

1864

The presidential election of 1864 in Maryland paled in comparison to the other political activity and events during that year. The Unionists had solidified their control of state government in the state legislative races in 1863 and had provided for legitimizing the smothering of southern-leaning Democratic votes by adoption of the 1864 State Constitution which contained a loyalty requirement.³⁵ The Constitution also abolished the institution of slavery in Maryland.³⁶ After the defeat of the Southern Democrat Breckinridge in 1860 and the secession of the southern states, the Democratic party was branded as "treasonous" and "disloyal." For the state and local races of 1861 the party ran under a "states' rights" banner and concentrated most of its efforts during the war years on county contests and organization.³⁷

At a national convention held in Baltimore on June 7-8, 1864 Abraham Lincoln was renominated for President. Perhaps in deference to the convention setting and with concern about national unity, the Republican label was avoided and the unobtrusive banner of "Union party" employed in its place.³⁸ In an attempt at national reconciliation, a Tennessee Democrat, Andrew Johnson, was accorded the vice presidential nomination.

The Democrats held their convention in Chicago and believed the progress of the war to that time in August, 1864 gave them an opportunity to win the Presidency. General George B. McClellan of New Jersey received the nomination. However, the choice of McClellan was an anathema and bitter pill for Marylanders because the former commander was associated with the orders authorizing the arrest of Maryland legislators and the intervention of Union troops and loyalty oaths in Maryland elections. The Maryland delegates to the national convention favored Horatio Seymour and returned from Chicago with little enthusiasm for the national ticket.

With the Unionists in control of the state's election machinery and the Democrats still weakened, Abraham Lincoln received Maryland's seven electoral votes in 1864.³⁹ But with many Marylanders absent, disfranchised or not participating the total vote in Maryland decreased by almost 20,000 from 1860, a decline of 21.31 percent. Lincoln would not have won in Maryland without the Unionist margin of 12,301 in Baltimore City as the Democrats carried 13 of the 21 counties. In the Southern Maryland counties of Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's, Lincoln lost by margins of almost 10 to one. The lower Eastern Shore (Dorchester, Somerset and Wicomico) favored the Democrat McClellan over Lincoln by better than two to one. It was therefore a reluctant political calm and a

1864 ELECTION SUMMARY

Candidate (Party)	Popular Vote		Electoral Vote	
	Md.	U.S.	Md.	U.S.
Abraham Lincoln (R)	40,169	2,218,388	7	212
George B. McClellan (D)	32,739	1,812,807		21