

TITLE

ROGER B. TANEY MONUMENT,
1887 copy of 1872 original

LOCATION

North square

SCULPTOR

William Henry Rinehart (1825-1874)

MEDIUM

Bronze

DONOR

William T. Walters

Roger Brooke Taney (1777-1864) was appointed chief justice of the Supreme Court in 1836 and held that position for nearly three decades. His most well known opinion is the one he wrote for the Dred Scott decision in 1854. Prior to being appointed to the Court, he served as attorney general of Maryland, U.S. attorney general, and secretary of the treasury under President Andrew Jackson.

This seated portrait of Taney was a gift to the city by William T. Walters. Taney is shown in his court robe with a scroll in his right hand, which is on his right leg, and his left hand resting on a volume labeled "THE CONSTITUTION." Walters commissioned the original statue of Taney for the front lawn of the State House in Annapolis in 1872, and he had this replica made for Mount Vernon Place in 1887. The siting has always been explained by family connections. Immediately to the east of the statue, where the Mount Vernon Place United Methodist Church is today, was the home of one of John Eager Howard's sons, who was married to a daughter of Francis Scott Key. Key was a frequent visitor to the home and actually died there. Taney and Key were brothers-in-law, fellow lawyers, and good friends. Indeed it is through Taney that we have the original handwritten version of Key's "Star-Spangled Banner" (now in the collection of the Maryland Historical Society) and the original details of its writing.

The sculptor, William Henry Rinehart, was an equally famous Marylander. He was born in Union Bridge, Maryland, in what is now Carroll County, the fifth of eight sons. His father was a prosperous farmer. Rinehart showed little interest in farming or in school, so his father sent him to work in the stone quarry on the edge of their farm. Rinehart enjoyed working with stone and was soon making tombstones and mantelpieces. At the age of 21 he left home and settled in Baltimore, where he worked for Baughman and Bevan, the most important marble company in the city. His natural talent was soon recognized, and he was given the firm's more important commissions. During his early years in Baltimore, in the late 1840s, Rinehart began taking evening courses at the Maryland Institute for the Promotion of the Mechanic Arts (today the Maryland Institute College of Art). His earliest appearance as a sculptor was in 1851, when he exhibited a relief that was awarded a gold medal in an exhibition at the Maryland Institute. It was also around this time that he came to the attention of William Walters. Rinehart was sent by his firm to Walters' home to repair a mantle, and legend has it that Walters recognized Rinehart's talent immediately. Whether or not that story is true, what is true is that Walters became Rinehart's chief patron and close friend.

In 1855 Rinehart made his first trip to Italy, living and studying in Florence. After his return to Baltimore, Rinehart received many important commissions. In 1858, with financial assistance from Walters, Rinehart returned to Italy, this time to Rome, where he set up a studio and began creating the sculptures that can be seen today in the Walters Art Museum, the Peabody Institute, Greenmount Cemetery, and Mount Vernon Place. He died in Rome in 1874, shortly after returning from a trip to Maryland, where he had been present at the dedication of the Taney statue in Annapolis.

Rinehart never married. In his will he left sums of money to each of his brothers, and he left the remainder of his estate, about \$38,000, to two friends, Walters and Benjamin Newcomer, to use "for the promotion of a more highly cultivated taste for art among the people of Maryland and for assisting young men in the study of sculpture who desire to make it their profession."



Walters and Newcomer invested the money, and by 1891, when they conveyed the money to the trustees of the Peabody Institute, the sum was approximately \$95,000. The Rinehart Fund Committee was established at the Peabody Institute, and Walters was made chair, serving along with Daniel Coit Gilman, the first president of the Johns Hopkins University.

The question of how to use this large sum of money remained unsettled. The committee members decided to begin by funding scholarships for study in Paris or Rome. Each scholarship paid \$1,000 annually and was tenable for four years. The first one was awarded in 1895.

Then the idea of establishing a school of sculpture began to evolve. The proposed school of sculpture was to be attached to the Maryland Institute, which had operated successfully in the city since 1826. In 1896 the Rinehart School of Sculpture opened in the Center Market building of the Maryland Institute, and it has operated ever since, graduating 314 students by its hundredth anniversary.

The Rinehart Fund was also used for annual prizes to the most promising students in sculpture, for commissions to young sculptors just returning from abroad, and for purchases and donations to the city of pieces of sculpture. One notable gift to the city by the Rinehart Fund Committee was *On the Trail*, by Edward Berge, in 1916 (K13). More than one-third of all of Baltimore's outdoor sculpture has been created by directors or alumni of the Rinehart School of Sculpture.

Except for this monument and the bust of William Walters on the Charles Street facade of the Walters Art Museum (C17), no other monuments by Rinehart are sited outdoors in Baltimore that are not in cemeteries, which this guide does not cover. To see more outdoor sculpture by Rinehart, visit Greenmount Cemetery. His work is also in the collections of the Walters Art Museum, the Baltimore Museum of Art, the Peabody Institute, the Maryland Institute College of Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the National Gallery in Washington, and the Brooklyn Museum, among others.