

delegate votes. The surprising emergence of Wendell L. Wilkie as the Republican nominee was the political story of the year. A Democrat until 1938, the utilities lawyer and businessman had never held public office before starting his campaign for the Presidency. Articulate, self-confident, successful and with an engaging personality, Wilkie came to the national scene with no political baggage and with the ability to attract support from a broad spectrum of groups. His supporters filled the balconies of the Philadelphia convention helping to nudge the delegates to his sixth ballot nomination. The Maryland delegation switched to the Wilkie bandwagon on the 3rd ballot after having supported Dewey who, in accordance with Maryland law, was entitled to the state's votes as the primary election winner.²¹

The general election campaign was to prove too difficult for the energetic but politically inexperienced Wilkie. The Republican candidate conducted a whirlwind tour around the nation covering 34 states and 30,000 miles with an estimated 12,000,000 people seeing him or hearing one of his 540 speeches. However, his uninformed reactions to the President's policies on the War in Europe and his undeniable tie to the business community prevented him from making further headway against the Roosevelt coalition.

Roosevelt, acting presidential in the face of worldwide crises, had his Cabinet and Congressional allies lead the attack on the Republicans. The President saved his best campaign efforts for the closing weeks culminating in a series of five radio speeches which secured his unprecedented third term. Although Wilkie improved upon the popular vote totals and percentages of Hoover and Landon, Roosevelt maintained a commanding lead in electoral votes 449 to 82.²²

The Maryland general election results demonstrated a weakening of Roosevelt support and the Wilkie appeal to independent Democrats. His personal charisma, the novelty of a non-officeholder as a presidential candidate and developing anti-Roosevelt sentiment had led to unusual bipartisan support for Wilkie in Maryland.²³ The President's percentage of the popular vote fell 5.81 points to 56.54 percent. Wilkie won traditionally Republican Garrett and the rural areas of Carroll, Charles, Harford and Talbot Counties with the President's margin falling below 52 percent in six other counties. Without the imminent threat of war the election year of 1940 may have been

1940 ELECTION SUMMARY

Candidate (Party)	Popular Vote		Electoral Vote	
	Md.	U.S.	Md.	U.S.
John W. Aiken (L)	657	14,883		
Earl R. Browder (C)	1,274	48,548		
Franklin D. Roosevelt (D)	384,546	27,263,448	8	449
Norman M. Thomas (S)	4,093	116,827		
Wendell L. Wilkie (R)	269,534	22,336,260		82