

## MARYLAND EMANCIPATION

November 1, 1864

**The Civil War of 1861 – 1864 was one of the most divisive events in the history of the United States of America. Maryland’s emancipation followed those of the District of Columbia in April 1862 and in the rebellious states of the Confederacy in January of 1863. Maryland newspapers expressed both anti and pro-slavery positions in articles and editorials across this border state. The popular return of the Constitutional election illustrates the sharp division existing in November of 1864 when Maryland’s history officially changed its course forever. Robert I. Cottom, Jr. and Mary Ellen Hayward’s, *A HOUSE DIVIDED*, states,**

***“The document that emerged did so over the protests of rural proslavery delegates. It radically changed the balance of power in Maryland by basing representation in the House of Delegates not on total population as rural, heavily slaveholding districts wished, but on the size of the white population. It also instituted a strict loyalty oath-election judges had the discretion to decide whether a voter was taking it in good faith-and disqualified from voting or holding office any who had supported the Confederacy in deed or in speech. Families who sent clothing, food, or letters to their sons in Confederate service were thereby disqualified. The convention then brazenly applied those powers to the ratification process itself. In the fall of 1864, with troops voting heavily and as many as two-thirds of Maryland voters disqualified for disloyalty, the Constitution of 1864 passed.”***

**The Maryland Constitution of 1864 existed until 1867 when a new version of the constitution was ratified. Amendments to the 1867 constitution have continued into our lifetimes, the most recent occurred in 2002. The Maryland State Archives houses all constitutions for the State of Maryland, electronic copies of which are available from The Archives of Maryland Online website, <http://www.mdarchives.state.md.us/megafile/msa/speccol/sc2900/sc2908/html/conventions5.html>.**