The Emancipation of Slaves in Civil-War Maryland: An American Epic

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This thesis is lovingly dedicated to my cat Annie. Neither blue nor grey, she is the quintessential lost Marylander who struggled to find a place in the divisive country.
# Table of Contents

Introduction ..............................................................................................................3

Chapter 1  Slavery and Civil War in Maryland: 
            A State Torn .................................................................7

Chapter 2  The Invention of Language .........................18

Chapter 3  1863: A Turning Point in Maryland 
            Politics .................................................................32

Chapter 4  1864: Freedom and Reelection ..............55

Conclusion ..............................................................................................................68

Bibliography .........................................................................................................74
Introduction

The coming [constitutional and] Presidential [elections are] not…mere [contests] between political parties to determine whose candidate and whose adherents shall exercise power during the next four years. [They are wars] of ideas, [contests] of principles. It is a question of National unity or of dissolution…If the people realize their danger, as we have reason to believe they do, victory will again perch upon the banners of the Union.¹

The Baltimore American published this plea for voters to exercise their electoral responsibilities on October 6, 1864. Its readers were preparing to cast a decision on both a new constitution emancipating slaves and the potential reelection of Abraham Lincoln.

By the date of publication, Maryland had already suffered through three years of the American Civil War, with its citizens sharply divided ideologically. Its status as a “Loyal slave state”—a slaveholders’ state that did not join the Confederacy, but instead chose to remain connected to the Union—made its situation nebulous and its status ill-defined.

Furthermore, the state was physically wounded in the conflict as a result of its geographical location. Indeed, the Battle of Antietam, fought in September 1862, wreaked havoc in the southern portions of Maryland. In addition, the strategic advantages

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¹ American and Commercial Advertiser (hereinafter Baltimore American), October 6, 1864. The Baltimore American was a Baltimore newspaper with a continuous lineage, beginning in 1773 with the Maryland Journal and the Baltimore Advertiser, and ending in 1986 as the Baltimore News-American. The American was published under numerous titles over the years, including the Baltimore Intelligencer (1798-1799) the American and Daily Advertiser (1799-1802), and the American and Commercial Daily Advertiser (1802-1853). The articles that I refer to in my thesis were originally published from 1862 through 1864. From 1861 to 1869, the paper was published under the heading American and Commercial Advertiser, owned and edited by Charles C. Fulton of Baltimore. It was published six days a week, taking Sunday off, and contained about 6-8 pages. Although Fulton published the paper under the Baltimore American and Commercial Advertiser banner, the editorials and articles, as well as secondary material, still refer to the publication as the Baltimore American. Also, as page numbers are not always visible on the microfilm because the corners were often inadvertently cut off and pages are sometimes missing from the papers, it would not be feasible to specify a page number while citing. Therefore, my citations are limited to the paper’s abridged title (in this case, Baltimore American) and the date of publication. This method of preparing footnotes is consistent with that of the secondary literature while referencing periodical sources, especially given the relatively short length in comparison to modern papers.
that Maryland posed for the Union caused the Lincoln Administration to invest considerable effort in trying to control Maryland’s fate. As a result, during the duration of the war, white Marylanders were no more autonomous than their African-American slaves, for their state was under strict Union martial law. Yet, while controlled by the free North, Maryland slaveholders retained their human property. Essentially, Maryland was a Northern slave state.

This thesis explores the way in which the Baltimore American—the most cosmopolitan of Maryland’s newspapers—designed a locally-comprehensible language to describe both the civil warfare and the state’s tenuous position in it in order to help its residents face their uncertain futures. Neither at the beginning, nor at the end were Marylanders unanimously secessionist or committed to maintaining slavery. On the other hand, its citizens were not united in a desire to eradicate the institution. The American created local connotations and implications for terms such as “loyal,” “rebel,” “union,” and “unconditional.” Much of the development of Maryland’s local language and mindset was both created by and reflected in the American, as the periodical editors attempted to lead their readers to a richer, forward-looking perspective on what they felt was the inevitable demise of slavery. The language used to construct these definitions and illustrate key individuals became increasingly sharply-defined as the war progressed. The American certainly was no exception. By 1863, the paper adopted a concrete Unconditional Unionist stance. The evolution of the language reflected by the editorials demonstrates active encouragement of similar philosophical enlightenment. While attributing uniquely local significance to nationally-utilized terms allowed the American
writers to openly discuss their state’s plight in this conflict, the vocabulary was limited to express the opinions of the Unconditional Unionists, at times at the cost of accuracy.

The election of 1863, and its long-lasting impact on the state as a Union supporter, became central in the Baltimore American’s evolving political task. For nearly two years following the commencement of the rebellion, both national and local Unionist authorities had been rather complacent regarding the issue of slavery in Maryland. Federal leaders allowed slaveholders to retain their property as long as they remained staunchly loyal to the Union. As the conflict continued, with Maryland weary over the blood spilled on its land and the fortunes of the war gradually favoring the Northern forces, the Lincoln Administration ultimately resolved to rid the troubled nation—including the “loyal” slave states—of slavery. The Baltimore American, consistently a supporter of Lincoln Administration policies, was a proponent of statewide emancipation. The American editorial staff urged the public to accept what they saw as a political and social necessity. The paper engaged in thought-provoking dialogues, striving to convince slaveholding Marylanders that freeing the slaves was necessary for any future progress.

The American’s desired goal would not be realized without controversy, as electoral procedures and Union soldiers’ zeal conspired to deprive the state of a “fair” election. The American did not encourage the soldiers’ actions. Rather, it sought to impress Union sentiments upon the readers in passionate editorials. Yet, the periodical also did little to condemn them. Instead, it touted the decidedly undemocratic result as a natural and positive outcome in such an unstable period. An analysis of the American’s progression towards this pivotal turning point only reinforces this logical, if flawed, conclusion.
During the year following the *Baltimore American*’s 1863 campaign, the paper implored that its readers complete the quest for emancipation, and support the president who had relieved the state of Confederate tyranny. While Maryland was symbolically free after the constitutionally dubious election of 1863, 1864 confronted the state with a constitutional convention and general election prior to emancipation being executed as the law of the land. At the same time, the nation awaited a tense presidential race to decide the fate of Lincoln. As the provocative issues were presented to the public, the editors of the *Baltimore American*, like many politically-minded thinkers in Maryland, fused the constitutional and presidential topics.

The story of Maryland’s polarized citizenry, and their journey to emancipation is an exciting model that many Civil War historians have explored. The state was the epitome of the “brother vs. brother” scenario often mentioned in reference to this conflict. However, the importance of the media, and of an editor’s influence in shaping public opinion is what this thesis adds to our understanding of how the “brother vs. brother” tensions were gradually put somewhat to rest. The *Baltimore American*, available via microfilm, is an invaluable resource for deconstructing the shifting loyalties of divided Marylanders and for examining the nuances of the eventual dominance of Unionist factions over politics and social policy.
Chapter 1

Slavery and Civil War in Maryland: A State Torn

My thesis analyzes the *Baltimore American*, a periodical that advocated emancipation of slaves, but only insofar as it satisfied the limited confines of the Republican agenda. Slavery in Maryland officially ended in 1864 upon adoption of a new state constitution. The document, ratified October 31, declared that “there shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except in punishment of a crime, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted; and all persons held to service or labor, as slaves, are hereby...free.” However, the sentiment for emancipation was certainly not unanimous among Marylanders. Rather, the question over the fate of African-Americans was directly related to a complex set of discussions that were pervasive in state politics and society, and some of those discussions were so polarizing that they divided the war-scarred state. Newspapers were a public venue for this controversial discourse. In the course of my analysis, I will argue that the *American* not only reported the Republican agenda as part of its coverage of Baltimore politics, but also helped shape the forces that propelled Maryland down the road towards freedom.

The problem of emancipation in Maryland and the *American’s* involvement cannot be addressed without understanding the position of the state during the Civil War. At the height of the war, Maryland held the distinction for being one of four slave states

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that had remained loyal to the Union, along with Delaware, Missouri, and Kentucky. West Virginia, which had separated from Virginia in 1863, became in additional force for emancipation. Although Maryland declared itself to be neutral in the initial secession crisis, neutrality was never a viable option due to its strategic geographic location between the North and the South. The attack on Fort Sumter by Confederate forces caused the Union to fear for the safety of Washington, D.C, across the Potomac River from Virginia. To protect the District, Northern forces were forced to travel through Maryland. On April 19, 1861, a riot ensued when the 6th Massachusetts Regiment passed through Baltimore. To prevent recurring violent opposition, General Ben Butler occupied Annapolis, and then fortified Baltimore. Since disunion and secession was unacceptable the Lincoln Administration, the president responded to the threats of violence and secession by suspending the writ of *habeas corpus* and arbitrarily ordering the arrests of verbal disunionists and requiring them to declare loyalty to the Union. Thus, Marylanders begrudgingly recognized that the Civil War was their conflict as well, and that unless their loyalties remained with the Northern ideologies, they risked their individual freedom.

Although Maryland’s Unionists were unanimous in their contention that their state should not secede, the party split into two groups, the Unconditional Unionists and the Conservative Unionists. The Unconditional Unionists, the more progressive Unionist faction, proclaimed unconditional support of the Lincoln Administration in suppressing the rebellion. The faction displayed a relentless determination to rid the state of slavery, denouncing all loyal slaveholders as rebels. Although some of the Unconditional

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Unionists were radical abolitionists, many were merely moderates who believed in accepting reality and pursuing the least traumatic outcome for their society and economy. The leader of the Unconditional Unionists was Henry Winter Davis, a prominent abolitionist sympathizer.  

While unwilling to support immediate emancipation, the Conservative Unionists also backed the Union State Convention and were adamant to stay in the United States. However, this group, which included Governor Augustus Bradford, did not want to risk their established power and influence over the Maryland political system by openly challenging their anti-slavery opponents. Instead, they believed that the debate on slavery should be postponed until the defeat of the Confederacy, at which point the federal government may be in a position to respect their traditional lifestyle and to allow the continuation of slavery. The Conservative Unionists’ lack of clearly-articulated goals actually strengthened the Unconditional Unionists, who were clear about their opinion that Maryland’s association with slavery must be severed in order to maintain unity with the North.

The Unconditional Unionist cause was strengthened by yet another reality. Though owners loyal to Union were technically permitted to retain their assets, the army, through recruitment of slaves and the passionate actions of abolitionist-minded Northern soldiers, contributed to the depletion of slave labor. This decline in strength of the slave-owning aristocracy offered the opportunity for the Baltimore-based Unconditional Unionists to expand their influence, and pursue emancipationist policies.

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6 Ibid.
In addition, the institution of slavery that tied Maryland to the Confederacy was deteriorating even before the war began. Among slave states, Maryland had the largest proportion of free black people relative to the total black population. On the Eastern Shore, where African-Americans constituted 20 percent of the total population and were vital contributors to the labor force in the cereal-producing economy, fewer than half were enslaved. As a result, the white farmers often depended on non-slave labor, to supplement the slaves’ work. Hence, the declining slave labor force offered free black people increased bargaining power to negotiate wages, much to the chagrin of the white planters.\(^8\) As a result, free black workers were in a position to destabilize and affront the established social order by operating with a greater degree of freedom while continuing to work alongside slaves.

Another factor causing the disintegration of slavery in Maryland was the commercialization of Baltimore. Slaves resided and worked in Baltimore. However, the circumstances of enslavement were quite different than on the plantations. Many owners established hire arrangements for their slaves, in which the latter were rented to either artisans or industrial firms, resulting in subsequent compensation to the owner. There was a significant difference between the individual Baltimore slaves and slavery as an urban institution. It is true that in the wake of the industrialization of Baltimore, the city dwellers did make substantial use of slave labor. However, as urban industrialists did not seem enthusiastic about sustaining the tradition, rural slaveholders feared the reliability of urban support, since the urban market for labor was seasonal and quite casual. Many services connected with commercial trade, such as those of sailors, stevedores, carters,

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\(^8\) Fields, *Slavery and Freedom on the Middle Ground*, 69-71.
and draymen, depended largely on weather conditions. Oystering and the processing of
seafood, fruits, and vegetables also made irregular demands for labor. Therefore,
Baltimoreans, who had less of a vested interest in the institution’s survival, viewed the
presence of a permanent slave labor force as inefficient and economically unnecessary.

While the historical context provided the conditions necessary for emancipation
ideology to flourish the “necessary conditions” do not get at the heart of the pivotal
question: why did Maryland ultimately vote for emancipation in October 1864? The army
was enlisting African-Americans and kidnapping them from their masters. Numerous
scholars believe that this signaled the end of slavery. However, the army had been present
in Maryland since 1861, and slaves had been fleeing to the encampments since its arrival.
But, at some point the more conservative political thinkers who remained in power
decided that the time had come to surrender their state’s right to hold onto its slaves? Did
Marylanders decide that it was time to pursue emancipationist policy, or did they simply
buckle under federal government pressure? This is a complex question, as the army had
instituted martial law on the state. Therefore, any opinions that ran contrary to the
Administration’s policies were censored, with the holder of such beliefs likely to be
imprisoned. How much of the influence change was due to the Unconditional Unionists?

The role of federal pressure is interesting to study, because it was erratic, even
ambivalent at times. Lincoln was in an awkward position with loyal slave states,
particularly so with Maryland. The president claimed that the objective was to fight for
the Union and nothing more, and retaining Maryland was geographically strategic for
assuring victory. However, as the military passed through, slaves sought refuge within its

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ranks. Therefore, Lincoln had to balance his obligation to protect loyal citizens’ slave “property” with his moral desire to free the enslaved African-Americans. Various commanders attempted to apply policies that would be sensitive to Lincoln’s concerns. For example, prior to assuming command in Annapolis, General Butler offered to assist Governor Thomas Hicks in putting down an apparent slave insurrection. Also, at the beginning of the war, the owners of runaways were allowed to cross into Virginia to retrieve any slaves who had crossed the Potomac with the Union military. In fact, most of the help that slaves initially received was from insubordinate Northern troops who disobeyed orders in reaction to the slaves’ plights. Many of these men had never before witnessed the master-slave relationship, and acted instinctively to these horrors.\textsuperscript{10} Thus, the Republican Administration in power had difficulty defining and enforcing a consistent agenda with respect to slaves. In my thesis, I use Maryland’s loyal newspapers to explore the differences between the Republican doctrine adopted by Lincoln’s White House and the abolitionist movement in Maryland.

My actual source is the \textit{Baltimore American}, which was Republican in its political affiliation. The proprietor and editor of the publication was Charles C. Fulton of Baltimore, who served as a delegate to the 1868 Republican National Convention from Maryland and was a member of the Republican National Committee from Maryland that same year. In supporting Lincoln, the \textit{American} was also closely tied with the Unconditional Unionists, who offered unwavering loyalty to the federal government. For example, the paper enthusiastically endorsed Henry Winter Davis for a United States Senate seat.

[The people of Maryland] are not willing to entrust the expression of their voice in the Senate of the United States to any man who is not willing to close his ears to the clamors of those whom traitors have excited to foist their ignorant and prejudiced interpretations upon the people as Constitutional law...[The] name of Henry Winter Davis will live in the hearts of his grateful countrymen long after those who revile him shall have descended to oblivion, as the honest, the fearless and the able advocate of the best interests of his country.  

The paper was determined to help elect candidates who were believed to be supporters of the White House regardless of the individual’s stance on abolition.

In addition to utilizing the American to gauge the Unconditional Unionist view of contemporary events, the paper also showcased the views of contrary-minded Marylanders. The American published excerpts from newspapers across the state. Numerous Maryland newspapers are not available for analysis today through microfilm. For example, the Cambridge Intelligencer was excerpted in segments in the American, but was never salvaged on its original form on microfilm. Cambridge is a town on Maryland’s Eastern Shore, and therefore predominantly featured the opinions of loyal slaveholders. For example, in one case, the periodical refutes Confederate claims that the conflict originated as a reaction against the tyrannical attack on their rights, and claims that the war and a secessionist agenda would likely destroy slavery as an American institution.

“Our largest slaveholders declared that they knew that the Union was the surest protection for their slave property, and that in the event of a dissolution of the Union, or of a war for that purpose, the ruin of the slavery interest was inevitable.”

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11 *Baltimore American*, January 14, 1862.
Here, the *Cambridge Intelligencer* refutes the Unconditional Unionist assumption that all slave holders were disloyal. The Conservative Unionists, the party to which loyal slaveholders belonged, cared very deeply for the maintenance of the Union. They believed that it was possible for slavery and emancipation to coexist. In fact, in the article, Unionism is credited for the institution’s survival thus far. I hope to find the *Baltimore American* to be a venue where multiple perspectives can be seen. Although the *American*’s editors rebut the arguments made in favor of conservative policies, they nevertheless contribute well-rounded primary accounts to a better-rounded study of Maryland during the Civil War.

Over the past half-century, a number of scholars have examined aspects of Marylanders’ relationship to the war, the federal government, and slavery. Charles B. Clark explored Maryland’s emancipation movement as part of his “Politics in Maryland during the Civil War” series, published in *Maryland Historical Magazine* between 1941 and 1946. The work, thorough in discussing the relationship between the Federal

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13 Broad contextual knowledge concerning Maryland, its citizenry, and individual locations prior to and in the midst of the Civil War is available in several survey texts. The books include complete descriptions and analyses of the political, social, and economic climate that engulfed the state and influenced historically significant decisions. Such sources are *Maryland, A Middle Temperament, 1634-1980* (1988) by Robert J. Brugger, and *Maryland--A History, 1632-1974* (1974) edited by Richard Walsh and William Lloyd Fox, specifically the chapters on “The Era of the Civil War” by Richard B. Duncan and “Social-Cultural Developments from the Civil War to 1920” by William Lloyd Fox. Outside of Maryland, my thesis benefits from texts the Civil War and its effects on the torn nation. The *South vs. the South: How Anti-Confederate Southerners Shaped the Course of the Civil War* (2001) by William W. Freehling, explains how the other border states fared during the Conflict, quite relevant in comparison to Maryland. Renowned scholar James M. McPherson has written countless books on the Civil War and its significance in American history. I am using two of his works, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (1988) and *What They Fought For, 1861-1865* (1994). Mark E. Neely’s *The Frat of Liberty: Abraham Lincoln and Civil Liberties* (1991) presents in-depth discussion of Lincoln’s justifications for overlooking breaches in civil rights during the war, relevant when studying the military’s actions while imposing martial law in Maryland.

14 *Maryland Historical Magazine*, published quarterly by the Maryland Historical Society, can be a valuable resource with regards to regional topics that may not afford adequate coverage in national journals, particularly when seeking information about local figures. However, the publishing requirements are less stringent in these collections, leading to the submission of works from amateur history “buffs.” This is especially problematic for a topic as popular as the Civil War. Nevertheless, if one carefully scrutinizes the articles, it is possible to find pieces by respectable historians.
government and the state politicians, builds an argument founded upon the assumption that the state was Southern-leaning and the presence of federal troops was the only factor that staved off secession. Building on Clark’s research, the seminal text for the emancipation of Maryland slaves is *The Mighty Revolution: Negro Emancipation in Maryland 1862-1864* (1964) by Charles Lewis Wagandt. Wagandt’s work, which offers a more in-depth study of the emancipation topic in state politics, is an intricate analysis of the interplay of Maryland politics, during a period of transition from constitutional slavery to constitutional freedom. Wagandt’s text, published in 1964, which was not only the centennial of the Maryland Constitution instituting emancipation, but also the height of the civil rights movement, when America was once more debating the place of African-Americans in society, takes a look at the Unionist in-fighting between the Conservative Unionists and the Unconditional Unionists, and how this conflict affected the deliberation process. Wagandt confirms this in his forward. “That issue had been a strong force behind the disruption of the nation. Now, it too must be fought openly.”

While the Wagandt and Clark texts covers the political trials of emancipation, the articles in the *Baltimore American* do not focus solely on the opinions of politicians. Therefore, this thesis also illuminates the perspectives on emancipation and the role of African-Americans as held by the slaveholders, white non-slaveholders, escaped slaves, and free African-Americans. For this, *Slavery and Freedom on the Middle Ground: Maryland during the Nineteenth Century* (1983) by Barbara Jeanne Fields. Fields is

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useful because it discusses the complex position of slaves and free African-Americans in their dichotomous society.\textsuperscript{16}

Fields was part of a scholarly movement in the 1970s and 1980s led by Ira Berlin and the Freedmen and Southern Society Project, which was established to depict the drama of emancipation through the words of the participants such as liberated slaves, defeated slaveholders, soldiers, commoners, and the elite, both Northerners and Southerners. The project compiled the primary accounts by tirelessly scouring the National Archives.\textsuperscript{17} The Maryland sections of these texts, which investigate primary accounts of African-Americans and others who were intricately involved in their lives, offer concise insights as to why the slavery institution broke down and how the concept of free labor, particularly in the context of the military occupation, added to permanent disintegration. As Maryland’s fugitive slaves were offered an escape route when the District of Columbia emancipated its slaves in 1862, the Washington sections of the Berlin series have useful information as does Ernest B Furguson’s detailed illustration of slavery in the District of Columbia.\textsuperscript{18}

My research on Maryland during the Civil War and the emancipation process has developed into an expansive thesis. Countless useful articles of the \textit{Baltimore American} incorporate seamlessly into my arguments. The secondary material yields insight not only on the political aspects of the emancipation process, but also on the socioeconomic concerns regarding the place of African-Americans and their presence in Civil War

\textsuperscript{16} My thesis would be incomplete without an explanation of African-Americans in Maryland following emancipation. The most informative text on this subject is \textit{Imperfect Equality: African Americans and the Confinces of White Racial Attitudes in Post-Emancipation Maryland} (1999) by Richard Paul Fulke.

\textsuperscript{17} My thesis utilizes portions of Berlin’s \textit{Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-1867} series, and specifically \textit{The Destruction of Slavery} (1985).

verbal discourse. These sources all contribute to the formulation of what I hope is an insightful, and quite interesting, historical experience.
Chapter 2

The Invention of Language

As the Civil War broke out in 1861 and the nation faced sharp division on geographical and ideological lines, Maryland had to design an understandable language to describe both the war and the state’s position in the conflict. Marylanders were not ideologically homogenous, neither wholeheartedly secessionist and committed to the preservation of slavery, nor staunchly focused on eradicating the institution. While many communities developed their own individualized meanings for words like “loyal,” “rebel,” “union,” and “unconditional,” The term “loyalty” was particularly sensitive, since “loyalty” to the state of Maryland was sometimes synonymous with support of federal government policies, but other times “loyal” citizens were at odds with national ideals. Maryland newspapers such as the Baltimore American also created local connotations and implications for these terms. As displayed in the periodicals, the definitions and the groups represented and illustrated by the language became more absolute as the war progressed. This was reflected in the American’s willingness to eventually adopt a rigorous Unconditional Unionist stance and encourage its readers to follow suit.

The American was one of the most popular, comprehensive, and durable papers in Maryland. In addition to its original stories and editorials, the American published excerpts from newspapers across the state. These papers were often small-scale, regional operations that did not enjoy long publication runs. During the Civil War era, many papers that were proslavery also faced risk as the military shut down “disloyal” papers,
arrested the editors, or denied use of the Post Office for delivery. Even the *Baltimore Sun* ceased carrying any editorial for fear of suppression.\(^{19}\) With the *Sun* forcibly constrained, the only paper with the capital and circulation to reach a significant portion of Maryland readers was the *American*. The language adopted by the *American* in 1861 was tested and solidified the following year, when federal forces occupied Maryland. Northern troops controlled the region following the Baltimore riot of April 1861, triggered in response to the passage of federal forces through the city en route to Washington. Martial law entailed suppressing all elements of opposition, in the process carrying out seemingly oppressive orders. To remain in business, news services emphasized the importance of maintaining allegiance to the Union.

As part of its formula for demonstrating loyalty, the *American* advocated paying taxes. The first federal income tax in American history was enacted on August 5, 1863, with collection to commence in 1862. The Republican architects strove for modestly progressive legislation, imposing a three-percent tax only on annual incomes over $800.\(^{20}\) Revenue from taxes, the *American* explained, was necessary to ensure good government. In addition, the *American* insisted that the taxing process would be fair. In other words, men who legitimately could not pay would not be expected to contribute to the effort. However, for those who were financially secure, the *American* stated that it was “[better to] give away to the Government that defends so noble a heritage the last dollar that might be reserved to your children so that they are left free… than to leave them a land torn asunder by anarchy or perishing under the blight and mildew of an irresponsible

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\(^{19}\) Duncan, “The Era of the Civil War,” 350.

military despotism.” Thus, taxation and the resulting monetary wealth should not be considered the spoils of war destined for the Union forces. Rather, tax assessment was a necessary investment in the futures of the state and the country for upcoming loyal generations.

If paying taxes was a clear statement of loyalty, other elements in the interpretation of a loyal Marylander were less absolute, and continued to be ambiguous in the American editorials for the duration of 1862. In fact, the newspaper was often forced to defend a wide range of perspectives held by its correspondents. Charles B. Calvert, a proslavery congressman, had written columns asserting that the American endorsed all of the views printed within. But soon the paper distanced itself from this claim, holding that the periodical did not necessarily reflect the opinions of all its contributors.

The issue in question of the Emancipation Proclamation, proposed in September 1862 by President Lincoln, was a case in point.

We believe [the president’s Proclamation] to be extra-Constitutional, and of doubtful expediency. It cannot be said to be Constitutional, because there is clearly no such power given to the President by that instrument. But as applied to the people of the States it cannot be said to be unconstitutional, because they—unless in individual cases where they may hereafter prove their loyalty—have denuded themselves of all rights under the Constitution.22

It is quite evident that the American had a specified objective, supporting the eventual end of slavery. Yet, the periodical was willing to publish articles containing a spectrum of opinions, even those with which Congressman Calvert would never concur. After all, the topic of emancipation was “one on which loyal citizens of our State [held] widely dissimilar opinions, [and the paper would therefore] have an opportunity to present their

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21 Baltimore American, January 8, 1862.
22 Baltimore American, October 6, 1862.
arguments fairly to the people.”

The American may have been constructing its version of loyalty by connecting the concept to the destruction of slavery. Additionally, the paper believed that loyal citizens would likely formulate similar conclusions. Still, the paper did not feel obliged to overemphasize such a mandate. Actually, demonstrating faithfulness to the Union, without Confederate leanings, was a sufficient statement of “loyalty,” even if one remained silent on the subject of emancipation.

However, with each passing year, the dimensions of loyalty reflected in the American shifted. Following the election of 1863, the term “loyal” was coined for the party that had been victorious in the recent elections for state legislature delegates and congressional representatives. In this case, the “loyal” had been the Unconditional Unionists who not only wanted to preserve the state for the North, but were enthusiastically determined to comply with Lincoln’s policies of Emancipation.

Furthermore, the newspaper reported that the losers were dissatisfied with the outcome, and would start a clamor, hoping to “scare back all who [desired] to see a loyal man in [their] place.” It was expected that the “disloyal” ideals of the losers would discourage election officials from pursuing any misconduct complaints that could perhaps challenge the results.

We hope the Government will see to it, and that the loyal of their district will see to it, also, that the votes of true men are not neutralized by the votes of those who deliberately abandoned their right to participate in the management of this Government, when they undertook the role of traitors—undertook to absolutely destroy the Government.

23 Ibid.
24 Baltimore American, November 23, 1863.
25 Ibid.
Yet, by the end of 1863, loyalty did not necessarily equate with a desire to defeat the South. The politicians eligible to run in the election indeed swore off all allegiances to the Confederacy. But, winning the war was no longer sufficient for the faithful citizens of Maryland. Instead, it was essential for the state to be secured for the Northern forces under the conditions specified by the Lincoln Administration. The *American*, a true advocate of Lincoln and his policies, was imploring that the disloyal and more Conservative elements of Maryland society not interfere in this seemingly inevitable process.

Similar to “disloyal,” the expression “rebel” was utilized most often when referring to the Confederacy, as North-supporting periodicals observed the war as the “rebellion.” Used by Maryland’s Unionists to describe their compatriots who sided with the Confederates, the word suggests that the Unionists considered the conflict to be an unjustified assault on the established political system, rather than the war for independence and states’ rights that Southerners considered it to be. Such a connotation was reflected in the Maryland press as well. As an example, the *American* noted in late 1862 that the skirmishes that had transpired thus far were more akin to arrays of isolated struggles between particular armed units than to battles between unified armies. The *American* downplayed the seriousness and resolve of both sides by reporting that there appeared to be no definite direction or plan outlining an overarching goal for the war.

Because of the resulting stalemate and lack of action to accompany the supposed potential of the Confederate forces, the rebel press had been urging an invasion of the loyal states. Confederate preparations had been successful so far, proving the potential for
a concrete endgame emerging, with the Southern troops commencing their assault into Union territory.

Yet, the *American* was convinced that the invasion would not likely occur. Instead, the newspaper contended that “the desperate fighting already done before Washington [had] so savagely panicked and disconcerted the rebels that even the thoughts of an inroad [there were] indefinitely postponed.”26 In other words, the Confederates were indeed ambitious in their goal to formulate prospective strategies for redirecting the conflict in their favor. Nevertheless, it seemed to the readers that the rebels were not confident about confronting the Northern Army with the power of established government backing it. In this instance, the national rebels were construed as an interference with the set order that would not constitute a long-term threat.

If the Confederate Army was not much of a threat, there were real dangers from the one entity in Maryland for which the *American* reserved the term “rebel.” Among Maryland’s Union sympathizers, it was widely suspected that the cause of the Civil War was slavery. In fact, according to the *American*, the war was often acknowledged as the “slaveholders’ rebellion,” and slaveholders were the true “rebels.” For instance, in 1863, *American* correspondents requested the publication of a front-page piece detailing its position on the controversial question of emancipation in the state. Within this article, slavery was definitively aligned with the rebels threatening to destroy the Union.

We believe that the slaveholders’ rebellion has virtually staked the triumph or destruction of slavery in all the States as the issue of the conflict. If the Union is maintained, slavery will fall everywhere, and will only exist as a weak State institution in a few of the Cotton States.27

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26 *Baltimore American*, September 3, 1862.
27 *Baltimore American*, May 4, 1863.
Moreover, though, the rebel class was not limited only to the Confederates; it included the slave owners as well. For most loyal states, politically powerful slaveholders were not an issue. But in Maryland, slaveholders were the ones aligned with the Confederates, who were, in turn, regarded as the oppressors of the helpless slaves and associated with the state’s stagnant economy, while the Union represented freedom and prosperity.

Unfortunately, the American’s inability to distinguish between slaveholders and Confederates would prove to be problematic for Maryland. While most slaveholders allied with the South, resulting in either personal exile or incarceration, many still professed loyalty to the North. These owners could not be branded as “rebels” in accordance with the accepted definition of the term. Yet, when the Conservative Unionist candidates lost the election in 1863, the American applauded the effort, claiming that “‘no [rebel] lyric…[could] prove otherwise than utter nonsense when contested with the stern and matter-of-fact verdict rendered by the people of Maryland at the polls yesterday; and so the sooner such nonsense as the dissatisfied here [had] indulged in hitherto is discarded, the better it will be for all concerned.”

Ironically, the musical chant cited by the newspaper as the “rebel lyric” was actually “Maryland, My Maryland,” which eventually became the official state song in April 1939. The poem was written in 1861 by James Ryder Randall, a Maryland native residing in Louisiana. Featuring provocative lyrics such as “Dear Mother Burst the tyrant’s chain, Maryland” and “Virginia should not call in vain, Maryland,” the poem was popular among Confederates throughout the South, and not limited to only Maryland.

28 Baltimore American, November 5, 1863.
sympathizers. The attribution of the name “rebel lyric” is probably suitable given its approval with the instigators of the rebellion in the southern states. Nonetheless, identifying the song with the election demonstrates the complexities of the words “rebel” and “loyal” since neither political contestant was eager to “spurn the Northern scum,” as clearly alluded to in the lyrics.

As a Unionist paper, the American believed that the sanctity of the federal system was paramount and, like other similar papers, did its best to insure that its readers understood the importance of this vision. If rebel meant “Southern-affiliated slaveholder,” how did the American define the term “union?” It is clear that the “Union” encompassed, first and foremost, the Northern states. Yet, it also represented the ideological belief of preserving the political and social attitudes cherished by the North from desecration by Southern influences. For the Unionist press, the sanctity of the federal system was paramount. Even the fate of slavery was considered a secondary concern. As a Unionist paper, the American was inclined to remind its readers of this fact. So, when challenged with the prospect of compensated emancipation in 1862, the Baltimore paper strongly urged its audience to “decide between the democratic Republic of the United States and the institution of slavery.”

The process of emancipation was increasing daily, and was likely to grow dramatically as the war progressed. To the American, it was inconsequential whether the state was seen as the southern end of the Union or the northern tip of the Confederacy. The Union would prevail in the state, and, freeing slaves should be regarded as a sacrifice necessary and beneficial to Maryland’s...

30 *Baltimore American*, July 26, 1862.
continued membership in the Union. After all, “[the] Union man who [weighed] in the crisis the former or prospective value of his slaves against the country is no Union man at all.”

If protecting the Union should take precedence over preserving slavery, the *American* deemed the abolition movement and its activities as subordinate to the maintenance of the Union. Specifically, the paper announced in early 1862, that the ultra-abolitionists had attempted to steer the government under its influence, wishing to capitalize on the war in order to rid the continent of slavery. Thus, the *American* strove to walk a fine line and to hold onto a middle ground. According to the *American*, if the Union was to be saved, it could only be accomplished by those committed to ending the disruption without ulterior motives of either protecting or abolishing slavery. In particular, “[a] mere faction [could] no more save the nation in its great struggle than it [could] destroy it. The nation must save the nation.” The abolitionist faction had surely not helped the Union to date, but, the *American* contended, had only embarrassed itself. In fact, the abolitionists were violating the Constitution, as they disregarded the conditions of all Americans except the slaves in captivity. In short, the *American* deemed the word “Union” as not so much associated with slavery or efforts either to maintain or destroy the institution, but rather with an ideal of a stable federal government in which slavery was little more than an incidental annoyance, and a peripheral issue.

Closer examination of the conceptualizations of the “Unconditional” Unionists also reveal complexities and ambiguities buried within the language, connotations that changed over time. When first founded in 1862, the party name was quite different than

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31 Ibid.
32 *Baltimore American*, January 27, 1862.
what it became by the election of 1863. It is interesting that the designation was initially referenced in the *Baltimore American* in 1862, in an address by Congressman Charles B. Calvert. Calvert claimed that he had been elected as an Unconditional Unionist, a position that lost him many longtime friends who did not share his vehemence for the Union. Although all politicians professed to be “Unconditional Unionists” during the prior election, Calvert was exceptionally proud of this distinction and was not envious of his opponents or their principles.

[The] absurdity and falsity of [secession] in behalf of one or more States is exhibited in the mere fact that the present Constitution was adopted by our predecessors because it was found impossible to administer the Government under the old confederation, where the states reserved the power in their own hands.\(^{33}\)

Calvert sincerely opposed the secessionist ideas introduced by Confederate advocates. In referring to the problems experienced by the young nation while governed by the Articles of Confederation, Calvert hoped to remind his fellow Marylanders of the difficulties that result from the lack of a strong central government. The present Constitution, Calvert reminded his audience, had been introduced to rectify the structural and administrative issues that developed during the nation’s formative years. So, in this case, the adoption of a “confederacy” and its loose governing ideals would result in a move backwards for the seceding states.

Still, as he explained later in the article, Calvert did not accept all of the principles adopted by the “free” North either. True, Calvert speculated that, had the war signified Confederate defiance of the Constitution, it would have ended long ago. However, as a slave owner and sustainer of the property rights of slaveholding Union men, Calvert was convinced that Lincoln was allowing abolitionists to control him while waging the war.

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\(^{33}\) Charles B. Calvert’s address, in *Baltimore American*, August 20, 1862.
Despite the perceived power of the radical abolitionists, Calvert argued that the Border States could confront the president regarding the controversy surrounding fugitive slaves. On April 16, 1862, Congress abolished slavery in the District of Columbia. The newly free region gave slaves an escape route with which many were already familiar. Slave families packed up their possessions and departed, banding together with large groups and heading for the District in force. Washington also gave free blacks leverage in extricating themselves from bondage to the slave system. Although already freed, these individuals remained dependent upon slaveholders because they remained a reliable source of employment and shelter, and sometimes because their kin were still enslaved. In contrast, the District offered freedom and government labor, enticing to all African-Americans. Slaveholders employed various methods, from hiring professional slave-catchers to incarcerating their slaves, to prevent runaways. Yet, given the seemingly continuous hemorrhaging of the enslaved labor force, these measures clearly constituted a losing effort. According to Calvert, the federal government betrayed the citizens of Maryland, a loyal state, when it enacted this law without considering the disposition of an “unconditional” supporter.

The passage of the bill for emancipation of the slaves in the District of Columbia was, to say the least of it, a breach of faith to the State of Maryland, for it must be admitted by every one that Maryland never would have yielded her property except under an implied understanding that the condition of slavery should not be changed within the District ceded without the consent of the State, or in conformity with the action of the State herself.

A descendent of the original Lord Baltimore George Calvert, Congressman Calvert had been born into a prominent Maryland family whose wealth originated from

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34 Fields, *Slavery and Freedom on the Middle Ground*, 111-112.
35 Charles B. Calvert’s address, in *Baltimore American*, August 20, 1862.
agricultural pursuits, owing much of its production to slave labor.\textsuperscript{36} Calvert County, named for the family and its integral role in the formulation of the state, is located in the southern region of the state, a region where slavery had been prominent. As a consequence, it is understandable if Calvert would have empathized with the slave owners and their frustrations, for there was growing evidence that the enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law in Washington was being obstructed by Federal officials. Despite this, as an Unconditional Unionist, the politician urged his listeners to temporarily forgo their petty grievances and losses. It was Calvert’s belief that an opportunity for justice with regards to this lackadaisical stance on slavery enforcement prevalent in the Lincoln Administration would exist in the culmination of the war. Thus, in contrast to the Northern perspective, the unwavering support of the president could only be expected as long as the war continued, and such “unconditional” allegiance was surely not without its presumed conditions to be addressed in the future.

Again in line with “free” North insights, by 1863, Maryland Unconditional Unionism would not allow any compromise in aiding the Union. In June of that year, the Union League Convention planned a statewide political organization to overhaul the older regime on every government level. The Convention proclaimed unqualified backing of the Lincoln Administration, including a resolve to end slavery, and embraced the title “Unconditional Unionists.” In the meantime, though, the more conservative elements of Maryland Unionism were members of the Union State Convention.\textsuperscript{37} As a result, it was mandatory for the nominees chosen through the Union State Convention to be defeated in the coming election if emancipation policies were ever to be realized in the future.

\textsuperscript{36} Brugger, \textit{Maryland, A Middle Temperament}, 33.

\textsuperscript{37} Wagandt, \textit{The Mighty Revolution}, 106-107.
Furthermore, in September 1863, the *Baltimore American* published a scathing letter by an Unconditional Unionist, refuting the paper’s claim that some nominees were unfit with regards to personal character, and questioning the motives of the nominees. According to the communication, “[the Unconditional Unionists wished] to mislead nobody. They [had] but one object—the prosperity and honor of the State and country and eternal rights.”

It is apparent that the party felt that any man could hold office as long as he was honest and capable. If the “old political hacks” were willing to wait and see which party would emerge the stronger, individuals could not complain about new men in the legislature. The letter charged that the changes being implemented within the political spectrum could infuse some desperately needed blood into an area occupied by arcane players not really representative of the desires of all Marylanders. “[Some] who [had] not been much in the eyes of the people as politicians [would] be found, when better known, to have [‘some] personal claims to the confidence of the [people.’]” So here, the term “unconditional” also was related to change. The Unionists could not reject change if the resulting actions were undertaken to maintain the country pursuant to Lincoln’s agenda. As emancipation became an underlying goal of the Administration in Maryland, so too did the state Unionists not only have to stand unopposed, but wholeheartedly encourage this initiative.

In Civil War-torn Maryland, language was formulated as a vehicle to explain the state’s tenuous position, and evolved over the course of the conflict to justify behavior alternatives so as to coincide with state and national sentiments. The *Baltimore American* was essentially the creator of language for those Marylanders who wanted to see the

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38 *Baltimore American*, September 28, 1863.
39 Ibid.
Union survive at all costs. While there were often problematic usages and connotations, the flow of words both reflected and helped to shape and define the values and ideals of the era, culminating in a subset of Marylanders united in their resolve to conclude a war under the stipulations set forth by a staunchly Republican federal government. This subset also benefited from the lack of unity among alternative points of view, and the suppression of media outlets through which ideological alternatives might have coalesced.
Chapter 3

1863: A Turning Point in Maryland Politics

For nearly two years following the commencement of the bloody Civil War, both national and local Unionist authorities had been relatively complacent regarding the maintenance of slavery in Maryland, allowing loyal slaveholders to retain their property. Yet, as the conflict continued, with Maryland weary over the blood spilled at Antietam and the direction of victory increasingly leading towards the Northern forces, the Lincoln Administration became resolute in its quest to rid the troubled nation of slavery, not only in the so-called rebel states, but also in the Union states where the institution of slavery continued. The Baltimore American, consistently Unconditional Unionist and supporter of the Lincoln Administration’s policies, was a proponent of statewide emancipation, and urged public acceptance of this political and social necessity. Through its yearlong thought-provoking, albeit at times controversial, dialogues, the paper strived to convince Maryland that freedom was necessary for any future progress. By the end of 1863, Maryland’s most influential newspaper had succeeded in swaying public opinion to Lincoln’s point of view, but the process had been neither smooth nor easy.

Brutal warfare ravaged the Maryland landscape in late 1862. Specifically, what would become known in the North as the Battle of Antietam, the first major confrontation of the Civil War, was fought primarily on September 17, 1862, near Sharpsburg, Maryland, and Antietam Creek. The Union managed this particular battle poorly. General George McClellan had failed to coordinate the attacks, allowing Confederate General Robert E. Lee to easily fight off the attacks, eventually leading to significant Northern
casualties. Despite to the grave tactical blunders, historians feel that the Union forces actually fought harder than in any other battle, culminating in significant casualties among Confederate troops as well. At the conclusion of the fighting, the Maryland countryside was saturated with blood. Nearly 6,000 men were dead or dying, and 17,000 others required medical attention.

Marylanders not directly in the fight were nonetheless in the line of fire, seeking shelter either outside of the Sharpsburg region or in their cellars. And when the battle was over, the citizens returned home to overwhelming devastation. In this agriculturally-dominated town, the rebellion had shattered the local economy, with homes, barns, livestock, and crops all destroyed. Remnants of the carnage would be present for months, with hospital tents constructed for surgeons to treat and house patients of both sides, remaining an active infirmary through December. Consequently, local townsmen were unable to escape the psychological torment of warfare. Antietam was strategically located in the Southern end of the state, in close proximity to the Virginia border. As such, the battle was a poignant reminder to the Union that the political climate within the state could prove to be a pivotal factor in their efforts to quash the rebellion.

Despite the horrors faced by both sides on the battlefield, Lincoln chose to label Sharpsburg/Antietam as a Union victory, and was felt that this was an appropriate point to release the Emancipation Proclamation, which declared freedom for slaves, but only in the “rebellious” states. Following the September 22 issuance, the Baltimore American declared that slavery in the United States was doomed. The paper was not concerned about the effects of the Proclamation on the Border States. Lincoln said that he intended

41 McPherson, Battle Cry of Freedom, 544.
42 Brugger, Maryland, A Middle Temperament, 290.
emancipation to apply only to states in the rebellion, thereby not pertaining to loyal slave states such as Maryland. However, the *American* editors clearly understood that reality indicated that this exemption could never hold any practical value:

> With Free States on both sides of her, who would care to own negroes here? And what possible advantage would we have over those obnoxious to the terms of the President’s manifesto in other states? As the matter stands even at present, negro property here has become so uncertain in the tenure that in many portions of our commonwealth, they are as good as free already.  

The “Free States” referenced here included Virginia and North Carolina. As Maryland is surrounded by Virginia—free under the Emancipation Proclamation—and Pennsylvania, where African-Americans were already freed, retaining slaves in Maryland would surely be impractical, as Maryland slaveholders would be isolated on an island, from which slave would have more escape routes. As a result, the Proclamation could not serve its purpose of preserving slavery for the loyal owners without ample enforcement.

The *American* also addressed the obvious question: if slavery was facing a natural demise, why was the Emancipation Proclamation necessary at all? The *American* contended that emancipation was an immediate wartime concern for the North because the Confederates had been using the slaves in their struggles against the Union. “[One] of the most striking anomalies of this war from the first [was] that the conspirators [were] privileged somehow in using means to destroy the Government denied to those whose duty it [was] to defend and save it.”  

In other words, the South was utilizing a resource that the loyal patriots were prohibited from possessing. Thus, the Emancipation Proclamation sought to equalize the field for the combatants.

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43 *Baltimore American*, September 24, 1862.
44 *Baltimore American*, September 29, 1862.
Moreover, the paper contended, Marylanders, who had experienced the war and its gory consequences while tending to the wounded at Antietam, would be quite willing to relinquish the privilege of slave ownership, if that was what was needed to end the destruction of war.

It is not the negro who has suffered in the fight, but men, mainly who have been victimized to an idea, and put in motion to destroy others, and powerless to reason themselves, they have to be turned back from their mad quest by cannon and musketry.45

In addition, the *American* reminded its readers, the war was not being fought by slaves nor were the front lines of Confederate units populated by slave owners. Rather, the Confederate regiments were comprised of men who were imbued with the false importance of states’ rights and independence so as to disguise slaveholders’ intrinsic financial motive. Thus, freeing the slaves would essentially render the wealthy rebels’ goals moot, possibly creating a resolution to a conflict which had already claimed too many lives on both sides. In accordance with this urgency, the prospect of emancipation and the Proclamation as a wartime necessity were prevalent in the paper throughout the remaining months of 1862.

As Maryland entered 1863, the attention of many politicians, both local and national, was concentrated on emancipation in Maryland and its importance in the upcoming state election. In March, the *American* printed a letter by Postmaster General Montgomery Blair, in which he reminded Maryland that although the state was technically exempted from enforcement of the Emancipation Proclamation, the issue of slavery could not be avoided. Blair knew that many were “terrified of the secession howl

45 Ibid.
of ['abolitionists.']”⁴⁶ Still, the issue could not be avoided, as the war was in part caused by indecision surrounding slavery. “[The] war now drenching the land in blood, which [was] due to this timidity, [would] at least teach us that to cower before traitors and adopt their slang [was] alike inconsistent with patriotism and self-respect.”⁴⁷ Within the same editorial, the American devoted lengthy coverage to Andrew Johnson, who would later become vice-president and president following Lincoln’s assassination. Johnson had been the Governor of Tennessee and represented the state at the Maryland Institute meeting. At that gathering, Johnson said that “if slavery, or aught else, [stands in the way of free government,] they must give way to it.”⁴⁸ The Baltimore American was perhaps publishing the opinions of prominent officials in order to sway its reader pool towards a policy favoring statewide emancipation, but, in any case, the paper’s persuasive, emancipationist voice continued to monopolize the discourse about the war and about slavery.

Nevertheless, while supporting the Republican ideals set forth by the Lincoln Administration, the paper was also willing to publish opposing arguments, thereby resulting in confusion among its readers. As the October elections drew ever closer, political tensions increased in the state. Therefore, correspondents begged for a clear, definitive stance from the American, considered one of Baltimore’s leading newspapers, on the question of emancipation.

In a front-page article in May 1863, the American finally gave in to this pressure, stating its argument that slavery hindered Maryland’s economic progress. Specifically, argued the article, “if slavery had been abolished in Maryland ten years ago it would rival

⁴⁶ Montgomery Blair’s letter, in Baltimore American, March 21, 1863.
⁴⁷ Ibid.
⁴⁸ Andrew Johnson’s Speech at the Maryland Institute meeting, in Baltimore American, March 21, 1863.
Massachusetts in manufactures, wealth, and commercial greatness."\(^{49}\) So, the sooner Maryland could rid itself of slavery, the better the economic prospects would be for present and future generations. The problem, continued the *American*, was that the strident antebellum abolition movements had hindered Maryland’s ability to see its own way out of the problems caused by slavery. “[Slavery] would long since have disappeared in Maryland if there had been no attempt made to force such a result.”\(^{50}\)

In spite of the criticisms of prior efforts to exterminate the institution, the *American* reminded its readers, Confederates had staked the fate of slavery as central to the conflict, but if the Confederacy fell, slavery would inevitably fall everywhere. And, even “[if] the rebellion [were to] triumph, which [was] not a possibility, the destiny of Maryland with the free North [was] now fixed and unmistakable.”\(^{51}\) It was becoming evident that slavery could no longer be profitable in Maryland no matter the outcome of the war. The sooner those Marylanders with vested interests in slavery accepted this, the quicker the state could progress and realize its potential.

Also, the *American* addressed the question of compensated emancipation, an option once considered viable in order to solve labor concerns. This method of vanquishing the institution placed Maryland in a problematic position. It required non-slaveholders to not only accept, but openly encourage the mass payment of governmental funds for relinquishing property depreciating in value with the progression of war. According to the *American*, “[if] the compensation proposition [was] to be accepted, [the paper argued] that the slaveholders themselves [were] the only parties [in positions to]\

\(^{49}\) *Baltimore American*, May 4, 1863.
\(^{50}\) Ibid.
\(^{51}\) Ibid.
apply to the Government for its bounty." Therefore, this policy was probably unjust, but in any case, the ultimate future of such a plan was undeniably in the hands of the Legislature. “The next Legislature [would] be ripe for action on the subject, and those representing the slave interest [would] be most urgent to secure compensation.” It is clear that the American comprehended the importance of the upcoming election for both sides of the emancipation debate, succinctly explicated its own opinions on the matter, and challenged its readers to think likewise.

As an example, the newspaper promoted the inevitable freeing of slaves by reprinting portions of a New York article that focused on the predictions of American Anti-Slavery Society leader Wendell Phillips. In the New York Commercial piece, Phillips declared that the war would continue “’till the sites of Richmond, Charleston, and Savannah were sowed with salt,” and their localities would subsequently be left to rot. To achieve Union victory, Phillips emphatically believed that abolitionists should continue to demand that Lincoln appoint radical thinkers like John C. Fremont. Fremont was a Union commander who was remembered for having issued a proclamation following the 1861 capture of Missouri, calling for the installation of martial law, confiscation of rebel property, and liberation of slaves. The more cautious President Lincoln demanded that Fremont take a more moderate position. When Fremont refused, the president relieved him of his command. Damaging his credibility with Republicans even further, Fremont’s wife met with Lincoln and urged him to reconsider, in the

52 Ibid.
53 Ibid.
54 New York Commercial, in Baltimore American, May 15, 1863.
process insulting the president’s intelligence by claiming that her husband possessed a superior intellect.\textsuperscript{55}

In contrast, the New York article also includes an outlandish quote from Theodore Tilton, who glorified the slaves. “Were all religion blotted out from the face of the earth, the plantation slaves would rehabilitate it, every doctrine. The Negro was in this greater than the white man, equal to the white woman.”\textsuperscript{56} This remark was probably intended to be flattering to the slaves and to those dedicated to the disruption of the slave trade. It was not likely admired by those still convinced that African-Americans were inferior, even while opposing slavery as a social body.

True, the article did reinforce the paper’s argument that a national policy of emancipation was vital for Maryland’s future. Yet, it is unclear why the editors decided to excerpt from the piece. During the period, the paper was published by Unconditional Unionist management, its opinions closely coinciding with those of the Lincoln Administration. The article in question endorsed the appointment of Fremont, a man who not only disobeyed his Commander-in-Chief’s request, but insulted him. The pursuit of emancipation in the United States—a priority for Unconditional Unionists—was merely a part of an overarching objective of preserving the Union. In a July story, the \textit{American} lamented that the Phillips school of abolitionism was taking credit for being the sole force behind emancipation, while at the same time, was demonstrating depraved indifference for the country’s welfare. Such an insensible path could potentially revitalize the Confederacy as the rebels’ influence stemmed from a resistance to the North’s desire to free the blacks and to reduce all laboring, landless individuals in the South into one caste.

\textsuperscript{55} McPherson, \textit{Battle Cry of Freedom}, 352-3.
\textsuperscript{56} \textit{Baltimore American}, May 15, 1863.
Given the resulting endgame of leveling the workers of the South, the non-slaveholding white Southerners could possibly be more willing to support the Confederacy, if only to maintain their superiority.

Whenever those eight millions of oppressed people see that the design of the North is to deliver them from that inferiority to the caste of [slave owners,] produced by subjection to competition with slave labor, or by submission to equality in political rights with their freed hirelings, then the non-slaveholders of the South will come to shed their blood to keep the negroes in thralldom, lest by being necessitated with them in a sort of hireling freedom, they at last be brought under a common yoke.\(^5^7\)

According to the *American*, instead of allowing the problematic scenario where the actions of a radical few provoked increased indignation among Southerners, the Free States would presumably tolerate elected power in the South, partially derived from the votes of emancipated blacks. This would likely happen upon the completion of the war in all slave states, including Maryland. Consequently, Phillips’s plan of usurping the president in order to satisfy his own agenda was both dangerously radical and quite unnecessary.

Unfortunately, Maryland was probably not the ideal locale for Phillips and his followers. Its citizens were anxious about the oath of allegiance necessary to vote in the upcoming election. The oath required voters to not only swear loyalty to the United States, but to President Lincoln and his mandates.\(^5^8\) The Phillips policies, on the other hand, were “directly the opposite of the policy of the president, who proclaimed that the Union was the foremost and final object sought for.”\(^5^9\) By the summer of 1863, the *American* strongly approved emancipation. In pursuing a concrete opportunity for

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\(^5^7\) *Baltimore American*, July 29, 1863.  
\(^5^8\) Wagandt, *The Mighty Revolution*, 156.  
freedom, the newspaper felt that such social phenomena should only be enacted in concert with the Lincoln Administration agenda.

Though it is not entirely clear what lay behind their thinking, the *American* editors’ decision to include Wendell Phillips’s doctrines was not necessarily an egregious error. On the contrary, the ideas presented provoked Marylanders to seriously consider the subject of emancipation and invited them to see their plight in a less parochial context. This was vital since the coming election would focus so deeply on the destiny of African-Americans. The paper provided ample evidence that the material should indeed be disconcerting to all Unconditional Unionists as the principles disregarded the status of the national government. All the same, the importance of emancipation should never be lost because of ill feelings towards this particular path. By presenting Phillips’s ideas as dangerously radical, the paper encouraged its readers to accept the Lincoln notions that were only mildly radical, and were confined within stringent legal parameters to ensure their legitimacy. In the coming election, voters needed to elect those who would draft a new constitution and back a convention as emancipation could be achieved via an avenue both approved by President Lincoln and consistent with state and federal laws.

A prominent factor contributing to the rapid decline of Maryland’s complacency and simultaneous acceptance of slavery’s inevitable demise was the enlistment of African-Americans for service in the Union Army. Here was an occurrence that the *Baltimore American* absolutely did not want its readers to ignore. The current enlistment ruling ordered General William Birney to enlist Maryland’s free black people. This was extremely controversial since the recruits would be drawn from the manual labor force in the predominantly free counties. Within these areas, the small, non-slaveholding farmers
who depended on these free black people for assistance would then be obliged to hire
slaves from local slave owners and to pay outrageous premiums for this scarce commodity. In addition, together with the outcries of their small fellow farmers, slave owners also resisted attempts to enlist slaves. The resistance stiffened as many recruiters seized slaves even without War Confiscation authorizations.\(^{60}\) The slave owners, arguing their constitutional right against property seizure, were outraged.

Judge Hugo Lennox Bond, a staunch abolitionist, wrote to Secretary of Defense Edwin Stanton. In the letter, subsequently copied in the \textit{American}, the jurist objected to Birney’s operating mandate as this order was, in essence, punishing the most loyal regions of the state. In fact, a great majority of slaveholders were still disloyal, apart from the oath of allegiance. Perhaps even more interesting, Bond also asserted that the right to own slaves was no more a “natural” right than the relationship between a master and an apprentice.

\begin{quote}
It is what the Constitution of Maryland calls it, and it is nothing more, ['the] relation of master and [slave.’] The right to hold the slave may be of more value than the right to the services of an apprentice. It may be the subject of inheritance, and not ending with the life of the party to whom service is due, as in the case of the parent and child, but the value of a thing does not alter its legal status or definition. The law deals with it in Maryland precisely as it deals with the relation of master and apprentice.\(^{61}\)
\end{quote}

Hence, this course of action, which gave advantages to slave owners, was unfair to the citizens of the state. What’s more, Bond contended that the slave was still a person, and should be eligible for the military draft. “The law of Maryland never [lost] sight of the fact that the party owing service [was] a person. The law of [congress regarded] him,


\(^{61}\) Judge Hugo Lennox Bond’s letter to Secretary of State Edwin Stanton, in \textit{Baltimore American}, September 7, 1863.
likewise, as a person, and that he [owed] military service.” Applying a legalistic mindset, the judge subsequently asked Stanton for an amended order approving the enlistment of all black men, whether enslaved or free. Only with non-discriminatory military regulations would the Union be able to muster the force necessary to defeat the South without providing aid for potential enemies.

In weighing Bond’s views, Stanton ultimately decided to enlist slaves as well as free black people. However, a caveat attached to the slave enlistment initiative promised that loyal slave owners would be compensated for their losses. A commission was established to hear and adjudicate the claims, and General Birney declared that the enlistment system was proceeding well. He reported that he had received “assurance of sympathy and aid from the loyal men of all parts of the State.” Given the financial incentives now available, “several gentlemen [had] either brought or sent their slaves for enlistment, desiring to give their aid to the Government; others [had] written urging [the general] to visit their counties.”

Despite the intrinsic incentives offered to slaveholders, Birney considered the enlistment process a positive step. He was optimistic about the future of military forces in Maryland. Specifically, Birney predicted that by October 1863, people would “see on the Eastern Shore the unusual sight of a regiment of native Marylanders, not a foreigner among them. [They would be] as good soldiers for new ones as [he had] seen in the army.” In effect, Birney observed that recruiting slaves, though operational only with the owner’s consent and an offer of compensation, could help enact unqualified change in the citizens’ morale. Armed Marylanders—black or white—were certainly an improvement over “foreigners” from other states monitoring local

62 Ibid.
63 *Baltimore American*, September 16, 1863.
64 Ibid.
communities. And once Maryland was patrolled by local soldiers, the connections between the state and the federal governments would assuredly grow stronger. An unrestricted recruiting drive obstacle could only expedite this inevitable, unavoidable—and ultimately positive—bond.

Even Governor Bradford, a Conservative Unionist who had consistently supported the property rights of slaveholders, realized that slave enlistments would eventually alter the status quo for black Marylanders. In response to the earlier letter circulated by Judge Bond, Bradford conceded in a correspondence to the *American* that the Constitution did not recognize slaves as subject to military duty. Still, the precedent existed for seized property to sustain a war effort and there was little reason why this could not apply to slaves. In particular, “[he conceived]…that the [president had] the right to [‘employ] and organize persons of African [descent,’] whether free or slave in such manner as he may deem necessary for the public defense.”

Latitude existed in Lincoln’s seizure powers. “[He could] take horses, cattle, or property of any description—even if this property should be slaves—giving compensation to loyal owners, and refusing pay, under the provisions of the Confiscation act, to those who are disloyal.”

Given prior confiscation rules, assuming that slaves were property, there was no reason why the Union Army could not appropriate slaves. The state’s white fighting contingents had depleted, and Bradford felt that this legal technicality should be overlooked to replenish Union troops.

So too, the governor admitted that slavery was quickly declining in the state.

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66 Ibid.
Compulsory slavery is...rapidly ceasing to exist in Maryland—in reality it does already cease to exist. In twelve months from [today.] with or without slave enlistments, there will not be a slave in Maryland who desires to be free, except the aged and infirm. The slaveholders’ rebellion has given the death blow to slavery in our State, and the great mass of those hold slaves have sympathized with and aided those who have taken up arms and shed the blood of the nation’s defenders—and we therefore say let them suffer, let them yield this portion of their property and aid in avenging the loyal blood already spilt.

Thus, the governor, well-respected and extremely popular among loyal slaveholders, was essentially declaring himself now in favor of emancipationist policies.

Governor Bradford’s revised stance on the slave owner’s plight was perhaps a sign that liberating slaves was inevitable in the state. Bradford understood that events were compelling him to alter his political views. After all, the Maryland politician was a fervent Unionist and, as such, wanted the Union to succeed. To add to this, the existing issues of the military draft in Maryland, both with the disproportionate numbers of free black recruits and the lack of white soldiers in local companies, dictated that modifications were inevitable. As a consequence, Bradford’s sole course of action was to encourage slave enlistment and its positive effects on the Union’s survival, even if the ultimate result would be permanent emancipation.

The comments laid forth by Bond, Bradford, and other likeminded thinkers, with their opinions printed in papers as the *Baltimore American*, gradually affected the prevailing local discourse on the future of the state. It is evident that the African-American question had forced Maryland and its premier theorists to devote increasing attention to it. To avoid unwarranted confusion, the *American* emphasized that the state should be absolved of all consideration for the South’s actions or desires, regardless of

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67 Ibid.
the course of action of Maryland citizens concerning slavery. The Deep South scorned interference from the Border States, even Virginia. The paper quoted the Charleston Mercury that had been repulsed by a compromise introduced by the Virginia leadership between the federal government and the Confederacy. “Let us act as if they had never come—as if they had not spoken—as if they did not exist …The time [had] gone by when the voice of a Virginia politician…[would] be heard in the land of a patriotic people.”

Even so, Maryland would not adhere to the political machinations of the Confederacy, or actively support any section of the South, in spite of its willingness to compromise on slavery. Maryland would not surrender its independence from the cotton regions as the state had suffered tremendous internal strife to for its betterment.

Maryland did not [yield.] She fell back on her reserved rights, and suffered these States that would have dragged her to destruction to take the road to ruin their own way. The result is that [today]—compared to them—her prosperity is wonderful, her losses as nothing. They have indeed, to a considerable extent, involved her—in common with other loyal States—in miseries and to contemplate. Large numbers of her people have paraded, many the victims of treason and madness; many, besides, as defenders of the State and of free government.

As one observes, the outcome of the Confederate in-fighting was virtually irrelevant to the future of Maryland. With this in place, the American assured readers that their responsibilities centered only on the interests of Maryland. For the periodical, this entailed voting for candidates who favored unrestricted emancipation as prescribed by Lincoln.

Undoubtedly, the newly-cemented support for emancipation was important not only for the state, but for the nation, especially given the close proximity of Washington,
D.C.. “When [Marylanders remembered] that the Capital of the nation [was] on [its]
soil—that Emancipation adopted by [the state freed] it forever, in the eyes of all nations,
from what to the civilized world [had] been more or less an [offense]—[the] action [was]
immeasurably enhanced in importance.”

In the eyes of the international community, freedom not only redeemed the state, but the country, adding even more pressure and interest regarding the outcome of the upcoming legislative election.

A week before the vote, the Baltimore American implored its audience to
discontinue all speculation with respect to probable outcomes. Slavery as an institution was dead. Contemplating how or why the events had occurred was counterproductive. Rather, the prime objective now was to extinguish slavery from Maryland forever. “[The Marylanders’] business…[was] to remove the rubbish of that explosion which has indeed [blown slavery to atoms.] The time for speculation [had] past- the duty of the people of Maryland, especially, [was] to act.”

Besides questioning the reasons surrounding the destruction, the paper discouraged its readers to express any doubt that the election would yield all but desired results. Expectations had to remain positive and non-wavering.

Already we have suffered quite enough from the doubts and dissensions that have, despite our best efforts, crept in our ranks; and at last, alive fully to the mighty issues at stake, let every one resolve, once for all, that no more idle speculations shall distract his attention from the main purpose of saving the Union and regenerating the State.

It is important to note that the Baltimore American no longer even feigned concern for the interests of slaveholders, whether loyal or not. Marylanders could not lose sight of the ultimate goal of this election. With a referendum favoring the Unconditional Unionists,

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70 Baltimore American, October 12, 1863.
71 Baltimore American, October 26, 1863.
72 Ibid.
the victors would unquestionably vote to hold a constitutional convention. A new constitution would subsequently be drafted and adopted, one that expressly outlawed slavery in the state and brought Maryland yet another step closer to its destiny with the Union.

As the excitement grew, on the day prior to the election, the Baltimore American became adamant about harmonizing and resolving all divisions within the state, and the country as a whole. The periodical excerpted the remarks of Andrew Schutman, originally presented before the Loyal League of Chicago. In this case, Schutman wanted all loyal men to understand each other.

[Let] them feel and know that they all anxiously and sincerely desire the early restoration of peace and the Union; and for the attainment of that one great, all-important end let them unite and act in harmonious [cooperation] and concord. First let the nation be saved, and leave the question of what shall then be done with the revolted States, and problems of similar nature, to be solved when the proper time comes. This Republic must be preserved only by the unity and determination of the loyal people.73

To be sure, Schutman strongly believed that there should be unity among Marylanders as they headed to the polls, as the safety of the country depended upon their unanimity. There could be no dissent.

Yet, a divided front within Maryland’s supporters of the Union could not be surprising to any local readers. After all, those from the Eastern Shore and Southern Maryland technically encouraged close ties with the Union. In contrast with the more radical ideals of Northern Maryland localities including Baltimore, the Conservative Unionists of the lower counties that slavery and Unionism could coexist. Thus, the newspaper urged the Unconditional Unionists to “have patience with such of their

73 Andrew Schutman’s remarks before the Loyal League of Chicago, in Baltimore American, November 3, 1863.
brethren in the ranks as being weak-kneed, or slow to discern the facts, complain that too much ultraism exists.”

This violent war was educating all throughout America, and Maryland would not be able to escape such a vital, but humbling, process.

On November 4, 1863, the day the election for Maryland legislature delegates and congressional representatives was held, the American considered it prudent to remind its readers of the pertinent issues. Indeed, the fundamental concern was whether Maryland was to “to take her place forever in the mighty galaxy of Free States, of prosperous commonwealths.” In stark contrast, the alternative was “to manifest a purpose still to trail along in the rear of the Cotton States, in the demonstrated purposes of the latter to overthrow free government and to cling to that system which, in the monstrous evils and ruins it has wrought.”

It is quite evident that the paper had no sympathy for malcontents among eligible voters. All voters should understand their responsibilities to support the president. Lincoln may have erred in judgement at times. However, the American argued, Lincoln would not cheat the electorate out of its constitutional rights or liberties. Lincoln, as the president, supported by Maryland citizens, would ultimately save the Union.

The President...has done his duty by Maryland—has done it kindly, considerably, faithfully; and if there can be anything in the decision of Maryland that will encourage him still in the line of duty, let it demonstrate a determined purpose to stand by him to the end. In thus honoring him we honor ourselves, and more—we save ourselves.

In effect, the Baltimore American encouraged voters to cast their ballots for a presumably selfless president who had labored tirelessly in the quest for freedoms and privileges.

Slavery was virtually non-existent by the time of this publication, and hence “saving” the

74 Baltimore American, November 3, 1863.
75 Baltimore American, November 4, 1863.
76 Ibid.
institution was almost irrelevant. However, the paper promised its readership that the benefits of Union affiliation would outweigh the loss, and would yield a positive outcome for the state.

So, it certainly was no surprise to standing *Baltimore American* patrons when the Unconditional Unionists were victorious in capturing the state legislature and the Maryland congressional seats. The newspaper headline pronounced Maryland “by the verdict of her own people prospectively a free state.” However, the state was not truly free until the newly elected legislature convened a constitutional convention. At such time, the delegates would draft a constitution to be voted upon the following year.

Nevertheless, the election of 1863 represented the culmination of the progressive disintegration of slavery and Southern influences throughout the country. This decision constituted “a wonderful revolution in popular sentiment” especially considering what a “strong…hold [slavery] had obtained on the whole country, arrogant in its pretensions and tyrannical in the requirements.” Political power was no longer in the hands of slave owners, as the votes demonstrated unopposed support for the Unconditional Unionists.

Although this change in voting that aided increasingly radical candidates seemed to appear quite sudden, the *American* contended that slavery had caused its own demise. Specifically, the institution reveled in toleration of the status quo, and was ruthless in its demands of all who attempted to alter it, perhaps precipitating its fate. The paper encouraged Maryland’s Southern loyalists to accept their fate. “[The] most determined and incredulous amongst Southern sympathizers here [had to] at last appreciate his position, unless he [was] content to fall entirely behind in the race for success and for prosperity…[The] verdict of yesterday [indicated] plainly that the loyal of the state

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77 *Baltimore American*, November 5, 1863.
[intended] to control the state—[indicated] beyond question that they [had] the power to do so.”  

With the concessions of the election, all Marylanders, despite previous ideologies, could pursue new sources of prosperity. As a consequence, there was little reason to begrudge the results. After all, insisted the American, the gains vastly outweighed the losses. Furthermore, the Baltimore American itself did not hint to any indications of impropriety. In fact, the paper promoted the election as the epitome of a fair, democratic revolution that the every Marylander should applaud.

Still, the paper reported that the unsuccessful party was clamoring over alleged voters’ rights violations during the electoral process. The newspaper decried the complaints as “carping and mouthing in a manner quite edifying to witness.”

Surely, these cries of misconduct were surely not worthy of the attention of loyal Marylanders.

We hope and trust, then, that this unwonted clamor over ['violated rights,'] gotten up by the secessionists of the [state,] will neither alarm [nor] deceive any. We have shown how utterly shameless and brazen they were in their purposes to establish an iron-handed tyranny here, had they but succeeded in attaining power, ['by] the aid of the [Confederates.'][

More to the point, the means of victory would never be an issue as long as the Unconditional Unionists remained empowered. Therefore, the American requested the government to uphold the elected results, in order that the votes of the loyal citizens would not be neutralized, lost to doubt and rebuttal. Moreover, faction leaders were briefed not to interfere with the transition process. Here, if heads were not proactive in forging onward themselves, they would not hamper the progress of those desiring to achieve a better destiny for their state or their country.

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78 Ibid.
79 Baltimore American, November 23, 1863.
80 Ibid.
But, in striving to maximize the optimism and excitement of the newfound emancipation, the *American* failed to adequately articulate the costs of such a landslide victory. The voting rights of Maryland citizens had indeed been compromised. In specific, General Orders no. 53, requiring the administration of an oath to suspect voters, was liberally interpreted by zealous military officers who prevented many citizens from voting, all to the advantage of freedom radicals. As a consequence, Conservative Unionists including Congressman John Crisfield of the Eastern Shore were denied their destined seats. There was speculation that soldiers had prohibited Crisfield’s own brother from casting his ballot. Nevertheless, while the Conservatives challenged the election and were eventually granted an investigation by the Lincoln Administration, the military commission appointed to review the case exonerated all accused officers.\(^1\)

In this instance, the fact that a hearing was authorized may imply that the president possibly questioned that Crisfield was truly a traitor and disloyal to the Union. The Conservative Unionist-affiliated *Annapolis Gazette* expressed dismay concerning the military interference in the election. Annapolis was located in the Southern portion of the state, where slaves were vital to the local economy. The state capital was a trading center for Anne Arundel County farmers, whose produce depended on slave labor.\(^2\) The *Annapolis periodical* published a notice seeking witness accounts of the military actions, with statements from both Crisfield and President Lincoln. First, Crisfield asked “all persons having knowledge of the misconduct of any military officer, at, or in reference to the recent election, to give information thereof by affidavit duly attested.”\(^3\) Such a

\(^{1}\) Wagandt, *The Mighty Revolution*, 184.


\(^{3}\) Congressman John W. Crisfield’s statement, in *Annapolis Gazette*, November 26, 1863.
solicitation is not shocking, as Crisfield would want justification for invalidating the election. Interestingly, within the same announcement was Lincoln’s letter to Montgomery Blair. This offered the postmaster general the jurisdiction to “let Mr. [Crisfield] procure the sworn statements of the election judges…as to what [could have been] deemed misconduct of any military officer, and present it to [him.]” In other words, the president wished to determine whether overzealous Union personnel had cheated Crisfield from office.

Why would Lincoln be inclined to collect evidence potentially damaging to key army officials based solely on complaints from the opposing party? Lincoln’s proposition to weigh any proof upholding Crisfield’s contention was due not only to a desire for justice, but his respect for the Maryland congressman, and his concern that citizens in loyal slave states view the federal administration as responsive to their concerns. The two politicians disagreed on the question of emancipation. A resident of the Eastern Shore, Crisfield viewed slavery as a benevolent patriarchy. He feared government intrusion with regards to slavery and was appalled by the compensated emancipation initiative, which Crisfield considered bribery for fundamental rights. Despite this topic of dissension, Lincoln saw Crisfield as a man of courage and unabated patriotism. He had been a spokesman for the loyalty of Border States that Lincoln could not afford to alienate. The president saw Crisfield as a potential ally, albeit reserved, and probably wished to reinstall him into office, so as to silence the more aggressive Conservative Unionists. Yet, the Baltimore American failed to consider the possibility that some Conservative Unionist victories could actually have been beneficial for the Unconditional Unionists, if

84 President Lincoln’s letter to Montgomery Blair, in Annapolis Gazette, November 26, 1863.
only to lessen the animosity between the two groups and to minimize the appearance of inappropriate voter screening tactics on Election Day.

It is quite unfortunate that the American did not sufficiently debate this travesty of American democracy nor did it express any outrage. True, most of these military operations occurred on the Eastern Shore and in southern Maryland. So, it seems logical that a paper concentrating on the Baltimore metropolitan area would not have devoted considerable efforts to this story. Still, the paper not only ignored the episode, but dismissed it as an inconsequential annoyance. In doing so, it erroneously misjudged the figures involved and the fundamental constitutional issues at stake.

The fate of Maryland was always vital to the outcome of the American Civil War. Antietam cemented the state’s importance as a central location, for both armies made it the battleground for one of the bloodiest days of the conflict. As the war continued, the Lincoln Administration strived to remove the Border State complacency with regards to the slavery question, and pursued an emancipation initiative. The Unconditional Unionist-affiliated Baltimore American supported the shift in the Lincoln agenda and in 1863, established itself as a venue for emancipationist discourse. The paper’s conclusions were particularly troubling following the election. In this particular political contest, freedom was assured, but the costs, though high, were nowhere to be seen in the American.
Chapter 4

1864: Freedom and Reelection

The election of October 1863 solidified Maryland’s position with the Union, despite controversy surrounding the results. Now, the American rejoiced that the state was “saved at last and [headed] for a nobler destiny than to be a pashalic at the disposal of Jefferson Davis.” While symbolically free, the state faced a constitutional convention and general election before emancipation became the law of the land. But the future remained treacherous and murky, as the nation looked forward to a presidential election the coming November that threatened to depose Lincoln, perhaps sweeping away the tolerant Republican foundation on which Maryland’s fragile loyalty stood. As the polarizing issues were presented to the public, the editors of the Baltimore American, like many politically-minded thinkers in Maryland, fused the constitutional and presidential questions, rendering the debates all-encompassing.

As 1864 opened, the American was fully aware of the responsibilities challenging the new legislature and the importance of success, especially given the overwhelming victory of the Unconditional Unionists during the recent political contest. The delegates were already deeply immersed in the details of actions to advance the pertinent interests of the state. In particular, the newspaper strongly believed that the Maryland legislators needed to expedite the emancipation process in order to link the issue to the agricultural cycle.

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86 Baltimore American, December 3, 1863.
[There] is demand for immediate action in [the direction of emancipation], such as cannot be exaggerated in its importance; because the moment it becomes evident to people abroad that legislation has been had looking to making Maryland a Free State at an early day, this assurance of itself will doubtless do much towards turning the current of labor this way, giving us perhaps before another season for agricultural effort is here much needed aid which otherwise may pass us by altogether.  

It was quite clear to the Baltimore periodical that aid was crucial for the farmers who would abruptly lose their slave labor supply, and would be dependent upon free labor. Although the American could not speculate regarding the possible sources of workers at this point, the paper did realize that free workers would never be attracted to Maryland as long as slave competition depressed the workers’ wages. The outcome of the election was a referendum for emancipation. As such, the legislature had no occasion for hesitation or restraint in meeting the demands. A large number of Marylanders had felt victimized by the slavery-preserving ambitions of the South. So, it is not surprising that the upcoming constitutional convention would likely be influenced by the deliberations that transpired during this session in Annapolis.

In conjunction with an emphasis on introducing free labor, the American discussed the feasibility of a gradual decrease of slave power in the lower counties of the state. According to the paper, in one election district of prior disloyal counties, 48 men had sought camaraderie with the Confederacy. In other words, these results demonstrated the price of such betrayal. Indeed, “few of them [had] returned to Maryland, most having perished by disease or [battle. Yet] large numbers of the very men—the slaveholders who misled them to their sad doom—[were] left behind.”

Yes, wealthy Confederate sympathizers had deceived impoverished citizens to cross the state lines to fight for the

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87 Baltimore American, January 8, 1864.
88 Baltimore American, February 4, 1864.
enemy. But, with the upshot of the recent election, slaveholders were losing their firm grasps on traditionally faithful individuals.

Just as slaves were being freed due to increased obstacles such as Union enlistment, non-landholding whites were liberated from the inhibiting sentiments of the South, as radically different worldviews became available to them. Poor, white Marylanders were now being exposed to new, liberal ideas that had originated in the North and would eventually mold Maryland into a free state. “Rampant and brave in their shortsightedness and folly in the onset, they [had] have been humbled, taught that lesson of obedience to constituted authority, without which all human government [was] indeed but a rope of sand.”

As the constitutional convention approached, public discourse on the issue was impossible to avoid, thereby leading to a more broadly-informed white voter populace. The American continued to publish this optimistic anecdote as the time for emancipation drew ever closer.

On April 6, an election was held to determine the fate of the convention and to choose delegates. Preceding the election, the American examined the qualities of prospective representatives. After all, the future of the state was at stake with the outcome of the constitutional considerations. As a consequence, the paper felt that the chosen men should be wise, philosophical individuals who were honest in their convictions.

Whilst these are desirable qualifications for legislators ordinarily, they are necessary qualifications for members of the Convention. The work they will have to perform will tend to the advancement or retardation of our social condition as it may be will or badly done. Those who have it to do should be able to adjust the organic law to the requirements of the people of the State, recognizing their present status, and providing for their improvement.

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89 Ibid.
90 Baltimore American, February 27, 1864.
It was vital that the candidates comply with the wishes of the populace concerning emancipation. Even more important, the decisions reached at the convention needed to hold weight in the community. More precisely, the potential delegates must not have private axes to grind, or place their own interests ahead of the electorate. It is sensible that such individuals would never be welcome by the *American* as the integrity of the new state Constitution would in essence be judged before ratification in the upcoming October election.

Following the delegate selection, the *American* refocused its efforts to remind readers of Maryland’s duty to its country. In fact, most citizens did not understand that the Unionists in the state were irrefutably devoted to the United States. “[The paper felt] quite sure that they [needed] only to be convinced that any given measure [was] essential to the welfare of the Republic to give it their sanction. Evils of long standing are hard to eradicate.”91 And, regardless of the apparent sluggishness of the population in accepting an end to slavery, the periodical expressed gratitude for the rapid development of “healthy” opinions on the subject of African-Americans.

Next, by using the writings of the Founding Fathers, the *American* set out to illustrate that slavery was truly incompatible with the foundations of this nation. For example, in a letter to John Mercer, George Washington professed that he “never [meant]…to possess another slave by purchase, it…among my first wishes to see some plan adopted by which Slavery, in this country [could] be abolished by law.”92 Washington, a member of the Virginia landed gentry and a slave owner, recognized the evolution of the socioeconomic landscape and subsequently acted accordingly. This was

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91 *Baltimore American*, April 7, 1864.
similar to the expectations of the *American* in the selection of the delegates. Moreover, in drafting the national Constitution, James Madison remarked that he “thought it wrong to admit in the Constitution the idea that there could be property in man.”

Thus, it can be surmised that these newly appointed delegates to the Maryland constitutional convention, who would likely have read the paper, would certainly be impressed by the rationales formulated in the original Law of the Land.

In the midst of heated discussions propelling the convention, the *American* appealed to the slaveholders to accept the idea that emancipation in Maryland was a foregone conclusion. True, the convention had yet to pass a new constitution. Still there was agreement at the Union caucus that the document would be bound by the popular verdict of immediate, uncompensated emancipation. As a result, slave owners had to reconcile their minds with the change. In this case, empirical evidence provided reassurance that freeing the slaves would actually benefit wealthy farmers. “The enhanced value of their lands, the increased product of their farms, the superior economy of hired labor over involuntary servitude, will all by their unerring appeals to the pocket, demonstrate more satisfactorily this labored argument the errors under which they have always rested.”

Undoubtedly, freed servants could seek employment elsewhere. Even so, it was reasonable to postulate that many would cling to their current homes, working for the same employers.

In this vein, the *American* urged owners to assume the responsibility of elevating the self-worth and stature of African-Americans by facilitating rudimentary educational programs. “[It was believed that slaves were] readily wrought upon by kindness, and

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93 James Madison’s remarks, in *Baltimore American*, April 7, 1864.
94 *Baltimore American*, May 21, 1864.
easily persuaded by considerable attention to their wants. [They were to receive] fair wages as an inducement to hard labor, and the advantages of evening schools as a reward for faithful exertion.95 Surely, efforts by slaveholders to ease tensions with labor would better position them to maintain their agricultural operations without the additional costs of attracting or importing outside help. Since the fate of slavery was sealed, it was mandatory that the American not only stress resignation to the new reality, but preparation for it as well. For, if the farmers were confident in their futures, they might be less likely to protest the emancipation path of the convention.

On September 6, 1863, the delegates passed the new Constitution by a vote of 53 to 20. In the last wave of arguments, similar to many issues raised earlier by the American, the more conservative delegates pursued a compromise to emancipation through apprenticeships. Some moderates joined, fearing that society would ultimately suffer if African-Americans were freed without adequate provisions for them. Though the Constitution did contain an article legalizing apprenticeships for minors incapable of parental assistance, the delegates subsequently voted against this tenet. Furthermore, voters would be required to pledge an oath of allegiance. Thus, slave owners could not vote to obstruct freedom. Finally, though less important to the issues at hand, the Maryland Constitution of 1864 introduced the position of lieutenant governor to the state hierarchy and created a public school system.96 The latter provisions demonstrated necessary progress in the political fortunes of the state, even as the electoral restrictions marked a step backwards. As the document was forwarded to the populace for approval, the more moderate voters required these incentives to assure a positive outcome.

95 Ibid.
However, the political landscape of fall 1864 did not solely center on emancipation. Here, Lincoln faced reelection and a challenge by Democrat George McClellan. McClellan was the most popular Democrat in contention and, being a former Union general, the most powerful symbol of opposition to Lincoln’s war policies. Although his platform was vague as to how or whether the renowned soldier would seek peace, his supporters assured disbelievers that he would restore the Union through nonviolent means. To reassure potential voters, as doubts of McClellan’s pacifism persisted, George Pendleton, an antiwar congressman from Ohio, was selected as his running mate. Additionally, in determining the party agenda, Clement Vallandigham called for a convention to arrange a swift peace with Southern leaders. Unfortunately, this controversial platform seemed to place peace as the first priority and the Union as a distant second. Republicans and Confederates alike interpreted it this way and responded accordingly.97

Following this, the *Baltimore American* was quick to criticize the Democratic presidential nominee. McClellan’s past course of action and present companionship illustrated his lack of substance and willingness to sacrifice the means in pursuing preferred ends. Furthermore, the Baltimore paper believed strongly that the politician possessed such little patriotism that “a few defeats of the Union arms would prove highly acceptable to him.”98 On the other hand, if he was elected, the pressures brought by the Copperheads, or peace Democrats, would perhaps result in immediate schemes for peace. Their backing was crucial to a victory in the general election. Nonetheless, the possibility that McClellan would pander to a Copperhead agenda was very real and frightening.

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97 McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 771-772
98 *Baltimore American*, September 22, 1864.
Moreover, with Pendleton as the vice-presidential nominee, the writers postulated that the situation could prove even worse for the country if McClellan died in office. “The integrity of the American Union would be at an end, the supremacy of the Constitution would be scouted at, loyal expression would be stifled, and patriotic effort would be paralyzed.”

As an Unconditional Unionist publication and vehement supporter of the war effort, the *American* opposed any compromise to expedite peace. In this case, peace would emerge following a definitive victory by the Union Army. A decisive ending to the conflict was especially necessary in Maryland where Confederate advocates still resided. The state could be united only if a unified nation was secured.

The objections to McClellan were not limited solely to his peace prerogative, for the *American* feared that the Democrat lacked the experience and skills required of a president, particularly during wartime. McClellan was a military man, and a quite indecisive one at that. He had demonstrated no skill as a statesman nor had he ever displayed the capacity for diplomacy. Also, McClellan had been overly conservative regarding slavery and had tried to convince Lincoln that a declaration of radical views, especially concerning slavery, would rapidly disintegrate the army. “[Had] it not been for the overpowering opposition of McClellanite [Copperheads, congress] would have passed the bill for the [constitutional] abolition of slavery.”

Based on his military record, the *American* concluded that McClellan was not prepared for the rigors of the presidency.

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99 Ibid.
100 *Baltimore American*, September 27, 1863.
His irresolution would pave the way for intrigues without number on the part of those designing and unscrupulous demagogues who are ever ready to take advantage of inferior shrewdness, and the nation would be at the mercy of a cabal which would not hesitate to sacrifice to the supposed interests of the South all the advantages we have gained, and even the Union itself.\textsuperscript{101}

In other words, McClellan’s weak presence would potentially provide Southern leaders the advantage in peace negotiations. If the Confederacy were to gain the upper hand in such negotiations, the national government could lose its credibility with the populace. As Maryland awaited ratification of its new constitution, it was imperative to the proponents of the emancipation initiative that the provisions of their constitution would have the support of a stable, strong government. This would not be feasible if McClellan lacked the approval of the American people.

The two political campaigns, ratification of the state Constitution and the national presidential race, became more connected as the voting days drew closer. At the beginning of October, the \textit{American} exclaimed that both elections were vital to those who cared about patriotism. In their minds, the political struggles were auxiliaries of the battlefield combat. In fact, the results at the polls, the paper argued, would be more important than a victory in war. “The triumph of [free] principles at the ballot-box at this juncture [was] of infinitely greater moment than any victories in the field.”\textsuperscript{102} Similarly, losses in either the state or national decisions would be crushing.

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{102} \textit{Baltimore American}, October 6, 1864.
The loss of the State election will have the effect of riveting more firmly the chains of Slavery, with all its baleful consequences, upon our moral and material interests; the loss of the National election will not only neutralize past gains and triumphs, and make a mockery of past sacrifices, but will pave the way for severer sacrifices, and lead to the worst form of National humiliation—the loss of National honor…[Success] at the polls is victory over the traitors in our camp, the foes of our own household.103

To avoid setbacks, the patriots of the state needed to express more enthusiasm for success than ever before. The country was in danger because of powerful enemies and ignorant citizens. The paper was confident that if the people realize the risks, and the interconnectedness of the issues, victory would be certain. Lincoln and unconditional defeat of the Confederacy was to be favored over McClellan and a disgraced, compromised Union.

To the American, October 12, the date of the statewide elections to ratify its new constitution, was devoted to the articulation of the wishes of Marylanders. The electorate had to consider the questions highlighted by the convention. The opportunity for debate had long passed.

We can no longer halt between two options. The time for discussion has gone by, and the time for action has arrived. Maryland expects every voter to do his duty. That duty concerns not the present merely, but the future; it involves not so much our own happiness as the peace of our children.104

Moreover, with the encouragement afforded by a free constitution, the paper predicted limitless prosperity for the state. That day, in a national struggle between freedom and servitude, Maryland occupied a conspicuous place. Thus, it was in the best interest of all liberation champions that as many votes as possible be cast. With the presidential election

103 Ibid.
104 Baltimore American, October 12, 1864.
drawing near, the high-profile nature of the ratification process could reflect positively or negatively on Lincoln’s political fate.

Even as the state ballots were being counted, the *American* continued its comparison of the presidential election to the war, claiming that neglecting one’s national duty could be considered “criminal to the highest degree.” The ramifications of even the slightest indifference would clearly be manifested in this campaign. The Unionist periodical was hoping to provide Lincoln with an impressive, unforgettable majority win. “The aim [was] to obtain such an expression of loyal sentiment as [would] overwhelm all opposition, disbanding the Rebel allies in the North and at the same time disarming the traitors in the South.” A referendum in the presidential election would be a symbol of gratitude for an individual who had personally sacrificed for the national welfare. Particularly in Maryland, the president had devoted much time and attention over the previous three years to ensure safety and stability. In the editorial offices of the *American*, Unionist tension ran high, and its readers were carried along on the newspaper’s presentation of Maryland’s plight, as the paper both reported and helped cultivate the drama.

At last, the Maryland Constitution of 1864 was officially ratified on October 29. Two days later, the *Baltimore American* boasted the headline “FREE MARYLAND!” Governor Bradford declared that “the *American’s* pet scheme,” the name coined by a Port Tobacco publication in recognition of the Baltimore newspaper’s earnestness, had indeed become fact. The *American* editors were not ashamed of this association. In addition, the paper deemed it correct in emphasizing the political and economic matters as opposed to

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105 *Baltimore American*, October 22, 1864.
106 Ibid.
moral concerns. “Moral suasion would have been love’s labor loss…with an oligarchic class, who…would not see in that light. We therefore chiefly made our appeal to the tender spot—their pocket…. [We cooperated] with those who were engaged in the grand work of reform, regardless of opposition, heedless of taunts, indifferent to jeers.”

Slavery, in effect, had had a deteriorating influence on the character of those who sustained it, so potent that one could not see the institution’s ethical flaws.

Yet, this ideological conflict was no longer a concern. “Maryland [was] free. She [had] joined hands with those which…preceded her in the march of freedom, and twenty Free States now [glittered] in the diadem of the Union. The borders of human liberty [now] extended to the Potomac” Maryland was receiving congratulatory messages from the loyal regions of the North, welcoming her into the sisterhood of free states. The American was grateful for this strengthened alliance with the North and anticipated the economic benefits that would accrue from this merger. Now, both the American and the Union could focus all their energies on securing the presidency, and subsequently the country.

In an atmosphere of unbearable anxiety, the presidential election was finally held on November 8. The Copperheads’ problematic peace strategy, which worried many Democratic voters, divided the party, allowing the united Republicans to achieve a landslide. The Baltimore paper announced the ending as “the grandest demonstration ever given of the efficiency of popular Government, and the grandest triumph of popular subjection to law, order and liberty.” Additionally, the paper hailed Lincoln as the epitome of human progress, civil liberty, social improvement, and humanitarian growth.

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107 *Baltimore American*, October 31, 1864.
108 Ibid.
109 *Baltimore American*, November 9, 1864.
With Lincoln’s victory, the *American* proclaimed, as well as the recent ratification of the Constitution, the Union would now not only be restored, but would be more secure. Maryland especially would never again be susceptible to rebellious pressures. Thus, also, a “Southern” newspaper based in a slave-infested city had been transformed over a two-year period into a Union mouthpiece.

Following the sweeping victory of the Unconditional Unionists in 1863, the *Baltimore American* concentrated its journalistic influences on composing a constitution adhering to the emancipation referendum. The publication was a staunch supporter of Lincoln and the freedom initiative, therefore combining the topics whenever presented to the Maryland populace. Both reelection and emancipation were key components in defeating the Confederacy. The future of Maryland, its citizens ideologically divided, depended not only on peace, but also on a clear demonstration of the superiority of a Republican-controlled Union.
Conclusion

Through the early years of the war, Union censorship and fear thereof provided the *Baltimore American* the opportunity to shine, shaping public opinion, and covering statewide emancipation and the 1864 election without significant competition. However, after the elections, the *American* had lost its monopoly. By early 1865, the *Baltimore Sun* had lifted its four-year voluntary moratorium on editorials. With this renewed option, Baltimore readers were again in a position to adjust the ideological spectrum of their primary news sources, as the *Sun* catered to more conservative worldviews than the *American*.

While the *Baltimore American* clearly remained a Republican voice through the nineteenth century, the *Sun*’s owner, Arunah S. Abell, considered his publication a gentlemanly paper, and adopted a posture based on class as well as politics, being careful to avoid any semblance of vulgarity. In addition, to further establish itself as the predominant Baltimore newspaper, Abell produced morning and afternoon editions as well as the Sunday copy, and from 1876 to 1916, issued the *Sun Almanac*, containing facts and figures about Maryland and Baltimore. The *Sun* was also a pioneer with the telegraph, receiving long-range stories and thereby increasing its prestige.\(^{110}\) Though upstaged by the *Sun*, the *American* held its own, continuing to pursue progressive agendas throughout its existence. For instance, during the Women’s Rights movements at the turn of the twentieth century, the paper promoted an active role for women in society, encouraging them to transcend the traditional societal boundaries and enter men’s

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professions. The periodical even employed female writers. From 1887 to 1891, Hester Richardson wrote under the pseudonym “Selene,” while also contributing to the *New York Herald*. But the *American’s* progressive views on politics and social policy could not protect the paper from the fate that befell many an American newspaper in the wake of television and radio. The *American* ultimately met its demise due to low circulation and an inability to compete with the *Sun*, first merging in 1964 with the *Baltimore News-Post* to create the *Baltimore News-American*, then ceasing publication in 1986. The *Sun* still remains the sole major newspaper in the Baltimore metropolitan area.

The *Sun’s* reemergence in 1865 reflected an overarching movement towards conservatism in Maryland following the adoption of the new state Constitution. The state elections of 1864, besides ratifying the constitution and reelecting Lincoln, had left Maryland Unconditional Unionists in disarray. Thomas Swann succeeded Augustus Bradford as the new governor, running on a Conservative Unionist platform and challenging both the traitorous Democrats and the more radical Unconditional Unionists. However, the shifting power base was not immediate. Bradford charged lawmakers in January 1865 to implement the Constitution, destroying much of the antebellum slave code. But, more provocative legislation, including the Registry Bill that listed voters by registrars and therefore disqualified Democrats returning from Confederate service, met with more resistance than would have persisted the previous year.

Furthermore, the radical faction forfeited its spokesperson when Henry Winter Davis was succeeded by a conservative candidate. Davis had previously lost much national respect as a result of the Wade-Davis Manifesto of 1864, in which the Maryland

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111 Fox, “Social-Cultural Developments from the Civil War to 1920,” 560-561.
congressman clashed with Lincoln over plans for governing and restricting the rebellious states. Specifically, he maneuvered a bill through both houses of Congress, known as the “Wade-Davis Bill.” This legislation called for stricter requirements than Lincoln envisioned in his ten percent plan when accepting Confederate states back into the Union. In the latter strategy, reentry to the Union would be permitted when ten percent of a given state’s voters from the 1860 presidential election swore an oath of allegiance and pledged to abide by emancipation. Lincoln ignored this bill upon its presentation, much to the bitter chagrin of its scribe. Davis publicly denounced the president, but Americans in the end sympathized with Lincoln, who had guided them tirelessly through the Civil War. As can be seen, radicalism was rapidly fading for the majority of Americans. As the war was winding down with the Appomattox surrender of April 1865, there was no longer a demand for Unconditional Unionists in Maryland, or in the United States. The Union had won. Imposing severe punitive restrictions on the Confederacy would not alter the outcome.

The ultimate undermining of the extreme branches of Unionism rescued Charles B Calvert from historical blasphemy. During its heyday in the midst of rebellion, the Baltimore American was quick to question the loyalties of the self-proclaimed “Unconditional Unionist” and slaveholder supporter. Had the radicals maintained their rule, Calvert would never have been treated favorably in the Maryland annals given his ideological conflicts with the state government and the press. In fact, historians credit Calvert for his contributions to agricultural reform. The former congressman served as president of the Maryland State Agricultural Society, and subsequently as vice president of the United States Agricultural Society. Calvert’s efforts were pivotal to the

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113 Wagandt, The Mighty Revolution 240.
establishment of the Maryland Agricultural College in Prince George’s County, the first agricultural research college in America. This institution is also significant as it later became the site for the University of Maryland, College Park.\textsuperscript{114} Calvert’s long-term contributions to Maryland’s education system far outweigh the criticism advanced by the extremists in the tension of warfare. While the \textit{American}’s uncertainty with respect to the congressman’s allegiances may have been important at the time, persistence in approaching the topic after the war would surely be trivial and unnecessary.

No work on emancipation can be complete without examining the lives of African-Americans prior to freedom and its impact on their destinies. After the ratification of the new Constitution, the \textit{Baltimore American} assured black Marylanders that there would be no shortage of employment opportunities.

The field of employment is broad, and laborers are needed; the harvest is plenteous, and reapers are in demand. It is with the colored artisan as with any other—if he is of little account, he will meet with proportionately small employment; if his services are indispensable to his fellow men, he will be universally sought after.\textsuperscript{115}

Thus, the paper believed that emancipated African-Americans would enter the same employment market as free white laborers, with demand for services dependent upon possession of specialized skills. It is true that many former slaves experienced immediate gains in geographic mobility and improved self-reliance. More specifically, freedmen often left the farms and plantations to reside and work elsewhere, or bargained with their former masters to develop free contractual arrangements. Washington, D.C. attracted many African-Americans, offering the most convenient alternative to the agricultural labor of Southern Maryland and a source of food and shelter provided by the federal

\textsuperscript{114} Brugger, \textit{Maryland, A Middle Temperament}, 376.
\textsuperscript{115} \textit{Baltimore American}, November 14, 1864.
government. In Baltimore, assistance was available from the federal Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands. This organization received further aid from private entities such as the Baltimore Quakers’ Friends Association in Aid of Freedman. Despite this, moving to Baltimore or Washington was not mandatory for African-Americans to gain autonomy. Many emancipated individuals merely traveled to an adjacent county, particularly on the Eastern Shore, where the labor shortage had increased the need for voluntary workers. This chance allowed them to perform similar tasks as when they were enslaved, but with expanded personal assurance and growth.

Still, while African-Americans did enjoy some freedoms in determining their futures, they were still bound to a social system very much under white control. True, laborers could negotiate contracts. But landowners held the advantage in defining these agreements. In particular, employers many times colluded to adopt uniform wage scales so workers would not venture elsewhere for more pay. Moreover, sharecropping and renting provided black families greater influence in the selection of crops and the allocation of their labors. Yet, this lifestyle rarely resulted in more money than the pay of a field worker. Their share of profits was only enough for expenditures such as housing, food, clothing, and medical care. Often the families fell into debt with their employers due to necessary borrowing. In spite of the undesirable employment situations, the local farm-based economy of the tidewater counties did not encourage more advantageous occupational possibilities. Unfortunately, the established production structure was

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hierarchical in that the laboring classes did not possess adequate funds to obtain a more desirable life, through the purchase of land.\textsuperscript{117}

In addition, the reasons behind this lack of employment improvement were not only based on the economic constraints of the locality. In this case, those able to effect immediate and real change in society did not wish to do so. Maryland planters thought that blacks were inferior and that their status as dependents must be maintained. White radicals and Freedmen’s Bureau agents, although seeking to improve the living conditions of black families, viewed the freed slaves as a subservient labor force that needed to accept its employers’ protection.\textsuperscript{118} Consequently, the resolve of Black Marylanders’ to provide a self-reliant position in the post-emancipation economy ensured enhanced freedom, but no upward mobility.

The discussion of free African-Americans in Maryland following emancipation could be the subject of a multi-volume research project. The Freedmen’s Bureau played a significant role in assisting the adjustment of former bondsmen to freedom. Also, additional studies would reveal whether newspapers favoring emancipation remained ardent supporters of African-American autonomy, or if the periodicals became complacent with the blacks’ physical and political freedom, despite their bondage socially, economically, and psychologically. The Maryland Constitution of 1864 was not sufficient to rid the state of racial oppression. More than 140 years following the destruction of slavery in Maryland, its ghosts continue to haunt the state. Regardless, considerable efforts should be made to acknowledge those that labored to end the regressive institution, and establish freedom in the Chesapeake.

\textsuperscript{117} Fulke, \textit{Imperfect Equality}, 12-14.
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