

extensive use of the mails and printed literature as an estimated 250 million documents were distributed to voters. The Republican strategy was successful as McKinley compiled a 271 to 176 electoral margin with a solid sweep of the populous northeast and central states. McKinley's 7,108,480 votes exceeded Bryan's total by 596,985.

In the November 3, 1896 election, McKinley became the only Republican to carry Maryland in the nineteenth century except for the distorted wartime vote for Lincoln in 1864. Maryland Democrats were not only on the wrong side of the national issues in 1896, but they were also the target of a continuing state reform movement against "government by bossism" which had gathered media support²⁵ and had broadened its political base by the first McKinley-Bryan contest. A year before the presidential election, Maryland elected its first Republican Governor, Cumberland banker Lloyd Lowndes, and gained an unprecedented 70-21 control of the House of Delegates.

Maryland's Republicans were at the nineteenth century height of their power and carried McKinley to a statewide victory. The Democrats managed to hold onto Montgomery, Queen Anne's, Wicomico and Worcester Counties in the presidential contest as McKinley gathered 54.7 percent of the vote, including an unprecedented Republican margin of 21,106 in Baltimore City. Republican candidates also swept all six Congressional districts for the first time in the history of Maryland politics. The gold standard Sound Money Democrats faired poorly with 2,507 votes which was less than half of the total for the Prohibitionist candidate, Joshua Levering of Maryland. Beset by national and state infighting, the Democrat bosses in Maryland were plainly put down in 1896.

1896 ELECTION SUMMARY

Candidate (Party)	Popular Vote		Electoral Vote	
	Md.	U.S.	Md.	U.S.
Charles E. Bentley (NP)	136	19,363		
Wm. Jennings Bryan (D)	104,746	6,511,495		176
Joshua Levering (Pr)	5,922	125,072		
Wm. McKinley (R)	136,978	7,108,480	8	271
Charles H. Matchett (SL)	588	36,356		
John M. Palmer (ND)	2,507	133,435		

1900

The volatile economic issues of 1896 had calmed as the United States approached the twentieth century and its 29th presidential election. Improved economic conditions, domestic and foreign, had eased the demands for easier money and the Gold Standard Act of 1899 had solved the currency issue for most of the public. The Spanish-American War, the acquisitions of Puerto Rico, Phillipines and Hawaii, and a