

federal constitution, have been gradually extinguished by the progress of the experiment; and the Maryland constitution is daily deriving, from the salutary operation of this part of it, a reputation in which it will probably not be rivalled by that of any State in the Union."

Federal law establishes the date for the electors to meet in their respective states. The law now requires that the meeting be held on the first Monday after the second Wednesday in December; the place is designated by the state legislature. The number of electors corresponds to that states' representation in the Congress of the United States.

Maryland's first electors — six in number — met in the State House on February 4, 1789, to cast their votes for George Washington for President and for Robert Hanson Harrison, a native son, for Vice President. Before so doing they qualified by taking the oath prescribed by the Constitution and by declaring their belief in the Christian religion. The oath follows: ". . . do swear that we will to the best of our skill and judgment diligently and faithfully, without partiality or prejudice execute the office of Elector for President and Vice President of the United States according to the Constitution and Laws of the State of Maryland and since the (4th) fourth day of July, in the year Eighteen hundred and fifty-one have not in any manner violated the provisions of the present, or of the late Constitution in relation to bribery of voters, or preventing legal voters, or procuring illegal votes to be given, for President and Vice President as aforesaid, and that we will not directly or indirectly receive the profits or any part of the profits of any other true Allegiance, to the State of Maryland, and support the Constitution and Laws thereof, and that we will bear true allegiance to the United States of America, and support, protect, and defend the Constitution, Laws, and Government thereof, as the Supreme Law of the land, and Law or Ordinance of this or any other State to the contrary notwithstanding, and that we have never directly or indirectly by word, act or deed, given any aid, comfort or encouragement to those in rebellion against the United States, or the lawful authorities thereof, but that we have been truly and Loyally on the side of the United States against those in armed rebellion against the United States, and we do further swear, that we will to the best of our abilities protect and defend, the Union of the United States, and not allow the same to be broken up and desolved, or the Government thereof to be destroyed under any circumstances if in our power to prevent it, and that we will at all times discountenance and oppose all political combinations having for their object such dissolution or distruction."

State laws vary on the appointment of electors, who are generally chosen by the political parties or by the candidates. In Maryland, the designated electors for the candidate who receives the most popular votes attend the College of Electors.

Until 1936, the names of the candidates for electors appeared on the ballot. Under this system, one voted for the electors and one could choose some of each of the major parties. This led to problems as split electoral votes occurred. This happened in Maryland in 1804, 1808, 1812, 1824, 1828 and 1832. For example, Theodore Roosevelt carried the State in 1904 by 51 votes; seven Democrats and one Republican were elected with the result that Roosevelt received only one electoral vote with seven going to Alton B. Parker. Again, in 1908, Marylanders picked William Howard Taft over William Jennings Bryan, yet voted for two Taft electors and six representing the Democratic candidate, Bryan. Today Maryland law requires electors to vote for the candidate receiving most of the popular vote.

The formation of political parties coincided with the emergence of the electoral college system. Before the federal constitution was adopted, there were no political parties; the idea was anathema to the Founding Fathers who were influenced by the European, anti-party theme and regarded parties as a threat to State Government. George Washington warned against the system in his farewell address in 1796 as did Jefferson who suggested, "if I could not go to heaven *but with a party*, I would not go there at all." Monroe referred to political parties as "the curse of the country."

The Founding Fathers had dim understanding of what was involved. Delegates to the constitutional convention and members of Congress ensured the roll for parties in govern-