

Congress, Charles J. M. Gwinn, of Baltimore City, a prominent lawyer of the State, and several others of distinguished ability. The total number of members of the convention was one hundred and three. Politically there were fifty-five Whigs and forty-eight Democrats.

The convention was temporarily organized by the calling of Col. Benjamin C. Howard, of Baltimore county, to the chair, and James L. Ridgely, of the same county, was appointed secretary.

Elements of discord abounded in the convention. Party feeling was very strong, and perhaps to this cause may be attributed in a great measure the difficulties and differences which were encountered in the progress of the session. An entire week was consumed before the convention was able permanently to organize, owing to political division and sectional jealousy.

The candidates for the presidency of the convention were Hon. John G. Chapman, of Charles county, Whig; Col. Benjamin C. Howard, Democrat; and William C. Johnson, of Frederick county, independent Whig. After eight days of various attempts to elect a president, during which time caucuses were held by both parties to instruct their members as to what compromises would be accepted and what required, Mr. Chapman, the Whig candidate was chosen permanent president. He was a conservative reformer,² and had voted against the call of the convention.

On taking the chair Mr. Chapman said that venerating as he always had done, the characters of those wise and patriotic men, who in 1776 formed the first republican constitution of the State, he had witnessed with a distrust, which he never desired to conceal, the efforts that had been made to change its provisions.² George G. Brewer, of Annapolis, was made secretary to the convention.

Nineteen standing committees were appointed by the president to prepare and bring business before the con-

² Baltimore American, November 16, 1850.