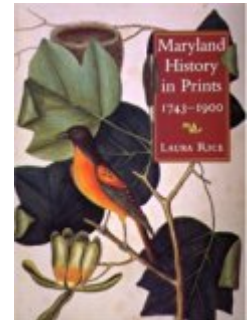


Laura Rice. *Maryland History in Prints, 1743-1900.* Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 2002. xii + 404 pp. \$75.00, cloth, ISBN 978-0-938420-71-2.



Reviewed by Cynthia H. Requardt

Published on H-Maryland (April, 2003)

New Maryland Print Book Is a Treat

The long-awaited Maryland print book has arrived and what a visual treat it is. This volume beautifully reproduces 327 engravings and lithographs from the Maryland Historical Society's extensive collection and combines these images with detailed descriptions of the historical events that spawned the prints. The prints originally appeared in a variety of ways including illustrations in books, broadsides, sheet music, advertisements, and political cartoons. Each provides a unique glimpse into events in Maryland's history and to the artist's perception of those events. These prints convey information to people beyond the written word, and unlocking the meaning of these prints provides insight into Maryland's past. This book has brought together in one convenient place a wealth of primary source material, and Rice's descriptions provide the keys to understanding them.

Maryland History in Prints is a handsome book combining high-quality reproductions of the prints with informative descriptions of the events surrounding their production. Rice was fortunate

to have Lois McCauley's meticulously researched book on which to base her own descriptions.[1] Nearly two-thirds of the prints in this book appeared in McCauley's *Maryland Historical Prints, 1752-1889*, and Rice used much from McCauley's text. It is curious, then, that Rice did not give more credit to the earlier work nor list it in her bibliography.

The prints are organized chronologically, which allows the reader to see the development of printmaking while reinforcing the historical developments taking place around the prints. There are five chronological divisions in the book that attempt to align the state's history with the prints. The first three are settlement to the War of 1812, the early national period up to the Civil War, and the Civil War in Maryland. The final two parts cover the period 1880 to 1900. Each part begins with an introductory essay to create a context for the prints that follow, and the essays are strongest when discussing the development of the print-making industry. Rice's summaries of Maryland history are less successful. The essays swing from broad generalizations to detailed discussions of

individual prints, information which is often repeated in the description accompanying the print later in the book. The scope of the essays often does not mesh with the prints that follow. For example, the essay for part 4 discusses the brewing industry while the brewing company prints are found in part 5.

These inconsistencies coupled with various technical errors give the impression that the book was rushed into production before a thorough editorial review, and the lapses make the book harder to use. Most worrisome is the bibliography. People intrigued by a print and looking for further information will find it difficult to follow Rice's research, because the abbreviated titles cited after a print's description often are not included in the bibliography. For example, Rice several times cited Walter Lord in describing prints about the bombardment of Fort McHenry in 1814 (pp. 44-45, 66), but the full title of his work is not given in the bibliography.[2] This type of omission was not uncommon. While a skilled researcher may be able to find Lord's *The Dawn's Early Light* from the short title given, citations such as "Edmund G. Lind's record book, vertical file" (p. 215) will be much harder to locate with no full citation in the bibliography to indicate what library owns it.

The strength of the book lies in the gorgeous reproduction of the prints themselves. Many of the original prints chosen were printed in color, and it is useful to the understanding of the prints to have them reproduced in color. The generous size of the pages allows for details from some prints to be enlarged which assists in reading the prints. It is too bad that one of the prints (Robert Mills's original design for the Washington Monument, p. 59) appears in the book backwards.

Maryland History in Prints, 1743-1900 is a wonderful addition to the pictorial record of Maryland's history. The editorial lapses notwithstanding, readers must commend Rice and the

Maryland Historical Society for updating and enlarging the McCauley classic.

Notes

[1]. Lois B. McCauley, *Maryland Historical Prints, 1752-1889: A Selection from the Robert G. Merrick Collection, Maryland Historical Society, and Other Maryland Collections* (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1975).

[2]. Walter Lord, *The Dawn's Early Light* (New York: Norton, 1972).

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Citation: Cynthia H. Requardt. Review of Rice, Laura. *Maryland History in Prints, 1743-1900*. H-Maryland, H-Net Reviews. April, 2003.

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