

City was one of the first to be considered by the convention, and one of the last to be disposed of. To many this took precedence over all issues before the convention. It was the most difficult and embarrassing question upon which that assembly was called to act. The issue was between the smaller counties of southern Maryland and of the Eastern Shore on the one hand, and Baltimore City and the larger counties which claimed representation according to population on the other. The smaller counties were generally willing to give representation according to population to the counties, but desired to restrict the representation of Baltimore City to equal representation with that of the largest county, or giving the city the same representation as was agreed to in 1836. The city of Baltimore and the counties which were prominent in wealth and population protested against the injustice of the smaller counties controlling the state legislature. The smaller counties having a majority in the legislature under the old constitution insisted that they would never surrender the rights and privileges which that constitution conferred upon them. Under the constitution of 1776 the people of the Eastern Shore enjoyed certain privileges, among which was that no constitutional amendment could be made touching the interest of the Eastern Shore without a two-thirds vote of all the members of two successive General Assemblies, requiring only a majority vote for the rest of the State.<sup>8</sup>

This provision was the result of a compromise between the Eastern and Western Shores at the time of the formation of the original constitution. The smaller counties of the Eastern Shore and southern Maryland having the majority in the legislature practically held control over the institution of slavery and the public treasury. This power they were determined not to yield to the larger counties and especially to the people of Baltimore City.

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<sup>8</sup> Constitution 1776, art. 59.