

Appendix B

Voter Registration in Maryland

The first statewide system for the registration of voters in Maryland was enacted in 1865 pursuant to the requirements of the 1864 Constitution of Maryland which also mandated a loyalty oath as a condition for participation in elections. *Laws of Maryland*, 1865, Chapter 174. Baltimore City had been employing a registration system since 1838. *Laws of Maryland*, 1837, Chapter 149.

Comprehensive revisions to the registration laws were made by the state legislature in 1882, 1896, 1910, 1939 and 1967. In 1882 the designation of race was required to be entered in revised, uniform registration books (*Laws of Maryland*, 1882, Chapter 22), which was a practice continued until the 1967 revision. *Laws of Maryland*, 1967, Chapter 392. In 1910 and 1939, the General Assembly provided for a general registration of all voters, new and previously registered. Not until 1914 were all voters required to express a party preference by participation in the initial statewide primary elections of 1912 or during the general registration of 1914 in their respective subdivisions. *Laws of Maryland*, 1911, Chapter 2. In the reform period immediately prior to 1912 party affiliation of voters was indicated in a few jurisdictions, including Baltimore City, which had held a primary election.

Because the earlier voter registration laws did not provide for the reporting of registration figures to any state agency, providing instead for the transmittal of a report to the Clerk of Court in each subdivision along with various methods of publication by newspapers, several significant gaps, and as yet unresolved questions, exist pertaining to Maryland voter registration data. For the period 1865 to 1881, no summary or complete set of registration information has been located. *The Sun Almanac*, an annual publication of the Baltimore Sunpapers, published a complete set of registration data for the years 1882 through 1914. *The Maryland Almanac*, a publication cousin of *The Sun Almanac* produced by the efforts of journalists Frank R. Kent and John W. Owens, published voter data during the period 1917 through 1929 but did not report every year and omitted the county information for most years. The *Maryland Manual*, published under the auspices of the Maryland General Assembly since 1896, first printed voter registration information in its 1926 edition. Regrettably, the voter registration information was irregularly compiled and reported in the *Maryland Manual* until after World War II.

Curiously, the major gap in Maryland voter registration information is in the period immediately preceding and after the extension of suffrage to women. Newspapers, journals and state government reports are strangely silent concerning the numbers of voters from 1920 through 1925. Data for Baltimore City is reported in *The Sunpapers* and *News American* but statewide totals were not published. It is difficult to believe