

Know-Nothings came in the Western Maryland cities of Hagerstown and Cumberland in 1854. However, it was the capture of the Baltimore municipal elections later that year, and the state legislature in 1855, which cemented its statewide influence. The Know-Nothing party fell as quickly from power as it was acquired, primarily because of its association with election day violence and fraud. Voting by "force and intimidation" was the rule in the 1850s, earning Baltimore the reputation of "Mobtown."<sup>3</sup>

After a coalition of reform groups had defeated the Know-Nothings in various parts of the state in 1859 and in the special Baltimore City elections of 1860,<sup>4</sup> the nation and state were plunging dangerously toward the Civil War as the 1860 presidential campaign was launched. Maryland's split political personality was evident in the voting returns of this era and the 1860 post-election anguish over whether to join the southern states or remain in the union. Intense pressure was placed on Governor Thomas Hicks, elected as a Know-Nothing in 1857 for a four-year term, to call a special session of the legislature to resolve Maryland's posture in the national crisis. Hicks delayed taking this step as Maryland's political leaders worked in vain for various attempts at national reconciliation.<sup>5</sup> Ultimately, while Marylanders debated and vacillated, national events drew the battle lines and the practicality of, and desire for, remaining in the union prevailed.<sup>6</sup>

During the Civil War, Maryland was a state held hostage by its own conflicting attitudes and feelings as well as controlled by a Federal government fighting for its survival. As one of four slave holding states not to secede from the union,<sup>7</sup> Maryland's geographic position in surrounding the nation's capital of Washington, DC, created unique burdens and concerns. The first casualties of the Civil War were in Baltimore on April 19, 1861 resulting from a riotous protest over the moving of Federal troops through the City.<sup>8</sup> Governor Hicks' desire to keep Maryland in a position of "armed neutrality" was overwhelmed by the Federal necessity to control the area surrounding Washington. Throughout the war opponents to the Federal administration were frequently arrested and incarcerated without formal charges or judicial hearing.<sup>9</sup> Newspapers were closed or suppressed.<sup>10</sup> Political opposition was silenced by force, intimidation and legislative changes.<sup>11</sup> The Federal authorities were, however, not without justification in the questioning of Maryland's loyalty insofar as the state was over 34 percent below its quotas for raising Federal troops<sup>12</sup> and several prominent Maryland political leaders fought with and aided the Confederacy.<sup>13</sup>

Symbolizing the Federal presence in Maryland politics during the war years were the various restrictions and influences on voting. By the state and local elections in the fall of 1861, the Federal presence had been clearly demonstrated by the summary arrest of 27 members of the Maryland General Assembly in September for their "southern leanings."<sup>14</sup> Federal troops were stationed near some polling places for the November elections and some arrests were made on election day leading to Democratic claims of a "trampled ballot."<sup>15</sup> In the statewide elections of 1863, the military commander over Maryland issued an order authorizing Federal troops "the right to support judges of election in requiring an oath of allegiance to the Union States as the test of citizenship of anyone whose vote may be challenged."<sup>16</sup> Federal soldiers at many polling places led to cries of an "election by sword," as the Unionists enhanced their political control in