

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

| | | |
|------------------|----------------|-------------|
| STATE: | Maryland | |
| COUNTY: | Baltimore City | |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | | |
| ENTRY NUMBER | •••• | DATE |
| | | FEB 11 1972 |

1. NAME

COMMON: First Unitarian Church

AND/OR HISTORIC: First Independent Christian Church

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: 2-12 West Franklin Street

CITY OR TOWN: Baltimore

| | | | |
|----------|------|----------------|------|
| STATE | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
| Maryland | 24 | Baltimore City | 510 |

3. CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY (Check One) | OWNERSHIP | STATUS | ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress | Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate) | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment | <input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum | <input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: Board of Trustees, First Unitarian Church of Baltimore (Universalist & Unitarian)

STREET AND NUMBER: 2-12 West Franklin Street

CITY OR TOWN: Baltimore

STATE: Maryland

CODE: 24

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Land Record Office of the Superior Court of Baltimore City

STREET AND NUMBER: Room 610, Baltimore City Courthouse, St. Paul & Fayette Sts.

CITY OR TOWN: Baltimore

STATE: Maryland

CODE: 24

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic American Buildings Survey (see continuation sheet)

DATE OF SURVEY: January 1964 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Washington

STATE: Dist. of Columbia

CODE: 11

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Maryland COUNTY: Baltimore City ENTRY NUMBER ... DATE FEB 11 1972 FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

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| CONDITION | (Check One) | | | | | |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Fair | <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated | <input type="checkbox"/> Ruins | <input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed |
| | (Check One) | | | (Check One) | | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Altered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered | <input type="checkbox"/> Moved | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site | | |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The First Unitarian Church of Baltimore is located on the northwest corner of Charles and Franklin Streets; its main entrance is on the southern, or Franklin Street, side.

The church is essentially a domed cube 108 feet long (north-south) and 78 feet wide (east-west). The dome is 55 feet in diameter. The walls are of brick and stone masonry covered with stucco.

Ornamenting the church's facade is a shallow, pedimented portico carried by an arcade formed of three arches on Tuscan columns. The pediment is decorated with a terra-cotta figure representing The Angel of Truth appearing from clouds and a sunburst. The figure holds a scroll containing a Greek inscription which in translation says: "To the only God." The original sculpture was the work of Antonia Capellano. The sculpture now in the pediment (June, 1971) is a copy of the Capellano piece made in 1959-60 by Baltimore sculptor Henry Berge. The head of the original is preserved in the church's Heritage Room.

The porch formed beneath the portico is vaulted, and it contains five doors of bronzed wood. Tuscan pilasters stand between the doors. The entablature of the portico continues, unbroken, entirely around the building. Thus, on the side and rear walls, the entablature assumes the nature of a cornice and gives the building the illusion of being of two stories: a main, or ground, story and an attic. A secondary cornice and large rectangular recesses form the only decorations on the attic planes.

Below the attic, each side (i.e., east and west) wall of the "main story" contains three tall stained glass windows in arched niches. The windows on the west side are blind. Each side also contains, located between the group of three windows and the southern corner, a recessed arched niche of the same proportions as the windows.

In plan, the auditorium of the church is a square with 53-foot sides. Originally the underside of the dome that crowns the church was visible from the pews beneath. Because of accoustical deficiencies, however, a corrective barrel vault was installed in 1893 by the well-known Baltimore architect J. E. Sperry. The vault, coffered and decorated with elaborate rosettes, now totally obscures the original dome.

The interior space is divided (north-south) into a nave and two side aisles by arcades that echo the arched windows of the exterior. The nave, or central aisle leads north to a raised, 15-foot-deep chancel which has an arched, coffered

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SIGNIFICANCE

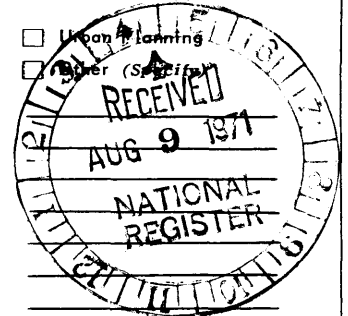
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1817-1818**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Unitarian |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | |



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

Although it was not the first American church to adopt a litany which was Unitarian in nature--Boston's King's Chapel claims that distinction--Baltimore's First Unitarian Church played a highly significant role in the development of Unitarianism in the United States, for it was there that American Unitarianism was given its first formal definition.

That definition came in a sermon delivered on May 5, 1819, by the Reverend Dr. William Ellery Channing, of Boston, on the occasion of the ordination of the Baltimore congregation's first minister, Jared Sparks. In his landmark sermon--known to historians as "The Baltimore Sermon"--Dr. Channing proclaimed the principles which gave early Unitarian thought in this country cohesiveness and a basis from which to grow and evolve. Among the essential principles he espoused were these: the Bible is a book written for men, and it can be understood by the exercise of reason; Jesus Christ is distinct from the one God; God is infinitely good, kind and benevolent; and, all virtue has its foundations in man's own morality, conscience and sense of duty.

The Baltimore church was in its infancy when Dr. Channing delivered his sermon. It had been founded only in 1817 by a group of prominent Baltimoreans (many of them of New England extraction) who had been inspired to their action by three sermons preached in October, 1816, by James Freeman, the Boston minister who had converted that city's Episcopal King's Chapel to Unitarianism in 1784.

Mr. Freeman delivered his three Baltimore addresses in a dance hall. His Baltimore followers were determined that a far more suitable and impressive edifice would house the church which they established as a result of those addresses. To accomplish their purposes they commissioned the French emigré Maximilian Godefroy (c.1765-c.1845). Godefroy had designed Baltimore's St. Mary's Seminary Chapel (1806), one of the first Gothic Revival churches in the country, and the highly eclectic Battle Monument, which honors the memory of the men who defended Baltimore at the Battle of North Point

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Researchers:

William Morgan, Maryland Historical Trust, Annapolis, Maryland.

Romaine Somerville, Catherine Black, Commission for Historic and Architectural Preservation, 402 City Hall, Baltimore, Maryland.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

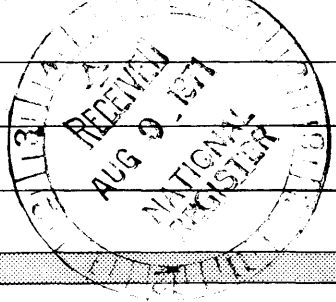
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

| LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY | | | O R | LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES | | |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------|---|-------------------------|--|
| CORNER | LATITUDE | LONGITUDE | | LATITUDE | LONGITUDE | |
| | Degrees Minutes Seconds | Degrees Minutes Seconds | | Degrees Minutes Seconds | Degrees Minutes Seconds | |
| NW | ° ' " | ° ' " | | 39° 17' 43" | 76° 36' 58.1" | |
| NE | ° ' " | ° ' " | | | | |
| SE | ° ' " | ° ' " | | | | |
| SW | ° ' " | ° ' " | | | | |

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **0.4 acre**

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

| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|--------|------|--------|------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Mrs. Preston Parish, Keeper of the Maryland Register

ORGANIZATION: **Maryland Historical Trust** DATE: **June 21, 1971**

STREET AND NUMBER:
94 College Avenue

CITY OR TOWN: **Annapolis** STATE: **Maryland** CODE: **24**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:</p> <p>National <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Name <u>Orlando Ridout IV</u> Orlando Ridout IV</p> <p>Title <u>State Liaison Officer for Maryland</u></p> <p>Date <u>JUN 21 1971</u></p> | <p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.</p> <p><u>Ernst A. Connolly</u> Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation</p> <p>Date <u>FEB 11 1972</u></p> <p>ATTEST:</p> <p><u>William H. Hunt</u> Keeper of The National Register</p> <p>Date <u>JAN 20 1972</u></p> |
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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FEB 11 1972

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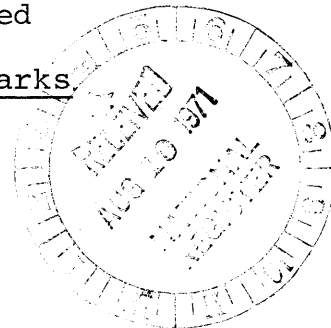
First Unitarian Church

#6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS continued

Maryland Register of historic sites and landmarks

State 1969

Maryland Historical Trust
94 College Avenue
Annapolis, Maryland 21401 Code: 24



Commission for Historic and Architectural Preservation

Local 1969

Commission for Historic & Architectural Preservation
402 City Hall
Baltimore, Maryland 21201 Code: 24

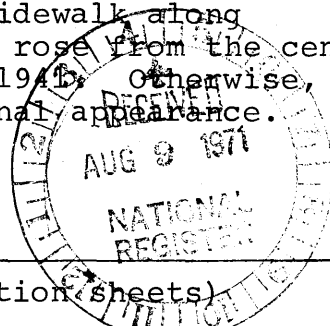
#7. DESCRIPTION continued

ceiling. Over the altar is a mosaic of the Last Supper, designed in 1879 by Frederick Wilson, of New York City, and manufactured by the Tiffany Glass Decorating Company. Above it is an arched stained-glass window, also made by Tiffany.

An organ loft is against the opposite (south) wall. It is supported by columns similar to those that carry the entrance portico.

The present altar is the original pulpit--designed, as were most of the other original furnishings, by Maximilian Godefroy, architect of the building. It is of Verd Antique and Carrara marble. Its cast lead and bronze ornaments were executed by Capellano.

An iron fence of Baltimore manufacture delineates a shallow entrance court between the portico and the sidewalk along Franklin Street. The cupola that originally rose from the center of the dome was destroyed during a storm in 1942. Otherwise, the exterior of the church retains its original appearance.



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First Unitarian Church

#8. SIGNIFICANCE continued

in 1814. During his earliest years in Baltimore, he was employed as instructor of civil and military architecture and fine arts at St. Mary's. According to Richard Hubbard Howland and Eleanor Patterson Spencer, his position at that institution marks him as the first professional teacher of architecture in Baltimore, perhaps in the United States.

As did the work of his contemporary and friend, B. H. Latrobe, Godefroy's Unitarian Church represented a departure from the late Georgian and early Neo-Classical styles of architecture familiar to Baltimoreans of the first decades of the 19th century. Instead of dealing with surfaces and applied ornament, Godefroy concerned himself with mass and the interplay of geometric forms--the cube and the hemisphere in the case of the First Unitarian Church, which is considered his most important building. His spatial concepts have been likened by Robert L. Alexander to those of the French visionary architect Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, and his style--especially as exemplified by the First Unitarian Church--has been cited by Howland and Spencer as contributing, with the works of Latrobe, Robert Mills and Robert Cary Long, Sr., to a ". . . Baltimore architecture during the first third of the nineteenth century [which] has a definite and individual look that emphasizes the geometric aspects of solids and voids, rather than decoration."¹

The only non-architectural decoration on the exterior is a reproduction of a terra cotta sculpture of The Angel of Truth originally executed by Antonio Capellano, sculptor to Spanish kings Charles IV and Joseph Napoleon. The sculpture crowns the pediment of the entrance portico.

The interior of the church is ornamented with a mosaic portraying the Last Supper. Manufactured by The Tiffany Glass Decorating Company, of New York, it contains 64,640 pieces of Favrile glass. It was installed in 1897. The nearly semi-circular window above the altar and the six stained-glass side windows were also products of the Tiffany studios. Together they represent an artistic style and taste far different from, yet compatible with, those prevalent during Godefroy's time.

¹Richard H. Howland and Eleanor P. Spencer, The Architecture of Baltimore A Pictorial History, (Baltimore: 1953), 43-44.

Form 10-300a
(July 1969)UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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First Unitarian Church

#8. SIGNIFICANCE continued

The congregation of First Unitarian has included many prominent Baltimoreans. Among them were: Henry Payson (1762-1845), financier, member of the city council and judge of the Orphans' Court; John W. McCulloh, cashier of the Maryland branch of the Bank of the United States and one of the principals in the Supreme Court case McCulloh vs. Maryland; Tobias Watkins, M. D., Surgeon General of the United States Navy; Charles Joseph Bonaparte, great-nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte, Secretary of the Navy, and Attorney General of the United States from 1906 to 1908; Enoch Pratt (1808-1896), philanthropist; and Rembrandt Peale (1778-1860), painter and founder of the Baltimore Gas Lighting Company.

Since its earliest years the First Unitarian Church has taken the concerns of the Baltimore community as its own. Some examples of its early (but since defunct) programs of social service include: sponsorship of The Boys' Guild, begun in 1888 as an institution to provide training for underprivileged boys; operation of The Industrial School for Girls (begun in 1874) and Channing House (begun in 1905), a settlement house located in a crowded working area of the city.

In 1855 the First Unitarian Church announced its intentions to remain in the inner city and refurbished its building. It has since joined with other nearby downtown churches to form an inner city ministerium that is still (June, 1971) in existence.

#9. REFERENCES continued

Researchers continued:

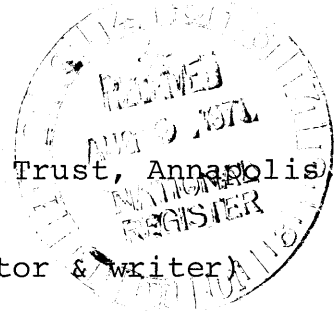
Nancy Miller, Historian, Maryland Historical Trust, Annapolis, Maryland, April 1970.

James F. Waesche, Baltimore, Maryland. (Editor & writer)

Sources:

Alexander, Robert L. "Architecture and Aristocracy: The Cosmopolitan Style of Latrobe and Godefroy." Maryland Historical Magazine. LVI (September 1961), 229-243.

Craven, Wayne. Sculpture in America. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1968.



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First Unitarian Church

#9. REFERENCES continued

- Davidson, Carolina V. "Comments on the Text [of Godefroy's resume of his life and work]." Maryland Historical Magazine. XXIX (September 1934), 200-212.
- Dictionary of American Biography. 20 vols. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929-1935, II, IV, VII, XV, XVII.
- Funk, Rebecca, et. al. A Heritage to Hold in Fee 1817-1917 First Unitarian Church of Baltimore (Universalist and Unitarian). Baltimore: Garramond Press, 1962.
- Hamlin, Talbot. Greek Revival Architecture in America: Being an Account of Important Trends in American Architecture and American Life prior to the War Between the States. (reprint). New York: Dover, 1944.
- Hart, Richard H. Enoch Pratt The Story of a Plain Man. Baltimore: Enoch Pratt Free Library, 1935.
- History of Baltimore, Maryland, from Its Founding as a Town to the Current Year 1729-1898 . . . [Baltimore]: S. B. Nelson, 1898.
- Hitchcock, Henry-Russell. Architecture, Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. [Baltimore]: Penguin Books, Inc., 1958.
- Howland, Richard Hubbard and Eleanor Patterson Spencer. The Architecture of Baltimore A Pictorial History. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1953.
- Godefroy, Maximilian. [Resume of his life and his work]. Maryland Historical Magazine. XXIX (September 1934), 175-199. Maryland Historical Society.
- Quinn, Dorothy MacKay. "Maximilian Godefroy and Eliza Godefroy." Maryland Historical Magazine. LII (March 1957), 1-34. Maryland Historical Society.
- Scharf, J. Thomas. The Chronicles of Baltimore . . . Baltimore: Turnbull Brothers, 1874.
- Scharf, J. Thomas. History of Baltimore City and County From the Earliest Period to the Present Day: . . . Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1881.

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First Unitarian Church

#9. REFERENCES continued

Toker, Franklin. "James O'Donnell: An Irish Georgian in America." Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians. XXIX (May 1970), 132-140.

Waesche, James F. "City's Contribution to Unitarianism." The Sun (Baltimore), February 5, 1967.

Young, William (ed.). Dictionary of American Artists, Sculptors and Engravers From the Beginning to the Turn of the Twentieth Century. (reprint) New York: Arno Press 1968.





BALTIMORE EAST QUADRANGLE
7.5 minute map
scale 1" = 20,000'
photorevised 1960

UNITARIAN CHURCH

Basin

NORTHWEST

Winans Cove

MIDDLE BRANCH

FERRY BAR CHANNEL (EAST SECTION)

FERRY BAR CHANNEL (WEST SECTION)

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