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"Spare your country's flag": Unionist Sentiment in Frederick, Maryland 1860-1865

Abstract

The historiography of Frederick, Maryland has maintained in the years since the Civil War that the area was firmly pro-Union. However, through the 1860 presidential election, as well as the reactions of residents of Frederick to the Confederate Army through 1862, it becomes apparent that there was a significant, although perhaps not sizeable, group with Confederate sympathies. In 1863, Frederick County began to shift its sympathies. Through the narrative written by one diarist about the Confederate Army's march through Maryland prior to the Gettysburg Campaign, the army's residence in Frederick during the Battle of Monocacy, as well as the 1864 Presidential Election returns, there is evidence that the city and county became more pro-Union as the war went on. Frederick County, as well as the city of Frederick, was divided in its sympathies at the beginning of the Civil War. By 1863, the county began to favor the Unionist sentiment for which it is known and has been remembered.

Keywords

Frederick, Maryland, Unionism, Unionist Sentiment

“SPARE YOUR COUNTRY'S FLAG”: UNIONIST SENTIMENT IN FREDERICK, MARYLAND, 1860-1865

Megan McNish

In 1863, John Greenleaf Whittier made Barbara Fritchie an icon.¹ Although there is little evidence to suggest that the event Whittier depicted actually occurred, he was able to convince the American public of his truth of the tale of Stonewall Jackson's march through Frederick, Maryland.² Whittier was an abolitionist poet and, as a result, he portrayed Frederick in the light of the Unionist cause.³ In fact, many historians have seen Frederick in the same light and have characterized the city as firmly Unionist.⁴ This belief is unfounded. Upon examination of a diverse set of primary source material, a different narrative emerges.

Unionism can be characterized as the desire, passive or active, to sustain the United States as one unified nation and to avoid or oppose secession.⁵ This means that those

¹ See Whittier's poem "Barbara Fritchie," <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/174751>.

² Nina Silber, "Barbara Fritetschie," *American National Biography (From Oxford University Press) Research Starters*, EbscoHost, accessed November 29, 2015.

³ "John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892)," *Whittier Birthplace*, accessed December 2, 2015, http://www.johngreenleafwhittier.com/about_whittier.htm.

⁴ Daniel W. Crofts, *Reluctant Confederates: Upper South Unionists in the Secession Crisis* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 353-354.

⁵ Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas believed that a few Southern fire-eaters perpetrated secession and that most Southerners were loyal to the Union. In the years since the Civil War, those interested in secession have asked the question 'Did the Confederate States have the right or the power to secede from the Union?' and this

who believed in the cause did not have to take direct action to express their support. There is no specific barometer for examining these beliefs, making it very difficult to study every person in Frederick who believed in the Unionist cause. Although historians never can be sure of exactly how many people in any given place were Unionists, there are windows into the views of the county's citizens that shed light on how people aligned politically. The election returns for the presidential elections of 1860 and 1864 suggest that Frederick was a divided city. The election results have been compiled and organized into tables and maps to illustrate the regional distribution of election returns. In addition, diaries—both Union and Confederate—and army dispatches have been incorporated to illustrate the personal beliefs that individuals held prior to and during the Civil War as another window through which Unionism might be understood, albeit on more personal terms.

The historiography of Frederick has maintained in the years since the Civil War that the area was firmly pro-Union. Frederick was divided in its sympathies at the beginning of the Civil War. By 1863, however, the county began to shift its sympathies in favor of Unionist sentiment. It is the latter period for which the town's allegiance has been remembered.

has colored the historiography. Legal scholars have seen the issue of secession as either unlawful and a breach of the Constitution, or as a breach of contract between the Southern states and the United States government. Many more questions have been asked about secession and full justice to the historiography cannot be done in this project. Stephen C. Neff, *Justice in Blue and Gray: A Legal History of the Civil War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 8-14; William J. Donnell, "Conspiracy or Popular Movement: The Historiography of Southern Support for Secession," *The North Carolina Historical Review* 42, no.1 (January 1965): 70-71, accessed December 9, 2015, JSTOR.

Frederick in the 1860 Presidential Election and Its Immediate Aftermath

There is a direct correlation between the counties with higher enslaved and free black populations and the votes that Maryland residents cast in the 1860 election.⁶ John Bell, who ran on the Constitutional Union ticket in 1860, was seen as a compromise vote to preserve the Union. Although Bell was not an extreme candidate, support for him suggested a commitment to Southern issues and, if he was not elected, the possibility of disunion.⁷ Bell received the highest percentage of the Frederick vote (see Table 1), although a large percentage of the electorate, particularly in the city, voted for John C. Breckenridge, the extreme Southern, secessionist candidate.⁸ A vote for Breckenridge in the 1860 election was a vote for stronger government involvement in the institution of slavery, a stronger fugitive slave law, and the strong possibility of disunion.⁹ In

⁶ The election process in 1860 was different from what Americans experience today. In the mid-19th century, polling stations were in large, open rooms. Voters filled out their ballots in these open spaces and then brought their completed ballots to the voting window. As a result, the voters and their ballot were almost always visible to the crowds that often gathered. Due to the format of the voting process, voters felt pressure, particularly in the larger slaveholding counties in Maryland, to cast their ballots for John C. Breckenridge and John Bell. Richard Franklin Bense, *The American Ballot Box in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 11.

⁷ Denton, *A Southern Star for Maryland*, 22-23.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁹ Some Southern historians have argued that Breckenridge himself was not pro-secession. Frank Heck argued in his article “John C. Breckenridge” that the Southern Democrat had reaffirmed his loyalty to the Union prior to the election. However, many of Breckenridge’s most prominent supporters were Southern fire-eaters, looking only for an

comparison to the rest of the state of Maryland, Frederick's vote for Breckenridge was not large. It does appear that there was a direct, although not exact, correlation between counties with large black populations and a large percentage of votes for Breckenridge.

The election results indicate that residents of Frederick County were not unified under the banner of Unionism. Jacob Engelbrecht, a prominent supporter of the Unionist cause in the city of Frederick recorded numerous events in Frederick prior to the 1860 election. "Yesterday [November 1] the Breckenridge wing of the Democratic Party had a mass meeting in our town...some 300 persons were in precession."¹⁰ Engelbrecht noted Breckenridge's followers had a meeting in Frederick and he had significant returns in the county. Although Stephen A. Douglas's returns in Frederick County and the city of Frederick were not significant, when compared with those of the other Northern candidate, his returns are much more respectable. The returns for Abraham Lincoln were almost non-existent.

It is not surprising, however, that Douglas was unpopular among Marylanders in 1860. Douglas's platform for the Election of 1860 was based on popular sovereignty, the principle that individual states should be able to decide

excuse for secession. In addition, after the election, Breckenridge supported secession in his home state of Kentucky. Frank H. Heck, "John C. Breckenridge in the Crisis of 1860-1861," *The Journal of Southern History* 21, no. 3 (August 1955), 328, 333. William T. Autman, *Civil War in the North Carolina Quaker Belt: The Confederate Campaign Against Peace Agitators, Deserters and Draft Dodger* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2014), 27; Larry Sabato and Howard R. Ernst, *Encyclopedia of American Political Parties and Election* (New York, NY: Facts on File, 2007), 319.

¹⁰ Jacob Engelbrecht, November 2, 1860, *Diary of Jacob Engelbrecht, 1818-1882*, edited by William R. Quynn (Frederick, Maryland: PublishAmerica, 2006), 884.

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if their territory would be open to slavery.¹¹ Those who were likely to vote for Douglas were those who were not invested in the institution of slavery, as well as those who were more conservative. In fact, the counties of Allegany, Cecil, Howard, and St. Mary’s gave Douglas the most support in 1860 and tended to be those with the smallest percentage of enslaved residents.¹² In Frederick, residents of the county tended to give less support to Douglas, but the percentage of the vote given to him in the city of Frederick was higher which reflects a national trend of reduced reliance upon slavery in cities (see Table 1).

Engelbrecht states that those in favor of secession were comfortable parading their beliefs and did not feel the need to hide them. He indicated a similar sentiment in 1861 when the Maryland electorate voted on secession. Among those who voted for secession was Andrew Kessler of

¹¹ *Horace Greeley and John F. Cleveland, comp., Political Text-book for 1860 Comprising a Brief View of Presidential Nominations and Elections: Including All the National Platforms Ever Yet Adopted: Also, A History of the Struggle Respecting Slavery in the Territories, and of the Action of Congress as to the Freedom of the Public Lands, with the Most Notable Speeches and Letters of Messrs. Lincoln, Douglas, Bell, Cass, Seward, Everett, Breckenridge, H.V. Johnson, Etc., Etc., Touching the Questions of the Day; and Returns of All Presidential Elections Since 1836* (New York, NY: The Tribune Association, 1860), 194.

¹² The only county among those listed that gave significant support to Douglas and had a significant enslaved population was St. Mary’s County. A possible explanation is that although the county had a sizeable enslaved population, according to Lawrence Denton, there were two hundred and thirty-six families in St. Mary’s County that owned more than ten slaves. This means that there were more than 2,360 slaves in the county held in large groups. As a result, there may have been more non-slaveholders than it would appear at first glance. Denton, *A Southern Star for Maryland*, 34.

Frederick County.¹³ Kessler was a member of the House of Delegates and was one of a number of citizens of Frederick expressing Confederate sympathies in the early part of the war.¹⁴ Jacob Engelbrecht noted in his diary a group of Frederick men who joined the Confederate Army, the ultimate symbol of patriotism for a cause. “Secession Soldiers- A Company of ‘Palmetto Flag boys’ raised in our town & commanded by Bradley T. Johnson left Frederick yesterday morning...for Harpers Ferry, Virginia to join the southern men there.”¹⁵ Engelbrecht highlights this display of Confederate enthusiasm and went on to list 23 soldiers by name, but says that there were 26 soldiers in total who were a part of the band of men Johnson led to Harpers Ferry.¹⁶ Catherine Markell, a Confederate sympathizer from Frederick, recorded in her diary her 1861 visit to Harpers Ferry between May 23 and 25 to see the Confederate soldiers. It is likely that Mrs. Markell saw some of these men

¹³ Engelbrecht, May 4, 1861, *Diary of Jacob Engelbrecht, 1818-1882*, 886.

¹⁴ Thomas John Chew Williams and Folger McKinsey, *Frederick County Maryland: From the Earliest Settlements to the Beginning of the War Between the States Continued from the Beginning of the Year 1861 Down to the Present Time*, reprint (Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing, 1979), 600-601.

¹⁵ Engelbrecht, May 10, 1861, *Diary of Jacob Engelbrecht, 1818-1882*, 900.

¹⁶ While Engelbrecht only listed twenty-six soldiers, he was not always the most reliable with numbers. See the returns for the Election of 1860 for the city of Frederick. Rebecca Miller argued in “Confederate Sentiment in Frederick County, Maryland” that it was frequently very difficult for men with southern sympathies to join the Confederate Army. See Rebecca Miller, “Confederate Sentiment in Frederick County, Maryland, 1861-1862,” in *Mid-Maryland History: Conflict, Growth and Change*, edited by Barbara M. Powell and Michael A. Powell (Charleston, SC: History Press, 2008), 23-25. Engelbrecht, May 16, 1861, *Diary of Jacob, Engelbrecht 1818-1882*, 900-901.

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from Frederick during her visit, as most of the soldiers Engelbrecht mentions in his list of the “Palmetto Boys” enlisted in the 1st Maryland Infantry and 1st Maryland Cavalry at Harpers Ferry on May 21, 1861.¹⁷

In hindsight, Southern sympathy in Frederick is further evidenced in the results of the election of 1860, which saw John Bell take Frederick. Just behind Bell in the polls was John C. Breckenridge, the most extreme Southern candidate. Voting for Breckenridge was akin to a vote for secession and over 40% of Frederick residents cast their vote in that manner. Despite this, there was no overt support for the Confederate cause in Frederick immediately after the election. Instead, more support came after the firing on Fort Sumter and this Confederate support became more apparent in September 1862 when the Army of Northern Virginia marched through Frederick. Prior to the beginning of armed conflict, Frederick showed little interest in supporting the Southern cause, perhaps because of their lack of reliance on slavery and investment in manufacturing. In the days following Fort Sumter, however, men from Frederick rose to serve the Confederacy and their support for the Confederate cause became more apparent in 1862 as the Confederate Army arrived on their doorstep.

Frederick and the Confederate Army

Devotion to the Confederacy in Frederick County continued throughout the early years of the war.¹⁸ On their

¹⁷ Catherine Susannah Thomas Markell, May 21-23, 1861, *Frederick Maryland in Peace and War, 1856-1864*, transcribed by David H. Wallace (Frederick, MD: Frederick County Historical Society, 2006), 94.

¹⁸ Miller, “Confederate Sentiment in Frederick County, Maryland, 1861-1862,” 24.

march north during the Maryland Campaign in the fall of 1862, Robert E. Lee and his army stopped in Frederick. A September 7th letter to the Charleston *Mercury*, a newspaper published in the heart of the secessionist south, told the story of Lee's march North. Personne, a correspondent for the newspaper, wrote to the paper: "Thus far we have everywhere met with cordial hospitality. Along the road the farmers have welcomed the presence of our men with sincerity that cannot be misunderstood, opened their houses, and spread their boards with the fat of the land."¹⁹ It should not be assumed that Personne's account was entirely honest due to the writer's intended audience in Charleston, an area with strong secessionist sympathies. It is highly probable that Personne put the march in the best possible terms. Notwithstanding his obvious bias, it is probable that there was some truth to the fact that the soldiers were welcomed as they marched through Frederick County.

Jacob Engelbrecht inadvertently confirms that, despite remaining in the Union, there remained a degree of Southern sympathy in the city. While he noted that many citizens left Frederick or closed their doors to the soldiers, he also wrote that many of the stores remained open for the soldiers of the Army of Northern Virginia and, after two days of occupation, Frederick merchants had nothing left to sell.²⁰ At first glance this may seem to be a handful of merchants trying to make money from the soldiers who had no choice but to pay their prices. However, this interpretation does not stand up. Confederate money never had the same strength as the U.S. dollar, and by the autumn of 1862, it was worth even less than it had been in 1861.

¹⁹ Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, 230.

²⁰ Engelbrecht, September 6, 1862-September 11, 1862, *Diary of Jacob Engelbrecht, 1818-1882*, 947-949.

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While it is possible that Frederick merchants planned to exchange the money, by September 1862 inflation rates had reached new levels. In December 1862, it took 300 Confederate dollars to purchase 100 dollars in gold. By comparison, the U.S. dollar remained fairly stable through 1862, maintaining the value it held in 1860.²¹ It was a counterintuitive business practice to sell goods to Confederate soldiers to make money, as there was no money to be made.²² By September 1862, Frederick had not yet experienced the full hardships of war, resulting in a greater expression of Confederate patriotism among the population, including among local merchants. In addition, Jacob Engelbrecht constantly recorded regiments of Union soldiers passing through Frederick. As Union soldiers could pay with hard currency, selling to Union soldiers would have been more profitable.

While some Frederick business owners may have sold goods to Confederate soldiers out of a fear that goods would have been commandeered without compensation, if they did not wish to sell to Confederates, merchants of Frederick could have done what their counterparts in Hagerstown did and send their stock elsewhere.²³ Nonetheless, it is doubtful that the Confederate Army would

²¹ Richard F. Selcer, *Civil War America 1850 to 1875* (New York, NY: Facts on File, 2006), 82, accessed December 5, 2015, Google Books.

²² Richard Duncan argues that Confederates paid for their merchandise in southern currency, certificates of indebtedness, and United States Treasury notes. Due to the necessity of using certificates of indebtedness, it can be inferred that the Confederates used United States currency infrequently and that merchants could not expect to be reimbursed for goods purchased by Confederate soldiers with United States currency. Richard R. Duncan, “Marylanders and the Invasion of 1862,” *Civil War History* 11, no. 4 (December 1965), 372.

²³ “War News. The Situation.,” *The Sun*, September 12, 1862, accessed January 3, 2016, America’s Historical Newspapers.

have commandeered goods due to their desire to bring Maryland into the Confederacy. Robert E. Lee issued the following statement as the Confederate Army entered Frederick: “This army will respect your choice [whether to remain with the Union or join the Confederacy] whatever it will be, and while the Southern people will rejoice to welcome you to your natural position among them, they will only welcome you when you come of your own free will.”²⁴ While Lee’s statement encouraged Maryland to enter the Confederacy, it can be applied more generally as a statement to govern the actions of the soldiers of the Army of Northern Virginia in order to prevent violence and looting. If the Confederate Army was to convince skeptical Marylanders that leaving the Union was in their interest they had to be on their best behavior, and breaking into shops was not considered acceptable while individual soldiers certainly broke the code of conduct, on the whole there does not seem to have been a significant problem in Frederick. If business owners could be fairly certain that their goods were safe, the act of selling goods to Confederate soldiers can be viewed as an expression of Southern sympathy.

While the merchants of Frederick may not have expressed outright support for the Confederacy, many individual citizens in Frederick openly supported the Confederate cause. On September 8, 1862 Catherine Markell wrote of a vibrant scene with the Confederate officers. “General McLaws and staff, General Kershaw and staff, took tea with us, some 20 officers and many girls were here until midnight....Our house [was] so brilliantly illuminated at night and horses in charge of orderlies stood 3 deep, the

²⁴ Robert E. Lee, “Dispatch of September 8, 1862,” in Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, 231.

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length of the square.”²⁵ In a later diary entry Catherine Markell described as the soldiers left town that “over 300 soldiers took meals and lunch at our house during the day...Mrs. Douglas displayed a pretty little rebel flag...Fanny Ebert had my southern cross which caused great cheering.”²⁶ Markell was one of many diarists who showed civilian support for the Confederacy in September 1862. These citizens created an environment that welcomed the Confederate Army on their march North. The events she described show clear support among the civilian population for the Confederate cause.

Civilians in Frederick were willing to do more than just support the Confederate Army from their homes; they were also willing to go to war. “A company of southern rights men was made up in Frederick the past few days and today a little after 12 o’clock PM they left town following the army towards Hagerstown.”²⁷ This group consisted of close to 50 men according to Jacob Engelbrecht.²⁸ Despite the passage of over a year, Frederick was still sending men

²⁵ Markell, *Frederick Maryland in Peace and War, 1856-1864*, September 8, 1862, 106.

²⁶ Markell, *Frederick Maryland in Peace and War, 1856-1864*, September 10, 1862, 107.

²⁷ Engelbrecht, September 11, 1862, *Diary of Jacob Engelbrecht, 1818-1882*, 949.

²⁸ Among the men that Engelbrecht listed as leaving Frederick on September 11 is Frederick Markell, Catherine Markell’s husband. Included in Catherine Markell’s diary is Frederick’s short account of his time with the army, September 12, 1862 through December 13, 1862. Unfortunately, Frederick’s account was not very expressive and he did not say more about why he chose to go with the army on September 12. Catherine did not shed any light on her husband’s intentions either. Frederick Markell, “Diary of Frederick Markell” in *Frederick Maryland in Peace and War, 1856-1864*, edited by David H. Wallace (Frederick, MD: Frederick County Historical Society, 2006), 110.

off to fight in support of the Confederate cause.

Although John Greenleaf Whittier's account of Barbara Fritchie waving the American flag above the head of Stonewall Jackson as he rode through the city of Frederick was not accurate, that does not mean that there was no Unionist activity in Frederick in the early years of the war. Jacob Engelbrecht's diary illustrates that there was indeed an active Unionist community in Frederick. "Today we had a Union county meeting in our city. The object was to organize a county or state convention to meet in Baltimore some time in April to organize a State Union Party....,The courthouse, where they held the meeting was filled to its utmost capacity."²⁹ Engelbrecht's account of this meeting demonstrates that there was a sizable group of people in Frederick who believed in the preservation of the Union. In the aftermath of the 1862 Maryland Campaign and as the war entered its second full year in 1863, other citizens of Frederick began to convert to Unionism.

After the Battle of Antietam, Frederick became one of the major hospital depots for wounded soldiers.³⁰ "There are now 22 hospitals in our city," Engelbrecht wrote on October 27, 1862, more than a full month after the Battle of Antietam while Frederick was still coping with the wounded soldiers.³¹ At one point, the number of wounded soldiers equaled the number of citizens in the city of Frederick.³² These wounded soldiers changed how residents of the city and county saw the war. Gone were the days of tea parties

²⁹ Engelbrecht, March 26, 1861, *Diary of Jacob Engelbrecht, 1818-1882*, 895.

³⁰ Chris Heidenrich, *Frederick: Local and National Crossroads* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia, 2003), 120.

³¹ Engelbrecht, October 27, 1862, *Diary of Jacob Engelbrecht, 1818-1882*, 956.

³² Heidenrich, *Frederick*, 120.

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and luncheons. By 1863, the time for destruction had arrived in the Eastern Theater of the war.³³ Lee began targeting bridges, railroads, property, and buildings as well as soldiers, forcing civilians to confront the costs of war.³⁴

As a consequence, both Catherine Markell and Jacob Engelbrecht seem to have been tired of the war and did not welcome the appearance of either army in their city in the summer of 1863. Jacob Engelbrecht wrote on June 23, 1863 that the Confederate Army looted forty head of cattle as they marched near Possomtown.³⁵ This is an action that Lee’s Army avoided in 1862 but their circumstances and hopes of aid from the people of Maryland had changed by 1863.³⁶ As a result, when the Army of the Potomac and the Army of Northern Virginia marched North through Frederick in 1863 their reception was significantly different. In 1862, Catherine Markell hosted Confederate officers for tea and rejoiced at the grand occasion. However, in 1863, Markell made few entries about the return of the Confederate Army in her diary. Markell wrote, “Rebels reported as having crossed the Potomac and approaching rapidly. Stampede . . . everything in confusion, terrible excitement. Eight or ten stores closed.”³⁷ Unlike 1862, she noted that stores closed. It would seem that the charity shop owners felt toward Confederate soldiers the year before had disappeared.

³³ David H. Wallace, Preface to *Frederick Maryland in Peace and War, 1856-1864* (Frederick, MD: Frederick County Historical Society, 2006), 3; Duncan, “Marylanders and the Invasion of 1862,” 382.

³⁴ Mark Grimsley, *The Hard Hand of War: Union Military Policy Toward Southern Civilians, 1861-1865* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 143.

³⁵ Engelbrecht, June 23, 1863, *Diary of Jacob Engelbrecht, 1818-1882*, 971.

³⁶ Duncan, “Marylanders and the Invasion of 1862,” 383.

³⁷ Markell, June 14, 1863, June 19, 1863, *Frederick Maryland in Peace and War, 1856-1864*, 120.

In addition to Mrs. Markell's comment that many shops were closed, her tone in describing the Confederate Army's approach was markedly different from what it had been the previous year. In 1862, Mrs. Markell was elated by the impending arrival of the Confederate soldiers, but in 1863 she seemed to be more disgruntled by the inconvenience created by the movement of the armies. "Soldiers skirmishing in street in front of our house. School dismissed in haste here, we could [not?] get into Patrick Street for the skirmishing."³⁸ In this instance, Catherine Markell and her family were prevented from returning home due to the skirmish and, instead of waxing about the gallant Confederate soldiers as she would have done in 1862, Mrs. Markell ended her entry with a short summary of those involved. The diaries of both Catherine Markell and Jacob Engelbrecht reveal that Frederick had changed a great deal since 1862.

In the summer of 1864, the Confederate Army once again visited Frederick, this time commanded by General Jubal Anderson Early. Unlike 1862 and 1863, the Confederate Army stayed and fought the Union Army on the outskirts of town in what became known as the Battle of Monocacy. The Confederate Army captured the city of Frederick on July 9 and, instead of offering to pay for goods as they had in 1862, Confederate soldiers looted the shops. "Hauer's hat store was entered and robbed of...about 300\$. Another store, Jew Reineke[']s] was robbed of about two hundred dollars. The robbing of horses about the county was general...the soldiers stole from the farmers, money, meat, chickens, cattle, sheep, and anything that came in their

³⁸ Markell, June 21, 1863, *Frederick Maryland in Peace and War, 1856-1864*, 120.

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way.”³⁹ Engelbrecht wrote that “some of the secessionist stores sold out all their stock of goods,” although, not all of the stores were open, unlike 1862.⁴⁰ Engelbrecht lamented the arrival of Confederate soldiers in 1864 and he also described plundering on a level that had not occurred in either 1862 or 1863.

To make matters worse, the Confederates ransomed the city for \$200,000. The banks of Frederick paid the money, which was demanded to prevent the city from being burned, but that was not all the Confederates threatened.⁴¹ “The Rebs threatened to shoot people if they would not give up their money, horses, [etc.]”⁴² These circumstances, as well as the millions of dollars in losses the county sustained, caused resentment on the part of residents of Frederick toward the Confederate Army.⁴³ In fact, among some residents like Jacob Engelbrecht, it created further resolve to see the war through to its end. “Whatever is the final issue, I say come weal or woe come life or death we go for the Union of the states forever one and inseparable.”⁴⁴ While it is not certain what every citizen in Frederick thought, it would seem that more believed in Unionism.

The horror that the city of Frederick faced did not end when the Confederates left town. In fact, it was compounded by the presence of over two thousand casualties that resulted

³⁹ Engelbrecht, July 11, 1864, *Diary of Jacob Engelbrecht, 1818-1882*, 998.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Engelbrecht, July 16, 1864, *Diary of Jacob Engelbrecht, 1818-1882*, 999.

⁴³ Ibid. Engelbrecht estimated the losses to be between two and three million dollars based on the inquiries he made in the city.

⁴⁴ Engelbrecht, July 11, 1864, *Diary of Jacob Engelbrecht, 1818-1882*, 998.

from the Battle of Monocacy.⁴⁵ After the battle, Jacob Engelbrecht visited a Union hospital and recounted: “Many had limbs amputated I saw one operation of the amputation of the left leg of a Union soldier...the wounded of both parties are now in our hospital at the barracks.”⁴⁶ Engelbrecht’s account of his visit to the hospital gives a gruesome view of what the citizens of Frederick were forced to confront. On July 11, Catherine Markell visited the hospital with her friend Alice. Although she does not mention what she saw, it is well known that the women of Frederick, including Markell, served as nurses and would have experienced the horrors of war first hand.⁴⁷ While women did not vote in the 1860s, it would have been difficult for the men of Frederick to fail to notice the wounded soldiers who lingered in town until early 1865.⁴⁸ The soldiers that remained were a reminder to the citizens of Frederick of what had changed in the last four years and this most certainly affected men of the city when they went to the polls in November 1864.

Frederick and the Election of 1864

The shift in Unionist sentiment in Frederick is most visible in the returns of the Presidential Election of 1864 when compared with the returns of the previous election. In

⁴⁵ “Battle of Monocacy,” *Civil War Trust*, accessed December 6, 2015, <http://www.civilwar.org/battlefields/monocacy.html>.

⁴⁶ Engelbrecht, July 11, 1864-July 12, 1864, *Diary of Jacob Engelbrecht, 1818-1882*, 998.

⁴⁷ Markell, July 11, 1864, *Frederick Maryland in Peace and War, 1856-1864*, 136; Wallace, Preface, *Frederick Maryland in Peace and War*, 3.

⁴⁸ Jacob Engelbrecht last mentions the wounded soldiers on December 27, 1864. Engelbrecht, December 27, 1864, *Diary of Jacob Engelbrecht, 1818-1882*, 1006.

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1860, residents of both Frederick County and the city of Frederick gave over 98% of their vote to candidates other than Abraham Lincoln. In 1864 over 60% of the votes in Frederick County went to Lincoln. By 1864, the war had been dragging on for three years and Frederick County had seen both the Confederate and Union Armies move into and through their area. The community also had been host to hundreds of wounded soldiers.

In the 1864 election, a vote for Abraham Lincoln was a vote to continue the Civil War and the horrors that came with it. A vote for George McClellan, on the other hand, was a vote for peace, but also disunion.⁴⁹ As Table 3 illustrates, the majority of voters who went to the polls in Frederick chose to continue the Civil War or end it on Unionist terms. When the returns of Table 1 are compared to those in Table 3, it becomes clear that the percentage of votes that were pro-Union in Frederick County versus the city of Frederick shifted significantly between 1860 and 1864. In the 1860 election, the city of Frederick gave close to 45% of its vote to John Breckenridge, the most pro-secession candidate running in 1860, compared to just over 43% pro-Breckenridge in the county as a whole. Conversely, in 1864, the city of Frederick had a larger percentage of its votes go to Lincoln than the county as a whole. Therefore, sentiments had changed not only within Frederick County, but also within the city of Frederick, showing an increase in Unionist sentiment between 1860 and 1864.

The numbers alone do not tell a complete story, as there are several different ways to interpret this shift in Frederick politics. One possible interpretation for this

⁴⁹ Jacob Engelbrecht called the Democratic Party “McClellanites or Peace Party or Rebels.” Engelbrecht, November 2, 1864, *Diary of Jacob Engelbrecht, 1818-1882*, 1005.

political shift incorporates the difference in the number of votes cast between the 1860 and 1864 elections. Between the two elections, the number of votes returned in Frederick County decreased by 1,476, while in the city of Frederick, voters declined by 394 during the same time span.⁵⁰ This decrease in votes was a result of the absence of citizens who were serving in the Confederate Army, deaths between 1860 and 1864, the separation of the soldiers' vote, and citizens who simply stayed away from the ballot box. The change in the number of voters between the two elections displayed a decrease of just over 29% in the county and close to 22% in the city. The percent change between votes in the 1860 and 1864 elections in Frederick County was an atypical change, one for which there was no precedent.⁵¹ In the city of Frederick, however, it is clear the percent change between elections tended to be more volatile than it was in the county. This difference could be a result of a better turn out in the 1860 election, which was surrounded by a great deal of drama. The 1856 election, on the other hand, was not as contested.⁵² It is not possible to assume, however, that a significant increase in votes for Lincoln was due to the percent change in the number of votes. The election returns, therefore, are not enough to fully interpret this election.

It is possible that in 1860 citizens of Frederick wanted to vote for Lincoln, but felt pressure against doing so

⁵⁰ The numbers for the city of Frederick are as reported by Jacob Engelbrecht and are likely not exact, but they do provide a window in the political phenomenon occurring in Frederick.

⁵¹ Michael J. Dubin, *United States Presidential Elections, 1788-1860: The Official Results by County and State* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2002), 124, 145; Cleveland, *The Tribune Almanac and Political Register for 1861*, 49; Ottarson, *The Tribune Almanac and Political Register for 1865*, 55.

⁵² Engelbrecht, November 5, 1856, November 7, 1860, November 8, 1864, *Diary of Jacob Engelbrecht, 1818-1882*, 799, 885, 1005.

because of the open voting process. However, this shift also can be accounted for in the opposite manner. It is conceivable, though improbable, that residents felt a different kind of pressure in 1864; this time there was pressure to vote for Lincoln. Jacob Engelbrecht gives some insight into this issue through his record of political activity in Frederick. Engelbrecht lists in his diary a number of events held prior to the 1864 election, including those held by both the Republican, or Unionist Party, and the Democratic, or Peace Party. The presence of activity by both political parties before the election suggests that residents of Frederick felt comfortable expressing support for Peace Democrats. In fact, on November 2, 1864, Engelbrecht recorded that “the McClellanites or Peace Party or Rebels,” held a meeting in Frederick, connecting a victory for McClellan in 1864 with a victory for the South and their bid for independence.⁵³ This connection to peace made the Democratic ticket in 1864 unappealing for many Marylanders, as a great deal had changed in the state in four years. Not only had Maryland passed a new Constitution that outlawed slavery, but citizens of Western Maryland also had been witness to Union and Confederate Armies moving through their counties in 1862, 1863, and 1864.⁵⁴ Frederick County saw over 1,000 young men join and serve with the

⁵³ Engelbrecht, November 2, 1864, *Diary of Jacob Engelbrecht, 1818-1882*, 1005.

⁵⁴ McClellan and his supporters knew that slavery could be a liability for them, so they focused on slavery as an obstruction to peace. Michael Vorenberg, “‘The Deformed Child’: Slavery and the Election of 1864,” *Civil War History* 47, no. 3 (September 2001): 249, Project MUSE. For more on the Maryland Constitution passed in 1864 see Engelbrecht, October 13, 1864-November 1, 1864, *Diary of Jacob Engelbrecht, 1818-1882*, 1003-1005; Guy, *Maryland’s Persistent Pursuit to End Slavery, 1850-1864*, 435-452.

Union Army and countless die for their country.⁵⁵ The city of Frederick was home to numerous hospitals in 1862 following the Battle of Antietam and again in 1864 after the Battle of Monocacy.⁵⁶ During the 1864 battle, the city also paid \$200,000 in ransom to Confederate General Jubal Early.⁵⁷ It is apparent, after the suffering Frederick had experienced, why the citizens of Frederick County were more open to Lincoln's reelection in 1864 than to the election of George McClellan as president. Yet, despite the suffering they had endured, close to 40% of the county cast their votes for the former general. This suggests that Frederick had changed over time, rather than voters feeling pressured to support Lincoln.

Conclusion

On Monday April 10, 1865, when news of Robert E. Lee's surrender reached Frederick, Maryland Jacob Engelbrecht wrote that "the whole town [was] in commotion."⁵⁸ Frederick had seen a great deal of commotion during the war, from the arrival of the Confederate Army in September 1862 to the departure of the last wounded soldiers in 1865. Frederick had been host to both the Confederate and

⁵⁵ The quota for Frederick County was 1,352 men, but as of October 9, 1862 only 1,019 had enlisted. Engelbrecht wrote that there was to be a draft taken up to fulfill the rest of the quota on October 15, 1862, but it did not take place until November 14, 1862. Two hundred and thirty-nine men were drafted. Engelbrecht, October 1, 1862, November 14, 1862, *Diary of Jacob Engelbrecht, 1818-1882*, 955, 958.

⁵⁶ Engelbrecht, October 29, 1862, July 11, 1864, *Diary of Jacob Engelbrecht, 1818-1882*, 957, 998.

⁵⁷ Engelbrecht, July 11, 1864, *Diary of Jacob Engelbrecht, 1818-1882*, 998.

⁵⁸ Engelbrecht, April 10, 1865, *Diary of Jacob Engelbrecht, 1818-1882*, 1011.

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Union armies, their wounded, and their dead; as a result Frederick had changed politically. Prior to the 1860 Presidential Election, there was significant support for Southern causes and the preservation of slavery, but by 1864, Maryland had outlawed slavery in its new Constitution.

What had changed the state so greatly between 1860 and 1864? While some of the changes in Frederick can be, in part, accounted for by the exodus of voters with sympathies to the Confederate Army, a much more fundamental change occurred in the county. In 1860, most voters in the county wanted to avoid secession, and yet over 40% of residents showed, with their votes for Breckenridge, that they were willing to go to war if it came to it. But when war arrived in the city of Frederick in September 1862 with the advance of the Confederate Army, the public’s willingness to live through the conditions of the war was worn down. Although Frederick residents were not overly disrupted by the march of the armies, they quickly realized the effects that followed in the armies’ aftermath. This included wounded soldiers, dead bodies, and a rise in the price of everyday goods. “In fact all things are extra high,” Jacob Engelbrecht recorded in his diary on November 1, 1862.⁵⁹ Similar to the young soldiers who entered the war in 1860, the illusions of residents of Frederick were shattered once they saw the nature of war. As a result, they were much less enthusiastic to see the Confederate Army in 1863, knowing that they brought death and destruction with them. When the Confederate Army again arrived in 1864, they managed to further alienate the civilians in Frederick through their ransom of the city and the soldiers’ threat to

⁵⁹ Engelbrecht, November 1, 1862, *Diary of Jacob Engelbrecht, 1818-1882*, 957.

shoot citizens who did not give them what they wanted. This translated to considerable support for Lincoln in the 1864 election and the county's resolve to see the war through to the end. The reality of war had transformed the outlook of the citizens of Frederick, making preservation of the Union the most appealing outcome for voters who had chosen a different platform only four years earlier.

Although Frederick did not start out as a bastion of Unionism, the cause gained support during the ensuing years of war. The change in the election returns between the 1860 and 1864 elections are a concrete example of this phenomenon. The shift in Catherine Markell's tone throughout the war is another example, although a subtler one. That being said, Frederick did not become entirely unified behind the Union by the end of the war. In the 1864 election, close to 40% of the voting population of Frederick County cast their vote for George McClellan—a vote in support of ending the war with a peace agreement rather than defeat. In that sense, there was still opposition to the war in Frederick, although support for the Confederacy had decreased significantly since the start of the war. However, Frederick was not a bastion of Unionism at the beginning of the war. Instead it was only when Frederick County and the city of Frederick experienced the horrors of war that the Unionist “loyal winds” were “stirred.”⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Whittier, “Barbara Fritchie,”
<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/174751>.

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Frederick County			City of Frederick	
<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Lincoln	103	1.4%	27	1.5%
Douglas	445	6.1%	129	7.2%
Bell	3,616	49.3%	835	46.5%
Breckenridge	3,167	43.2%	804	44.8%
Total	7,331	100.0%	1,795	100.0%

Table 1: This table illustrates the 1860 election returns for Frederick County and the City of Frederick. Numbers from *The Tribune Almanac and Political Register for 1861*, compiled by J.F. Cleveland (New York, NY: Tribune Association, 1861), 49; Jacob Engelbrecht, *Diary of Jacob Engelbrecht, 1818-1882* Wednesday November 7, 1860 (Frederick Maryland, Frederick County Historical Society), 885. Engelbrecht's numbers on the city of Frederick's votes in the Election of 1860 do not add up. These numbers have not been adjusted.

Frederick County		
<i>Year</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Percent Change</i>
1852	6,561	
1856	7,049	7.44%
1860	7,331	4.00%
1864	5,855	-20.13%
City of Frederick		
1856	1,125	
1860	1,795	59.56%
1864	1,401	-21.95%

Table 2: Table indicating change in number of votes cast in each election.

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Frederick County			City of Frederick	
<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Lincoln	3,553	60.7%	918	65.7%
McClellan	2,301	39.3%	479	34.3%
Total	5,854	100%	1,401	100%

Table 3: This table illustrates the 1864 vote in Frederick County. Numbers appear as reported by Engelbrecht and have not been altered to reflect numerical accuracy. Engelbrecht, *Diary of Jacob Engelbrecht, 1818-1882*, 1005; *The Tribune Almanac and Political Register for 1865*, compiled by Francis J. Ottarson, (New York, NY: The Tribune Association, 1865), 55.

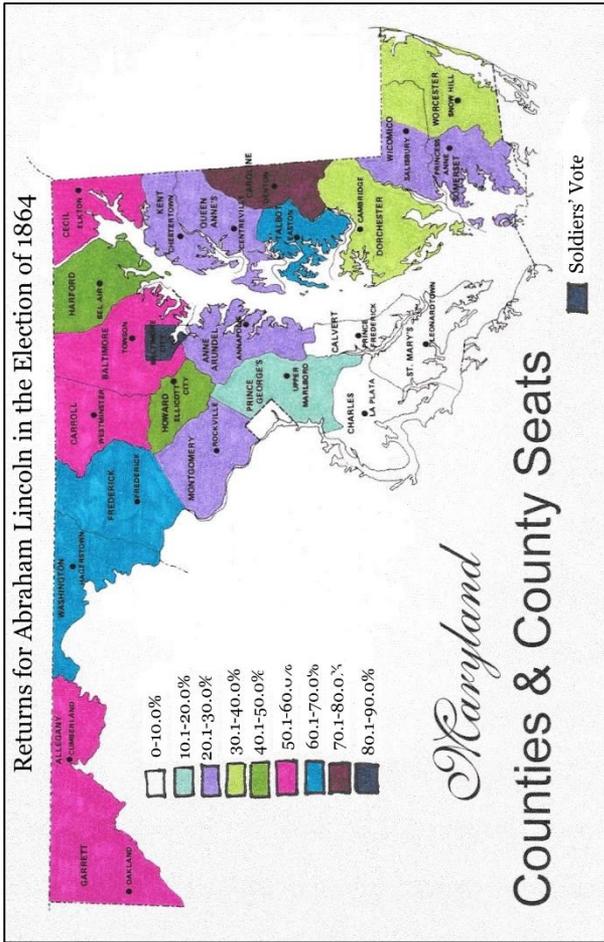


Figure 2: Map of Maryland illustrating the returns for Abraham Lincoln in the Election of 1864.
The Tribune Almanac and Political Register for 1865, 55.

