The Story of
The Library Company of the Baltimore Bar

by

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SUPREME BENCH OF BALTIMORE CITY

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Dedicated

To the Memory of

JEROME M. ASCH, *Esquire*

(1923-1976)

ATTORNEY, SCHOLAR, TEACHER,

CITIZEN, SOLDIER, ATHLETE

AND A FRIEND OF THE BAR LIBRARY,

WHOSE GENEROSITY MADE THIS PUBLICATION POSSIBLE

The Library Company of the Baltimore Bar

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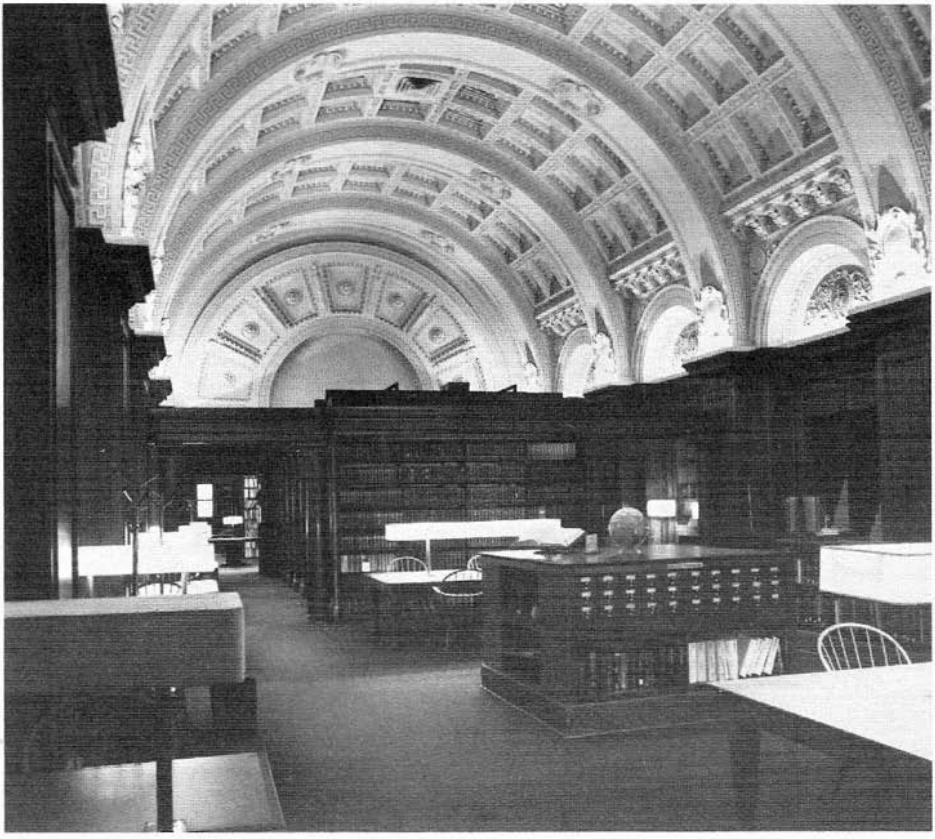


The main reading room of the Bar Library

Introduction

Located on the sixth floor of the Baltimore City Court House, the Bar Library is one of the oldest private libraries in the state and one of the most complete and comprehensive law libraries in the country. Established as "The Library Company of the Baltimore Bar" in 1840, it is a vestige of the past that has somehow survived to the present day, a private law library run by a corporation supported by the annual dues of member attorneys. Its story is a veritable history of the legal profession in Baltimore, for both have grown up together. Its founding a generation before the Civil War predates the incorporation of the Bar Association of Baltimore City by some forty years, the "Daily Record" newspaper by forty-eight and the Maryland State Bar Association by fifty-six years.

Baltimore and the Legal Profession in 1840

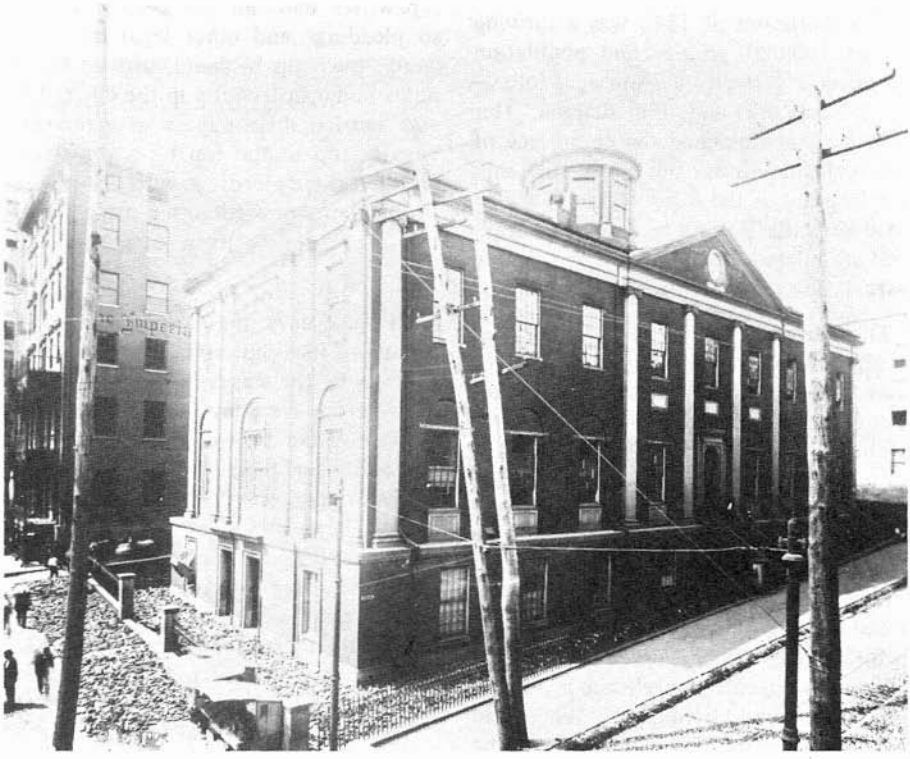
The Baltimore of 1840 was a thriving city of 100,000, in size and population the third largest city in America, following New York and Philadelphia. Her great harbor welcomed the commerce of the world in the days of steam and sail. Her location at the head of the National Road and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad stimulated local industry by creating markets for manufactured goods.

There were then no more than two hundred lawyers practicing law in Baltimore, most of whom maintained homes and offices in the two and three-story dwellings that dotted the landscape around the Court House. They were the elite of society, for whom the great mass of people had a reverential respect, to whose leadership the majority naturally deferred. As members of such a small, closed set, all were known to the others, as former classmates, law partners, mentors and protegés, fellow church members, slaveholders and abolitionists, Whigs and Democrats, friends and adversaries on the political stump or across the trial table. They dined together, played cards together, debated each other and, on occasion, traded pistol shots on the field of honor. They were brothers in the law, in name and fact, for there was not a woman in the whole number. Together they joined in marking occasions peculiar to the profession, celebrating a new lawyer's admission to practice, or mourning the passing of departed colleagues in the cancellation of court sessions, the wearing of armbands and other badges of grief and the reading of eulogies at memorial meetings. Their lives and conduct founded a tradition that lives today in the bench and bar of Baltimore.

The practice of law was much simpler then, as was life itself. The telephone had not yet been invented, so lawyers conducted their practices face to face. The typewriter had not yet been conceived, so pleadings and other legal documents were drawn up by hand, usually by students under instruction in the office. Lawyers carried their papers in green cloth bags bound at the top by a draw-string and tied their pleadings with red ribbons. From these now-forgotten usages came the expressions "green bag" and "red tape".

In those days, the Court House was a branch of local entertainment, its various courtrooms the stages upon which dramas drawn from everyday life were acted out. Citizens often crowded the galleries to see and hear their favorite orators declame in grandest style the causes of their clients before Judge and Jury. And from the fragments of those courtroom speeches which survive, it is clear that Judges then were far more tolerant in permitting digression from the point in controversy than they are today.

When the Library was founded, the bar was disorganized and unregulated. There were no written codes of ethics nor bar examinations: students "read law" in the offices of practicing attorneys, then were admitted to the bar upon motion before the local bench by their sponsors, who attested to their competence and integrity. There was then no Supreme Bench of Baltimore City: that judicial institution was not established until 1867 when the present State Constitution was ratified. The city and county were not then the separate political entities they are today: before the Constitution of 1851 by which the separation was effected, Baltimore City was the county seat, and the old two-story brick Court House which stood on the southwest corner of Calvert and Lexington Streets housed the county courts.



The Old Court House at Calvert and Lexington Streets
The Bar Library was located on the second floor

Founding of the Bar Library

It was there in the County Courtroom on the second floor that a general meeting of the bar was held on Monday, March 30, 1840. The concept of a non-circulating, subscription law library was suggested by a twenty-seven year-old lawyer named George William Brown. He recognized the need for a source of legal reference open to members of the bar who lacked funds to establish libraries of their own. An old leather-bound minute book, still in the archives of the Bar Library, records the birth of the Library and contains the following acknowledgement:

This meeting was called by George William Brown, Esquire, who having fully informed himself of the origin and purpose of similar institutions in Boston, New York and Philadelphia, proposed to the bar formation of the present Library and gave to the undertaking its first impulsive step. It is to his zeal, aided afterwards by the liberal cooperation of the whole bar, that the Library is indebted for its existence and success.

The old Library Company Minute Book and Photographs of some of the Founders

In his pioneering efforts, Mr. Brown reflected something of a family tradition. It should be noted that both of his grandfathers were among the founders of the city's first circulating library. In 1797, the Rev. Patrick Allison (1740-1802), chaplain to the Continental Congress and founding minister of the First Presbyterian Church and Dr. George Brown (1755-1822), a founding member of the city's first medical society helped organize the Library Company of Baltimore. Like the Bar Library, this was a private concern, patronized by those who could afford the purchase of company stock which supported the library until it was absorbed into the collection of the Maryland Historical Society in 1856.

It has long been assumed that the Bar Library traces its lineage back to the older library. There is no evidence to support this assumption. But for a similarity in name and a coincidence in membership of some of the same people in both libraries, there is no record of any official connection between the two. The old Library Company was perhaps the model and inspiration for the Bar Library, but that appears to have been the extent of the relationship.

Library Constitution and Membership

The constitution of the Bar Library provided for annual elections of an unsalaried president and a five-member board of directors. The size of the board has since been enlarged. Library membership was originally limited to Baltimore attorneys, but lawyers from "beyond the pale" of the city line were later welcomed to join. A year after its founding, the Library was opened to law students, defined as "any gentlemen reading law with any member of this company." In those days, "joining the Library" meant paying a $20 initiation fee toward launching the venture and annual dues of $10 to keep it going. The initiation fee was later abolished.

In legal history, it was the dawn of corporation, insurance and international law. Before the rush of time and events brought specialization to the profession, the lawyer worked on one case at a time, devoting hours and days to its complete preparation for trial. It was for this purpose that the Bar Library was founded. What a tribute to the genius of young Mr. Brown that sixty-six attorneys—fully one-third of the bar among whom were counted its greatest members—ratified the Library constitution by the time the assembly convened for the third time on Monday, April 13, 1840. At that session, the members selected as the Library's first president John V. L. McMahon and a board of directors composed of George William Brown, Hugh Davey Evans, I. Nevitt Steele, James Mason Campbell and George W. Dobbin.

The Library's First President and Board of Directors

JOHN VAN LEAR MCMAHON
(1800-1871)

Selected as chairman of the assembled lawyers at the March 30th meeting, John V. L. McMahon was also the first to sign the Bar Library Constitution and the first president of the Library Company. Indeed, it was he who presented the ledger in which the Constitution, its subscribers and the minutes of the Library's first sixty-odd years are contained. At that time, he was at the head of his profession. Yet in his early career at the Baltimore bar, he was not successful.

Born in Cumberland on October 18, 1800, he graduated first in his class at Princeton before his seventeenth birthday, was admitted to the Cumberland bar at nineteen, was elected to the Legislature at twenty-one and came to Baltimore soon after. Sophisticated Baltimore rejected his rough dress and boisterous spirit as frontier gaucherie. Despondent over his lack of clients, he returned to Cumberland, determined to renounce the law but unable to choose between a career in medicine, literature or theology. Instead he returned to the Legislature where, as Speaker of the House of Delegates, his voice was raised in support of the so-called "Jew Bill", which conferred upon Jewish citizens the right to vote and hold public office. He was persuaded by friends to return to Baltimore, where at the age of twenty-six, he drafted the corporate charter of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, the first instrument of its kind in America, upon which all subsequent charters were patterned. In 1831, he wrote the authoritative "Historical View of the Government of Maryland."

He was a prominent figure in national politics. Less than a month following his election as Bar Library president, he was chairman of the Whig Convention which nominated William Henry Harrison for the Presidency at Baltimore on May 4, 1840. The incredible power of his oratory is evident in his keynote address, delivered to a crowd of twenty-thousand, in the presence of Webster and Clay:

Let the nation come to order! The mountains have sent forth their rills; the hillsides their streams; the valleys their rivers; and lo! the avalanche of the people is here!

Notwithstanding his considerable ability, McMahon consistently refused offers of public office. He declined nomination to the Congress as a Democrat in 1829 and to the Senate as a Whig in 1837; the offer of the cabinet position of his choice under President Harrison; the office of U.S. Attorney General under President Tyler. In 1844 he turned down appointment as Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals and the office of Chancellor of Maryland two years later.

His career in the law was brought to a tragic close when he began to suffer a loss of sight while preparing to argue a case before the Court of Appeals in 1859. The condition worsened, necessitating his retirement from practice. He resigned the presidency of the Bar Library in April, 1861 after serving for twenty-one years. In 1863 he returned to Cumberland where he died on June 15, 1871.

GEORGE WILLIAM BROWN
(1812-1890)

Mr. Brown not only led the movement which founded the Bar Library, but also purchased some of the first books in its collection with funds which he advanced. A brilliant career in public life at bench and bar lay ahead. With William H. Norris and Frederick William Brune, Jr., he compiled the very first Maryland Digest in 1847. In the years which followed, he became the first Reform Mayor of Baltimore (1860-62) and the second Chief Judge of the Supreme Bench (1873-88). During his term as Mayor in 1861 during the secession crisis, the Sixth Massachusetts Regiment was attacked while passing through the city by an angry mob. Mayor Brown arrived at the riot scene on Pratt Street and marched unarmed at the head of the Union column as it proceeded to Camden Station. Four citizens and twelve soldiers were killed in the confrontation. History records that the first blood spilled in the Civil War was shed that day in Baltimore. Ironically, Mayor Brown was later arrested by federal authorities as a suspected secessionist and imprisoned without trial for fourteen months, first at Fort McHenry and later at Fort Warren in Boston. He was serving as the second President of the Bar Library at the time of his arrest. He helped found the Bar Association of Baltimore City in 1880 and served a term as President in 1890. He died the same year, the golden jubilee year of the Bar Library, full of honors and years.

HUGH DAVEY EVANS
(1792-1868)

Hugh Davey Evans, LL.D. was the legal scholar whose treatises on common law pleading written in the 1830's guided the practice of law in Maryland for many years. Oddly enough, he was not personally successful as a lawyer. He explained why in his autobiography:

This want of success was the more remarkable, because I always had among my brethren the reputation of being a learned lawyer. But in the earlier part of my career I could not speak. I was never an adroit man of business . . . Nor had I that sort of knowledge of human nature, which makes a man skillful in cross-examination.

Nevertheless, Mr. Evans performed several important tasks with distinction. When the American Colonization Society created the state of Liberia in Africa and peopled it with emancipated slaves, he was chosen to draft the colony's laws and constitution. He served for a number of years as counsel to the board of directors of the Library Company of Baltimore.

Upon his retirement from the practice of law in June, 1856, the directors of the Bar Library bestowed a life membership in the Library upon him as a token of his standing among his fellow attorneys. He became an authority on the history and dogma of the Episcopal Church and devoted the remainder of his life to writing theological treatises and polemics.

I. NEVITT STEELE
(1809-1891)

When the Bar Library was founded, I. Nevitt Steele was an Assistant Attorney General of Maryland, assigned to prosecute criminal cases in the Baltimore County Court. Among his most famous cases was the trial of Adam Horn for the brutal ax-murder of his wife in 1843.

The case took seven days to try and was based solely upon circumstantial evidence, but Steele won a conviction from a jury which spent only ten minutes deliberating upon the verdict. The defendant confessed to his crime a few days later and was hanged the following year.

He resigned as prosecutor in 1849 to become American Chargé d'Affaires in Venezuela by appointment of President Zachary Taylor. He spent four years in Caracas, negotiating claims of American citizens against the Venezuelan government. At one point his life was threatened by bandits who broke into the embassy. He returned to Baltimore in 1853 to resume the practice of law and dabble in politics as chairman of the Whig State Central Committee. The minutes of a meeting of the Library Board of Directors on October 9, 1862 recite that "Mr. Steele took the chair, the President [Mayor George William Brown] being still at Fort Warren."

His ability as a criminal defense lawyer was never more apparent than in the case of Mrs. Elizabeth G. Wharton, a Baltimore widow charged with murdering General W. S. Ketchum by poison in 1871. The case was removed to Annapolis, where it was tried before a jury over a period of forty days. The State apparently had an "open and shut" case. Every bit of incriminating evidence was introduced, including a witness who testified that the defendant had purchased a quantity of poison immediately prior to General Ketchum's visit. Mrs. Wharton was acquitted after Mr. Steele devastated the State's expert witnesses on cross-examination and produced his own expert who testified that the victim had died of cerebrospinal meningitis.

Mr. Steele's death on April 11, 1891 removed from the public scene one of the most capable attorneys ever to practice in a court of law.

GEORGE WASHINGTON DOBBIN
(1809-1891)

It was George W. Dobbin who, serving as secretary at the first meeting of the Library Company, recorded the Library's founding in the old ledger. He was the son of George Dobbin, who owned and edited the *Baltimore American* before his death in 1811. Mr. Dobbin owned shares of stock in the old Library Company of Baltimore and was a founder of the Maryland Historical Society in 1844. During the Mexican War, he served in the Maryland Cavalry, attaining the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in June, 1846. With the intention of building a summer home outside of Baltimore, he purchased nine acres on a hillside near Relay in about the year 1840. The mansion he built there he named "The Lawn," and because so many of his lawyer friends—Thomas Donaldson, John H. B. Latrobe and George M. Gill, to name but a few—followed his lead and settled there, the area became known as "Lawyers' Hill".

He served as a delegate to the Maryland Constitutional Convention of 1867. When the new State Constitution was adopted and the Supreme Bench of Baltimore City thereby created, he was elected one of the first five judges in October, 1867. He was the first Supreme Bench judge to have his judicial term extended beyond the mandatory retirement age of

seventy, permitting him to serve a full fifteen year term. He retired from office in November, 1882 and spent his last years surrounded by family and friends at "The Lawn", where he died on May 28, 1891 at the age of eighty-one. A memorial tablet in his honor was erected in the narthex of Old Saint Paul's Church in Baltimore.

JAMES MASON CAMPBELL
(1810-1869)

Mr. Campbell was a prominent attorney and Chief Justice Taney's son-in-law. His wedding to Anne Arnold Taney took place in Washington in 1834 while Taney was yet a trusted adviser to Andrew Jackson and a member of his cabinet. Indeed the President himself attended the wedding which was the highlight of the social season in the national capital. At the time of the founding of the Bar Library, Chief Justice Taney lived across and down the street from the Court House on Lexington Street in a house located on the present site of the public gardens next to the Workmen's Compensation Commission. At Taney's death in 1864, Mr. Campbell served as the executor of his will.

Acts of Incorporation

The Library Company of the Baltimore Bar was incorporated by the Maryland Legislature for a period of thirty years by Chapter 8, Acts of 1840-41 enacted on January 8, 1841. The life of the corporation was extended indefinitely on February 19, 1870 by Chapter 6, Acts of 1870.

Library Chambers in the Last Century

Today's attractive and comfortable Library bears little resemblance to its cramped quarters of more than a century ago. The Library's first home was a modest room on the second floor of the old Court House, made available by the Judges of the Baltimore County Court and the County Commissioners. From the windows of the Library facing Lexington Street on the north, readers could see the fine homes of Chief Justice Taney and Betsy Patterson, abandoned bride of Jerome Bonaparte. The Library's collection rapidly outgrew its quarters and it became necessary in 1847 to convert a passageway adjoining the Library on the west into a room. This work was superintended by Robert Cary Long, Jr. (1810-1849) renowned Baltimore architect. Oil lamps were used for reading at night, supplemented by gas light which was added in 1852. The Library's last territorial expansion in the old building occurred in 1857 when it acquired another room on the west formerly used as a secondary jury room by the Superior Court. This was the extent of the Library when it was described in a complaint addressed to the editor of the Maryland Law Journal by attorney Martin Lehmayer in April, 1888:

Perched up on the top floor (of the Court House) is our apology for a law library, and one visit will dissipate all doubts as to the necessity for a change. Three very small rooms constitute and compose the quarters of the entire "library." Here are piled, heaped and crowded together the English and American text books and reports. Every State in the Union is constantly adding to its decisions; fresh treatises and new editions of old ones continually appear; law books and lawyers are rapidly increasing—but still the library is as small as it was decades ago.

Then again ventilation seems not to have been considered by the builders of our halls of justice, and the library has been impartially neglected. In summer the place is intensely warm and in winter exceedingly cold. One large stove in the middle apartment heats the three, and as each room is only about twenty feet square, the one which boasts of the stove must be superheated in order to make the others suitable for occupation.

. . . The Court House stands like the pyramids of Egypt—a monument of the civilization of a departed age—and in its innermost recesses is hidden the Law Library of the Baltimore Bar.

In the Spring of 1893, in view of the approaching demolition of the old Court House, the Bar Library moved to the ninth floor of the Equitable Building where it stayed until July 1900 when it moved into its present quarters on the sixth floor of the new building. Three and one half years later, the Equitable Building was gutted by the Great Baltimore Fire.

Librarians of the Bar Library

	Years of Service
1. Charles Summerfield Carter	1840-1844
2. S. Asbury Shepparde	1844-1846
3. Philip L. Moore	1846-1847
4. Wilson C. N. Carr	1847-1848
5. James A. Buchanan	1848-1851
6. Thomas William Hall, Jr.	1851-1854
7. Samuel W. Emory	1854-1856
8. John Prentiss Poe	1856-1857
9. William E. Geeson	1857-1859
10. J. Campbell Dorry	1859-1862
11. George L. L. Davis	1862-1868
12. Thomas S. H. Phillips	1868-1871
13. Charles Poe	1871-1872
14. Pierre Phillips	1872-1874
15. Col. Daniel T. Chandler	1874-1877
16. Josiah Holmes Converse	1877-1897
17. Winfield Scott Amoss	1897-1899
18. Andrew Hartman Mettee	1899-1933
19. Laurie Howard Riggs	1933-1958
20. Betty Hancock	1958-1961
21. John Dyrud	1961-1962
22. Samuel M. Briggin	1962-1970
23. Michael L. Renshawe	1971-1976
24. Kai-Yun Chiu	1976-

Librarians

The constitution provided for the employment of a librarian at a salary of $100 per year, supplemented by a commission for fines successfully collected from delinquent members. At first, the position was filled by law students who served for only a year or two until their admission to the bar. The very first of these gentlemen was Charles Summerfield Carter (1824-1854) who is remembered for compiling the table of cases to the first Maryland Digest in 1847. John P. Poe (1836-1909), who served during 1856-57, later became Attorney General of Maryland, Dean of the University of Maryland School of Law and author of "Poe's Pleading and Practice". While librarian, J. Campbell Dorry compiled the Library's first published catalogue, three hundred copies of which were printed in June, 1860. This fascinating record indicates that twenty years after its founding, the Bar Library boasted a collection of over 5,000 volumes.

In its first thirty-four years, the Library employed fourteen librarians. In October 1874 the Board of Directors voted to end the policy of hiring law students. The first permanent librarian appointed was Colonel Daniel T. Chandler of Georgetown, retired soldier. He served with the U.S. Army during the Mexican War and fought in the battles of Monterey, Contreras and Cherubusco. A veteran of the Confederate Army in the War Between the States, he was imprisoned for over a year in the Old Capital Prison in Washington, D.C. He served as librarian for only three years before his death on October 14, 1877 at the age of fifty-seven.

His immediate successor was J. Holmes Converse, teacher and classical scholar who served for twenty years until he resigned because of ill health in 1897. He died at his summer home in Buena Vista, Pennsylvania on September 27, 1907 at the age of sixty-four. Winfield S. Amoss, a young attorney who succeeded Mr. Converse, served as librarian for only two years.

The fourth librarian served longer than any other. Andrew Hartman Mettee (1871-1933) had served since 1895 as Mr. Amoss' assistant and before that had worked in the Bar Library during his vacations from the University of Maryland Law School. Too young at graduation to be admitted to practice, he stayed on at the Library. He was appointed chief librarian in 1899 and for the next thirty-four years directed the daily operation of the Bar Library until his death on September 30, 1933. He supervised the Library's move from the Equitable Building to the Court House in July, 1900 and compiled the subject index to the library collection which was said to have been unique in law library cataloguing.

When Mr. Mettee died, the Library Board talked one of its members, Laurie H. Riggs (1878-1963), a practicing attorney, into assuming the post of librarian on a short-term basis with an assistant. As it turned out, he stayed twenty-five years, during which the operation of the Library was modernized in many respects. Chief among these was the recataloguing of the collection and the introduction of the present card catalogue system. While the bulk of the Library collection does not circulate, Mr. Riggs began the lending of books of legal fiction, history and jurisprudence known as the "Horwitz Collection." The Library was air conditioned and renovated under his direction in the 1950's, and a xerox machine introduced. He was a member of the American Association of Law Libraries for thirty years and its president, 1946-47. He died in Baltimore after a long illness on February 12, 1963 at the age of seventy-four.

Margaret E. Coonan (1902-1965) was hired as Mr. Riggs' assistant in 1935. A native of Westminster, Miss Coonan graduated from Western Maryland College and pursued graduate studies at Columbia and Illinois Universities to become a librarian. Her first job was assistant librarian in the Department of Legislative Reference in Baltimore. After she was hired by the Bar Library, the Board of Directors passed a rule requiring its librarians to attend law school for at least one year. Accordingly, Miss Coonan enrolled in the evening law school of the University of Maryland, while still working at the Bar Library by day. Despite a rigorous schedule, she excelled in her studies, and decided to complete her legal education. She served on the student editorial board of the law review, was elected to the Order of the Coif and graduated with honors in 1942. She passed the June 1943 Maryland bar examination with the highest score, but did not enter into the practice of law, satisfied to remain at the Bar Library. When she left in 1949, it was to become librarian of the U.S. Railroad Retirement Board in Chicago and later law librarian of the New Jersey State Library in Trenton. In 1955, she was elected President of the American Association of Law Libraries. She returned to Maryland the following year to become law librarian and associate professor at the University of Maryland. Miss Coonan wrote the beautiful tribute to Mr. Riggs that appears in the *Law Library Journal* for May, 1963. Her own death occurred on March 30, 1965 after a long illness at the age of sixty-two. A striking portrait of this beloved librarian by Betty Wells is displayed in the library of the University of Maryland School of Law in Baltimore.

No one before or since has worked in the Bar Library longer than C. Richard Suter, reference librarian, who was hired in 1931 and stayed on for forty-five years. Prior to his retirement, he was honored with a luncheon by the Society of Bailiffs, an organization composed of the law clerks to the Judges on the Supreme Bench, which was attended by most of the Judges and other Court House personnel. Dick received a commemorative plaque and was named "S.O.B. of the Year", the annual award which the group presents to individuals whom it esteems.

Betty Hancock was the first woman to serve as chief librarian, serving for three years after the retirement of Mr. Riggs in 1958. She left to become a reference librarian at the U.S. Supreme Court Library in 1961 and was succeeded by John Dyrud, who in turn was followed by Samuel M. Briggin in 1962. Mr. Briggin began his career as a law librarian at the library of the New York City Bar Association in 1929, served in the army during World War II, and after the war worked as an accountant and later law librarian of the Navy Department's Military Sea Transport Service. He became law librarian at Columbia University and was associated with the New York law firm of Donovan, Leisure, Newton and Irvine before coming to the Bar Library. He died at the age of fifty-nine on August 10, 1970.

When Michael L. Renshawe was appointed librarian in January, 1971, the future of the Bar Library appeared in doubt. Dwindling funds and rising costs seemed to forecast its closing or at best its continuation on a restricted basis. It was feared that hours of operation would be shortened and part of the collection sold. In response to a desperate plea from the Board of Directors, the Legislature enacted Chapter 432 of the Laws of Maryland of 1971 which directed that revenue from all attorneys' fees filed in

Baltimore City be paid to the Bar Library. A much-improved financial picture permitted the complete restoration and renovation of the Library quarters in the Court House and insured its survival in its present form for generations.

Mr. Renshawe, a native of Washington, D.C., had served as a reference specialist at the Library of Congress before coming to the Bar Library. He left in 1976 to assume the position of law librarian at McGill University in Montreal, Canada.

Kai-Yun Chiu, Bar Librarian

The revitalization of the Library has continued through the term of the present librarian, Ms. Kai-Yun Chiu. She was born in Kwangsi province in Southern China and escaped with her family to Taiwan in 1949. She came to this country ten years later and received her bachelor's degree from the College of the Holy Names in Oakland, California and her Master of Library Science from the University of California at Berkeley. She also holds a Master's degree in Administrative Science from Johns Hopkins University. Ms. Chiu has held various supervisory positions at the Enoch Pratt Free Library and the Milton S. Eisenhower Library. The process of restoration and regeneration of the Library is being carried on under her able leadership. Additional space for expansion of offices and books was recently acquired. These areas include the former chambers of the Baltimore Judges on the Court of Appeals on the sixth floor and the former office of the Trust Clerk on the fifth.

Description of the Bar Library

The Bar Library occupies the entire west side of the fifth and sixth floors of the Court House. The main hall of the Library on the sixth floor is 125 feet long by 35 feet wide, elegantly crowned with a barrel vault ceiling. It was here in this room, devoid of shelves and furniture, that the Court House was officially opened in ceremonies attended by hundreds of dignitaries and guests at noon on Monday, January 8, 1900. Today it houses the central reference desk, card catalogue and shelves containing most of the Library's collection of cases from State and Federal Courts. It is the showplace of the Court House, its design and decor exemplifying the craftsmanship of a bygone age which is today beyond duplication.

A major renovation of the Bar Library was undertaken bythe Board of Directors in 1974-75 at a cost of more than $100,000. At that time the room was thoroughly cleaned, the walls and ceiling repainted and the woodwork stripped and varnished. A reception in celebration of the newly restored Library was given there by the Board on Thursday, March 13, 1975.

The receptionist's desk greets the visitor upon entering the double doors at the Library's threshold. Aisles on both sides of the shelves pass beneath lintels supported by oaken columns. Note the beautifully carved face of Minerva, goddess of wisdom, on the frieze over the doorways in each corner of the main room. The woodwork of the shelves and wall paneling is lustrous English oak which rises to a height of fifteen feet, trimmed with a classic carved border of rosettes, laurel and egg-and-dart embellishments. Alcoves on the east side of the main room, furnished with floor lamps, parsons tables and comfortable armchairs beckon ardent scholars to quiet

study or entice weary researchers to forego their labors for a relaxing interlude.

These alcoves were formerly windows which opened on an uncovered light court to provide light and ventilation. Before this void was covered and filled to provide additional floor space during the Court House renovation of the 1950's, the rooms of the Record Office could be seen across the way from these windows. After the renovation, the Library became a veritable oven in the summer months, necessitating the installation of air conditioning in 1957.

The entire floor of the Library is covered in red wall-to-wall carpet which was laid during the most recent restoration of the rooms in 1974. The original flooring underneath is expensive parquet, which was covered in 1928 with linoleum to muffle the sound of loose pieces clicking together when people walked upon them.

Walnut reading tables in the center of the room and along the windows overlooking St. Paul Street on the west side are well-lit by attractive brass flourescent lamps trimmed with canvas shades. Some of these tables were purchased at the turn of the century and lately refinished and retopped. During the renovation of 1974, many new tables were bought. The originals can be identified by their fluted legs, contrasted with the plain legs on the new tables. Brand-new windsor chairs blend with and complement the tables.

At one time the room was illuminated by nearly 300 sixty-watt bulbs which dotted the ceiling in uniform rows of ten, bathing the room in a soft glow. While this must have created a beautiful effect, particularly at night, the light was not good enough for reading. Not only that, but replacement of burned-out bulbs required a 50-foot pole and the hands of a surgeon. In 1928, new reading lamps were purchased to supplement this unique method of lighting. Sometime during the Second World War, the ceiling lights were discontinued altogether to save electricity. The empty bulb sockets in the ceiling can yet be discerned by the careful observer.

The scrollwork and embellishments in the ceiling were originally highlighted in gold leaf, but were covered over with green paint by W.P.A. workers in 1936. Today the entire ceiling is painted white. Forty individual art glass skylights stand out against the white background of the ceiling at its zenith. They were recently removed and cleaned by artisans employed by the city.

Alcoves on the East Wall

Visitors to the Bar Library should not miss the alcoves on the east wall to which reference was previously made. A locked case in one such alcove contains rare books, including Nicholas Trott's "Laws of British Plantations in America" (1721) and Nicholas Statham's "Abridgement of Cases" (1490), the latter believed to be the first printed law book in history. Another alcove features the Joseph Collection of books on English and American history and biography, established by brother attorneys Abram C. Joseph (1894-1960) and Daniel C. Joseph (1888-1973). The area set aside for newspapers and periodicals is styled the "Welch Alcove" in memory of Boston attorney Charles Alfred Welch (1833-1908), who made a gift of $4,000 to the Library at the turn of the century.

One of the most unusual printers' marks in the Bar Library

Points of Interest

Printers' Marks

The renovation of the Bar Library during the spring and summer of 1974 focused attention upon fourteen medallions set in lunettes on the eastern and western walls of the main room. For years these emblems had gone unnoticed, painted white to blend into the white background of the walls. This condition was changed when a professional artist was commissioned to highlight the details of each design with appropriate colors. Red and blue were alternately used to accentuate the main features of each seal, while the borders of each were uniformly emblazoned in gold leaf. Patrons of the library immediately began to ask what the seals represented and how they came to be placed there.

Research has led to the conclusion that these emblems were trademarks used by some of Europe's first printers, dating from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. As the printing trade blossomed after the invention of movable type, attributed to Johann Gutenberg (1400-1468) in Mainz, Germany, printers adopted various insignia to ornament and identify their books. In an age when very few people could read, merchants in medieval guilds had long employed recognizable marks to identify goods which they produced, in much the same way that modern industry uses brand names. The use of such marks could also indicate ownership of property.

As time passed, the printers' mark also served as a copyright symbol on original works. Designs combined features of the old merchants' marks with family crests, place names and religious symbols.

Why these particular seals were chosen to ornament the Bar Library is not known. The Library was founded in 1840, the 400th anniversary of the invention of printing; but this explanation seems some-

what far-fetched. The records of Wyatt and Nolting, the architectural firm that designed the Court House, were lost in the 1904 Baltimore Fire. As late as the 1930's, no one in the firm could state who had selected these emblems, nor upon what basis the selection was made. A thorough search of the records of the Bar Library has failed to turn up a clue. All of the seals portrayed are from European cities; no English or American printers are included.

Description of printers' marks—
Eastern wall

Servanius

The first seal to greet the visitor upon entering the library is that of Claudius Servanius, an early printer whose career spanned the years from 1553 to 1573. Because he lived and worked in the French city of Lyons, he chose the symbol of the lion as his identifying mark.

Fust and Schoeffer

Johann Fust (or Faust) and Peter Schoeffer were the immediate successors of Gutenberg at Mainz, Germany. Fust was a goldsmith who had been Gutenberg's financial backer until he demanded his money back and ultimately acquired Gutenberg's printing press and equipment in a lawsuit. Peter Schoeffer was a skilled printer in Gutenberg's shop when he married Fust's daughter.

The mark of Fust and Schoeffer was the first printers' mark, published in a 1462 edition of the so-called Mainz Psalter of 1457, only the third printed book in history and the first ever to bear a date. The mark consists of two shields suspended from the branch of a tree. Portrayed on each shield are printers' rules: those on the left shield are joined in the form of a cross while the rules on the right form a 45° angle with two stars on either side. The cross on the left shield looks suspiciously like a swastika and has been so described by some authors. The dual-shield design was copied by many early printers who followed Fust and Schoeffer.

The firm was responsible for introducing printing to the people of Paris. It was there that Johann Fust died on February 27, 1466, probably of the plague, while on a business trip to sell printed Bibles. Schoeffer continued the business alone until his own death in late 1502 or early 1503.

Wolf

Georges Wolf was a Parisian printer and bookseller whose working period covered the years from 1489 to 1500. His mark portrayed here is from a book published in 1494 and is in the form known as the "orb and four". The "orb" symbolized the world while the "four" is derived from earlier merchants' marks signifying either the Christian cross, the numeral "4" (regarded in mystical circles as the perfect number), or the letter Delta, fourth letter in the Greek alphabet. The design has been traced to Roman times when it represented Mercury, patron deity of merchants.

Whatever the symbolism of the "orb and four," Wolf was the first printer in Paris to use it. Included in the design is the name "WOLF," printed as an anagram.

Jucundus

Jacobus Jucundus of Stratsbourg dedicated his career as a printer to the promotion of the arts. His motto was "Musae, noster amor dulcesque ante omnia musae," which translated means

"The Muses, our love, and sweet beyond anything, the Muses." His whimsical and highly original emblem, which dates from the year 1531, featured a goose playing a violin.

Balet

Pierre Balet published books at Lyons from 1515 to 1527. The fleur-de-lis was one of several symbols which he used during his career.

Lambert

Jean Lambert was a printer and bookseller at Paris from 1493 to 1514. The seal portrayed here dates from 1493 and was the first of several he used to identify his work. It is an intricate design, featuring a large capital letter "A" superimposed upon a heart, coupled with other strange figures including a cross turned on its side, surmounted by a "W". On either side of the central plan are the cockle shells and staffs of Saint James, symbolic in olden times of a religious pilgrimage. The original emblem included on its border the phrase "Hope in God," printed in French, together with the name of the printer.

Turnes

The last seal on the east side of the library, identified by the name "Turnes" is probably that of the sixteenth century printer, Jean de Tournes, founder of a dynasty of printers in the city of Lyons. He was a master printer in that city when Lyons was the flourishing center of law book production. During the period of his career from 1542 to 1564 he established a name for himself as the finest printer in Lyons and perhaps all of Europe. Included in his catalogue of books were many Italian literary masterpieces; he wrote a foreword to his edition of the works of Petrarch published in 1545.

The design of the seal attributed to de Tournes is of unknown origin. The motto quoted on the border which encircles the raised triangle in the center, "Nescit labi virtus" means "Virtue knows no fall." The same phrase was used by the printer Lilius P. Jerome of Venice in 1560.

Description of printers' marks—
Western wall

Vorsterman

Willem Vorsterman printed and sold books in Antwerp, Belgium from 1511 to 1542. His seal, which dates from 1517, features a two-headed eagle surmounted by an imperial crown. The original printed version also included the official crest of the city of Antwerp on the eagle's breast.

The eagle was the symbol of high-minded thought and also the Holy Spirit; the double-headed eagle was a symbol of omnipotence and may also have represented the mythical Roc, the giant bird of the Arabian Nights.

Gruninger

Johann Gruninger, also known as Johannes Reinhard of Gruningen, was a printer and bookseller whose career spanned a period from 1483 to 1529. He came to Strasbourg, Alsace-Lorraine from Basel at the end of 1482. Gruninger was the first printer in Strasbourg to use a mark, employing four different signets throughout his working period. Among the books he printed was "Cosmographie Introductio" in 1509, in which the name "America" appeared for the first time. He was notorious for his poor spelling and the great number of typographical errors that occur in his books.

Gruninger's seal, composed of an orb and cross, was the first in Germany to employ the fleur-de-lis.

Moderne

Jacques Francois Giunta, also known as Jacques Moderne or Jacobus Modernus (1487-1546), was a great publisher of popular works written in the vernacular. His career was centered in Venice and Lyons. His emblem was the fleur-de-lis, first used by him in a book printed in 1544. At that time, the fleur-de-lis was the symbol of Renaissance Florence, where his uncles had an established printing concern; it had not yet become the Lily of France.

Aldus

Aldus Manutius, the Latinized form of Aldo Manuccio (1450-1515), was the most famous printer in Italy, regarded second only in historical importance to the great Gutenberg himself. To Aldus is attributed the printing of the first pocket-sized books, popularization of the great classics, the first use of punctuation in printing, and the creation of italic as opposed to Roman type.

The speed of the dolphin and the weight of the anchor symbolized his motto of "Festina lente"—"Slow but sure," or "Make haste slowly." The design is believed to have originated with the Emperor Augustus and was used on medals minted in the time of Vespasian and Domitian. It was first used by Aldus in a book printed in his native Venice in 1502. He wrote: "I can surely affirm that I have as my constant companions the dolphin and the anchor. I have accomplished much by holding fast and much by pressing on."

At his death, Aldus was close to financial ruin, but he left a legacy of printed books whose craftsmanship and beauty have seldom been equalled.

Levet

The seal of Pierre Levet, Parisian printer and bookseller from 1485 to 1502 is one of the earliest French printers' marks and only the second to originate at Paris, dating from 1486. The trademark is composed of a monogram of the printer's initials within a heart surmounted by a cross. The overall design is a variation of the "orb and cross;" the heart is used variously as a symbol of charity and Christ's passion.

Belot

Jean Belot was a Swiss printer and bookseller who plied his trade first in Lausanne in 1491 and later at Geneva from 1495 to 1512. His insignia dates from 1493 and includes his initials in its design.

Julien

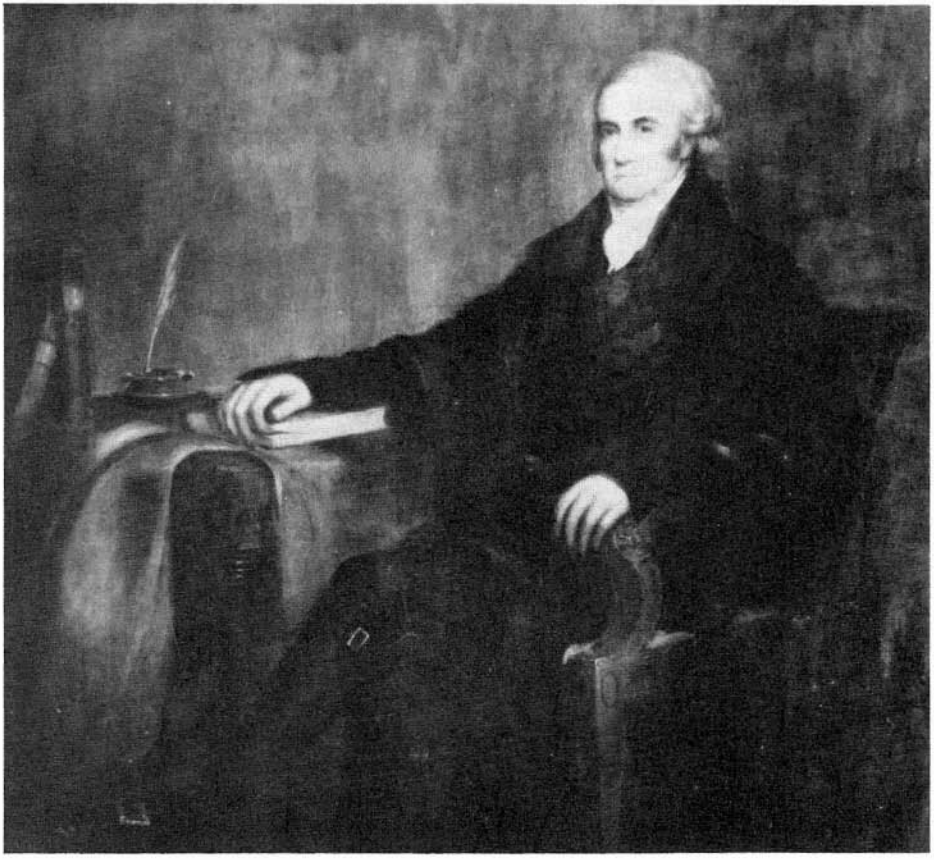
The mark of Parisian printer Guillaume Julien dates from 1562 and features a star topped by a crown, symbolizing friendship and kindness. Julien's motto was "Nil Deus hac nobis majus concessit in usus" which means "God has granted us nothing of greater use than this."

Portraits in the Bar Library Collection

Over the many years of its existence, the Bar Library has come into possession of a number of paintings of famous judges and lawyers, some of which are on display in the Library and throughout the Court House. These include likenesses of William Gwynn (1775-1854), John Johnson, Jr. (1798-1856), Reverdy Johnson (1796-1876), Arthur Machen, Sr. (1827-1915), Luther Martin (1744?-1826), and Roger B. Taney (1777-1864).

The Lost Portrait of Chief Justice John Marshall

A large, full-length portrait of John Marshall (1755-1835), seated in an armchair at a table and dressed in the robes of the Chief Justice of the United States, was the very first portrait in the Library collection. It is mentioned in the minutes of the first meeting of the Bar Library Company held in the old Court House on Monday, March 30, 1840:



The Lost Portrait of Chief Justice Marshall

Before the meeting proceeded to the consideration of the business for which it was convened, Mr. [James Mason] Campbell stated that upon a former occasion the Bar purchased from Mr. Wattles a painting of Chief Justice Marshall, which was now in the Masonic Hall and could not be obtained without the action of the Bar in general meeting; and he therefore offered the following resolution which was passed: Resolved, *That a committee of seven be appointed by the chair to procure the Portrait of Chief Justice Marshall, belonging to the Bar, from the Masonic Hall, where it is now deposited and to cause the same to be transported to, and placed in the Court House.*

The "Mr. Wattles" referred to in the minutes was probably the artist James L. Wattles, originally from Wilmington, Delaware, who is known to have lived and worked in Baltimore from 1829 to 1854.

At the time of the resolution quoted above, the Masonic Hall stood on the east side of St. Paul Street just above Fayette and housed the United States Circuit Court in Baltimore. The portrait may have been hung in the federal courtroom on the first floor. Since there was no organized Bar in 1840, the meeting on March 30th which was called for the purpose of founding the Bar Library, was a unique occasion when many of the attorneys in the city were gathered together in one place. It was a most opportune moment to elicit their approval for the retrieval of the Marshall portrait from the federal court.

At the next meeting of the Bar on April 4, 1840, at which time the constitution of the Bar Library was presented and ratified, the following item was noted in the minutes:

Mr. Campbell, from the committee to which the subject has been referred, reported that the painting of Chief Justice Marshall was now in his possession, and would be brought to the Court House in pursuance of the resolution upon that subject.

A room in the Court House next door to the County Courtroom was made available to the Bar Library. It was there amid the first books owned by the Library that the portrait was hung until sometime in the late 1850's. Then, Judge Z. Collins Lee, who presided in the Superior Court until his death in 1859, requested that the Marshall portrait and several others owned by the Library be displayed in his courtroom. The directors of the Library responded to his request, convinced that the portraits could not be shown to their best advantage in the cramped reading room. The portrait of John Marshall remained in the Superior Courtroom for forty years until 1895 when it was taken down and stored while the old Court House was razed to make way for the construction of the new.

When the courts convened in the present building on January 8, 1900, the portrait of John Marshall gazed down from the walls of the Superior Court No. 2. It was photographed by J. H. Schaefer & Son in 1938 at the request of then-Supreme Bench Clerk and later Judge Joseph R. Byrnes. Copies of the photograph were sent to the Frick Art Reference Library in New York and to Dr. J. Hall Pleasants, whose survey of historic portraiture is now in the Maryland Historical Society. In 1943, the

Marshall portrait was loaned to the Walters Art Gallery for display. It was reportedly insured for $50,000 at the time of shipping. Soon after it was returned to the Court House.

In the early 1950's, work was commenced to reconstruct and renovate the Court House. The portrait was again taken down, this time to be put away in a side room for safe-keeping while construction work was proceeding.

One day in 1954, while storing ladders in the same room where the portrait was located, some maintenance men accidentally punched a large hole in the canvas. The portrait was sent to the Walters, where experts estimated that it would cost $1200 to repair the canvas. The possibility of eliminating the torn portion of the portrait by cutting it down to bust size was considered. In the end, nothing was done. Because no funds were available, the portrait was returned in its damaged state to the Court House. There it was taken to the basement, where it has since vanished without a trace, in all probability discarded. Not even the giant gilt frame survives.

Today, the only likeness of the portrait in existence is the black and white photograph made in 1938.

The Portrait of Chief Justice Taney

Portrait of Chief Justice Taney

The three-quarter length portrait of Maryland-born Chief Justice Roger Brooke Taney (1777-1864) which hangs in the Maryland Room of the Bar Library is perhaps the most valuable painting in the Court House. It depicts the subject in his robes on the bench in the Old Supreme Court chamber located in the U.S. Capitol Building. While the identity of the artist and the year of its execution were yet unknown, this author determined some years ago that the portrait could not have been painted before 1849, because it shows Taney with pen in hand writing his dissent in the Passenger Cases, sub. nom. *Smith v. Turner,* 48 U.S. (7 Howard) 283 (1849). The portion quoted on the portrait appears at page 492 of the opinion:

> *"For all the great purposes for which the Federal government was formed, we are all one people with one common country. We are all citizens of the United States."*

In the course of an extensive and much-needed restoration of this portrait completed by Peter Michaels in October, 1975, the original signature of the artist was discovered along the edge of the table in the lower right hand corner reading "M. K. KELLOGG, P.—BALTIMORE 1849." The artist, Miner Kilbourne Kellogg (1814-1889) was a famous portraitist whose subjects included Andrew Jackson, James K. Polk and Winfield Scott. His identity had been obscured for one hundred years, the signature having been painted over by well-intentioned restorers endeavoring to cover cracks on the surface of the canvas. Also hidden were highlights in the Justice's robes and details in the background of the portrait. The Chief Justice may have posed for this painting: he had blue eyes and the eyes on the portrait are blue.

The Old Moose

The moose head on the wall of the study at the south end of the Library was a gift of the law firm of Venable, Baetjer and Howard when it moved from the old to the new Mercantile Bank Building. The late Edwin G. Baetjer (1868-1945) one of the firm's founding partners, bagged the trophy on a hunting trip in Canada sometime in the late '20's or early '30's. At Christmastime, the Bar Library staff decorates the moose's antlers with ornaments.

The Horowitz Collection

The former office of the librarian north of the Maryland Room houses the 3,000-volume Horwitz Collection of legal history and philosophy. The collection is named for Orville Horwitz, (1820-1887) famous attorney and Bar Library member, whose will bequeathed the funds with which these books were purchased. They and the books in the Joseph Collection may be borrowed by members.

Orville Horwitz (1820-1887)

The Bar Library Today

With all its venerable history and deep tradition, the Bar Library is today a modern, functioning research library. The small convocation of sixty-six charter members in 1840 has swelled to a multitude of over 2000. The few shelves of books accumulated by its founders has multiplied into a magnificent collection of over 130,000 volumes, including all federal and state statutes and reported decisions, legal encyclopedias and treatises. Its collection of English cases and statutes is vast and unsurpassed. Virtually every law review published in the United States is represented in its periodical collection of more than 300 titles. It has a copy of every record and brief filed in the Maryland Courts of Appeal since 1884. Its collection of transcripts and digests of famous English and American trials is rare and impressive.

The Library has survived and flourished by keeping pace with changing developments in the law and advances in technology. Sponsorship of film and lecture programs for its members is but one example. Another is the use of microfilm, which has been accepted as a standard component of the Library's services. Copying machines save patrons valuable time and ink. The board of directors recently ushered in the computer age when it voted to introduce such a system into the Library's arsenal of research tools. Soon to become operational on a limited scale, the computer may well revolutionize legal scholarship and practice.

From a lone law student employed as librarian in 1840, the Library staff has grown to eleven persons, including the librarian, assistant librarian, a bookkeeper, reference librarian and clerk-typist, plus six pages. The original budget of $400 in 1840 has grown to almost $350,000, which is today quite a conservative figure for funding the Library's many services.

On the eve of its 140th anniversary, the Library Company of the Baltimore Bar continues to fulfill the enduring purpose expressed by its founders on that long ago day in 1840: "to provide the Bench and Bar of Baltimore with the necessary legal resources for the successful practice of law."

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Enoch Pratt Free Library—page 4
Frick Art Reference Library—page 22

Presidents of the Library Company of the Baltimore Bar

1. John Van Lear McMahon 1840-1861
2. George William Brown 1861-1874
3. Arthur W. Machen, Sr. 1874-1915
4. J. S. T. Waters 1915-1916
5. G. W. S. Musgrave 1916-1917
6. J. S. T. Waters 1917-1921
7. Shirley Carter 1921-1928
8. Walter H. Buck 1928-1930
9. Charles C. Wallace 1930-1947
10. John D. Alexander 1947-1959
11. Norman P. Ramsey 1959-1962
12. Melvin J. Sykes 1962-1964
13. Arthur W. Machen, Jr. 1964-1966
14. Fred E. Weisgal 1966-1967
15. Robert L. Karwacki 1967-1968
16. George T. Tyler 1968-1969
17. Shale D. Stiller 1969-1970
18. Russell R. Reno, Jr. 1970-1971
19. George T. Tyler 1971-1973
20. Robert J. Thieblot 1973-1975
21. George W. Liebmann 1975-1977
22. Lewis A. Noonberg 1977-