

The Constitution of 1851

Constitution of Maryland

ADOPTED IN CONVENTION,
WHICH ASSEMBLED AT THE CITY OF ANNAPOLIS ON THE
FOURTH DAY OF NOVEMBER, EIGHTEEN HUNDRED AND
FIFTY, AND ADJOURNED ON THE THIRTEENTH DAY
OF MAY, EIGHTEEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY-ONE.

THE DECLARATION OF RIGHTS.¹

We, the People of the State of Maryland, grateful to Almighty God for our civil and religious liberty, and taking into our serious consideration the best means of establishing a good Constitution in this State, for the sure foundation and more permanent security thereof, declare:

Article 1. That all government of right originates from the people, is

founded in compact only, and instituted solely for the good of the whole; and they have at all times, according to the mode prescribed in this Constitution, the unalienable right to alter, reform, or abolish their form of Government, in such manner as they may deem expedient.

¹This is a verbatim reprint of the first recorded printed edition of the Maryland Constitution of 1851. It was printed in Baltimore in 1851, prior to its submission to the voters of the State for their adoption or rejection, by John Murphy & Co. The punctuation and capitalization is that originally used. The copy of the 1851 edition from which this reprint was prepared is owned by the Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore. The Convention's handwritten draft is on file at the Hall of Records, Annapolis.

Art. 2. That the people of this State ought to have the sole and exclusive right of regulating the internal government and police thereof.

Two additional editions of the Maryland Constitution of 1851 were published by John Murphy & Co. in 1851: the second with extensive marginal notes and an appendix by Edward Otis Hinkley, Esq., after the Constitution was ratified by the people on the first Wednesday of June, 1851; and the third apparently later in the same year without the marginal notes for sale by booksellers generally.

Art. 3. That the inhabitants of Maryland are entitled to the common law of England, and the trial by jury according to the course of that law, and to the benefit of such of the English statutes as existed on the fourth day of July, seventeen hundred and seventy-six, and