

## PREFACE

Maryland's first electoral college met in Annapolis on February 4, 1789, to participate in the unanimous election of George Washington for President.

Quoting from the minutes of Maryland's first meeting of electors, ". . . upon examining the ballots and counting the votes they appeared as follows: George Washington, Esquire, of the State of Virginia, and late Commander in Chief of the American Army, — Six votes — for President of the United States, and for Robert Hanson Harrison, Esquire, of the State of Maryland, and Chief Justice of the same, — six votes — for Vice President of the United States."

Fifty-two years later in 1841, noting that the minutes of the first meeting and of the others to follow were not preserved until the year 1832, the Maryland General Assembly took action by way of resolution ". . . to cause to be procured from the proper office of the general government full and authentic copies of as much of the proceedings of each and every college of presidential electors of the State of Maryland, prior to the year 1832, as may be found, and to have the same recorded in a book with the proceedings of the present year and those to follow."

This directive having been followed, the minutes of the meetings of the presidential electors were recorded by hand and preserved in the leather bound volume affectionately and accurately referred to as the "Old Book." The 1980 entry was the last to be recorded in that book; because of the deteriorating condition it has been retired to the Maryland Hall of Records. Future proceedings, beginning with a duplicate copy of the minutes of 1980, will be continued in a new book, also bound in leather, with removable pages so that entries may be typed, allowing for easier reading, if not for the glamour provided by the early script.

The Old Book, no longer available to the public, can be viewed on micro-film at the Hall of Records; nevertheless, it seemed appropriate to those familiar with the contents, to extract the pertinent data, compile this in readable form for the use of those interested in the electoral college process in Maryland.

Preparation of this publication involved considerable time and research. Some of the material contained in the Old Book is sketchy, much of the beautiful script, undecipherable; names were frequently presented with several spellings, for example, Gwynn, Gwinn, Gwinne; Humphreys, Humphries, etc. Every effort was made to identify the electors and the accurate spelling of their names. Dates were carefully checked and verified; clarification of many references was needed. Resources used:

The Maryland Hall of Records  
The National Archives  
The Annapolis Public Library  
The Nimitz Library at the Naval Academy  
The Maryland State Library  
The Maryland Historical Society  
The Maryland Gazette  
Congressional Quarterly's Guide to United States Elections

The historical background of the electoral college and a brief account of the development of the two-party system is included. This data adds to the value of the publication, as it is, perhaps, the one place where such references to presidential elections in Maryland are contained.