

consciously and subconsciously, county-oriented in their view of state and local government, and in their self-identification.

Maryland is presently composed of 23 counties varying in size from 213 square miles (Calvert County) to 663 square miles (Frederick County) and in population from 16,695 in Kent County to 665,071 in Prince George's County.³⁸ There are metropolitan counties and rural counties, seashore counties and mountain counties, poor counties and rich counties, industrial counties and farming counties. Standing in contrast to the counties is the state's 24th political subdivision—Baltimore City. Originally incorporated as a municipality in 1796 and completely severed from Baltimore County in 1851, Baltimore City has been and remains a vital and controversial element in the character in Maryland because of its economic importance and political independence. Its 786,775 residents in a land area of 80 square miles comprise the largest subdivision population whose collective votes have often determined statewide election results. This rich diversity in the state's basic political units means that election results cannot be studied and viewed solely on a statewide basis if the dynamics and meaning of any given election or series of elections are to be correctly understood. Analysis and conclusions are subject to distortions which can occur by utilizing a single geographic perspective.³⁹

Five Maryland counties were formed subsequent to the first presidential elections. Allegany County was created on December 25, 1789, almost one year after the first presidential election.⁴⁰ Carroll County, formed in 1837 from parts of Baltimore and Frederick Counties,⁴¹ first voted as a separate unit in 1840. Howard County, derived from Anne Arundel County, first voted in 1852.⁴² Wicomico County, created with the ratification of the 1867 state constitution from parts of Somerset and Worcester Counties, initially voted in 1868. Garrett County, formerly the western part of Allegany County, was created in 1872⁴³ and voted initially in 1876. As a result of the creation of these subdivisions, the vote totals and census information for the parent counties may show significant, but illusory, variances in voter turnout and election totals. The prudent observer of election statistics should also be aware of the growth of Baltimore City from a one-house farm settlement to the economic, social and political center of the State with its most noticeable affect on election results and population data occurring after the annexations of 1816, 1888 and 1918.⁴⁴

"America in Miniature," the school book description of Maryland's geography and demographic diversity, is not fitted to the State's political history. Maryland cannot be said to mirror the nation in presidential politics. Presidential elections in Maryland do reflect national events but often in a unique fashion. "The Free State"⁴⁵ has evidenced an independence or resistance to the national majority during several major eras of American history. A significant contributing factor to Maryland's often-split political personality has been the state's geography and its housing of the nation's capital. Maryland was the middle state from the northern and southern boundaries of the original thirteen colonies. The geographic population center of the United States was 23 miles east of Baltimore in 1790 and 18 miles west of Baltimore in 1800. As a slave-holding but non-secessionist state, Maryland's Civil War politics were fraught with uncommon occurrences. The Depression-generated and post-World War II-bolstered expansion of the Federal government brought Maryland its greatest period of population growth and a heightened