

Revolutionary Period

Fort Whetstone Flag

Date: 1776

Seven red and six white stripes. Eight stars in a circle, one centered, one in each corner of the canton. [R18]

This flag flew over Fort Whetstone in 1777. The name of Fort Whetstone was changed to Fort McHenry in 1798. Originally an earthen star shaped fort was located on Whetstone Point. Fort McHenry and many additions to the fort occupy that site now.



The site was an excellent location. It was located far enough from Baltimore to provide protection without endangering the city, and it is surrounded on three sides by water. Constructing the fort on Whetstone Point meant that enemy ships sailing into Baltimore would have to pass the fort first.

The Revolutionary War ended without an attack on Baltimore. In 1798, a French engineer, Jean Foncin, was selected to plan a new fort on Whetstone Point.

James McHenry, the Secretary of War under President George Washington, was instrumental in providing support for its construction. The fort was renamed "Fort McHenry" in his honor.

The fort became famous in the War of 1812 when the British attacked on September, 1814. For 25 hours the British bombarded Fort McHenry from ships outside of Baltimore harbor in the Patapsco River. The fort's defenders held firm, and Baltimore was saved. This valiant defense of the fort by 1,000 Americans inspired Francis Scott Key to write "The Star-Spangled Banner."

R18



*Wilfred C. Clausen Historic Flag Collection
Hanover Area Historical Society*