

MARYLAND'S NICKNAMES. Maryland is known as both the Old Line State and the Free State.

According to some historians, Gen. George Washington bestowed the name "Old Line State" and thereby associated Maryland with its regular line troops who served courageously in many Revolutionary War battles.

The nickname "Free State" was created by Hamilton Owens, editor of the Baltimore *Sun*. In 1923, Georgia Congressman William D. Upshaw, a firm supporter of Prohibition, denounced Maryland as a traitor to the Union for refusing to pass a State enforcement act. Mr. Owens thereupon wrote a mock-serious editorial entitled "The Maryland Free State," arguing that Maryland should secede from the Union rather than prohibit the sale of liquor. The irony in the editorial was subtle, and Mr. Owens decided not to print it. However, he popularized the nickname in later editorials.

POET LAUREATE OF MARYLAND.

Maria B. Coker, 1959–1962
Vincent Godfrey Burns, 1962–1979
Lucille Clifton, 1979–1985
Reed Whittemore, 1985–

In the 18th century, Ebenezer Cook, author of *The Sot-weed Factor: Or, A Voyage to Maryland* (1708), styled himself Poet Laureate. Maryland did not have an official poet, however, until 1959. In that year, the General Assembly authorized the Governor to appoint a citizen of the State as Poet Laureate of Maryland (Chapter 178, Acts of 1959; Code State Government Article, sec. 13–306). Since 1979 the incumbent has been appointed to a three-year term.

STATE THEATERS. By Chapter 1003, Acts of 1978, Center Stage in Baltimore was designated the State Theater of Maryland. By the same act Olney Theatre in Montgomery County was designated as the State summer theater of Maryland (Code State Government Article, sec. 13–309).