

## INTRODUCTION

PATRICIA M. VANORNY

### HISTORY

As the one-hundredth anniversary of the Constitution of 1867 approached, many Marylanders advocated the need to undertake a major revision.<sup>1</sup> The attorney general in an opinion dated February 9, 1965, advised that the General Assembly had the authority to call a convention to revise the constitution or to submit to the electorate a referendum on holding a convention. Thus, Governor J. Millard Tawes recommended that the General Assembly provide for a commission to study the constitution, recommend changes, and plan for a convention. Although the General Assembly failed to pass a resolution on the matter, Governor Tawes on June 16, 1965, established the Constitutional Convention Commission by executive order and appointed twenty-seven persons as members. On July 1 he designated former Governor William Preston Lane, Jr., as honorary chairman and H. Vernon Eney as chairman.

After reviewing the 1867 constitution, the commission in September 1965 recommended a complete revision and the convening of a convention to undertake the revision. At its 1966 session the General Assembly passed and the governor signed bills calling for a constitutional convention, subject to referendum by the electorate.

While these events were taking place, the commission continued to review proposals for constitutional revision by conducting studies and holding public meetings and hearings during 1965 and 1966. During the first few months of 1967 the commission concentrated on composing a draft constitution and accompanying commentary, which were printed in an interim report dated May 26, 1967. The commission's final report was produced on August 25, 1967.

In order to implement the work of the commission, a staff was assembled and members were organized into ten committees. The chairman was the chief executive and presiding officer. Administrative duties were delegated to an executive director. Other full-time personnel included secretaries and an assistant to the director. Reporters were employed to assist the committees in preparing drafts, minutes, and reports. Research assistants were used to conduct research projects.

Seven of the convention committees were assigned specific topics and sections of the constitution. The Committee on Elective Franchise and Declaration of Rights considered sections of the constitution dealing with elections and voting rights and most sections of the Declaration of Rights. The Committee on the Executive Department considered sections of the Declaration of Rights and constitution dealing with offices of the executive branch of state government. The Committee on the Judici-

<sup>1</sup> The following history of the Constitutional Convention Commission is based on information from its records and the letter of transmittal and introduction in the *Report of the Constitutional Convention Commission* (Annapolis: Constitutional Convention Commission, 1967). The history of the Constitutional Convention of 1967 is based partially on information from its records. Most of the material, however, is taken from Sherrod E. East, *Records of the Constitutional Convention of Maryland, 1967-1968: A Descriptive Inventory*. His expertly written *Inventory* aptly describes the work and organization of the convention, the duties and responsibilities of the officers and committees, and the contents of record series.