

Senator Gorman and with the counsel of John P. Poe, Dean of University of Maryland Law School, the Maryland General Assembly passed laws designed to frustrate black voting by prohibiting the use of party emblems, groupings, names or designations on the ballot.³² The second Act, known as the "Wilson ballot law," allowed candidates to be identified only by place of residence and applied only to counties with large black populations or a history of Republican voting.³³ Whatever the cause, the 1904 election in Maryland was the closest of any contest between the Democrat and Republican parties in *any* state in the history of American presidential elections.³⁴ Only 51 votes separated the leading Republican elector from the leading Democratic elector out of a total of 227,165 votes cast for President. The Democratic electors led in 13 counties, the Republicans in 10, with Baltimore City returning to the Democratic column by 457 votes. The conservative Democrats had delivered Maryland but by the narrowest of margins.

1904 ELECTION SUMMARY

Candidate (Party)	Popular Vote		Electoral Vote	
	Md.	U.S.	Md.	U.S.
Eugene V. Debs (S)	2,247	402,489		
Alton Parker (D)	109,446	5,082,898	7	140
Theodore Roosevelt (R)	109,497	7,626,593	1	336
Silas C. Swallow (Pr)	3,034	258,596		

1908

The failure of 1904 led to another battle for control of the national Democratic party. At the first convention held in a western state, at Denver, Colorado in July, 1908, William J. Bryan received his third nomination for President. The Democratic platform sounded the beginnings of the twentieth century divisions between the major parties by supporting legislation favorable to the labor movement and accusing the Republicans of favoring big business and ignoring the people.³⁵

The Republican Convention was never in doubt over the presidential nominee as President Roosevelt had announced early that he supported Secretary of War William Howard Taft as his successor. There were platform debates sparked by Senator Robert M. LaFollette but the delegates to the convention were singleminded and harmonious.³⁶

In this third campaign Bryan drew less electoral votes than in the 1896 and 1900 as the Republican Taft proved an acceptable candidate to the populace. The Democratic attacks on Republican campaign ethics and finances missed their mark as the outspoken President Roosevelt made it difficult to damage the judicial Taft. The