

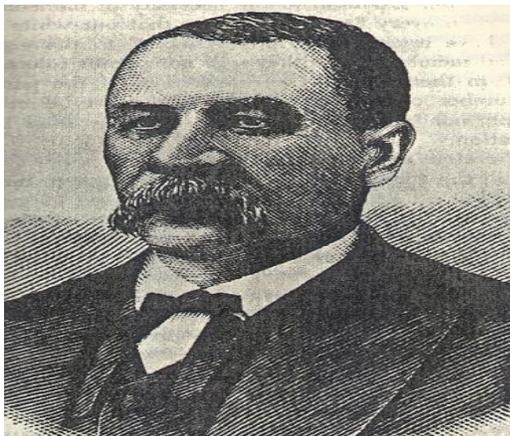
Fells Point

Fells Point is a point of interest in Baltimore City. Being part of the hub of tourism being the Inner Harbor has made it into a bustling neighborhood for all your attractions. Fells Point wasn't always a tourist attraction though.



Fells Point is significant as one of the original three settlements that merged to form the beginnings of Baltimore City. The area is directly linked to early maritime trade, which was to Baltimore's growth and development. Many of Baltimore's famed Clipper Ships were built and operated out of Fells Point. They gained prominence by capturing and sinking British warships in the War of 1812. The maritime character of the district still exists with the small gabled roof residences that housed local seamen, ship's carpenters, sailmakers, and artisans.

A large part of the bay was shipmaking, and in the 19th century a lot of the ship makers were African American. One of these prominent shipmakers was Isaac Myers. He was one of the top caulkers in Fells Point. During the Civil War, he worked as a shipping clerk for a grocer until he was ousted from caulking because of White Caulkers' protests. In response he started a Union. The Union made a company that bought a railroad and shipyard. Within months the cooperative employed 300 black caulkers and received several government contracts. Ultimately it employed a number of white workers as well.



The success of Myers's union in Baltimore encouraged black caulkers in other cities to organize. It also caught the attention of the National Labor Union (NLU) Executive Committee, the largest labor organization in the nation. Meanwhile, Myers was elected president of the (Colored) National Labor Union, the first organization of its type in U.S. history. Expecting the full support of the NLU, he soon learned that the predominately white organization insisted that black union members abandon the Republican Party and join the Labor Reform Party. Most black caulkers refused and were not invited back to the NLU causing the CNLU to fail and collapse with no allies. Myers never gained much more success.

References:

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