

5 - Fort Mc Henry
(Landmark)

Fort McHenry
Locust Point (at the Eastern end of Fort Ave.)

Fort McHenry has national significance as the objective of the unsuccessful British naval bombardment, September 12, 1814, which inspired Francis Scott Key to write "The Star Spangled Banner." In 1776, Fort Whetstone, an 18-gun fort with exterior batteries was the original fortification strategically located on the same site. During the Revolutionary War, it deterred an earlier group of British cruisers operating in the Chesapeake from attacking the Port of Baltimore and its shipbuilding complex.

A new star-shaped fort was built in the 1790s with funds contributed by both the citizens of Baltimore and the Federal Government, enlarged and strengthened and renamed Fort McHenry in honor of Baltimorean, James McHenry, Secretary to George Washington during the Revolution and U. S. Secretary of War from 1796 to 1800. Decreasing in strategic importance after its dramatic role of proving that determined militia could stand against professional naval and military units in 1814, Fort McHenry was used as the mobilizing station for the Maryland Volunteer Artillery during the Mexican War, and as an uncomfortable prisoner-of-war camp during the Civil War. Many prominent Baltimoreans, suspected of Southern sympathies were held there by the Union Army.

A 43-acre area, including the Fort and its bastions, known as Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine was established in 1925 as a National Park and, by Act of Congress in 1939 named a National Monument and Historic Shrine. It was, therefore, automatically placed on the Register of Historic Places established in 1966. Presidential Proclamation No. 2795 of July 2, 1948 enunciates President Truman's decision that the Fort McHenry flag shall never be lowered, but shall fly night and day to commemorate its triumphant survival of the night 1,500 British shots fell around it.