

there was any deviation in Maryland's voting in the 1832 election, it was probably Jackson who lost as his ticket withdrew in Frederick County over the redistricting squabble.⁴²

In the 1832 election, a Marylander, William Wirt,⁴³ was the presidential candidate of the Anti-Mason Party. A former U.S. Attorney General in the Adams administration, Wirt carried the state of Vermont but had no support or votes in his native state.

1836

Although he had grown weary of his battles with Congress and was leaving the Presidency, Jackson continued his influence in the 1836 election. With his encouragement an early national convention was scheduled to assist in securing the nomination of his Vice President, the New York political genius, Martin Van Buren. The Democrats met from May 20 to 22, 1835 to confirm the choice of Van Buren who then had the advantage of conducting an 18 month general election campaign.

Continuing opposition to the Jackson administration, fragments of the extinct Federalist party and previous Adams supporters produced a new political party known as the "Whigs" to contest the Democratic nominee. The formal origin of the party in Maryland can be traced to a meeting on April 23, 1834 where a resolution forming a "State Whig Society" was adopted.⁴⁴ However, this new political entity suffered from a lack of national organization. The Whigs did not hold a convention and ran three regional candidates against Van Buren in hopes of preventing an electoral majority and thereby requiring the House of Representatives to again choose the President. In Maryland, the Whig candidate was William Henry Harrison of Ohio.

The development of more recognizable political parties and the acceptance of the principal of popular majority voting, led to a crucial change in the method of selecting Maryland's presidential electors in 1836. With a preamble noting that a majority of states awarded all of its electoral votes to the candidate winning that state, the Maryland General Assembly passed a statute on March 15, 1834 which provided that all presidential electors would be selected by all qualified voters.⁴⁵ This system made campaigning for President a statewide effort and served to strengthen party politics within Maryland.

The Maryland Democrats, recognizing that in their state the Jackson administration was disfavored, focused their campaign on the need for reform in state government rather than national issues.⁴⁶ In addition to the November presidential election, voters in Maryland were choosing electors for the State Senate in September 1836 and members of the House of Delegates in October. During the early 1830s the Democrats had been advocating the direct election of the Governor and State Senate and fairer representation in the state legislature. In the first electoral battle of 1836 a political stand-off resulted which colored the entire fall campaign.

The Democratic candidates for senate electors received more total votes than the Whigs but trailed 21 to 19 based on the county allocation system. This meant the entire State Senate could be Whigs even though the Democratic electors represented substantially more Maryland citizens. The Democrats refused to attend the electoral college meetings blocking a constitutional quorum and election of a new State Senate.