

The Whig national convention was also sensitive to the political implications engendered from westward expansion and the slavery issue. The elder statesman Clay lost another bid for the Presidency with the delegates opting for the combination of General Zachary Taylor of Virginia for President and Millard Fillmore of New York for Vice President. Taylor, married to the former Margaret Mackall Smith of Calvert County,⁵⁶ has been the choice of Maryland Whigs who had previously urged his nomination at a state convention held in Baltimore.⁵⁷

In the campaign of 1848, the Virginia General continued the Whig success in Maryland presidential balloting by defeating Cass, 37,704 to 34,531. This was almost five percentage points ahead of Taylor's winning national plurality. The Democrats, however, did carry Baltimore City and four counties (Allegany, Baltimore, Caroline and Talbot) by relatively small margins but the most subdivisions since 1832. This election marked the first time an organized third party gathered any votes for presidential elector in Maryland. Having been twice rebuked by the Democratic party which he previously headed, Martin Van Buren accepted the nomination of the Free Soil Party at its convention in Buffalo, New York in 1848. The new Van Buren candidacy attracted a scattering of votes in 10 counties and Baltimore City for a meager total of 128 signaling an ignoble end for the career of one of the country's master politicians.

1848 ELECTION SUMMARY

Candidate (Party)	Popular Vote		Electoral Vote	
	Md.	U.S.	Md.	U.S.
Lewis Cass (D)	34,531	1,223,460		127
Zachary Taylor (W)	37,704	1,361,393	8	163
Martin Van Buren (FS)	128	291,501		

1852

The presidential election of 1852 initiated a disintegration of the existing national political parties and foreshadowed the national fight which would ripen into civil war. The Congressional Compromise of 1850 had not resolved the slavery issue as both sides felt they had lost.⁵⁸ With 15 slave states and 16 free states now in the union, virtually every national issue was cast in the light of this economic, social and political struggle.

Both the Democrat and Whig National Conventions were held in Baltimore and produced protracted internal party disputes. The Democrats met first from June 1-5, 1852 and required two days and 49 ballots to determine the Democratic presidential nominee. Franklin Pierce of New Hampshire, a former member of Congress who lacked identification with any party faction, was the Democrats' compromise candidate.⁵⁹

The Whigs then met from June 16 to 21, 1852 with its presiding officer being Maryland Congressman John G. Chapman of Charles County. After 53 ballots and three days of