

The peculiar geographical features of Maryland are such that the State is divided into sections whose interests have always been regarded as opposed to each other. Sectional jealousy was particularly strong before the Civil War. The Eastern Shore and southern Maryland had some interests in common; both were agricultural districts, and both were deeply interested in the maintenance of the institution of slavery within the State. The number of slaves was increasing in the southern counties of both the Eastern and Western Shore. The number of slaves in three of the counties: Prince George's, Calvert and Charles, exceeded the number of whites.¹

On the Western Shore the city of Baltimore was clamoring for greater political power. The city's representation in the General Assembly of the State was limited to equal representation with that of the largest county, though with a population more than four times as great. The rapid growth of population of Baltimore City, and her great commercial expansion; while producing a sense of pride among the inhabitants of the agricultural districts, filled them with alarm for their own political influence in the government of the State, and thereby the control over the institution of slavery. This alarm was greatly increased by the relative decrease of slave population in the northern and western sections of the State.

The commercial interest of Baltimore City was not deeply concerned in the maintenance of slavery in the State, because the employment of slaves in commercial pursuits was not considered to be profitable.

The sectional jealousy of the two Shores was greatly increased by the system of internal improvement, which was financially aided by the State. For advancing its commercial interest, the small State of Maryland had become indebted to the extent of over sixteen millions of dollars. The citizens of Baltimore City were the real promoters

¹ U. S. Census, 1850.