

The Story of a Southern State in the Union: Maryland in 1860 and 1861

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Firing their rifles “wildly,” the soldiers fought back against the secessionist mob hurling stones at them as they marched down Pratt Street.¹ Baltimore Mayor George William Brown thought it prudent to direct the commanding officer of the Sixth Massachusetts Regiment to slow his troops’ marching speed — double-quick time, the mayor felt, was too fast and would thus incite further panic. Brown had no military expertise, but that did not stop the determined mayor from taking charge. Nothing would. It was his city in chaos, after all. The soldiers slowed down as Brown began to march at the front of their unit, but the violence worsened.² Rioters wrestled weapons away from the troops, continued throwing stones and bricks, and cheered in support of the newly-formed Confederate States of America.³ Four soldiers and twelve civilians died on the streets of Baltimore that day.⁴ Although this tumult on the morning of April 19th, 1861 terrified Marylanders, by this time they were already quite familiar with secessionism and the tense nature of the sectional crisis plaguing the nation. In Maryland, secessionists were present throughout 1860 and 1861 because of the state’s political climate, in which a disdain for outsider intervention, a fear of abolition, and a strong sense of Southernness prevailed.

Maryland’s secession crisis experience has been regarded as an especially fascinating one, in part because on the surface it may appear to many that Maryland could have sided with either the Union or the seceding states. Since the 1970s, however, historians who have studied Maryland during 1860 and 1861 have rejected this misconceived view that Maryland’s course

¹ George William Brown, *Baltimore and the Nineteenth of April, 1861: A Study of the War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1887), 49.

² Brown, *Baltimore and the Nineteenth of April*, 48-51.

³ Brown, *Baltimore and the Nineteenth of April*, 50; Reminiscences of Henry C. Wagner, October 11, 1909, MS 1860, Maryland Historical Society, cited in Charles W. Mitchell, ed., *Maryland Voices of the Civil War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 52-53.

⁴ Jean H. Baker, *The Politics of Continuity: Maryland Political Parties from 1858 to 1870* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), 53.

was ever truly uncertain.⁵ In doing so, these scholars have examined exactly why Maryland remained in the Union. They have generally agreed that the state's ultimate course was primarily determined by the prevalence of Unionist sentiments and federal intervention. Yet even though Maryland in the end did not secede, secessionists nonetheless abounded in the state. The secessionist presence and the sectional disagreements it produced have also garnered historians' attention.⁶ Specifically, much of the scholarship has focused on secessionist politicians in the state and the perspectives and strategies of Unionist politicians, such as Governor Thomas Holliday Hicks, who were tasked with managing crises induced by sectional discord.

Study of Maryland's secession crisis experience, though, has largely been constrained to questions regarding either the state's Unionist course, political parties, or conflicts between Unionists and secessionists, namely the Baltimore Riot of April 1861.⁷ These issues, without a doubt, are vitally important to investigate because they were central elements of the sectional crisis both in Maryland and on the national level. But historians have not offered a substantial examination of why the state became home to secessionists and sectional tension; traditionally, scholars simply attribute this to Maryland's existence as both a border state and a slave state. Although correct, this answer only represents a surface-level exploration of the question. In fact, Maryland became a place where secessionists existed and had a voice because of three key

⁵ For specific references to the lack of adequate study of Maryland during the secession crisis, see William J. Evitts, *A Matter of Allegiances: Maryland from 1850 to 1861* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 1-2. For scholarship in addition to Evitts's work that dispels the misconception that Maryland could have seceded, see Baker, *Politics of Continuity*; Lawrence M. Denton, *A Southern Star for Maryland: Maryland and the Secession Crisis, 1860-1861* (Baltimore: Publishing Concepts, 1995); Mitchell, *Maryland Voices*, 7; and Frank Towers, *The Urban South and the Coming of the Civil War* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2004).

⁶ Baker, *Politics of Continuity*; Denton, *Southern Star*; Evitts, *Allegiances*; Timothy R. Snyder, "'The Susquehanna Shall Run Red with Blood': The Secession Movement in Maryland," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 108, no. 1 (2013); and Towers, *The Urban South*.

⁷ Baker, *Politics of Continuity*; Denton, *Southern Star*; Evitts, *Allegiances*; Snyder, "'The Susquehanna.'"; and Towers, *The Urban South*.

elements of its political climate: a rejection of outside influence in the state's affairs, a fear of abolition, and a sense of Southern regional identity.⁸

Before delving into these underlying reasons why some Marylanders adopted secessionist views, it is necessary to understand the nature of the sectional strife in the state. Republican Abraham Lincoln's November 1860 election and South Carolina's secession from the Union a month later prompted citizens to express their views on the secession crisis. In the weeks and months following these events, it became apparent that Marylanders held divergent views on some of the issues facing their state. Perhaps the most pivotal of these matters was the question of the hour: whether or not to secede. This dilemma proved especially divisive for Marylanders. From a day-to-day perspective, sectional disagreements ended friendships and caused family members and colleagues to not speak to each other for the duration of the Civil War.⁹ More notably, sectional discord in the state manifested itself in two major conflicts. The first controversy was the question facing Governor Hicks of whether or not to convene the state legislature in a special session so that it could vote on secession. Hicks, elected governor in 1857 thanks to election violence in Baltimore that suppressed Democratic turnout, was a pro-slavery, planter-politician who throughout the secession crisis remained staunchly Unionist.¹⁰ The Governor, fearing that, if assembled, the legislature would vote to secede, withstood the intense

⁸ To be clear, these three factors have not gone unnoticed, but historians have not viewed them in the same way this paper does — as underlying elements of Maryland's political climate that induced the development of secessionist views in the state. Additionally, in a chapter of his book, Lawrence Denton cites the many commonalities between Marylanders and citizens of other Southern states, particularly those illuminated by the election of 1860, as evidence for his argument that Maryland would have seceded had it been able to. Denton, however, addresses Marylanders' Southernness from a political perspective that views Southern regional identity in conjunction with pro-Southern sectional identity. This paper, on the other hand, addresses Southernness as a form of regional identity independent from Southern sectional allegiance that influenced both secessionists and Unionists in Maryland.

⁹ Harold A. Williams, *The Baltimore Sun, 1837-1987*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 46.

¹⁰ Towers, *The Urban South*, 153. Though elected as a Know-Nothing, Hicks switched his affiliation to the Constitutional Union Party in the middle of his term.

pressure from secessionist politicians and in December 1860 rejected initial requests for a special session.¹¹ The second significant sectional conflict in Maryland was the Baltimore Riot of April 1861. This clash between federal troops and a secessionist mob, in addition to demonstrating the sectional friction present in the state, signaled to Marylanders that the Civil War and its violence would indeed affect them.¹²

The first and most straightforward reason why Maryland provided fertile ground for secessionist views in 1860 and 1861 was that many Marylanders loathed federal intervention in their state's affairs. More specifically, they believed that the state should exist and determine its own path forward independent of government influence. Held by both Unionists and secessionists, this perspective was frequently voiced regarding the most prevalent and powerful source of outside intervention: President Lincoln's federal government. This widespread negative view of federal interference in the state helped bring about disdain for the U.S. government that induced some to adopt secessionist views.

Federal troops sent to the state served as a first target for Marylanders' expression of their contempt for government intervention. The Baltimore Riot, of course, serves as a straightforward example of this phenomenon; a mob of Baltimoreans, comprised primarily of secessionists, attacked U.S. troops as they marched through the city on their way to defend Washington D.C. Furthermore, in the immediate aftermath of the riot, Baltimoreans — both Unionists and secessionists — eagerly tore up train track and burned railroad bridges in an effort to prevent

¹¹ "Letter from Governor Hicks Refusing to Convene the Maryland Legislature," *Daily National Intelligencer*, December 1, 1860, *America's Historical Newspapers*; and Snyder, "The Susquehanna," 29-34.

¹² Richard D. Fisher, April 19, 1908, cited in Mitchell, *Maryland Voices*, 57.

more soldiers from passing through their city, again demonstrating their disdain for U.S. military presence.¹³

Marylanders reinforced their actions during and after the riot with harsh words about the troops' appearance in their state. William Bowley Wilson, for example, served in a Confederate-sympathizing Maryland militia. Recalling his involvement in the April 1861 riot, he unambiguously voiced his feelings about the soldiers' arrival: "Believing firmly that that Government had no right to coerce the Southern States, and that it was outraging the State of Maryland by bringing Northern militia through it for that purpose, I ran down to the depot to assist in preventing their passage."¹⁴ Similarly, Jabez David Pratt, a Baltimore secessionist, wrote to his brother following the riot, proclaiming, "Let any more Northern troops attempt passage of this city and not one will live to tell the story."¹⁵ Pratt and some other Marylanders, including one Baltimorean named Phil, even recognized a link between the appearance of the soldiers and the rise of secessionist views in the state.¹⁶ Phil wrote in a letter to his sister that the passage of "northern troops" through Baltimore had the effect of making "men who a day or two ago would have done anything for the 'Union' . . . the most ranting secessionists."¹⁷ For many people, especially Baltimoreans, the presence of federal troops was a source of great agitation.

¹³ Williams, *The Baltimore Sun*, 47. For public safety reasons, Governor Hicks and Mayor Brown ordered the burning of railroad bridges north of the city. Some Marylanders, however, acted on their own, tearing up and burning track out of contempt for the passage of troops.

¹⁴ William Bowley Wilson, *Reminiscences of April 19, 1861*, June 13, 1910, MS 1860, Maryland Historical Society, cited in Mitchell, *Maryland Voices*, 52.

¹⁵ Jabez David Pratt to John C Pratt, April 20, 1861, MS 1860, Maryland Historical Society, cited in Mitchell, *Maryland Voices*, 59. The exchange of letters between the Pratt brothers — Jabez of Baltimore and John of Boston — provides a fascinating example of the divisiveness of the Civil War. The brothers' diverging opinions on political issues led them to exchange harsh words and thus impacted their relationship. For excerpts of these letters, see Mitchell, *Maryland Voices*, 59, 70, 76, 78-79, and 82.

¹⁶ Pratt, cited in Mitchell, *Maryland Voices*, 59 and "Phil" to Mamie [S. Gardiner] [April] 19, 1861, Bowie Papers, cited in Mitchell, *Maryland Voices*, 57.

¹⁷ "'Phil' to Mamie," cited in Mitchell, *Maryland Voices*, 57.

Another way in which Marylanders expressed their frustration with the federal government was by criticizing President Lincoln himself. The Illinois Republican, largely because of his stance on slavery and the perception that he would seek to coerce the Southern states, was never popular in Maryland.¹⁸ In fact, he garnered only 2.48 percent of the vote in the state and did not receive a single vote in seven of its counties.¹⁹ After Lincoln began to take concerted actions aimed at keeping Maryland in the Union in the Spring and Summer of 1861, such as bringing federal troops to the state, opinions of the President only grew more negative. One citizen of the state quoted in the *Baltimore Sun* on April 23, 1861 clearly voiced his antipathy to Lincoln by saying, “God have mercy on us, when the government is placed in the hands of a man like this!”²⁰ James Ryder Randall also sharply criticized Lincoln and echoed sentiments held by many of his fellow Marylanders in a poem he wrote following the Baltimore Riot. The poem, titled “Maryland, My Maryland,” urged the state to secede and envisioned a day when Maryland “spurns the Northern scum.”²¹ According to the lyrics, Randall viewed Lincoln as a “despot,” a “tyrant,” and a “[v]andal.”²² Randall demonstrated in this poem that he, like some others, thought that the President’s actions were enough to warrant secession. Yet despite his plea, Lincoln’s actions did not induce Maryland to secede — in fact, they essentially had the opposite effect. Nonetheless, the presence of federal troops in the state, as indicated by the words

¹⁸ Williams, *The Baltimore Sun*, 45.

¹⁹ “Election of 1860,” The American Presidency Project, accessed April 22, 2018, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/showelection.php?year=1860> and Mitchell, *Maryland Voices*, 3.

²⁰ *The Baltimore Sun*, April 23, 1861, cited in Mitchell, *Maryland Voices*, 75.

²¹ James Ryder Randall, “Maryland, My Maryland,” Maryland Manual On-Line, accessed May 8, 2018, <https://msa.maryland.gov/msa/mdmanual/01glance/html/symbols/lyricsco.html>. Randall’s poem became Maryland’s official state song in 1939. Today, much like Confederate monuments, the song is the source of controversy because Randall wrote it as a pro-Confederate hymn. State lawmakers have considered bills, as recently as this past March, that seek to strip “Maryland, My Maryland” of its official status. So far, no such bill has passed. For more on this present-day debate surrounding Randall’s poem, see Bruce DePuyt, “Sing a New Song? Lawmakers Say No, Thanks,” *Maryland Matters*, March 22, 2018, www.marylandmatters.org/single-post/2018/03/22/Sing-a-New-Song-Lawmakers-Say-No-Thanks.

²² Randall, “Maryland, My Maryland.”

of Randall, Wilson, Pratt, and others, prompted many Marylanders to regard the federal actions as interference with their state's right not to be coerced by the federal government.²³

The second element of Maryland's political climate that gave way to a secessionist presence in the state was the commonly-held fear of the abolition of slavery. The prevalence of this sentiment, expressed by both Unionists and secessionists, of course did not induce Maryland to secede. But given that the Confederacy was formed in large part to preserve the institution of slavery in the Southern states, anti-abolitionist views in Maryland and the presence of secessionism in the state were naturally linked. This prevailing fear of abolition had its roots in Maryland's existence as a slave state. Since its colonial days, the state had relied on slavery to maximize production of tobacco—its preeminent cash crop—in the regions known as southern Maryland and the Eastern Shore.²⁴ By the nineteenth century, even after the Eastern Shore had largely converted to cultivating grain, slaves remained a vital part of the labor force on both shores of the Chesapeake Bay; in 1860, the state's 87,189 slaves comprised thirteen percent of its population and twelve percent of Maryland families owned slaves.²⁵ As a result, Marylanders from these plantation agriculture communities tended to be staunch supporters of slavery. Even Baltimoreans, who lived in an industrial urban environment, were generally pro-slavery, in large

²³ In addition to these direct expressions of disdain for Lincoln, some Marylanders also criticized him indirectly. One intriguing example of this is an etching by Adalbert John Volck that portrays Governor Hicks as Judas Iscariot, Jesus's disloyal disciple, for cooperating with the President. It depicts Hicks standing proudly, appearing to be in defense of Maryland and its values, but with one hand he is reaching behind his back to do business with a shady-looking Lincoln. The etching not only depicts Lincoln as shadowy, but it also implies a dichotomy between what Marylanders desire and what he stands for. See Adalbert John Volck, "Judas," etching, 1861-1865, www.collections.digitalmaryland.org/cdm/ref/collection/scav/id/2.

²⁴ A brief word on geography: southern Maryland (or the southern counties) refers to the portion of the state located south of Annapolis and on the western shore of the Chesapeake Bay. The Eastern Shore, naturally, refers to the region of the state on the eastern shore of the Chesapeake.

²⁵ *The Encyclopedia Americana*, vol. XVIII (New York: J.B. Lyon Company, 1919), 352 and "Results from the 1860 Census," The Civil War Home Page, accessed May 6, 2018, http://www.civil-war.net/pages/1860_census.html. It is also important to note that in 1860 Maryland had the largest free black population in the nation by a massive margin.

part because the city's two most dominant political parties, the Know-Nothing Party and the Democratic Party, both supported the institution.²⁶

Marylanders, urban and rural, Unionist and secessionist, frequently conveyed their fear of abolition. Governor Thomas Hicks, for example, offered his perspective on slavery and abolition in both private and public correspondence. Regarded throughout the secession crisis as a staunch Unionist, Hicks, in addition to professing his love of the Union, often voiced his contempt for secession and fear of disunion.²⁷ Yet however daunting the prospect of secession was to Hicks, he suggested on multiple occasions that his fear of abolition was paramount. In other words, he would rather Maryland secede than be part of a United States in which slavery had been abolished. One instance in which Hicks indicated that his fear of abolition carried the most weight occurred in his January 1861 letter "To the People of Maryland," in which he justified his decision not to convene the legislature.²⁸ In this message, the Governor juxtaposed the South's "secession leaders" with the North's abolitionist "fanatical demagogues."²⁹ Here, Hicks used strong, disdainful language to characterize abolitionists, but simply referred to secession leaders as what they were. The implication of the Governor's choice of words, then, is that even though he dreaded the prospects of both abolition and secession, the thought of losing slavery was much more frightening.

Furthermore, Hicks confirmed that this indeed was his perspective in other communications, including a December 1860 letter to John Contee. To Contee, a lawmaker who had supported convening the legislature, Hicks wrote that the laws Northern states had passed to

²⁶ Towers, *The Urban South*.

²⁷ Thomas H. Hicks, "To The People of Maryland," January 3, 1861, Maryland State Archives Museum Online and "Letter from Governor Hicks Refusing to Convene the Maryland Legislature," *Daily National Intelligencer*, December 1, 1860, America's Historical Newspapers.

²⁸ Hicks, "To the People."

²⁹ Hicks, "To the People."

weaken the Fugitive Slave Law “should be repealed at once . . . If they are not, *then* in my judgment, we shall be fully warranted in demanding a division of the country.”³⁰ Again, the Governor conveyed — and this time quite directly — that despite his fear of disunion, he would tolerate secession if it were necessary to escape these laws that interfered with the rights of slave owners.

Hicks, however, was certainly not the only Marylander for whom abolition was the most frightening possibility. In the same post-riot letter to his brother in which he threatened the federal troops, Jabez Pratt also expressed that his fear of abolition was not only grave but paramount as well. Pratt wrote, “We, both Lucy and myself, are not disposed to run — much less into the arms of infernal abolitionism. We know there is danger. . . . Possibly all may be slaughtered; but . . . we are determined to die in the work.”³¹ First, he evinced his fear of abolition about as unequivocally as one could: in describing abolitionism as “infernal,” he equated a world without slavery to hell, a universally frightening place to which no one wants to go. But more telling, perhaps, is the clear implication that, for Pratt, staying in Baltimore to fight and maybe even die was a more desirable option than fleeing to a place without slavery. With that suggestion, Pratt communicated that he, like his governor, feared the abolition of slavery more than anything else — maybe even death.

Another indication that a fear of abolition prevailed in Maryland during 1860 and 1861 is that elected officials and campaigns played to this fear when seeking to advance their political interests. Henry Winter Davis, a Know-Nothing U.S. Representative from Baltimore, was by no means a staunch supporter of slavery, as evidenced in part by his 1861 switch to the Republican

³⁰ Thomas H. Hicks to John Contee, in *The Baltimore Sun*, December 21, 1860, cited in Mitchell, *Maryland Voices*, 30.

³¹ Pratt, cited in Mitchell, *Maryland Voices*, 59.

Party.³² Yet in trying to convince others of his argument that Maryland should remain in the Union, Davis believed it expedient to appeal to this widely-held fear of abolition. He asserted that dissolution of the Union would cause “Maryland slaveholders” to “lose the only guarantee for return of their slaves” and that if Maryland were to secede, “her slaves will walk over the Pennsylvania line unmolested.”³³ Regardless of the actual plausibility of Davis’s claims, he evidently felt that connecting secession with the possibility that Marylanders would lose their slaves was an effective way to plead his case for staying in the Union. Additionally, in the presidential election of 1860, supporters of the staunchly pro-slavery Southern Democrat John Breckinridge also played to the fear of abolition that existed in the state. Breckinridge’s main opposition in Maryland was Constitutional Unionist John Bell, who did officially hold a position regarding slavery.³⁴ Nonetheless, Breckinridge backers tried to paint Bell as an abolitionist in an attempt to sway the state’s many pro-slavery voters their way.³⁵ Davis, a Bell supporter who had himself catered to Marylanders’ fear of abolition, voiced his distaste for the Democrats’ tactic. In a speech to presidential electors from his district, he accused Democrats of perpetuating an “eternal howl on the Negro Question to keep themselves in.”³⁶ Albeit in a different way, these political appeals, like the words of Hicks and Pratt, demonstrate that fear of losing the institution of slavery was a commonly held sentiment in the state.

The third element of the state’s political climate that enabled secessionism to exist in the state was that Marylanders, Unionist and secessionist, felt that their state was part of the South and thus they identified as Southern. Even in the context of the Civil War, which was marked by

³² Towers, *The Urban South*, 124 and 162-163.

³³ Henry Winter Davis, *Speeches and Addresses* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1867), 190.

³⁴ Evitts, *Allegiances*, 146.

³⁵ Baker, *Politics of Continuity*, 43 and Evitts, *Allegiances*, 147.

³⁶ Davis, *Speeches and Addresses*, 152 and Evitts, *Allegiances*, 147.

all-out North-versus-South fighting, this matter of regional identity was different from that of sectional allegiance. That said, Marylanders' Southernness was perhaps the most important reason why the state became home to secessionists. Some Marylanders indeed believed that since their state was regionally Southern it should, naturally, join the Confederacy of other Southern states.

Marylanders often communicated their sense of Southernness, but sometimes took different approaches in doing so. Governor Hicks expressed his southern identity unequivocally, writing in a December 1860 letter to General Assembly leaders explaining his refusal to convene the legislature that, "Identified as I am by birth and every other tie with the South..."³⁷ In his letter "To The People of Maryland" on the same subject, he added, "It is unnecessary for me to make extravagant professions of devotion to the South."³⁸ Clear as these statements are, more telling, perhaps, is that when supporting these claims "of devotion to the South" Hicks cited his Maryland-ness, suggesting not only that he was Southern but that he was Southern because Maryland was his birthplace and "residence for more than sixty years."³⁹ Further, these messages served a critical political purpose for Hicks: to convince the many Marylanders who so intensely pressured him to call a special session that he had just cause to deny their request. From this precarious political position, he evidently thought it expedient, or at the very least he knew it would not be politically damaging, to assert his "devotion to the South" on multiple occasions in these letters. This, in and of itself, serves as an indication that the sense of Southernness in Maryland was widespread.

³⁷ "Letter from Governor Hicks" *Daily National Intelligencer*, December 1, 1860, America's Historical Newspapers.

³⁸ Hicks, "To The People."

³⁹ Hicks, "To The People" and "Letter from Governor Hicks" *Daily National Intelligencer*, December 1, 1860, America's Historical Newspapers.

Some Marylanders, both secessionists and Unionists, shared their sense of Southernness, often in passing, as if it was a given. A Baltimore secessionist, reflecting on his efforts in 1861 made sure to characterize his city as Southern, writing, “Baltimore, being a Southern city . . .”⁴⁰ Likewise, *The Sun*, when discussing Lincoln’s journey through Baltimore prior to his March 4th, 1861 inauguration, contended that the President and his entourage would not have attracted hostile crowds had he journeyed “upon the first Southern soil incognito.”⁴¹ While this statement contains other important implications about Baltimoreans’ attitudes, the obvious takeaway is that the *Sun*’s editors believed that their city was in the South. Other Marylanders, rather than describing their state’s Southernness in geographic terms, articulated that citizens of the state felt a collective sense of Southern identity. For example, in late 1860, the editors of the *Baltimore Exchange*, referring to their status as Marylanders, used the phrase “we in common with the South.”⁴² Christopher Columbus Shriver of rural Carroll County also indicated that he believed that he and his fellow Marylanders identified as Southern. In a February 1861 letter to his cousin discussing sectional allegiances, Shriver wrote the words “*We Southerners*” when explaining a belief that he shared with some fellow Marylanders.⁴³

In addition to those brief, direct expressions of Southern identity, some citizens of the state implied their Southernness subtly. James Ryder Randall’s “Maryland, My Maryland” provides a particularly fascinating example of this phenomenon. The poem not only implored the state to leave the Union because of Lincoln’s tyrannical governance, but it also suggested that

⁴⁰ William Platt to Richard D. Fisher, May 25, 1909, Maryland Historical Society, cited in Mitchell, *Maryland Voices*, 19.

⁴¹ Williams, *The Baltimore Sun*, 45.

⁴² *The Baltimore Exchange*, November 7, 1860, in W. Bruce Catton, “The Baltimore Business Community and the Sectional Crisis, 1860-1861” (M.A. thesis, University of Maryland, College Park, 1952), 53-54, cited in Mitchell, *Maryland Voices*, 15.

⁴³ C. C. [Shriver] to F[rederick] A. Shriver, February 2, 1861, Shriver Family Papers, 1774-1957, MS 2085-2085.1, Maryland Historical Society, cited in Mitchell, *Maryland Voices*, 39.

Maryland should secede because its rightful place was with the other Southern states. Randall, in the sixth stanza, wrote: “Dear Mother! burst the tyrant's chain, / Maryland! / Virginia should not call in vain, / Maryland! / She meets her sisters on the plain- . . .”⁴⁴ Here, Randall called for Maryland to rebuff Lincoln and secede, just as Virginia had. The use of the phrase “her sisters” to describe Maryland’s relationship the other Southern states indicates quite explicitly that Randall saw his state as Southern and that therefore, in his view, its natural place was in the Confederacy.

Lastly, the results from Maryland in the 1860 presidential election bolster the idea that Marylanders, regionally speaking, identified with the South. Ultimately, Breckinridge, of Kentucky, defeated the Tennessean Bell by less than a percentage point.⁴⁵ More revealing than Breckinridge’s narrow victory in the state, however, is that he and Bell, both from the border South, fared much better than Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas, the two Northern candidates. The two Southerners together garnered over ninety percent of the state’s vote, whereas Lincoln and Douglas combined received less than ten percent.⁴⁶ It is also interesting to note that the *Southern* Democrat Breckinridge beat the Democrat Douglas by almost forty percent in the state.⁴⁷ Furthermore, Maryland’s results were quite similar to those of the other Southern and border states, which backed either Breckinridge or Bell, than those of the Northern states.⁴⁸ Of course, more than just regional identity factored into Marylanders’ decisions at the ballot box, but this massive dichotomy between their support for the Northern candidates and for the Southern candidates further evinces the overwhelming sense of Southernness in the state.

⁴⁴ Randall, “Maryland, My Maryland.”

⁴⁵ “Election of 1860,” The American Presidency Project.

⁴⁶ “Election of 1860,” The American Presidency Project.

⁴⁷ “Election of 1860,” The American Presidency Project.

⁴⁸ “Election of 1860,” The American Presidency Project.

Marylanders' Southern regional identity, along with their contempt for federal intervention and their fear of abolition, made the state fertile ground for secessionist views. This presence of secessionism stoked the sectional tensions that made 1860 and 1861 so divisive for Marylanders. The state's secession crisis experience, then, fits within the traditional Union-versus-Confederacy Civil War framework, one that perpetually emphasizes the sectional split that occurred. But the secession crisis, as Maryland's story also illuminates, was not *only* characterized by division. After all, it was both Unionists and secessionists in the state who harbored hatred for Lincoln, feared abolition, and expressed their Southernness. More profoundly, though, Marylanders and Americans of all allegiances fell victim to the violence before and during the Civil War — just as both secessionist Baltimoreans and Union troops perished in the streets of Baltimore on April 19th, 1861.

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