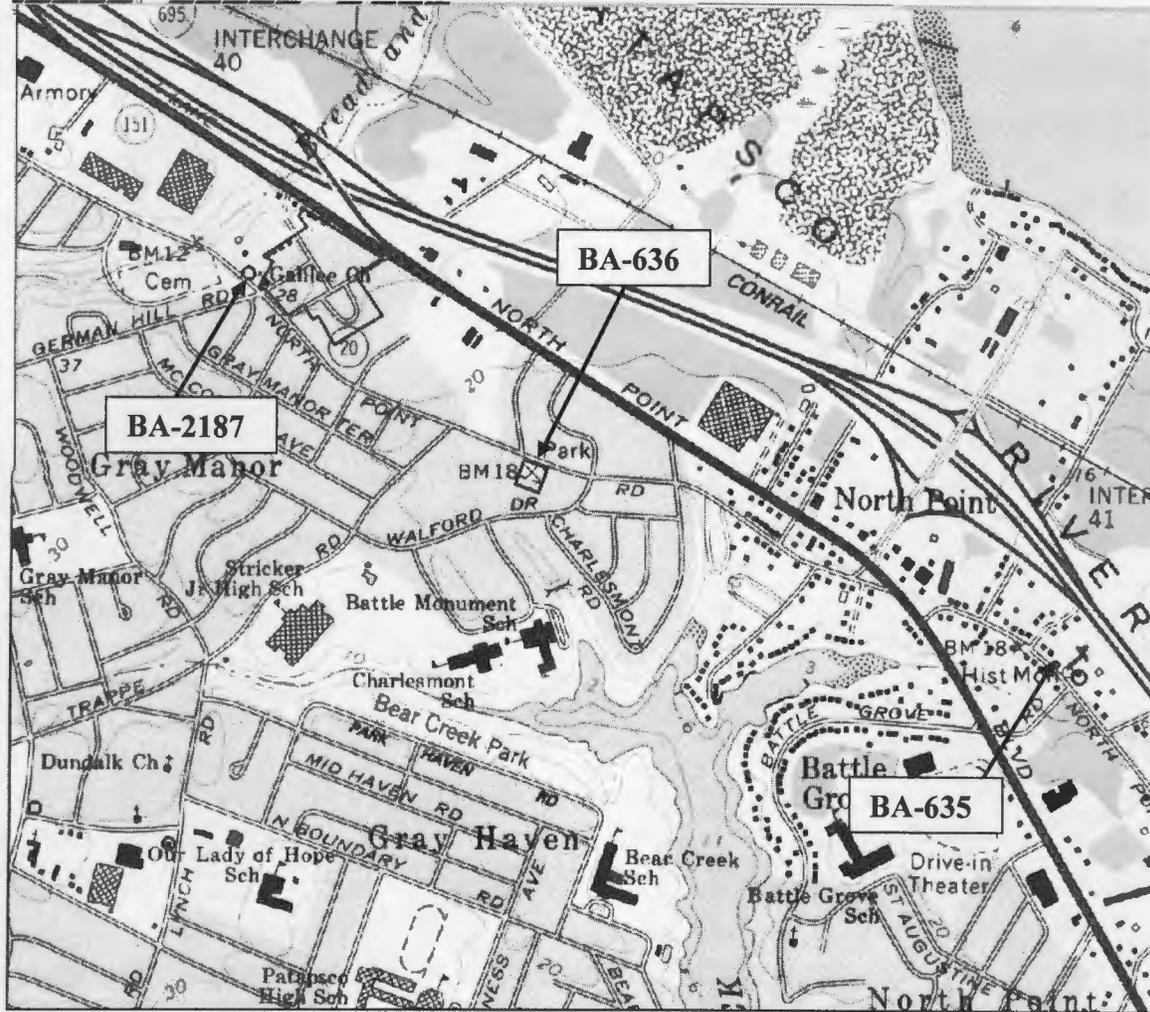
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BA-0636
Battle acre
Dundalk, MD
Bd to CO DEPT OF PLANNING
April 2013
Maryland SHPO
Park, looking NE
13 of 13

Epson
Professional Paper

- BA-635 Aquilla Randall Monument (North Point Battle Monument)
3970 Old North Point Road (MD 20), Dundalk
- BA-636 Battle Acre & Monument
Old North Point Road (MD 20), Dundalk
- BA-2187 Bread & Cheese Creek Battle Monument
Opposite 2400 Old North Point Road (MD 20), Dundalk

Middle River Quadrangle



BCHS-HBS

Baltimore County Landmarks Preservation Commission

BA-636

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

MAGI #0306364434

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC Battle Acre

BA-636

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

South side of Old North Point Road, opposite terminus of Kinberly Road.

ELECTION DISTRICT 15
MIDDLE RIVER QUAD

CITY, TOWN

Dundalk

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF 7th Councilmanic District/2nd Congr. Dist.

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Baltimore County

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input 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"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME State of Maryland, Military Department

Telephone #: 723-3388

STREET & NUMBER

Fifth Regiment Armory

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

STATE, zip code

VICINITY OF

Maryland

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE.

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Baltimore City Courthouse

Liber #: TX 292

Folio #: 246

STREET & NUMBER

111 North Calvert Street

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

Maryland

STATE

21202

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

MARYLAND HISTORIC SITES SURVEY; BALTIMORE COUNTY

DATE ONGOING SINCE 1964

BATTLE ACRE MONUMENT ENTERED 4/6/72

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

CITY, TOWN

ANNA POLLS

STATE

MARYLAND 21401

BA-636

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

- EXCELLENT
- GOOD
- FAIR

- DETERIORATED
- RUINS
- UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

- UNALTERED
- ALTERED

CHECK ONE

- ORIGINAL SITE
- MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Battle Acre is as its name implies, an acre of land, enclosed by iron fencing and entered via concrete gateposts topped with cannon balls. The ground is mostly in grass, and very level. In the center of the compound is a large flagstone terrace which supports an enormous surticated stone block bearing memorial tablets and a small cannon. There is also a flagpole, too small for an acre park, and also bent from its vertical alignment. The fence was second-hand when installed in 1914 and had served the Blind Asylum on North Avenue.

In July, 1977, the grass was cut, and the litter situation was mostly under control.

B 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
<input 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 Dedicated 1839, fenced 1914 BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Battle Acre is a small part of the field where Baltimore's "citizen Soldiers" --the term was used at the time--stood their ground before the advancing British army. All the rest of the battlefield has been overrun by row houses and suburban sprawl in the last few decades. The part of the field that survives was directly in front of the position held by the Fifth Regiment of Maryland Militia during the afternoon of September 12, 1814. The Fifth held, but it must be admitted that the Fifty-first fled.

The battle area was not forgotten by the original combattants, as witnessed by the erection of the Aquilla Randall Monument farther down North Point Road in 1817. Numerous engravings and lithographs celebrated the Old Defenders, and the Battleground Hotel (distinct from the Monument House) helped mark the spot. Back in the city itself, the Battle Monument in Calvert Street north of Fayette was put up in 1815 and made Baltimore the "Monumental City."

President John Quincy Adams visited the scene on October 16, 1827, and recorded it in his diary. The next day's paper reported the event.

The President left the City Hotel yesterday morning, about eight o'clock, accompanied by a number of citizens, on a visit to the Battle ground at North Point; and after an examination of the various points of this interesting spot, rendered additionally so by the explanations of those who had a personal share in the dangers of the day, -- returned to the city at one. (1)

Baltimore made a great event of the 25th anniversary of the battle in 1839, and the newspapers for the 12th of September listed the order of march downtown to the Bond Street wharf for a steamboat excursion to Bear Creek; room had been reserved for both the President and Vice President of the United States. (2)

As reported later, the city had to do without the two top officers, but the flotilla of seven steamboats carried two cabinet officers and two justices of the Supreme Court, the governor, and at least three generals. Their destination was Battle Acre and their mission the laying of a cornerstone. The Fort McHenry flag from 1814 was displayed on the rostrum.

The day before, the one-acre site had been deeded to the State of Maryland by Dr. Jacob Houck, owner of the surrounding farm. For one dollar, Dr. Houck conveyed to the State part of the tract called Swan Harbor, "constituting a part of the North Point Battle Ground for the purpose of erecting a Monument thereon."

As the daily paper reported:

The procession having formed around the foundation of the Monument, the venerable Major General McDonald, aided by a soldier of the Revolution, General T.E. Stansbury, Governor Grason, General Forman, and others proceeded to the cornerstone, in doing which General McDonald delivered a brief and pertinent address. He then deposited in its cavity an official list of all the officers and privates who were in the Battle of North Point and Fort McHenry, lists of the present members of the military corps of the city, the newspaper of the day, coins &c. The ceremony concluded, a national salute was fired by the artillery and a feu de joie by the whole line of infantry

General B.C. Howard, the Orator of the Day, addressed the assembled multitude for about an hour and a half. (4)

But nothing happened at Battle Acre to justify the excursion, the bands, the speeches, and the drowning of one steamboat passenger. No funds were appropriated by the General Assembly for the monument. On his tour of November, 1860, Benson J. Lossing mentioned the hostelry, the Battle Ground House, and added

In a field adjoining it we saw a rough-hewn block of granite; with a square hollow in it, which was pointed out as the cornerstone of a monument which it is proposed to erect on the field of strife. This was on the right of Long Log Lane going out . . . (5)

Years later, it was recalled that Miss Long, keeper of "a tavern" kept the grounds clean for a period of time. Eventually the cornerstone and its contents vanished. Local people laid out their vegetable gardens on the acre. (6)

Dr. Houck, who had donated the land, was recalled as never practicing his profession but as manufacturing a patent remedy called a "panacea." Each year he entertained the Old Defenders at his farm on Swann's Creek, "Houck's Pavillion."

Scharf in 1881 stated:

The monument has never been erected, but there is a plain slab of stone marking the spot. Around the stone are the remains of the old intrenchments, and nearby is an old log hut bearing the marks of cannon and musket-balls. (7)

A Sunday feature article of 1907 described the spot near the former "Houck's Pavillion."

As one goes down the North Point Road, he will notice on the right hand margin immediately after passing Mr. Lang's house, two small granite markers, a dozen rods apart. These with two other in the field mark the acre invested by Mr. Houck, and in the center of the space thus enclosed will discover, if he searches carefully, a tiny mound only a few inches higher than the adjacent soil and almost hidden by vegetation.

This is the foundation of the proposed monument, shadowed by peach trees and surrounded by standing corn. (8)

It is not until the 75th anniversary of his donation and the 100th anniversary of the battle that anything was done about the park. Dr. Houck's granddaughter had turned out to be an active patriot—perhaps the most visible ever—Mrs. Reuben Ross Holloway. In 1914, Mrs. Holloway reminded the State that it owned the ground and prevailed on the Star Spangled Banner Commission to make the wasteland into a park.

The Commission, founded to organize the celebration of the Centennial of the anthem,

put up a fence around the acre and erected a large memorial stone—apparently a stone distinct from that of 1839. Admittedly, the fence was previously owned, having been removed from the Blind Asylum on North Avenue which was then being replaced by the new buildings of Polytechnic Institute. Lombardy and other shrubs were planted around the fence.

In the week-long festivities, Sunday, September 13 at 11:30 a.m. was marked on the official programs with the entry

North Point Battlefield

Dedication of "Dr. Houck's Acre" in commemoration of the last important engagement before Peace was declared. Unveiling of tablets. (9)

By 1939, many of the trees and plantings had died but "the spot presents sufficient dignity and distinction to induce an occasional traveler along to the North Point Road to stop, enter the inclosure and read the inscriptions . . ." (10)

Keeping the plot up always seemed a good thing to avoid and periodically an outraged citizen would sound off against the disgrace of it all.

In 1947, fourth and fifth graders from East Baltimore went on a history field trip to Battle Acre and could barely find the cannon for the weeds. They wrote a letter to local papers and the notoriety resulted in a general clean up. (11)

The Enoch Pratt Library's vertical file on "War of 1812" contains numerous newspaper clippings about the acre, many of them letters protesting weeds and litter, and lack of gratitude to the fallen. In 1962, the State Board of Public Works restored the Battle Acre and instructed the State Roads Commission to maintain it. The roads agency cleaned it up at least annually over the next seven years, as reported by their public relations director, George A. Elliott, 3d. (12)

About 1971, Ben R. Womer, president of the Dundalk-Patapsco Neck Historical Society went through a lengthy correspondence with various arms of the State, and eventually discovered that the Military Department was responsible for maintaining the park, and another clean-up was effected by the citizen soldiers of the present.

Two years later, when Mr. Womer brought out his society's book The Neck, he was interviewed by Isaac Rehert of the Sun:

-Battle Acres monument. "I got proof that monument belongs to the State. But we've had a helluva time getting them to clean it up."

In July, 1977, various citizens of the eastern county interested in preservation and history proposed that the county acquire title to the park and place its maintenance under the Department of Recreation and Parks.

NOTES:

1. Baltimore American, October 17, 1827, p. 2, col. 1. Also, JQA's diary, 7:336.
2. "Twelfth of September," American, September 12, 1839, p. 2, col.5.
3. Baltimore City Deeds, TK 292:246.
4. "The Twelfth of September," American, September 14, 1839, p. 2.
5. Benson J. Lossing, Pictorial Field Book of the War of 1812 (New York, 1868)
6. "Centennial of 'Battle Acre,'" Sun, August 20, 1939.
7. T.J. Scharf, History of Baltimore City and County (Philadelphia, 1881), p. 933.
8. Lewis Beeman Borwne, Rev., "Battle of North Point in Legend and Tradition," Sun, September 8, 1907, p. 13.
9. Frank A. O'Connell, National Star-Spangled Banner Centennial (Baltimore, 1914), p. 113.
10. "Centennial of 'Battle Acre,'" Sun, August 20, 1939.
11. Wayne Hardin, "Ghost Soldiers of 1814 Wouldn't Recognize Site," Evening Sun, April 4, 1972, p. C1.
12. "How It Turned Out," Evening Sun, April 2, 1969.
13. Isaac Rehert, "Patapsco Neck History Buffs Put Out Book on Their Area." Sun, July 17, 1973, p. B-1

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Center of 'Battle Acre,' Sun, August 20, 1939.
The Town of September," Baltimore American, September 14, 1839, p. 2.
Dundalk-Annapoco Neck Historical Society, The Neck 1672-1973 (Dundalk, 1973), p. 21.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.0

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Bg on SW side of road ... to North Point ...
S66¹/₂E 12.7 perches
S23¹/₂W 12.7 Perches
N66¹/₂W 12.7 perches
thence by straight line ... to begining

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	none	COUNTY	none
STATE		COUNTY	

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE John McGrain *EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION*

ORGANIZATION *BALTIMORE COUNTY*
Office of Planning and Zoning

DATE
July 1977

STREET & NUMBER
401 Bosley Avenue

TELEPHONE
494-3495

CITY OR TOWN
Towson

STATE
Maryland 21204

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
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438

- BA-635 Aquilla Randall Monument (North Point Battle Monument)
3970 Old North Point Road (MD 20), Dundalk
- BA-636 Battle Acre & Monument
Old North Point Road (MD 20), Dundalk
- BA-2187 Bread & Cheese Creek Battle Monument
Opposite 2400 Old North Point Road (MD 20), Dundalk

Middle River Quadrangle

