

Maryland was now a self-governed republic, and the Convention emphasized the fact by issuing a formal Declaration of Independence on the third of July.

The Convention had always recognized itself to be a merely provisional government, uniting functions and powers which in a free State should be kept distinct. It therefore drew up a Bill of Rights and Constitution, to be submitted to the people, and then abdicated its authority by a simple adjournment, leaving the directions of affairs in the hands of the Council of Safety, and thus the wisest and most patriotic body that ever governed Maryland ceased to exist.

The Constitution provided for a government consisting of a Governor and Council, a legislative body consisting of a Senate and House of Delegates, and other inferior executive officers. It was adopted by the people and ratified at the elections. Thomas Johnson, the first elected Governor, was inaugurated in March, 1777, and the Council of Safety dissolved itself. Maryland thus became a sovereign and independent State, but she did not enter the Confederation until 1781, when she came in as the thirteenth and last State.

After the successful close of the war, General Washington resigned his commission to Congress in the Senate Chamber of the State House, at Annapolis, on December 22, 1783.

Maryland ratified the Federal Constitution, April 28, 1787, and entered the Federal Union, being the eighth State in the ratification of that instrument.

In 1791 Maryland ceded to the United States the present District of Columbia, to be the permanent seat of the Federal Government.

Important changes were made by the Legislature in the Organic law of the State in the year 1837. Amongst these changes was the election of the Governor by the people.

The second Constitution of the State was reported and adopted by the Convention which assembled at Annapolis November 4, 1850, and which Constitution was ratified by the people on the first Wednesday of June, 1851.

The third Constitution of the State was reported and adopted by the Convention which assembled at Annapolis April 27, 1864, and was ratified by the people on the 12th and 13th of October, 1864. The fourth and present Constitution of the State, was formed and adopted by the Convention which assembled at Annapolis, May 8, 1867, and ratified by the people, September 18, 1867.