

FOREWORD

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The evolution of the political process is fascinating both for the professional political scientist and the amateur historian.

In the royal charter granted by King Charles I to Lord Baltimore, it is clear that a new foundation of feudalism was contemplated. Lord Baltimore was to be the "Absolute Lord and Proprietor" of Maryland. The statute against subinfeudalization was suspended so that the Lord Proprietor could create manors with all feudal privileges and duties. The medieval political structure was to be reconstructed in the New World.

But the stream of history cuts its own course and makes new channels.

In Maryland, the old roots were planted deep and survived, but their new growth reflected the changed environment. The mutation soon developed hybrid vigor and a strength and direction of its own.

The Maryland story is well known and will be often retold in 1984, the year of the 350th Anniversary of the founding. But the growth of the political institutions, the widening of participation, the extension of the suffrage and the integration into the national political system are all facets that have had scant attention.

Presidential Elections in Maryland illuminates an important part of that development and it is a welcome addition to our heritage. It is evidence of the distance that Maryland has travelled to measure the difference between the feudal foundation and the vote in the presidential election of 1980. The study of the transition is not only interesting but useful as a guide to political behavior. This volume contributes to that study.