

the general ticket method where electors pledged to different parties finished among the number qualifying for the electoral college.

Starting with the 1940 election, Maryland law was modified to remove the names of the individual electors from the ballot.¹³ When a vote is now cast for a presidential candidate it is counted as a vote for all of the presidential electors pledged to that candidate on a certificate filed prior to election day. An individual elector is theoretically free to vote for a person different from the candidate to which he or she may be pledged but the possibility of a split electoral vote has been practically extinguished in Maryland and no maverick electors have emerged.¹⁴

Voting in Maryland

In the first presidential election held from January 11 to 14, 1789, the eligible voters of Maryland were those free adult males, with a one-year residency in the state and respective counties, who either owned fifty acres of land in fee simple or had personal property of a value in excess of 30 pounds current money.¹⁵ Upon arriving at the single polling place in each county the duly qualified voter had his name inscribed in a poll book beside which the name of the candidate or candidates for whom he voted would be marked after he publicly announced his choices.¹⁶

The issues of voting qualifications and ballot mechanics have been significant in Maryland's political history from the property restricted, *viva voce* voting of early presidential elections described above to the contemporary lawsuits of third party or independent candidates seeking to have their names placed on the official machine and absentee ballots.¹⁷ An attack on the property qualifications for voting gave the Democratic-Republicans of Jefferson an important political wedge against the Federalists who sought to prevent the extension of suffrage. With their eventual ascension to power in the state legislature, the property qualifications and *viva voce* method of voting were finally abolished in 1802 for state elections and in 1810 for all elections.¹⁸

However, this "universal suffrage" action did not eliminate voter discrimination in Maryland. In fact, simultaneous with the abolition of property as a requirement for voting the Maryland General Assembly added the word "white" between the words "free" and "male". The ever-increasing free black population in Maryland was therefore denied suffrage until the Fifteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified becoming effective for the statewide races in 1870.¹⁹ The potential impact of the black vote was perceived as a serious threat to certain political interests and several attempts were made in the course of Maryland's history to deny suffrage to or otherwise frustrate the black voter.²⁰ Woman's suffrage was denied in Maryland until required by the Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution for the 1920 elections.²¹ And, during the Civil War, large numbers of Marylanders were disqualified from voting because of their refusal to take a "loyalty oath" or because of their southern sympathies.²²

Elimination of voice voting likewise did not prevent ballot coercion in Maryland politics. It was not until 1890 that the printing of ballots was performed under the supervision of state officials. Prior to 1890 the individual voter, candidates or political