

Some weeks ago I read a most interesting article in a national magazine, *Industrial Development and Manufacturers Record*, about this southern end of the vast super-city that—as planners and others keep reminding us—extends from Boston to Washington.

I should like to quote from a foreword to that article:

“Astronomers have recently discovered,” it says, “that many a large star previously thought to be a single body is actually a pair of stars revolving around each other. We will not speculate on the origin of this phenomenon, but we do know something about an earthly counterpart.”

The earthly counterpart referred to was the cities of Washington and Baltimore and their surrounding areas.

To go on with the quotation:

“Baltimore and Washington,” it says, “started out with completely independent existences but have grown so big that they exert an extremely strong magnetic attraction on each other.”

The author of the piece had flown over the area at night, just as most of us here have, I suspect, and he was deeply moved by the parorama that spread out before his eyes. “Midway between Baltimore and Washington,” he writes, “you can look down and see practically all of both cities spread out before you. The centers of the two great masses of light are about 40 miles apart, but the straggling lights on their outskirts are already intertwined.”

This aerial picture of the intertwining lights in an accurate overall picture of the interrelationship of the two metropolitan areas, but an examination of the details affords an even better opportunity to understand these twin stars among cities and the gravitational force they exert upon one another. It is true, as this author suggests, that until comparatively recently Washington and Baltimore were inclined to ignore one another, emphasizing their dissimilarities, frequently with some contempt, and giving little recognition to the fact that they were in many respects interdependent and complementary. But all of that changed when the massive growth of the federal government caused the national capital to overspill the boundaries of the District of Columbia and spread out into the surrounding areas of Maryland and Virginia.

Already the Bureau of the Census unites Baltimore, Anne Arundel, Howard and Carroll Counties with Baltimore City into the Baltimore metropolitan area, with a population in 1960 of more than 1,700,000.