

II.

The Convention met at the State House in Annapolis on Wednesday, April 27, 1864. Of the ninety-six members elected, eighty were present on the first day. The remaining sixteen, of whom fifteen were from the southern counties, appeared within the next week or two, with the exception of John F. Dent, of St. Mary's, who did not take his seat in the Convention till July 7, having been detained by illness in his family and other domestic causes.

It would have been difficult to have found at that time a more representative body of Maryland men, nearly all of them native-born to the state, with two striking exceptions—Henry Stockbridge, of Baltimore City, a native of Massachusetts, and Oliver Miller, of Anne Arundel, a native of Connecticut—who were prominent in the councils of the majority and minority respectively. The members from the southern part of the state in particular, were largely from the oldest and best known families of Maryland, and showed their conservatism in the fact that they formed the minority which not only opposed emancipation, but also nearly all other measures of reform introduced in the Convention.

Five of the members had been in the Convention of 1850-1 which had formed the old Constitution—Messrs. Chambers, Dennis, Dent, Lee and Ridgely—and J. S. Berry, of Baltimore County, had been Speaker of the House of Delegates of the "Know Nothing" Legislature of 1858, and at this time held the office of Adjutant-General of the state. Messrs. Goldsborough, Smith of Carroll, Briscoe and Dennis had been members of the celebrated "Frederick Legislature"¹ of 1861, the two former as pronounced

¹ Suppressed by the military authorities.