

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PHO 673 820

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED MAY 1 1979  
DATE ENTERED 14 1979

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1** NAME *House at*

HISTORIC

9 North Front Street

AND/OR COMMON

9 North Front Street

**LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

9 North Front Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Third

STATE

Maryland

CODE

COUNTY

Baltimore City

IND CODE

**CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

**PRESENT USE**

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER: office,

**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Mayor and City Council of Baltimore

STREET & NUMBER

City Hall, 100 N. Holliday Street

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

VICINITY OF

STATE

Maryland 21202

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Land Record Office

STREET & NUMBER

Room 610, Baltimore City Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

STATE

Maryland 21202

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT (exterior)	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This 2 1/2-story brick townhouse with 2 story rear wing is located on the east side of Front Street between Fayette Street and Baltimore Street, within the recently constructed Shot Tower Park in Baltimore City. Three bays wide and two rooms deep, the main house has a gable roof with two dormers on each side and two interior chimneys connected by a parapet at the north end. The front facade is laid in flemish bond while the gable ends (and rear wing) are laid in common bond with 5 rows of stretchers with occasional glazed bricks. On the front facade, the foundation is faced with stone, and there is a raised water table and a three-brick stringcourse. Except for the masonry, all elements have been replaced to make the building look as close to its original late 18th century **appearance** as possible. All doors and windows have flat arches. The windows on the front facade have 6/6 sash and fluted stone sills. (The original shutters will be replaced.) The cornice is boxed, and the dormers have gable returns. The roof is covered with wood shingles.

The front or west side has three windows in ~~the~~ second story, and, in the first story, two windows and a door in the south bay. The (six-panel) door with a four-light transom is reached by a flight of marble steps, several of which are **original**.

There is an entrance to the basement through a rectangular opening in the basement north bay and double iron doors flush with the sidewalk. In the basement center bay is a window with horizontal, diamond-shaped iron bars.

Because this house was originally flanked by other townhouses, both gable ends are blank.

On the east side, the back wing covers the north bay. There is a six-panel door in the first story south bay and, above that, a window at the stair landing level. In the first and second story center bays are 12/8 sash windows.

The first floor interior plan is composed of two rooms with the staircase at the back against the south wall. Originally the rooms were closed off from the entrance and stairs by a hall that ran the length of the house. Virtually none of the original trim is left on the first floor.

In the first floor west room, there is a large opening to the east room in the center of the east wall, flanked on the north by a small square opening at chairrail height. In the north wall is a brick fire-place opening.

The east room has a door to the wing in the east wall, and a fire-place in the center of the north wall.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

## PERIOD

## AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

## SPECIFIC DATES

## BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

As the sole surviving townhouse in the Shot Tower area, 9 Front Street merits attention. Extensive research has been conducted on the site to make this house an accurate representation of what was once there. Baltimore has few houses from the Federal period, although it was the city's first major building phase. Because it typifies what was once common, 9 Front Street is a valuable and irreplaceable artifact. It is further distinguished by being the home of Thurogood Smith, the second Mayor of Baltimore.

The house at 9 Front Street is one of the few remaining 18th century townhouses in Baltimore. It stands in a portion of the city known as "Old Town" or, formerly, "Jones Town" which was annexed to Baltimore in 1745 and whose settlement actually predates that of Baltimore Town.

This house was built by either John Beale Bordley (1) or Charles Torrence to whom he sold the property in 1794, (2). Since Baltimore Street was extended through the property in 1788, it would appear **logical** that this structure, which is located in the center of the lot, was constructed thereafter.

In 1802 and 1804, the Baltimore City Directory listed "Thorowgood Smith, merchant" as the occupant. Smith was the second mayor of Baltimore (1804-1808). He was a successful merchant and the owner of the "Willowbrook" estate whose oval room is now in the Baltimore Museum of Art. Smith suffered financial losses and sold "Willowbrook" just prior to the period when he occupied 9 North Front Street. (3)

In the years following Smith's occupancy, the building was owned and occupied by the heirs of Charles Torrence. In 1875, it was sold to William Suess (4) who turned it into a hotel and restaurant. Fragments of Suess' painted advertisement are still visible on the south wall. Samuel Nechamkin purchased the building from the Suess estate in 1940 (5) and thereafter the structure was used as an automobile parts shop.

In 1971, the City of Baltimore acquired this house (6) as **part** of the proposed Historical Park surrounding the Shot Tower which stands immediately north of this building. The city has entered into an agreement with the Women's Civic League which allows the League to restore the structure for use as their headquarters and a visitors' center.

The exterior restoration has been completed under supervision of Donald A. Radcliffe, AIA, partially with State funds from the Maryland Historical Trust. (Dec. 31, 1978.)  
SEE CONTINUATION SHEET # 3.

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Baltimore City Directories.  
Baltimore Tax Records.  
Baltimore City Land Records. Baltimore City Courthouse, Baltimore.

Biographical Cyclopedia of Representative Men of Baltimore and D.C.  
National Biographical Co. (Baltimore, 1879).

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #4.

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Lot size 29' x 124'

QUADRANGLE NAME Baltimore East Quadrangle

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A | 1, 8 | 3 | 6, 1 | 5, 5, 0 | 4, 3 | 5, 0 | 0, 5, 0 |

B | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

D | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

E | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

F | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

G | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

H | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #5.

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

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE Natalie Shivers, Summer Intern  
Catharine F. Black

ORGANIZATION Maryland Historical Trust

DATE August 1978/June 1973

STREET & NUMBER 21 State Circle

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN Annapolis

STATE Maryland 21401

**12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL     

STATE     

LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

4-23-79

TITLE STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Acting Charles A. ...  
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

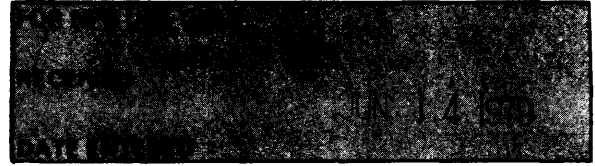
DATE 6-14-79

APPROVED Emma Jane ...  
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION  
Regional Review Coordinator

DATE 6-18-79

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**



9 North Front Street  
Baltimore City

CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland . ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

(DESCRIPTION continued)

The stairs consist of two flights and a landing, which is lighted by a window. The original railing with square balusters, a rounded rail, and round newels on square bases is still in place. Most of the original chair-rail along the stairs and around the second floor hall is intact.

On the second floor, the front room stretches across the full width of the house; the back room is narrower because of the stairhall. The stairs to the third floor are against the south wall, in the same position as the first floor staircase.

In the west room, there is a fireplace off-center in a projecting chimney breast in the north wall. The original mantel has half-columns on square bases flanking the opening, a frieze with v-shaped horizontal grooves, and blocks with depressed circles, and a molded shelf.<sup>1</sup> In the east wall, there is a six-panel door to the stairhall and a four-panel door to the east room. Both have molded trim and two-light transoms. There is a baseboard and a chairrail with a cyma reversa under the plain shelf and in the base.

In the east room, the fireplace in the north wall is flanked by closets on both sides. The fireplace in a projecting chimney breast has a simple surround with architrave trim, and the east closet has shelves. In the south wall, west of center, is a six-panel door with architrave trim to the hall. In the center of the east wall is a door to the wing. There is a beaded baseboard and a chairrail like the one in the west room, but with a beaded base.

The third floor staircase originally had the same arrangement as the main staircase, but now the second flight turns north-south. (It will be returned to the original plan.) On the third floor, there is one room and the chimney stacks join in the north wall.

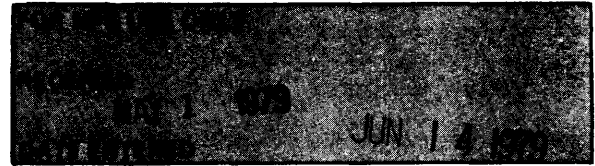
The shed-roofed, ell-shaped wing consists of two sections: the original two-story kitchen and a two-story hyphen that joins it to the house. The brick is laid in the same bond as the ends of the house with occasional glazed bricks. All windows have 6/6 sash and there is a standing seam metal roof.

The north sides of both sections are flush with the north end of the house and are blank. The south side of the hyphen has one window in each story. Inside there is one room on each floor and, at one time, there was a staircase against the north wall.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #2.

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9 North Front Street  
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CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland . ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

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(DESCRIPTION continued)

The south side of the kitchen has two windows in the second story, and, in the first story, a door in the west bay and a window in the east bay. In the east end is a small interior chimney, and there is a wood fascia board. (The corners of the second story are almost completely glazed.) The east end of the kitchen is blank; the brickwork is slightly irregular with occasional closers.

The interior has one room per floor.

In both rooms of the kitchen wing, there are fireplaces in projecting chimney breasts in the east wall.

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<sup>1</sup> According to Orin Bullock's studies.

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9 North Front Street  
Baltimore City

**CONTINUATION SHEET** Maryland . ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

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(SIGNIFICANCE continued)

- (1) John Beale Bordley, prominent member of the judiciary of Maryland, judge of the Provincial Court (1766) and Judge of Admiralty Court (1767), purchased this property from Brian Philpot (Deed: LiberDD#2 Folio 298, (1764), Hall of Records, Annapolis).
- (2) Deed: Liber WG#PP, Folio 138-140, Hall of Records, Annapolis.
- (3) Although the City Directory lists Smith at 8 N. Front Street, the Baltimore City street numbering system was changed in 1887 and #8 became #9. See page 79, Polk's City Directory (1887).
- (4) Deed: Liber GR 698 Folio 436, Baltimore City Courthouse.
- (5) Deed: Llber MLP 6058, Folio 185, Baltimore City Courthouse.
- (6) Deed: Liber RHB 2838, Folio 28, Baltimore City Courthouse.

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9 North Front Street  
Baltimore City

CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland . ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 4

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(BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES continued)

Forman, H. Chandlee. Maryland Architecture, A Short History from 1634 through the Civil War. (Cambridge, Md., 1968), p. 59.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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9 North Front Street  
Baltimore City

CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 5

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

BEGINNING for the same on the East side of Front Street at the distance of 95 feet 2-1/4 inches or thereabouts Northerly from the corner formed by the intersection of the North side of Baltimore Street as condemned and widened under Ordinance No. 150 of the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore approved October 15, 1890 and the East side of Front Street said place of beginning being also at the Northwest corner of the whole lot which by Deed dated July 8, 1974 and recorded among the Land Records of Baltimore City in Liber W.G. No. PP folio 132 was granted and conveyed by John Beale Bradley to Charles Torrance and running thence South 17 degrees East binding on the East side of Front Street 29 feet 5 inches or thereabouts to lot No. 9 in the Return of the Commissioners appointed to make division of the Estate of Charles Torrance and Elizabeth Torrance, his wife recorded in the Office of the Register of Wills for Baltimore City in proceeding Liber D.M.P. No. 16 folio 380 thence North 73 degrees East 124 feet thence North 17 degrees West 29 feet 5 inches or thereabouts and thence South 73 degrees West 124 feet to the place of beginning, and being all of lot No. 8 in the division of the Real Estate of Charles Torrance and wife recorded as aforesaid. The improvements thereon being known as No. 9 North Front Street.

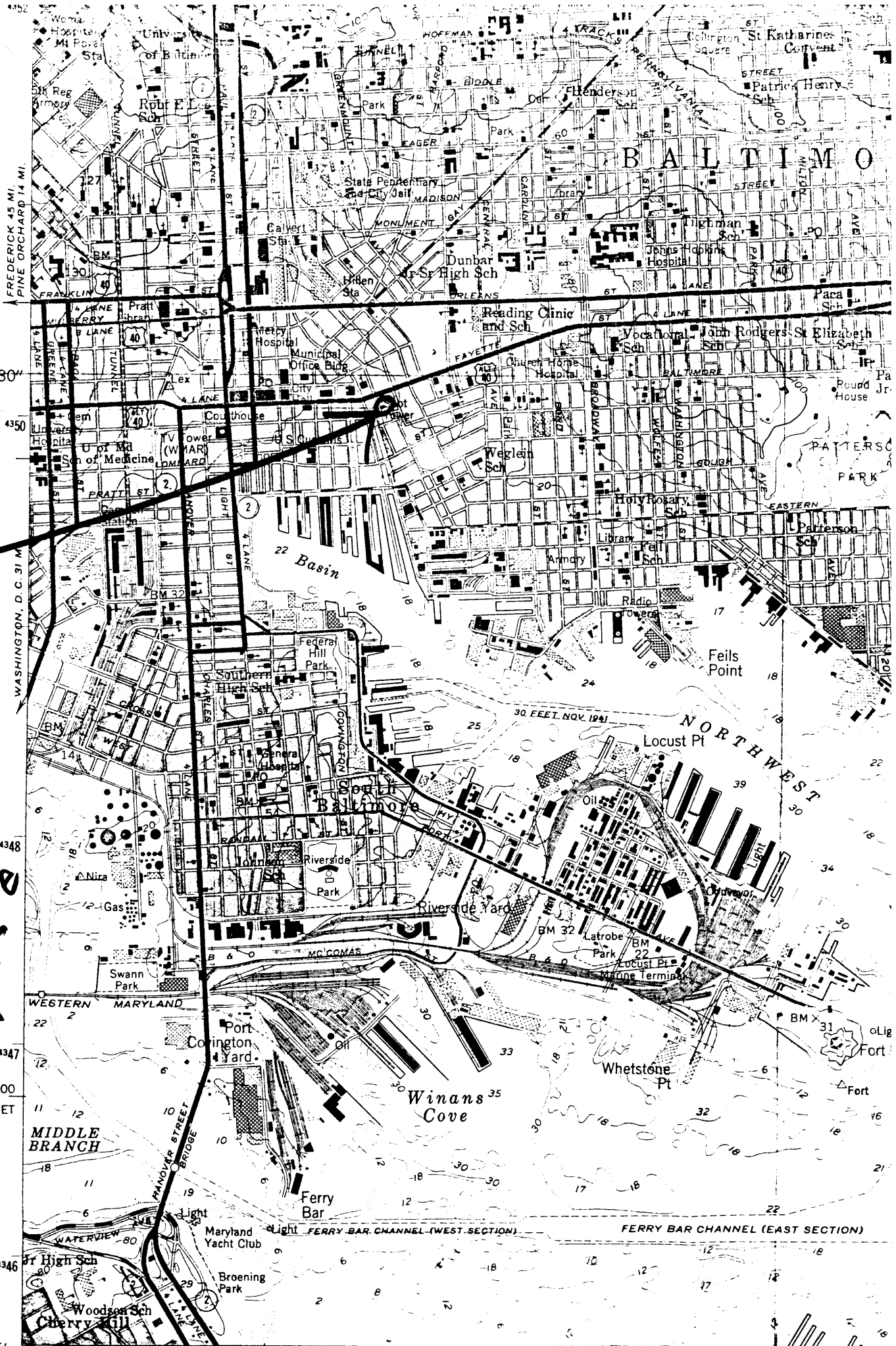
Fee simple deed vested in the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore City, Municiple Corporation of the State of Maryland.

Two deeds dated September 30, 1971, recorded among the Land Records of Baltimore City. Deed #1 RHB2858/19, Deed #2 2838/28. Subject to an unrecorded lease from the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore City to the Women's Civic League, March 1, 1972.

RECEIVED

MAY 1 1979

NATIONAL REGISTER



Front Street  
 17°30'  
 4350  
 9th Front Street

Baltimore East Quad

39°15' 76°37'30" GLEN BURNIE 61 MI 910 000 FEET 362 363 35'

Mapped by the Army Map Service