

THE POE AMENDMENT'S DEFEAT: MARYLAND VOTERS REJECT
THE NEGRO DISFRANCHISEMENT MOVEMENT, 1903-1905

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ABSTRACT

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The Poe amendment resulted from the increase of anti-Negro feeling in the very early 1900's and dominated Maryland politics from 1903 to 1905. Through this amendment, the Democratic party under Senator Arthur P. Gorman would have disfranchised Maryland's Negroes. The racist movements of the South and anti-Negro sentiments of a segment of the Baltimore press affected Democratic thinking.

The Democrats scored an overwhelming victory in the 1903 state election and pushed the amendment through the 1904 meeting of the Legislature. The Legislature sent the measure to the people as a referendum in the November 1905 election. If passed, it would have placed much power in the hands of election officials. In 1904, however, resistance to the proposal emerged, first by Governor Edwin Warfield and later by other leading Democrats. In addition, the newspapers lessened their racist tone.

The amendment threatened the Republican party; its members strongly fought it. They received help at this critical point from Secretary of the Navy, Charles J. Bonaparte, who led and solidified the party. In particular, the Bonaparte-led Republicans utilized the foreign community and apprehensive

third parties. They also received negative help from the Baltimore Democratic organization under I. Freeman Rasin which gave the amendment little support. Further, the election eve saw a number of leading Democrats such as Senator Isidor Rayner squabbling publicly over the amendment. Thus, the voters did not trust Gorman and his organization, did not fear the threat of Negro domination, and thoroughly defeated the amendment throughout most of the state.

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CHAPTER I

THE ANTI-NEGRO FRAME OF REFERENCE IN MARYLAND

The 1905 election produced one of Maryland's most hotly contested political campaigns. Following the lead of the other southern states, the Maryland Democrats under Senator Arthur P. Gorman made the first attempt to disfranchise the state's Negroes. Gorman and his lieutenants developed an amendment commonly called the Poe amendment. Before it reached the ballot for referendum in 1905, a number of Democrats such as Governor Edwin Warfield and Senator Isidor Rayner bolted their party and attacked the amendment. The Republicans stopped disputing among themselves and put up a vigorous fight. When it finally reached the voters, they soundly rejected it. The defeat stemmed somewhat from a fear of Senator Gorman's gaining too much political power. In 1909, and 1911, without Gorman, the Democrats made additional attempts to limit Negro suffrage; however, their best opportunity came in 1905, when the state descended from its apex of racial antipathy.

The race issue characterized the Maryland state elections in 1903, and 1905. In that period of Maryland politics, no other issue approached it in emphasis, as both major political parties stressed the race question. In general, the Democrats of the state attacked the Negro and his right to the suffrage, while the Republicans, without really defending the Negro, defended the Negro's right to vote. The spectre of this

racial feeling did not spontaneously appear on the Maryland scene in the brief period from 1903 to 1905. Rather, racial prejudice existed in the state both before and after those years.

The high point of racial agitation, however, took place at that juncture, with the influx into Maryland of the Negro disfranchisement and Jim Crow movement of the southern states.¹ The northward direction of this movement put Maryland in its path. In the summer of 1901, the Virginia Constitutional Convention met and disfranchised the Negro. From a geographical view, Maryland's turn came next. Moreover, the federal census of 1900 counted 235,064 Negroes and a total population of 1,188,044 people. The Negroes made up 19.8 per cent of the state's population.² Conceivably, there existed a large enough Negro population to move many of Maryland's Democrats toward disfranchisement. They attempted to follow the lead of their fellow southern Democrats by amending the state's constitution to restrict greatly the Negro's suffrage.

Yet, Maryland did not possess a reconstruction constitution. The Populist movement did not affect the state to such an extent that the Democrats felt forced into needing the race issue as a means of breaking up any political alli-

¹For these movements in the southern states see: C. Vann Woodward, The Strange Career of Jim Crow (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957), pp.49-95. Also see John D. Hicks, The Populist Revolt: A History of the Farmers' Alliance and the People's Party (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 1961), p. 410.

²Sun (Baltimore), July 31, 1901, p. 1.

ance between the farmers and the Negroes. There existed no reason for Maryland Democrats to copy the racist tactics of southern Bourbons in order to stem the populist movement.

Instead, factors other than political expediency helped pressure Democrats toward Negro disfranchisement in Maryland at the turn of the century. The nation's experiment with imperialism and the repression of the Filipino insurrection offered an image of national harshness toward non-white peoples. An assassin's bullet abruptly ended the McKinley administration and Mark Hanna's quiet policy of undermining the Negro's usefulness to the Republican party.³ People now heard and read such terms as square deal and social equality. On October 16, 1901, social equality suddenly became a reality to the racially sensitive Marylanders when the President of only one month entertained Booker T. Washington at dinner in the White House.

The end of the nineteenth century found trends toward curtailing the Negro's vote incorporated into the thinking of some of Maryland's Democratic leaders. A few of the more vocal politicians copied the southern demagogues in the Jim Crow and disfranchisement movement. In 1899, the then ex-Senator Arthur P. Gorman wrote his suggestions for the Democratic platform to his trusted lieutenant, Murray Vandiver. Gorman proposed that they denounce the Republican party for bringing up the race issue and that "the success of that party has been interpreted by the

³Theodore Roosevelt to Lyman Abbott, Nov. 5, 1903, Library of Congress, Washington, Theodore Roosevelt MSS, Box 43.

ignorant men of the co'ld colored race as a license to disregard the law."⁴ Later that year, the Baltimore Sun informed its readers that residents of the Black Belt (southern Maryland), supported the Republican party. In effect, the responsible, hard-working element of southern Maryland involuntarily supported a party comprised almost entirely of Negroes who did not pay their own way. The paper further illustrated the growing anti-Negro attitude by reporting the increasing amount of "self-assertion and arrogance and dislike for work" on the part of the younger Negroes.⁵ Moreover, Isidor Rayner asserted in his letter of acceptance of the nomination for Maryland's Attorney General in 1899, that further Republican rule could result in the lawlessness which threatened the other southern states.⁶ This lawlessness "menaced" Rayner to the point that it would "almost daily send a thrill of horror to every fireside and home in the State."⁷ Two years later, L. Victor Baughman led the Frederick County Democratic Convention to pass a resolution to favor restriction on Negro voting.⁸

⁴Notes concerning a letter from Arthur P. Gorman to Murray Vandiver, July 17, 1899, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Arthur P. Gorman MSS, 706. This collection will be cited hereafter as Gorman MSS. There is also a collection of Gorman scrapbooks in the Southern Historical Collection, Chapel Hill, N. C., which this writer examined. However, as the scrapbooks consist almost entirely of newspapers clippings, the writer chose to examine and cite the items from the original newspapers.

⁵Sun, Oct. 18, 1899, p. 9.

⁶Typed copy of Isidor Rayner's acceptance, (not dated), Gorman MSS.

⁷Sun, Oct. 13, 1899, Clippings from Gorman MSS.

⁸Ibid., July 27, 1901, p. 10.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Arthur P. Gorman decided political issues in Maryland not Democratic demagoguery. Outside of Baltimore, he smoothly managed the Democratic party in Maryland. I. Freeman Rasin controlled the party in the city, and although Baltimore held almost half of the state's population, rural political domination easily gave Gorman the upper hand. Gorman generally controlled his party's moves toward Negro disfranchisement, although, initially, he and his party did not attempt to radically limit the Maryland Negro's right to the suffrage.

In fact, Gorman and his lieutenants incorporated disfranchisement moves into different maneuvers through which they could wrest complete control of Maryland politics from the Republicans and then maintain this control. On March 6, 1901, a special session of the Legislature met at Annapolis to revise Maryland's election laws. The Democratic governor, John Walter Smith, called the session, but Gorman manipulated it. He and his followers designed the special session to change the state's voting laws in order to ease Gorman's return to the Senate.⁹ They needed to diminish Republican power and contrived to eliminate many Negro and Republican voters. At this point, disfranchisement existed primarily for political expediency; emotions and racial prejudice had not yet greatly affected it.

The special session increased the illiterates' difficulty in voting by abolishing the party emblem from the ballot, eliminating assistance in the voting booth, requiring a signature upon

⁹American, (Baltimore), March 5, 1901, p. 15.

registration, and alphabetically arranging the names on the ballot.¹⁰ The Legislature aimed these changes at the Negro voter, but the changes did not result in his wholesale removal from the voting rolls. However, the Democrats did win control of the Legislature in November and they elected Arthur P. Gorman to his fourth term in the United States Senate.

Following Gorman's return to the Senate, other factors clouded the race issue in Maryland politics and affected the Democratic leaders. Gorman and his followers began to view the issue with decreasing rationality; they became addicted to the cause of Negro disfranchisement. Ultimately, their inflexibility on this question helped cause infighting that eventually split the Democratic party. This tenacity toward Negro disfranchisement also helped remove Senator Gorman as a Presidential possibility. It marked him as a definite southern candidate.

The party managers made a practice of keeping volumes of scrapbooks filled with newspaper clippings. These scrapbooks became files for political information and references. They further supplied written political ammunition when needed.¹¹ The party leaders utilized the newspapers as essential tools of their trade; the papers, in turn, greatly affected the leaders' thoughts and attitudes. In the years 1903 and 1904, certain Baltimore newspapers focused a great deal of attention on the racial violence which occurred in the nation. They helped stir

¹⁰Ibid., Mar. 3, 1901, p. 3.

¹¹Personal interview with Robert M. Vandiver, son of Murray Vandiver, Nov. 10, 1965.

up the racial prejudice that many Marylanders possessed. President Roosevelt's square deal, the Jim Crow movement in the South, increasing attitudes of white supremacy, and the excesses of the Filipino insurrection all offered excuses for greater racial violence.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, racial hatred reached a high pitch in many areas of the United States. Regions outside of the South participated as the racial rantings of the southern demagogues scattered northward. After Theodore Roosevelt became President, publicized race eruptions began appearing in northern states with increasing frequency. The increase in anti-race thought became more and more accentuated by a portion of the Baltimore press. The press contributed greatly toward increasing anti-Negro thought in Maryland; the prejudices of the Democratic leadership reflected its success. Consequently, the newspapers did much to help fan the flame of racism, and a residual effect from this intense mood lingered well into the twentieth century.

Both the Baltimore World and the Baltimore Sun accentuated the violence that fed on racial prejudice and helped develop racial antagonism. The World utilized a bold headline, low level, sensationalist style. When the paper campaigned for more frequent garbage collections in Baltimore, the subject of garbage suggested a simile in reference to the level of the paper. Yet, the World with the Sun helped create the attitude of racial inferiority and supposed Negro villainy. This attitude, in turn, encouraged usually shrewd professional poli-

ticians to inflexibly cling to an issue such as the Poe amendment, which stood such an excellent chance of defeat.

In 1903 and 1904, the Baltimore papers reached the high point of forming a contemptuous attitude toward the Negro. The ex-Virginian, Oakley Philpotts Haines, held the position of managing or chief editor of the Sun.¹² This paper followed along the lines of allegiance to the Democratic party, while in 1903, the World's tabloid form made lynch stories paramount. In August 1904, the Morning Herald became the evening Herald and adopted a Democratic allegiance. It increased somewhat its antipathy toward the Negro. Consequently, it too, contributed in stimulating greater racial hostility. An increasing number of clippings which downgraded the Negro found their way into the political and personal files of the Democratic party leaders.¹³

In June 1903, an editorial in the World commented on the burning at the stake of George White in Wilmington, Delaware, for the murder of Helen Bishop. The writer mildly condemned the burning, yet brought out the attitude of justification of the cruel punishment because of a "foul brute" ['s] victimizing a "sweet, pure" seventeen year old girl.¹⁴ The viciousness manifested at the burning of a Negro in Bluefield, West Virginia,

¹²Gerald W. Johnson et al., The Sunpapers of Maryland: 1837-1937 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1937), p. 226.

¹³Surviving scrapbooks. For example: The Gorman MSS and The Arthur P. Gorman Scrapbooks, Southern Historical Collection. Also: Isidor Rayner scrapbooks, Southern Historical Collection, and the Murray Vandiver papers in the possession of Robert Vandiver.

¹⁴World (Baltimore), June 23, 1903, pp. 1,4.

exemplified the intense racial hatred that some persons of the era could demonstrate if goaded into the proper fever pitch of animal-like violence. In this instance, a Negro made the mistake of being caught "returning" to the scene of an assault on a fourteen year old girl bound to a tree. The mob freely extended many indignities upon the unidentified Negro before his demise. Ultimately, parts of his anatomy became souvenirs for some of the participants.¹⁵

The more distinguished and conservative Baltimore Sun took delight in reporting the lynching and burning of two Danville, Illinois, Negroes. A mob wrecked the jail and beat one Negro to death before burning the body. The paper, which on July 23, had reached the point of featuring four separate front-page articles on Negro violence and williany, found much satisfaction in the fact that Republican Speaker of the House, Joe Cannon, resided in Danville. The paper emphasized that he "held" his hometown "to public view as the seat of all that is perfect in simple Christian character." Moreover, the Sun pointed out that a leading Republican voice would now be muffled from declaring against "Southern outrages."¹⁶

As the summer progressed further, the World continued to evince the development of anti-Negro attitudes when it described Ellicott City, Maryland, on the eve of the Republican primary. In August, a World reporter found this town in Arthur P. Gorman's native Howard County to practically exist in a "Reign of Terror."

¹⁵Ibid., July 13, 1903, p. 1.

¹⁶Sun, Aug. 7, 1903, p. 1.

The election and the "irrisistible bar'l" drew the Negroes to the county seat where they hung "lazily about the street corners" with "idle and surly" countenances. World readers also learned that the Negroes "all carry razors and guns" despite the fact that the reporter admitted not having seen any of the weapons.¹⁷ Additional examples of Negro evils came about on the eve of the 1903 state election when the paper again depicted the "bad effect" of the impending election on the unfortunate souls. Thus, by November, the paper reported that rowdyism had increased; the police even went to the "extreme" of locking up a fourteen year old Negro youth, Henry Baker, whom they found to be drunk and "when searched a deck of playing cards was found on him."¹⁸ On the following day, through the use of cartoons, the World reminded mothers and fathers of the repugnancy of racially mixed classrooms.¹⁹

The Baltimore Sun continued to reflect the tone of white supremacy when it wrote of Dr. H. K. Pancoast's experiment at the University of Pennsylvania. His attempts at using X-rays to produce white skin suggested the premium placed on being white. Or, the account of the hearse driver who drove away and left the coffin with the Negro corpse inside suggested the handicap of being non-white.²⁰ The description of the accused Negro murderer whose "face is not repulsive looking, but shows evidence of a rather weak intelligence" serves to illustrate

¹⁷World, Aug. 14, 1903, p. 2.

¹⁸Ibid., Nov. 2, 1903, p. 2.

¹⁹Ibid., Nov. 3, 1903, p. 2.

²⁰Sun, Dec. 28, 1903, p. 7.

the enlightenment projected toward the Negro.²¹ Against this background, the orators of the Democratic party demanded Negro disfranchisement, and the 1904 session of the Maryland Legislature passed Jim Crow laws to become effective on July 1, 1904.²² Delegate Henry A. Bosse of Baltimore told the Legislature that the "virginity of the wives' and daughters' ears... will be insulted" by the Negro's presence in the vehicles, when he endeavored to expand the Jim Crow laws to the electric railroads in Baltimore.²³

Moreover, a lynching in Springfield, Ohio, provided a further example of callousness and contempt for the Negro. While shooting at the lifeless body hanging from a pole, "everyone seemed in the best of humor, joking with his nearest neighbor while reloading his revolver."²⁴ The Sun editorialized against a racially mixed Navy. It maintained that Negroes in the Navy stirred up the race issue and ultimately harmed the Negro race which depended on the white race.²⁵ The populace identified masked Negroes by the appearance of their eyes, refused to use the services of the Ferdinand, Indiana, post office which hired a Negro clerk, refused to attend the State Normal University classes in Ohio, with a Negro student, and continued to suggest that "brutal creature" Negroes convicted

²¹Ibid., Jan. 4, 1904, p. 7.

²²Ibid., Mar. 17, 1904, p. 2.

²³Morning Herald, (Baltimore), Mar. 2, 1904, p. 2.

²⁴Sun, Mar. 9, 1904, p. 10.

²⁵Ibid., May 3, 1904, p. 4.

of crimes deserved to die when a court of law felt otherwise.²⁶

In mid-August, a climax of racial violence took place at Statesboro, Georgia. The disclosure that a "Negro Mafia" group's killing of a farm family brought violent death to approximately ten Negroes. The mob discovered that these Negroes belonged to the Before Day Club, which plotted to kill off whites. This revelation helped foment the mob's frenzied hatred as it captured and violently killed the alleged murderers.²⁷

Within this frame of reference, Arthur P. Gorman, Murray Vandiver, John Walter Smith, Victor L. Baughman, and other Democratic leaders championed Negro disfranchisement in the form of the Poe amendment--their tenacious attempt to remove from the Negro his right to vote. They remained captive to the racist impressions created from the communicative media and their own prejudices. The Democrats could not adjust their anti-Negro attitudes as readily as did the Baltimore press following Roosevelt's complete victory in the 1904 election. At that point, anti-Negro news lessened, but it certainly did not disappear. In the main, the press now left racism primarily to the political orators.

²⁶ Ibid., June 28, p. 2; Aug. 17, p. 1; Sept. 3, p. 10; July 16, 1904, p. 4.

²⁷ Morning Herald, Aug. 17, 1904, pp. 1,2. Also, World, Aug. 17, 1904, p. 1.

CHAPTER II

THE DEMOCRATS WIN IN 1903 WITH NEGRO DISFRANCHISEMENT CAMPAIGN

In 1903, the Democrats under Arthur Gorman's sanction successfully conducted their campaign almost entirely on the race issue. With a pledge to disfranchise the Negro, they won a very complete victory, as their candidate became the governor. The Democrats interpreted this victory as an unqualified endorsement from the Maryland voters to disfranchise the Negro. Yet, the election results misled Gorman and his followers as other factors entered the campaign. In particular, a split in Republican party ranks effected the outcome. The in-fighting also caused President Theodore Roosevelt to intervene.

Senator Arthur P. Gorman provided the key turning point. On August 1, 1903, when the Senator returned from his summer trip to Europe, the New York press interviewed him, and stirred up a mild Gorman "boom" for the Presidency. The nation now became increasingly aware of his availability. In the fall, Gorman led the field as the possible Democratic Presidential nominee--the first southern candidate since 1844. Ultimately, the early date of his candidacy gave the Senator enough time to unwittingly effect his own elimination from the race. He staked his political fortunes on losing issues. He poorly led the Democratic Senatorial minority in its December fight against ratification of the Panama Canal Treaty.¹ Moreover, Gorman

¹John R. Lambert, Arthur Pue Gorman (Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State University Press, 1953), pp. 305-307.

lost much of his grip on the Democratic party in Maryland. The inflammatory issue of the Poe amendment proved to be one of the primary reasons.

To shift the Negro disfranchisement movement into high gear, Gorman declared at his August 1, New York interview that broadening of the Negro question removed it from being solely a political issue. He stated that "The frequency and appalling character of the race riots of the last few months is serving... [to] make it a national...question."² Further, the Senator publicly wondered how only Democrats possessed the capability of controlling Negro lawlessness.³

The Democratic primary election in August 1903, presented little evidence of race being an issue, and such resolutions as the one "against Negro control" given by the Somerset County Democratic Convention seemed to merely continue lip service against the Negroes.⁴ However, at the same time, a conference took place in Washington, D. C., between Arthur P. Gorman, lame-duck Governor John Walter Smith, I. Freeman Rasin, and Murray Vandiver. Gorman approved the selection of Edwin Warfield for the Democratic gubernatorial nomination.⁵ Thus, the party put forth a standard bearer quite willing to campaign on the race issue.

² New York Times, Aug. 2, 1903, p. 1; American, Aug. 2, 1903, p. 3.

³ American, Aug. 2, 1903, p. 3.

⁴ Sun, Aug. 13, 1903, p. 10.

⁵ Ibid., Aug. 14, 1903, p. 12.

On September 16, a similar group gathered in Room 50 of the Rennert Hotel in Baltimore. The state Democratic Convention met that day, and Gorman led this small group in drawing up the Democratic platform.⁶ When the meeting resulted in a statement that white political ascendancy would be maintained, the convention showed no radical departure from past threats.⁷

Gorman's Democrats, however, waited until later in the month to present the Negro question as the central issue. At the Mt. Airy barbecue, on Saturday September 25, when some 5,000 persons attended in order to eat, dance, sing, and listen to speeches, they heard tirades throughout the day on the evils of Negro lawlessness and the relief that disfranchisement would bring. At that point, the plank of the platform which called for white supremacy became paramount. Democratic candidates for Governor, Edwin Warfield; for Comptroller, Dr. Gordon T. Atkinson; and for Attorney General, William Shepherd Bryan all spoke on the race issue. When Edwin Warfield had accepted his nomination, he described the Negro problem as "the great and pressing problem of the day."⁸ He committed himself to a course with which he did not completely agree.⁹ Nonetheless, eager to become the Governor, he readily spoke the gospel of disfranchisement.¹⁰

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid., Sept. 17, 1903, p. 12; American, Sept. 17, 1903, p. 14.

⁸Sun, Sept. 27, 1903, p. 14.

⁹American, Oct. 10, 1903, p. 6.

¹⁰Lambert, Gorman, p. 344. He takes the view that Warfield used his office to enhance his financial interests.

Race became the only issue. The Democrats followed southern politicians in appealing to passions and emotions of prejudice, fear, hatred, and ignorance. From the Mt. Airy barbecue, the Democratic orators fanned out through the state exalting Negro disfranchisement and feeding on the cheers of their listeners who seemed to be of an overwhelmingly like-mind.¹¹

Edwin Warfield led the oratory. Before nearly 10,000 persons in Baltimore County, he charged that Republican election successes caused the "ignorant and emotional" Negro to become arrogant and offensive.¹² He cried that portions of the state staggered "under a black burden!"¹³ Then, when the Republican nominee for Governor, Stevenson A. Williams, conferred with President Roosevelt on the Maryland election, the meeting provided Warfield with further verbal ammunition. He lamented that Williams sat at the same table as had Booker T. Washington. He told his audiences that from such behavior it would reach the point whereby "Negro children" would eventually sit... "beside your own in public school."¹⁴

To further the cause, Warfield received oratorical help. Significantly, two of those most vocal in their anti-Negro tirades would join him in opposing the Poe amendment in the future. The Democratic candidate for Attorney General, William

¹¹ Frank R. Kent, The Story of Maryland Politics (Baltimore: Thomas and Evans Printing Co., 1911), p. 330.

¹² Sun, Oct. 4, 1903, p. 14.

¹³ Morning Herald, Oct. 5, 1903, p. 11.

¹⁴ Ibid., Oct. 16, 1903, p. 12.

Shepherd Bryan, asserted that the 60,000 Negro voters allowed the Republican party sometimes to "override the will of the intelligent white taxpayers."¹⁵ Also, the vocal but sometimes hollow talents of Attorney General Isidor Rayner joined the campaign, By mid-October of 1903, he announced his candidacy for the United States Senate. The term of Republican Lewis E. McComas expired the following year, and Rayner broke precedent by openly soliciting the position. He went so far as to advertise his candidacy in the newspapers. This gave him license to stump the state. He quickly became one of racism's most vociferous and articulate champions. Rayner ranted "that all men were not born equal," and that in parts of southern Maryland and on the Eastern Shore, the Republican party caused "desolation and despair."¹⁶ He quoted the lady from Kent County who told him that a Republican victory would leave no woman safe in Kent County.¹⁷ Nor did he "hesitate a moment to say that I am in favor of a law disfranchising the Negroes."¹⁸ To the cheering crowd at a large Democratic rally, Rayner predicted that "Negro domination...means ruin and disaster." The Democrats climaxed the rally with a stereopticon projection depicting President Roosevelt amicably eating with a colored gentleman.¹⁹

Even the normally aloof and quiet Arthur P. Gorman chimed

¹⁵Ibid., Oct. 16, 1903, p. 12.

¹⁶Sun, Oct. 18, 1903, p. 14.

¹⁷Ibid., Oct. 22, 1903, p. 12.

¹⁸Ibid., Oct. 27, 1903, p. 7.

¹⁹Morning Herald, Oct. 22, 1903, p. 11.

in. His speech at Highland identified him personally with the election. As one Republican advertisement said, he made himself an issue.²⁰ In that speech, Gorman informed the hundred men gathered at Highland, in Howard County, that the President suddenly made the Negro race believe that his dining with Booker T. Washington entitled them to social and political equality.²¹

Campaigning almost exclusively on the race issue, the Democrats won a complete victory in November 1903. They garnered the Governorship, the offices of Attorney General and Comptroller as well as three-fifths of the seats in both the Senate and the House of Delegates. By all outward appearances, the voters gave Gorman a solidified state from which he could presumably go to the Presidency. But, both illusions evaporated in the next two years. The state's voters rejected the 1905 Poe amendment's attempt to disfranchise the Negro; later, they again rejected the attempt in the 1909 election.

Further, Senator Gorman, who in 1890, used states rights to successfully lead the fight against the Force Bill, now became a racist politician. He thus joined Ben Tillman and James K. Vardman. When the anti-Bryan [William Jennings] conservative faction of the party looked for a nominee, the business-oriented, fund-raising Gorman no longer gave the impression of availability.

Actually, the "mandate" the Democrats received resulted in a deception. The subsequent 1905 and 1909 defeats at disfranchisement attempts demonstrated that the voters did not

²⁰American, Oct. 28, 1903, p. 1.

²¹Sun, Oct. 25, 1903, p. 14.

wish to allow curtailing of the suffrage to any great extent. In truth, other factors helped produce the complete Democratic victory. For the 1903 election, there existed a bad split within Republican ranks. United States Senator Lewis McComas led the regular organization with the help of Port of Baltimore tariff collector, William F. Stone. Republican Congressmen Frank Wachter and Sydney E. Mudd challenged McComas' leadership. Wachter and Mudd wielded a considerable amount of power within the party. Their faction gave virtually no support to the party in the 1903 election. In fact, Sydney E. Mudd's "illness" did not improve until after the election. Moreover, Frank Wachter publically found "satisfaction" in McComas' defeat.²² Many Republicans throughout the state strove to remove McComas' bossism.²³ That McComas himself bore a considerable amount of the financial burden further illustrates the handicap the Republicans had.²⁴ McComas evidenced his difficulty when he appealed to Rhode Island's Republican Senator Nelson W. Aldrich for funds.²⁵

At the same time, Marylanders learned of President Roosevelt's stake in the election. He hoped that a Republican victory in Maryland would vindicate his pro-Negro attitude. Therefore, he held conference with Maryland Republican leaders and he identified himself somewhat with the campaign. The President

²²Sun, Nov. 5, 1903, p. 2.

²³Evening Times (Cumberland, Md.), Oct. 27, 1903, pp. 1, 4.

²⁴American, Nov. 8, 1903, p. 30.

²⁵Lewis E. McComas to Nelson W. Aldrich, Sept. 8, 1903, and Oct. 11, 1903, Library of Congress, Washington, Nelson W. Aldrich MSS.

wanted to repudiate the southern politician with whom the North and West gave signs of sympathizing. He strongly desired that a state with a southern identification would reject the race issue.²⁶

Roosevelt found it difficult to understand the southerner's attitude toward the Negro.²⁷ He strongly wished to see Maryland reject the Democrats' appeal to race.²⁸ The President disliked Gorman's use of a campaign button depicting Roosevelt and Booker T. Washington eating together, which he used in order to solicit funds for the campaign. In addition, he earnestly wanted to see Gorman's prestige lessened as he felt that some business trusts backed Gorman. In particular, he suspected the Rockefellers.²⁹

President Roosevelt met with little success, as the sound defeat of the Republicans indicated. The state's voters undoubtedly resented the intrusion by the President, especially, a youthful President not yet cloaked with the prestige that Panama, the Russo-Japanese Peace Conference, and other U. S. adventures later brought him. In addition, his own re-election had not yet helped somewhat to diminish racial antagonism.

During the second week of October, Roosevelt summoned

²⁶Sun, Oct. 14, 1903, p. 1; American, Oct. 13, 1903, p. 1.

²⁷Theodore Roosevelt to Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., Oct. 31, 1903, Roosevelt MSS, Box 43.

²⁸Theodore Roosevelt to Mrs. Grant La Farge, Nov. 5, 1903, Roosevelt MSS, Box 43.

²⁹Theodore Roosevelt to Dr. Lyman Abbott, Oct. 29, 1903, Roosevelt MSS, Box 43.

a number of Maryland Republicans for discussions on the elections in an effort to fuse the split. Stevenson A. Williams, ex-Governor Floyd Lowndes, former Postmaster General, James A. Gary, and Congressmen Frank Wachter, William H. Jackson, and Sydney Mudd all lunched with or conferred with the President.³⁰ However, the President could not bring the factions together.

Other handicaps aided in making the Republican defeat so complete as to give the illusion of a mandate to disfranchise the Negro. Maryland Republicans functioned under the typical handicap of the Democratically contrived election laws. Stevenson A. Williams credited the discarded ballots as being the Republican's greatest handicap.³¹ The staid, dignified Bel Air lawyer failed to consider himself a liability in the election. Yet, Williams conducted a gentlemanly, reasoned campaign at a time when the people looked for flamboyant oratory. Attacking the Negro offered a greater opportunity for such oratory, and the Democrats blatantly utilized this method. The Republicans remained on the defensive throughout the campaign by defending the Negro's right to vote while negating social equality. During one Republican rally, the "colored voters occupied the south gallery of the Music Hall."³²

³⁰American, Oct. 10, 1903, p. 16; Oct. 13, 1903, p. 1; Oct. 14, 1903, p. 1; Oct. 15, 1903, p. 1.

³¹Ibid., Nov 5, 1903, p. 5.

³²Ibid., Oct 24, 1903, p. 16.

CHAPTER III

FORMATION AND INTRODUCTION OF THE POE AMENDMENT INTO THE LEGISLATURE

After the 1903 election, the Democrats wrote a Negro disfranchisement measure. They devised a plan based on the grandfather clause and literacy requirements. In addition, the party's leadership decided to use a constitutional amendment as the method of bringing about disfranchisement. However, the difficulty in selecting a new United States Senator and the Baltimore fire in February 1904, delayed introduction of the measure into the Legislature.

With the 1903 election "mandate" from the people in hand, Senator Gorman proceeded to develop a plan to disfranchise the Negro. At the same time, the Senator remained aware of the bonus of perhaps increasing his own political power in the state. At least, he could enhance his party's political fortunes by removing the alleged block of Negro votes that the Republicans controlled.¹

In December and early January, Gorman, his supposed ally I. Freeman Rasin, and lieutenants held a number of meetings to plan the upcoming legislative program. In the main, they concerned themselves with Negro disfranchisement, a new Senator from Maryland, and the leadership of the Maryland Legislature. In spite of the Christmas season, Gorman remained at his K

¹ Lambert, Gorman, pp. 345-346.

Street home in Washington and conducted meetings there. On December 14, 1903, he met with his chief lieutenant, Murray Vandiver, the state treasurer and head of the Democratic State Central Committee, and John Prentice Poe, the legal counsel for the Central Committee and Dean of the Faculty of the University of Maryland Law School. Gorman suggested the general requirements for the amendment to Poe and commissioned the lawyer to draw it up.² The Senator insisted that the amendment comply with the Fifteenth Amendment of the national Constitution.³ He developed the guidelines after consulting some of his fellow Senators who came from states having disfranchised a portion of the population.⁴ Moreover, he referred to the suggestions offered by the Virginia Constitutional Convention of 1901.⁵ The press soon gave the amendment Poe's name, although Gorman developed most of its essentials.

The Poe amendment basically stated that a person could qualify to vote if he could read a section of the state's constitution, or in the opinion of the voter registration officers, could give a reasonable explanation of the constitution. A voter could also vote if he or an ancestor could have voted on January 1, 1869.

²Arthur P. Gorman, "Journal", Dec. 14, 1903, Gorman MSS.

³Lambert, Gorman, p. 347.

⁴Ibid.

⁵John W. Daniel, "The Work of the Constitutional Convention," Record of the Virginia State Bar Association (Aug. 5-7, 1902), Gorman MSS.

On the first Saturday afternoon of 1904, the Democratic leadership met at the K Street house and discussed the Poe amendment along with other legislative matters. At this meeting, there existed a feeling of agreement with Senator Gorman's schemes. This group included lame-duck Governor John Walter Smith, ex-Governor E. E. Jackson, Joshua W. Miles, I. Freeman Rasin, Victor L. Baughman, Murray Vandiver, and about ten others. However, Governor-elect Edwin Warfield and Attorney General-elect William Shepherd Bryan presented some dissent with their "mugwump" idea of putting property qualifications into the disfranchisement amendment. Among the other topics discussed, the leadership decided that no legislation on oysters would pass in that legislative session.⁶ When they finally satisfied their wish and prevented any legislation on the control of oysters in the Chesapeake Bay, they lost a potential, powerful ally in the Baltimore Sun. From that point on, the Sun gave no help toward bringing the voters in line on the Poe amendment.⁷

When the Legislature met in January 1904, there appeared to be little opposition to Gorman, the Democrats, and the people of Maryland's removing the Negro as a voter. Nonetheless, at that point, a series of events began which eventually defeated those who advocated disfranchisement. This series of events lessened Gorman's tight grasp on his party and his national leadership. Because Gorman created the amendment and attempted

⁶Gorman, "Journal," Jan. 2, 1904, Gorman MSS.

⁷The paper proved to be one of the most vocal supporters on the similar disfranchisement attempt in 1909.

to execute it exactly as he wished, he needed to retain the party structure well under his control throughout the fight for its passage. In the national political arena, Gorman's inability to solidify many Democratic Senators against the Panama Treaty cost him prestige. Further, his success in the Maryland election made him a special concern of the William Jennings Bryan faction of the party. Within a week after the election, Bryan, Morse Wetmore of Missouri, Senator Bill Storm of Missouri, and ex-Senator and Democratic National Chairman, James K. Jones conferred in St. Louis on stopping the Gorman move to the Presidency.⁸

The first Gorman set-back in Maryland came when the Democrats chose a successor to Lewis McComas' Senate seat. The Democrats' three-fifths majority in both houses suggested little potential difficulty. The problem worsened when lame-duck Attorney General Isidor Rayner noisily threw his hat into the ring. The flamboyant Rayner had acquired good-will throughout the state representing the Marylander, Rear Admiral Winfield Scott Schley, at a Naval court of inquiry. The Admiral endeavored to receive more credit for his action at the Battle of Santiago Bay in the Spanish-American War. Rayner's arguments proved successful, and the court gave Schley his recognition.⁹

In putting himself into the Senatorial race, Isidor Rayner utilized unprecedented methods. Inadvertently anticipating the Seventeenth Amendment, he made his candidacy an attempt at

⁸American, Nov. 6, 1903, p. 1.

⁹Lambert, Gorman, p. 330.

being a popular one. In October 1903, he purchased advertising space in the Baltimore papers to announce his candidacy. In addition, he stumped the state, attempted to drum up support in the counties, and received the support of the Baltimore Sun. Further, for a consideration, Rayner obtained Rasin's support.¹⁰

Contrary to the wishes of Gorman, the Legislature elected Rayner after a reasonably long struggle. Initially, Gorman half-heartedly favored Governor John Walter Smith, whose term ended in mid-January, as a Senatorial candidate. Maryland political custom suggested that one Senator come from the Eastern Shore. Yet, Smith received opposition from other leading Shore Democrats who jealously opposed him and coveted the same office.¹¹ Finding Smith unable to win and Rayner's election distasteful, Gorman shifted support to Bernard Carter, a Baltimore lawyer for the Pennsylvania Railroad.¹² Throughout the latter part of January and into early February, the Sun heaped editorial abuse on those who opposed Rayner. Almost daily, the Legislature voted and could secure no majority; frequently the Democrats caucused and could reach no agreement--all legislation including the Poe amendment remained at a virtual impasse. At a politically strategic moment, Issac Rasin's city delegation

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 341-2. Lambert credits Gorman's "Journal" with the view that Rasin eventually received \$35,000 from Rayner.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 332, 334.

¹²Ibid., p. 330.

¹³Ibid., p. 341.

voted for Rayner, and he won.¹³ The deceived Gorman lost prestige. Rayner and Rasin displayed a successful independence from the Democrats' boss. Others would follow their lead.

For a time, Gorman, Vandiver, Baughman and other Democratic leaders kept a reasonably close reign on the Poe amendment while continuing to decide its exact fate. In early January, they permitted the text of the amendment to appear in print for public exposure.¹⁴ They debated among themselves as to the method of incorporating the amendment into the constitution. A constitutional convention offered the quickest means. However, they deemed too risky the plan of calling a constitutional convention. There rested a slight chance that the Republicans could take a majority of convention seats, and state office holders feared an uncontrollable convention which could eliminate many offices.¹⁵ Consequently, the Legislature became the recipient of the Poe amendment.

After another delay, the Poe amendment went into the hoppers of the two houses. The Sunday following the settlement of the Senatorial election, a fire devastated much of the Baltimore business district, and the Legislature concerned itself with it. As the amendment went into the hoppers of the Legislature's two houses, the relatively small amount of dialogue in the General assembly offered little indication of much opposition to the amendment. However, the just previously in-

¹³Ibid., p. 341.

¹⁴Sun, Jan. 1, 1904, p. 1.

¹⁵American, Jan. 1, 1904, p. 4; Sun, Jan. 12, 1904, p. 1; Jan. 13, 1904, p. 1.

stalled Attorney General, William Shepherd Bryan, in a newspaper interview criticized the Poe amendment. He presented one of the arguments which would haunt the amendment all the way to its eventual defeat. Bryan opposed the large amount of discretionary power the amendment gave to registration officials.¹⁶ A well-disciplined machine could truly control the destiny of the voters and the state with the "proper" utilization of such power.

Additional rustlings of dissent appeared. State Senator John Gill of Baltimore introduced an alternate form of the bill which included property qualifications. Essentially, he introduced Attorney General Bryan's plan. It forced the Democrats into a caucus, as Gill suggested revisions to the too drastic Poe plan.¹⁷ Behind the scene, Gorman and his lieutenants permitted no changes. In particular, Murray Vandiver represented Gorman's interests at Annapolis. At a point when an easy compromise or a slight accommodation would result in greater acceptance of a disfranchisement scheme, reason failed to prevail. Here, and all the way to the election of 1905, Gorman and his followers remained intransigent.

Concomitant to the maneuverings on the Poe amendment, the rank and file of the Legislature followed the assumed dictates of the electorate and passed Jim Crow laws. The new laws reflected the extreme anti-Negro attitude. However, Gorman and his lieutenants displayed little concern for the Jim Crow laws,

¹⁶Sun, Feb. 6, 1904, p. 10.

¹⁷Morning Herald, Feb. 26, 1904, p. 2; Sun, Feb. 26, 1904, p. 7.

which offered little political advantage. Other than unheeded Negro groups and "helpless" Republican minority in the Legislature, only the railroads opposed the Jim Crow legislation.¹⁸ The law forced intra-state steam railroads and boat lines to provide separate facilities for the Negro, and the Legislature set July 1, 1904, as the effective date.

¹⁸Sun, Feb. 27, 1904, p. 11.

CHAPTER IV

THE LEGISLATURE PASSES THE POE AMENDMENT: OPPOSITION EMERGES

In February and March 1904, the two houses of the Legislature passed the Poe amendment. They adopted the measure rather easily. However, the nucleus of the real opposition to the amendment's becoming part of the state's constitution then began to emerge.

During the Legislature's deliberations on both the Jim Crow laws and the Poe amendment, the Republicans offered only token opposition.¹ They made some arguments, they presented some amendments to the Poe amendment, but they agreed to allow the State Senate to vote on these changes all at once to save time. In the House of Delegates, they voted on the amendments in rapid order.² Both houses easily rejected all proposed changes to the Poe amendment. The Republicans failed to fight this bill as might a desperate minority which feared possible elimination as a political party.

The Poe amendment required more time for passage and evoked a greater amount of debate than did the Jim Crow laws. Much of

¹Sun, Mar. 3, 1904, p. 2.

²Journal of Proceedings of the Senate of Maryland, January Session, 1904 (Annapolis, Md.: William J. C. Dulaney Co., 1904), pp. 469-476. Also, Journal of Proceedings of the House of Delegates of Maryland, January Session, 1904 (Annapolis: William J. C. Dulaney Co., 1904), pp. 821-230. The Journals do not include any debates or views of the members of the General Assembly.

the debate took place, not in the Legislature but in the Baltimore newspapers. Initially, the debate concerned itself with the exact form of the amendment. In an interview early in the dialogue, Democratic Senator Thomas H. Robinson stated that the amendment constituted an educational test similar to the one the Massachusetts constitution required. As the Senate floor leader, Robinson's statement of policy supposedly carried weight. He insisted that regardless of the form of the amendment, they designed it only for the purpose of disfranchising Negroes.³ He thus established the line of argument the Democratic leadership and supporters of the amendment held throughout the next two years. Throughout the fight for passage, they continued to insist that they intended to disfranchise the Negro only. The 1905 election defeat reflected the voters' belief in the assurances of the Democratic leaders.

Very slowly and somewhat quietly, the seeds of opposition began to form. State Senator John Gill submitted the Bryan plan which omitted the "reasonable explanation of a clause of the Constitution," from the Poe amendment. The Senate voted it down.⁴ The party managers continued to feel that no other alternative offered equal effectiveness; they did not allow the members of the Legislature to alter this inflexible position. Further, the Democratic leaders insisted that the grandfather clause removed any threat of white disfranchisement.⁵ They also

³American, Mar. 3, 1904, p. 4.

⁴Sun, Mar. 3, 1904, p. 2.

⁵Ibid., Mar. 6, 1904, p. 16.

felt that they needed a procedure to insure their preventing the Negro from voting. In particular they wished to disfranchise the Negro politician who could read and write.⁶ Senator Robinson told an interviewer that the illiterate white's heritage of voting stood the white man in good stead when he voted.⁷

Prior to the large vote in favor of the amendment in the House of Delegates, the party leaders had become concerned that the necessary sixty-one votes might not materialize. Some Democrats appeared reluctant to vote for the measure. However, Speaker George Y. Everhart, State Senators Thomas Robinson, Joseph S. Wilson, and Arthur P. Gorman, Jr., and State Treasurer Murray Vandiver scurried about and herded the Democrats back for the vote.⁸ They met with success as the members then dutifully voted 64 to 27 to present the amendment to the people in the November 1905 election.⁹ The Maryland Senate had also voted by more than a **three-fifths'** majority for the amendment.¹⁰

Upon final passage in the Legislature, the first real opposition to the amendment arose. The Democratic leadership received the shock of learning that Governor Edwin Warfield opposed the Poe amendment. Here began the first in a series of setbacks which finally led to defeat. Very soon the word "leaked out" that Governor Warfield did not favor the amendment and

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid. Mar. 11, 1904, p. 2.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Journal of the House of Delegates, p. 830.

¹⁰Journal of the Senate (Md.), p. 476.

would most likely veto it.¹¹ Although he showed some disapproval during Senator Gorman's early January conference, Warfield gave few hints of his possible opposition during the limited debate on the amendment. The tone of his speeches during the 1903 campaign offered little indication that he would have any qualms about disfranchising the Negro. The Governor's reluctance to guide the Legislature on the amendment prior to its final passage indicates that he desired more than just the passage of a more equitable amendment. The Senatorial fight which Rayner won set back the Old Guard or Democratic leadership composed of Gorman, Rasin, and their lieutenants.¹² Edwin Warfield took this opportunity to throw off the shackles of the Old Guard. He succeeded in dividing the Democratic party and from that point on, the opposition became increasingly vocal concerning the Old Guard's pet piece of legislation.

In spite of his racist campaign, Warfield held, in reality, a paternalistic attitude toward the Negro.¹³ Once in office, the Governor more freely expressed his more accurate feeling and insisted that some responsible Negroes should enjoy the privilege of voting. He felt the propertied Negro to be responsible.

Consequently, the Governor revealed that he would veto an amendment that did not contain a property qualification. This

¹¹Morning Herald, Mar. 15, 1904, p. 1.

¹²Ibid., Mar. 16, 1904, p. 1.

¹³An account of a 1902 reunion of ex-slaves, and Edwin Warfield's correspondence with ex-slave Oliver Cromwell Gilbert (around 1912), Edwin Warfield MSS, in possession of Edwin Warfield III.

revelation "created consternation in the Democratic ranks." The Democrats knew of some unfriendliness toward the measure, but they did not suspect a veto.¹⁴ A delegation of fourteen of the nineteen State Senators rushed to meet with the Governor. They tried to induce him to change his mind. Remaining true to Gorman's dictate, they insisted upon the impossibility of altering the amendment. One unidentified Senator predicted a division of the Democratic party, while another forecast the defeat of the Poe amendment.¹⁵ Both predicted correctly. The Governor refused to change his stand. The Senators then caucused and sent the president of the caucus, Senator Thomas H. Robinson to confer with Governor Warfield. Robinson, too, had no success.¹⁶

At this juncture, the Legislature concerned itself with the ill-fated Haman Oyster bill. This measure basically provided for the marking and leasing of the oyster beds of the Chesapeake Bay to whoever desired them. The plan, hopefully, would result in conserving the Bay's oyster beds and would bring in revenue with which the state could pioneer its road-building program of hard-surfacing. As hope for passage of an oyster bill decreased, the influential Baltimore Sun increasingly editorialized against the Democratic leaders who blocked its passage. The Sun became convinced that the Haman Oyster bill offered a panacea to the good roads difficulty and that a good

¹⁴Morning Herald, Mar. 16, 1904, p. 2.

¹⁵Sun, Mar. 16, 1904, p. 2; American, Mar. 17, 1904, p. 5.

¹⁶Sun, Mar. 16, 1904, p. 2.

part of Maryland's economy depended upon the little oyster. At that point, sensing the Haman bill's defeat, the anti-Negro Sun removed any support for the Poe amendment. The paper felt it better "to continue to bear with the evil of the Negro in politics, than to place the welfare of the State in the hands of a party which shows absolutely no regard for the interests of the people."¹⁷ Eventually, the Eastern Shore oystermen pressured their assemblymen to combine with the Democratic party leadership to produce a poor substitute bill which the Governor vetoed.

The Sun held true to its threat, and Murray Vandiver later wrote the popular Judge James McSherry to request that the judge induce the Sun to support the Poe amendment. Vandiver wanted him to convince owner Walter Abell to support the measure. He felt that the "undivided support of the Sun...can give /a/ ten thousand (10,000) majority for the Amendment."¹⁸

At the same time, the Legislature's leadership maneuvered to solve the dilemma of the Governor's potential veto of the Poe amendment. Friends of the Governor resubmitted the Worthington or Bryan plan of disfranchisement which basically included a property qualification.¹⁹ True to form, the party leadership did not allow any alternative to go far. Instead, the leadership passed the Wilson election law to help insure

¹⁷Ibid., Mar. 18, 1904, p. 1.

¹⁸Murray Vandiver to James McSherry, Mar. 25, 1905, Murray Vandiver MSS.

¹⁹American, Mar. 25, 1904, p. 7.; Morning Herald, Mar. 25, 1904, p. 2.

the electorate's voting for the Poe amendment. This scheme removed the party names from the ballots in eleven counties in the state, primarily those on the Eastern Shore and in southern Maryland.²⁰

A struggle further developed between the Democratic Governor and the Democratic leadership of the Legislature. Gorman and his followers decided that the Governor need not sign the bill. The three-fifths' majority in both houses and the impending vote by the electorate made his signature unnecessary. Accepting this view, the legislators passed a resolution to deliver the amendment to the custody of the Clerk of the Court of Appeals.²¹

Contemplating the veto of the Poe amendment, Governor Warfield wrote a summation of his opposition to it. He sent the message to the State Senate in spite of his lost opportunity to veto. He declared that the educational requirement "was vague and uncertain" and that the fundamental right of voting depended upon the "reasonableness of his interpretation" on the part of the election officer. Moreover, Warfield insisted on a property qualification to "encourage thrift, industry, and the making of good citizens."²² The Senate refused to read the

²⁰Sun, Mar. 24, 1904, p. 1.; Morning Herald, Mar 24, 1904, p. 2. The counties were: Calvert, Charles, Frederick, Garrett, Kent, Prince Georges, Queen Annes, St. Marys, Somerset, Talbot, and Worcester.

²¹Sun, Mar. 26, 1904, p. 11.

²²Ibid., Mar. 31, 1904, p. 12.

Governor's message.²³ In Washington, Senator Gorman maintained his stubborn position. He continued to refuse to allow any alteration in the structure of the amendment.

At this point, in the beginning of April 1904, there emerged a theme which would prevail through the fight against the measure. This theme outwardly identified the amendment with the machine or ring element of the Democratic party. An editorial by the Democratic Sun called it a "program of trickery and dishonor" and felt that the party should abandon it.²⁴

In mid-April, Governor Warfield displayed an inconsistency in his purpose toward protecting the voter when he signed the Wilson election bill to remove the party name from the ballot of eleven counties. He also signed the bill abolishing annual registration.²⁵ The Democratic leadership manifestly had designed both measures to help insure the voters' ratifying the Poe amendment. Gorman and his lieutenants felt that the registration books in the city contained optimum listings of voters; they consequently did not wish to change them until 1906.²⁶

Baltimore's Reform League, under Charles J. Bonaparte, sent a delegation to urge the Governor to veto the Wilson and registration measures.²⁷ Yet the delegation made no mention of the Poe amendment. In this instance, however, Warfield remained a

²³Ibid., Apr. 1, 1904, p. 1.

²⁴Ibid., p. 4.

²⁵Ibid., Apr. 14, 1904, p. 16.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Charles J. Bonaparte to William Keyser, Apr. 11, 1904, Library of Congress, Washington, Charles J. Bonaparte MSS, Box 67.

loyal Democrat and went along with these party measures. Therefore, Governor Warfield failed to truly function as a real protector of democracy in Maryland. Instead, he acted to guarantee only the rights of the more responsible citizens, both white and Negro. In addition, he also revolted against Gorman and further demonstrated his independence by making his own appointments without consulting the party leadership.²⁸ This independence on the part of the Governor led Murray Vandiver to assure one disappointed officeseeker that "there will be another day when we will be able to take care of our friends."²⁹

²⁸ Lambert, Gorman, p. 344.

²⁹ Murray Vandiver to Dr. Harry A. Meisner, April 27, 1904, Murray Vandiver MSS.

CHAPTER V

THE ELECTION OF 1904 AND COURT APPROVAL OF THE POE AMENDMENT

The 1904 re-election of President Theodore Roosevelt resulted in a toning down of the race issue in Maryland. Senator Arthur P. Gorman lost prestige both nationally and in the state before and as the result of Roosevelt's election. The Maryland Republicans received encouragement from the President's partial victory in Maryland. Following the election, the Democrats gave the Poe amendment a supposed impartial court test and met with success.

In May 1904, both parties held state political conventions which reflected slightly on the fate of the Poe amendment. They met to select delegates to go to the national conventions. The Republican national convention met in June; the Maryland state convention met in May. At the Republican state convention, Lame-Duck Senator Lewis E. McComas wrote the platform, which denounced the "semi-barbarous Jim Crow laws," the continuation of trick ballot laws, and the classification of portions of Maryland as black belt areas. Moreover, "Christian sentiment" and the Republican party would prevent such "immoral, unpatriotic...evasions" of the federal Constitution as the Poe amendment.¹

Except for brief outbreaks which some political events provided, however, the Republicans remained reasonably quiet

¹Sun, May 12, 1904, p. 6.

in their organized opposition to the Poe amendment. They waited until the summer of 1905 and then devoted their full energies to opposing the amendment. Even the reform inclined Charles J. Bonaparte showed but scant concern with the amendment. Later, when he did start opposing the scheme, Bonaparte fought it from the point of view of its wrongness in principle rather than on the basis of its potential detrimental effect on the Republican party.

The subsequent Democratic state convention later that month continued to accentuate the widening split in its ranks. Gorman ran the convention; he left no doubt of his domination over the majority of his party in the state. In fact, the state's Democratic Governor, Edwin Warfield, and Democratic Senator-elect, Isidor Rayner, did not even attend. Moreover, the convention selected neither man as a delegate to the national convention--an unusual circumstance that the state's Governor should not attend as a party delegate. However, Gorman felt the need to punish the two and when he spoke at the convention he made only negative mention of the Governor and no mention of Rayner.² The snubs served to widen the split in the party.

In spite of the Maryland Democratic regulars' hopes of endorsing Gorman for President, the boom had disappeared. It had more or less evaporated during the winter and spring of 1904, aided by the fiasco of Rayner's election and Warfield's bolt from the party leadership's control. In addition, the Panama

² Morning Herald, May 27, 1904, p. 1.

Treaty difficulty and his identification as a southern candidate hurt Gorman. Moreover, the Senator did not declare any intentions. Perhaps, he awaited a draft or foresaw the Democratic party as a certain loser.³ As the lustre of the party leader lessened, the opportunity for voter acceptance of the Poe amendment diminished. In July, when the national convention met, the selection of New York Judge Alton B. Parker as the nominee did not enhance Senator Gorman's prestige in Maryland.

By fall, the 1904 election campaign in Maryland became the 1903 campaign warmed over. The Democracy again pinned its hope of success on the race issue; further, it hoped this success would carry over to the 1905 election, when the populace was to vote on the Poe amendment.⁴ In early September, ex-police justice William J. "King Bill" Garland, a petty ward leader, began ranting his racist speeches, complete with stereopticon sketches showing Theodore Roosevelt leading colored troops up San Juan Hill.⁵ Senator Rayner told a political rally that the nation would never let the President force social and political equality upon it.⁶

The Democrats again exploited the seemingly large reservoir of anti-Negro feeling in the state. They brought North Carolina's

³Lambert, Gorman, p. 313.

⁴American, Sept. 18, 1904, p. 11; Sun, Sept. 1, 1904, p. 12.

⁵Sun, Sept. 2, 1904, p. 12.

⁶Ibid., Oct. 5, 1904, p. 12.

Governor Charles B. Aycock to Baltimore, and he told a cheering pre-election audience how disfranchisement had improved racial conditions in his state. He repeated the tired argument that the Negro benefited by disfranchisement. His frequent use of the word "nigger" in his speech "made a big hit with the crowd."⁷

The election gave an indication of the Poe amendment's future fate. This time, the Democrats did not ride overwhelmingly to victory on the race issue. Instead, the election divided the Congressional seats equally between the two parties. Moreover, one Roosevelt elector to the Electoral College, Bonaparte, received more votes than any other elector which suggested a Roosevelt victory. However, the state's morass of election laws allowed the voter to mark either the ballot for each individual elector, or the block by the Presidential candidates' name. The Democratic electors received the next seven places. Bonaparte received 109,497 votes and the leading Democratic elector, former Governor Frank Brown, received 109,446 votes. The other Democratic electors received votes in the 107,000 range and the Republican electors in the 106,000 range.⁸ This split resulted from a series of manipulations such as having no party designations in some counties and the placing of the Republican electors in the middle of the ballot. On most ballots, Judge Alton B. Parker and the slate of Democratic electors

⁷Ibid., Nov. 6, 1904, p. 16.

⁸"Official Tabulation of Electoral Vote, State of Maryland," from the Governor's office, Dec. 6, 1904, Bonaparte MSS, Box 195.

appeared on the upper left-hand corner.⁹

The thorough victory of Roosevelt resulted in a lessening of anti-Negro writings in the sector of the Baltimore press which indulged in the practice. This in turn, helped diminish the impact of the race issue on the public mind, although racial prejudice did not lessen greatly. Instead, the Roosevelt victory toned down the tendency arousing racial hatreds, except on the part of the Democratic politicians.

The voters did not, in 1904, seem to give an unqualified endorsement to the Democratic leadership which sponsored the Poe amendment. At least, the journalists and the Republicans made this interpretation. The closeness of the election further hurt Senator Gorman's prestige.¹⁰ Nonetheless, Gorman and his lieutenants continued to maintain an inflexible stand on the amendment. They would not change it.

The election heartened the Republicans. Prior to the election, few Republicans hoped for a very good showing.¹¹ At one point just a week before election day, they even cancelled a planned political rally, apparently because it lacked support and speakers.¹² Then too, the immense 1903 Democratic victory based on the race issue, remained prevalent in Republican thought. Republicans accepted the fact that considerable racial prejudice existed in Maryland. Yet, the 1904 election

⁹News, Nov. 2, 1904, p. 2.

¹⁰Ibid., Nov. 9, 1904, p. 14.

¹¹Sun, Nov. 10, 1904, p. 12.

¹²Evening Herald (Baltimore), Oct. 31, 1904, p. 12.

indicated that in the border state of Maryland, a fear of the Negro bugaboo did not dominate the voter.

Encouraged, the Republicans somewhat quietly and both intentionally and unintentionally began a series of steps to defeat the Poe amendment. During the 1904 election, the colorful, reform-oriented, prominent Baltimore lawyer, Charles J. Bonaparte, gave Roosevelt a considerable amount of verbal support. A mild friendship had existed between the two men, as Bonaparte had served the President on investigations into both postal and Indian affairs. However, the lawyer had never held a public elective office, and he had preferred the respectability of being a reformer, displaying little interest in the rough-and-tumble of ward politics. Bonaparte showed little respect for the professional politician and delighted in playing satirically with the title "honorable" when he referred to such men as Congressmen Wachter and Mudd.¹³

As Bonaparte carried the Roosevelt banner in Maryland, the President cheered him on, and developed a small political debt.¹⁴ The two men shared a community of interest, as the President found irritation in the shenanigans of the Baltimore Democratic political ring and its ability to remove seven electoral votes from the Republican fold.¹⁵

¹³Charles J. Bonaparte to Charles M. Howard, Secretary of the Reform League, Oct. 14, 1904, Bonaparte MSS, Box 160. Here, Bonaparte referred to Frank C. Wachter as "that eminent statesman."

¹⁴Theodore Roosevelt to Charles J. Bonaparte, Sept. 27, 1904, Bonaparte MSS, Box 68.

¹⁵Theodore Roosevelt to Charles J. Bonaparte, Nov. 24, 1904, Bonaparte MSS, Box 68.

Therefore, much to the consternation of the party regulars, the President increasingly turned to Bonaparte for Republican counsel in reference to Maryland. A few days after Christmas, he evoked much gnashing of teeth within Republican ranks by selecting W. Hall Harris, a distant cousin by marriage of Bonaparte, as the Baltimore postmaster. By acting upon Bonaparte's recommendation, Roosevelt, in effect, began to ease the mantle of party leadership onto Bonaparte's shoulders. In giving the most desirable federal position in the state to Harris, Roosevelt ignored the entreaties of the party regulars. Consequently, the leadership of the fight against the Poe amendment fell into the hands of a man who fought for more than just retaining a number of Negro voters on the Republican side of the register, but rather, believed in the Negro's right to vote. Simultaneously, the press dangled the possibility of a Federal judgeship in front of lame-duck Senator Lewis McComas. He later received this plum and took himself out of the Republican politics to a considerable extent. This removal left better opportunity of effective leadership to Bonaparte.

Also following the 1904 election, in an unusual move, the Republicans decided to keep their campaign headquarters open. They did so for the expressed purpose of fighting against the Poe amendment.¹⁶ Nonetheless, it would take about seven months before they really entered the fight with vigor. The Republican press, however, did begin to mold anti-disfranchisement thought. Following the election, the Republican American and the alleg-

¹⁶News, Nov. 18, 1904, p. 16.

edly, independent Democratic News began denouncing the amendment almost immediately. Bonaparte spoke of being able to control the News on the amendment despite its label as an independent Democratic paper.¹⁷

At the same time, the Democrats approached their fight for voter ratification of the amendment by continuing their in-fighting. On November 22, Gorman's chief lieutenant, Murray Vandiver, wrote Warfield and informed the Governor that he would effect legal proceedings to force the Governor to publish the Poe amendment in papers throughout the state for three months prior to the election. Vandiver requested a "final judicial decision, without delay."¹⁸

The Gorman faction gave the case considerable amount of fanfare. They submitted for publication letters sent to and received from the Governor. They insisted that a favorable ruling by the court would demonstrate the legality of the Poe amendment itself.¹⁹ Moreover, each side brought out its champion as Attorney General Bryan represented the Governor and John P. Poe, the Democratic regulars.

The two sides proceeded to indulge in legal hair-splitting over whether or not the state constitution required the Governor to sign an amendment. The Circuit Court soon ruled in favor of Murray Vandiver, and the Attorney General appealed to the Court

¹⁷C. J. Bonaparte to Dr. Bernard Steiner, head of Enoch Pratt Library in Baltimore, Oct. 27, 1905, Bonaparte MSS, Box 175.

¹⁸Murray Vandiver to Edwin Warfield, Nov. 22, 1904, Copy in Gorman MSS.

¹⁹Sun, Nov. 16, 1904, p. 12.

of Appeals. In late March 1905, the Court of Appeals, with all eight judges sitting, unanimously concurred. They decided that the Poe amendment and Good Roads amendment must be placed on the November ballot, that the Governor could not veto the amendments, and that he must publish them prior to the election.²⁰ The Good Roads amendment would have allowed the state to aid in the construction of hard surface roads.

With their decision, the Court of Appeals established a precedent of the Governor's not needing to sign amendments. Two days later, the plaintiff, Murray Vandiver, wrote his friend, the Chief Judge, James McSherry, and congratulated him for his court's "great opinion."²¹ Later, Bonaparte further indicated the flavor of the Court to Congressman Mudd, when he quoted Baltimore's District Attorney John C. Rose that there existed "no hope of a favorable decision from the present Court of Appeals." Rose referred to a possible court test of the Wilson election law.²²

²⁰ Ibid, Mar. 24, 1905, p. 1.

²¹ Murray Vandiver to James McSherry, Mar. 25, 1905, Vandiver MSS.

²² Charles J. Bonaparte to Sydney E. Mudd, Oct. 3, 1905. Bonaparte MSS, Box 174.

CHAPTER VI

THE 1905 ELECTION CAMPAIGN BEGINS VERY EARLY

As early as the late spring of 1905, the two sides opened their campaign to decide the issue of the Poe amendment. In particular, by the summer, groups who opposed the amendment stepped up their activities. The Republicans recognized Bonaparte as their leader, and he effectively organized the Republicans and brought a consolidation among non-Republican organizations. The groups started rallying the voters against the amendment early and made effective inroads among the large foreign community.

Through its extremely early start and because of the inflammatory Poe amendment issue, the 1905 election campaign became one of the most severely fought in the state and received national attention. In an editorial, the Sun called the impending amendment the most important political question for the voters to decide on since the adoption of the constitution of 1867.¹ A portion of the Baltimore press continued to steadily remind the reading public of the potential for injustice that the amendment offered. People began forming organizations to fight the amendment. In February, a group of Baltimore lawyers organized the Municipal League of Baltimore.² In reality, this

¹Sun, Mar. 24, 1905, p. 4.

²Ibid., Feb. 16, 1905, p. 12.

group played a very minor role in defeating the amendment. Yet, it represented the first of many groups which formed to fight the disfranchisement bill. Soon, other organizations appeared, such as the Democratic Anti-Poe Amendment Association, and similar smaller groups--often of foreign background--followed.

The battle lines formed early in the campaign. The Maryland Democratic Editors' Association met to obtain information on the amendment in order that they might better write articles advocating its passage. The editors heartily endorsed ratification of the measure.³ The threat of the Democratic organization's removing both state and party advertising from their newspapers did not enhance or encourage too much independent thought. Murray Vandiver's position as State Treasurer earned him a place on the powerful Board of Public Works. This small group consisted of the Governor, the Treasurer, and the Comptroller of the state. It served as the purchasing agency for the state. Vandiver thus possessed the dual role of manipulating and controlling both the state and the Democratic party's advertising.⁴ This somewhat large expenditure could aid in keeping a newspaper such as the Sun from giving too much opposition to the Poe amendment. Consequently, the Sun gave only dignified opposition and received the most advertising space of all the Baltimore newspapers. In the weeks preceeding the election, the Sun almost filled the first two pages with adver-

³Ibid., Apr. 5, 1905, p. 12.

⁴Murray Vandiver to Oswald Tilghman, Secretary of State (Maryland), Sept. 6, 1904, Vandiver MSS.

tised argument from both sides. By comparsion, the News, which apparently possessed a large circulation, gained or accepted much less advertising space on the issue.

In May 1905, the Reform League, an important group on the other side of the struggle, held its annual meeting. The hierarchy of this organization generally reflected Charles J. Bonaparte's domination and the philosophy of the Republican party. Bonaparte had influenced its leadership more than any other individual.⁵ Moreover, at that point, the reform in which it became most interested proved to be the Poe amendment.

Consequently, at its annual meeting, the Reform League issued a sixteen page report citing the wrongs and injustices the Poe amendment contained. The League presented little new material; going back to Governor Warfield's veto threat in March 1904, others had stated most of the League's views. In essence, the Reform League considered the Poe amendment undemocratic, that it threatened those of "foreign birth or parentage," that it gave too much power to registration officials with no safeguards or appeals against their arbitrary power, and that it could possibly exclude 118,000 (64,000 of those white) voters in the state.⁶

In the Baltimore spring elections of 1905, the Democrats scored a strong victory. This success hearted the amendment's supporters. A Negro boycott gave grounds for further tirades against the Negro as a voter. Many Negroes apparently protested

⁵Charles J. Bonaparte's letters to Reform League executives, May 12, 1903, Bonaparte MSS, Box 158.

⁶Sun, Apr. 20, 1905, p. 12.

their inability to receive a proper share of city jobs from Republican Mayor, E. Clay Timanus, by staying away from the polls. In one ward, the administration had not hired one single Negro, not even as a street cleaner.⁷ The refusal to vote caused some irritation on the part of some Republicans and offered encouragement to a number of Democrats who favored the amendment.⁸

A few weeks before the usual spring meeting of the Democratic State Central Committee, Gorman held a meeting of the organization's functionaries at his Washington home. This gathering served as another planning session in which Gorman again developed the procedures of the Central Committee's conference. He continued to direct the amendment fight. At the K Street house, Gorman and those attending discussed the opposition in Baltimore, Rasin's lack of enthusiasm, and the apparent favor of the counties for the Poe amendment.⁹ They also planned for a state convention in July, which would result in an unusually long campaign. Further, Gorman let it be known that he would continue personally to conduct the campaign until the election.¹⁰ In previous elections, the Senator generally had remained in the background, content to allow Vandiver to manage the campaign.

Following this meeting, the first of the Democratic county conventions took place. The Cecil County Democrats dutifully

⁷Ibid., May 4, 1905, p. 12.

⁸Ibid., May 11, 1905, p. 7.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid., May 14, 1905, p. 12.

endorsed the Poe amendment and became the first of many counties to do so. Commenting on the convention, the Republican Cecil Whig claimed that the county delegates had no say in the matter but merely followed the dictates of the party leadership.¹¹

As early as May 25, 1905, the first of a series of many arguments appeared in advertising form in some Baltimore papers. Attempting to imitate the form of the Federalist Papers, the writer signed the argument with the pen-name Tocsin. He offered an example of the argumentative gauntlet through which the amendment would run. In this instance, Tocsin attempted to demonstrate the logic of voting for the amendment by suggesting that the educated colored voter could enhance his "power and influence" within the colored community. To the independent voter, the amendment would give him the opportunity "to elevate and purify our State suffrage." Tocsin argued that in spite of their belief in white supremacy, the Democrats would be "just and even generous to our colored people."¹² Many of those who participated in this series, displayed similar logic throughout the entire noisy campaign.

The Sun's Washington correspondent, Frank A. Richardson, chimed in. Although recently retired, the former reporter attempted to lend his support to the Poe amendment by using his reputation. In his political advertisement, he quoted a "Western Republican...who hoped to see the day when the Negro would be eliminated from the suffrage in every State" as well as a

¹¹Cecil Whig (Elkton, Md.), May 5, 1905, p. 4.

¹²Sun, May 25, 1905, p. 1.

Washington Republican who insisted the nation's capital needed a Jim Crow law for its street cars.¹³

The appearance of Tocsin coincided with the meeting of the Democratic State Central Committee which Senator Gorman attended--an unusual happening. The meeting completely belonged to the Senator, as "the room to which he retired upon reaching the hotel was the Mecca for the other leaders." All present, except Attorney General William S. Bryan, professed to favor the amendment.¹⁴ The Central Committee commissioned county leaders to stir up enthusiasm for the amendment in their respective counties in order to bring the city dissidents back into line.¹⁵

Throughout the summer of 1905, opposition to the Poe amendment continued to build. Most of the rising resistance came from those belonging to groups which actively opposed the amendment, but further splits began to show within the Democratic organization itself. A few county Democratic groups failed to endorse passage of the amendment. Murray Vandiver represented the party leadership's irritation when he chided Congressman Thomas A. Smith for allowing Caroline County convention to avoid endorsing the amendment. He insisted that the Congressman insure that those who attended the state convention from his county be favorably inclined toward the amendment.¹⁶ Further, the failure of Baltimore County's Democratic convention to endorse

¹³Ibid., June 22, 1905, p. 1.

¹⁴Ibid., May 26, 1905, p. 12.

¹⁵Ibid., May 28, 1905, p. 16.

¹⁶Murray Vandiver to Thomas A. Smith, July 28, 1905, Vandiver MSS.

the Poe amendment demonstrated the uncertainty the politicians held toward its fate. A number of Democrats sensed that too many voters suspected the potential dangers in the amendment; they did not wish to have its overwhelming defeat serve as an albatross around their political necks. Congressman J. Fred. C. Talbott, usually a loyal friend and follower of Gorman, held the Baltimore County "convention" in his law office. The participants straddled the fence and did not endorse the amendment.¹⁷

Around this time in Baltimore city, an ever increasing number of Democrats grew more apprehensive of what the voters would do to the amendment. In a state politically dominated by the rural areas, the city politicians became more aware of the potential increase in power that the Poe amendment could afford these areas. Moreover, because of its structure, the amendment could threaten a large segment of the foreign vote, thus further diminishing the city's political power. Then, too, for the right price, the city politicians purchased many Negro as well as white votes. Loss of these voters would make disfranchisement a liability.

Those actively opposing the amendment gave much attention to enlisting the help of the naturalized voters. John E. Semmes, who worked closely with Bonaparte as titular head of the Reform League, insisted that they needed help from the "foreign element" in order to defeat the amendment.¹⁸ As a result,

¹⁷American, July 11, 1905, p. 16.

¹⁸John E. Semmes to Charles J. Bonaparte, June 19, 1905, Bonaparte MSS, Box 72.

they put much effort into this approach. In early July, the Independent Citizens Union of Maryland began increasing its activities against the disfranchisement measure. This newly organized group represented the many foreign social and political clubs of Baltimore. Most of these clubs had German language names and offered effective outlets for the German language circulars which the Union distributed.¹⁹ The Union and other groups opposing the amendment placed much emphasis on the circulars, utilizing them in large numbers. The Republican and Reform League people put forth considerable effort and expense to print them in English as well as German. They distributed thousands at the late summer county fairs in the rural areas and also in the socialistic industrial areas of east Baltimore.²⁰ The pamphlets utilized scare tactics, bluntly informing the naturalized citizen that not only he but also his sons stood to lose their right to vote.²¹

On June 1, 1905, the White House brought another catalyst into the political struggle by announcing that Bonaparte would be the new Secretary of the Navy. This appointment solidified Bonaparte's position as the ex-officio leader of the Maryland Republicans. The new Secretary took charge of those whom

¹⁹American, July 11, 1905, p. 16.

²⁰Bernard C. Steiner to Charles J. Bonaparte, Oct. 11, 1905, Bonaparte MSS, Box 72.

²¹Sollen im Ausland geborene Bürger entrecht werden? ("Pamphlets on the Amendment"), Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore. Also, Das Entrechtungs Amendment, Pamphlet #4 of the Independent Citizens Union of Maryland, ("Pamphlets on the Poe Amendment"), Enoch Pratt Free Library.

Columbia University President Nicholas Murray Butler had called a "narrow-minded squabbling lot."²² Bonaparte effectively organized the Republicans to give them a basic singleness of purpose--that of defeating the amendment. He insisted that the party concentrate its efforts on that one mission only, refusing to allow the Republican campaigners to divert their attention to other issues. The respected Stevenson A. Williams could not dissuade Bonaparte from this singlemindedness when he expressed a strong desire to bring the difficult oyster question into the campaign. The dirt-roads farmers favored legislation on oysters, while the Eastern Shore oystermen generally did not. The farmers wanted access roads; the oystermen wanted unregulated oyster catching. Bonaparte insisted and won out on the point that the party ignore the oyster issue.²³ In effect, Bonaparte dictated the party's platform for the 1905 campaign.²⁴

Roosevelt's appointment of Bonaparte actually coincided with his increased efforts to defeat the amendment. Bonaparte, a week after his appointment, presented his grandfather speech to the Republican State Central Committee meeting on June 7, 1905. He would use this argument often throughout the campaign, when he viewed that he, the Republicans, and Voltaire held

²²Nicholas Murray Butler to Theodore Roosevelt, Nov 9, 1903, Roosevelt MSS, Box 63.

²³Charles J. Bonaparte to Stevenson A. Williams and others, Aug. 31, 1905, Bonaparte MSS, Box 162.

²⁴Charles J. Bonaparte to William F. Stone and others, Aug. 28, 1905, Bonaparte MSS, Box 162.

"that a good citizen needs no grandfather."²⁵

Bonaparte devoted considerable time, effort, and money to defeating the Poe amendment. In addition to organizing the Maryland Republicans, he enhanced the party's prestige and respectability. His position as Secretary of the Navy and his years of association with reform movements helped. Thus, he felt no obligation to marshall only his party in the fight, but he freely enlisted the aid of most interested groups devoted to the same cause. He likened it to a political crusade; where relevant, he invariably emphasized the anti-ring aspect of the fight. Drawing upon his reformist outlook, Bonaparte gave most attention to the point that defeat of the Poe amendment meant a defeat for Gorman and his ring.

The smaller political parties feared for their very existence in this campaign, and Bonaparte readily enlisted and received their support. Throughout the summer, Populist Dr. William N. Hill worked with Bonaparte to defeat the disfranchisement measure. Hill represented third party leadership. His letterhead credited him with the 1904 leadership of the Populist party in Maryland and also indicated that he advocated the single tax cause and promoted it until the interruption of the Poe amendment fight.²⁶

In the summer of 1905, Hill urged a non-partisan combination against the amendment. He suggested that the Republican

²⁵Sun, June 8, 1905, p. 12.

²⁶William N. Hill to Charles J. Bonaparte, Aug. 24, 1905, Bonaparte MSS, Box 70.

dominated Reform League and the anti-amendment Democrats "ought to get together."²⁷ Hill hoped for a strong, well-disciplined organization which could simply overwhelm the Democrats and the amendment.²⁸ He displayed more than a righteous interest when he wrote that "the success of the amendment puts all such men as myself forever out of any participation in politics in a peaceful way." Hill revealed that he fought for his political life when he stated the potential of the amendment, and that "nothing could budge the dominant party short of revolution of the amendment process."²⁹ The desire to diminish the power of Maryland's "senior Senator" also encouraged the third party groups in the state.³⁰

On September 12, at their state convention, the Prohibition party declared its opposition to the Poe amendment. The convention felt that the amendment would be harmful to the Negro race and would lessen the hope of the Negro's economic and social status in the future.³¹ The support against the disfranchisement amendment came as a result of Charles J. Bonaparte's behind-the-scene effort. He had learned that the Prohibitionists leaned toward endorsement of the Poe amendment.³² With such an

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸William N. Hill to Charles J. Bonaparte, Aug. 24, 1905, Bonaparte MSS, Box 70.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Charles J. Bonaparte to William N. Hill, July 7, 1905, Bonaparte MSS, Box 162.

³¹American, Sept. 13, 1905, p. 16.

³²Charles J. Bonaparte to W. Frank Tucker, Sept. 16, 1905, and to W. O. Atwood, Sept. 18, 1905, Bonaparte MSS, Box 162.

endorsement, the Prohibitionists would merely reflect some of the thinking of their era, which stereotyped the Negro as irresponsible and unable to conduct himself properly when under the influence of alcohol. Because of this attitude, the Prohibitionists looked for and solicited little political support from the Negroes.

Bonaparte acted quickly to counter the threat of the Prohibitionists' endorsing the amendment. He insisted to the party leadership that the potential endorsement carried considerable weight. Confessing that he held little concern over the actual political strength of the Prohibitionists, Bonaparte feared that the righteous group would help many fence-sitting Democrats and independents to decide in favor of the disfranchisement measure. At that point, he felt that many Democrats faced a choice between "their strong prejudices against Negroes and Republicans" and the straight ticket voting habit, or voting for political right and decency.³³ In dealing with the Prohibitionists, Bonaparte emphasized the danger of the Democratic ring's gaining unlimited power.³⁴

In most election years, late September state conventions of the two major parties generally signified the actual start of a fall's political campaign. Usually, the party leadership returned from their vacations before allowing a campaign to become very active--both Gorman and Rasin enjoyed going to

³³Ibid.

³⁴Charles J. Bonaparte to F. C. Hendrickson, Prohibition party chairman, Aug. 22, 1905, Bonaparte MSS, Box 162.

Saratoga, New York, prior to a campaign's opening. The intense interest in the Poe amendment, however, forced this campaign to begin earlier.

The Republicans in particular, started earlier. They held pre-convention planning sessions in Bonaparte's Baltimore law office. Such men as John B. Hanna, chairman of the State Central Committee, William F. Stone, Frank C. Wachter, Sydney E. Mudd, Phillips Lee Goldsborough, Lewis Putzel, and Stevenson A. Williams met with Bonaparte to plan anti-Poe amendment strategy.³⁵ Having obtained his federal judgeship, ex-Senator Lewis E. McComas no longer attended party policy meetings. Thus, a potential source of friction no longer existed. Bonaparte decided on the platform to be presented to the state party convention. His gesture of summoning the other members represented his implied initiation as the party leader.³⁶

At their August state convention, the Republicans naturally denounced the Poe amendment. To make their platform more palatable, the convention stated that Republicans opposed social equality between Negroes and whites and favored protecting white people from the danger of Negro domination.³⁷ Many Republicans outside of Maryland did not like this hint of racism which would ultimately reflect in the party's coffers.³⁸

³⁵American, Aug. 17, 1905, p. 14; Sept. 16, 1905, p. 16; Sun, Aug. 18, 1905, p. 12.

³⁶News, Aug. 17, 1905, p. 12.

³⁷Sun, Sept. 7, 1905, p. 12.

³⁸Charles J. Bonaparte to John B. Hanna, Sept. 17, 1905, Bonaparte MSS, Box 162.

Nonetheless, as the minority party, the Republicans realized that they had to fight for their political lives; they did not allow such principles as social equality to stand in their way.

In spite of better intentions, the Democrats "formally" entered into the campaign later than the Republicans. In May, they had announced their wish to hold an earlier state convention in order to gain more campaigning time. However, the Gorman faction also required that those who attended the state convention must support the Poe amendment. In Baltimore, increasing numbers of individuals found disfavor with the amendment. This feeling reflected on the Democratic candidates who became more and more reluctant to base their campaign on the amendment alone.

In particular, those individuals with foreign affiliations felt threatened by the amendment, because it could remove their right to vote. In 1905, two newspapermen, Paul Winchester and Frank D. Webb, estimated that 100,000 German-speaking people lived in and around Baltimore. In addition, they estimated that 35,000 Poles, 28,000 Yiddish-speaking people, and 20,000 Bohemians lived in this same area.³⁹ Many of those of German derivation could recall a Germany where the voter ineffectively struggled in a political system which depended upon the caprice of the master politician, Otto von Bismarck. One such immigrant, August F. Trappe, arrived in the United States in 1880; in 1905, he served as the city editor of the German language newspaper,

³⁹Paul Winchester and Frank D. Webb, Newspapers and Newspaper Men of Maryland: Past and Present (Baltimore; Frank L. Sibley and Co., 1905), pp. 44-45.

Der Deutsche Correspondent.⁴⁰ Two years earlier, in the 1903 election Der Deutsche Correspondent urged its readers to vote Democratic and support the Democrats on the race issue.⁴¹ However, on the eve of the 1905 election, the paper asked its readers to vote against the Poe amendment.⁴² Nonetheless, the paper did not do so with a great deal of vigor.⁴³ Although Trappe continued to express friendship for Murray Vandiver, the paper could not find in its conscience any course but to oppose the amendment.⁴⁴

The efforts of the Republicans bore fruit. They made better in-roads into the foreign community, as Republicans Bonaparte and Congressman Frank C. Wachter utilized the foreign tongue to better their political advantage. The Democrats simply approached the foreign community too late and too ineffectively.

At this point, the infamous William "King Bill" J. Garland further demonstrated the impact of this foreign group. In the previous 1904 campaign, Judge (police magistrate) Garland had served as one of the Democrats' most vociferous low-level racists in Baltimore. Yet, a year later, Garland took an 180 degree turn, vehemently opposing voter ratification of the

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 75-76.

⁴¹Der Deutsche Correspondent (Baltimore), Oct. 31, 1903, p. 4.; Nov. 2, 1903, p. 2.

⁴²Ibid., Nov. 6, 1905, p. 8.

⁴³Ibid., Nov. 6, 1905, p. 4.

⁴⁴August Trappe to Murray Vandiver, Nov. 16, 1905, Vandiver MSS.

amendment.⁴⁵ A political opportunist, Garland displayed no qualms at throwing over the Poe amendment in exchange for foreign and Jewish votes in his ward. He utilized many Yiddish posters and declared himself against the amendment.⁴⁶ In the September 19th city primary, "King Bill" became ward executive in the third ward. His election served as a barometer of the foreign community's distrust of the potential political dangers in the Poe amendment.⁴⁷

The success of Democrats, such as Garland, who opposed or who remained silent on the Poe amendment, boded ill for Gorman and his organization. The primary election results brought Gorman "rushing" to Baltimore.⁴⁸ From then until the eventual defeat of the amendment, Gorman spent much time in the city, directing the fight. Following the Senator's arrival, his chief lieutenant, Vandiver, released the structure of the organization of the amendment committee. Gorman placed former Governor Elihu E. Jackson in charge of a high-powered committee of leading and loyal Democrats for the purpose of leading the fight for the disfranchisement measure. Frank A. Furst chaired the executive committee and ex-Governor Frank Brown chaired the finance committee.⁴⁹ Accepting the "honor" of his post, Elihu E. Jackson repeated the worn phrase that the amendment

⁴⁵American, Sept. 16, 1905, p. 16.

⁴⁶Evening Herald, Sept. 17, 1905, p. 5.

⁴⁷News, Sept. 19, 1905, p. 14.

⁴⁸Ibid., Sept. 20, 1905, p. 12.

⁴⁹Ibid.

was not a political question but "a social and economic question."⁵⁰ The Republicans then created a similar committee, placing their prominent members on it. John B. Hanna became the ex-officio chairman. The two parties then headed into the final stages of the campaign.

⁵⁰Sun, Sept. 21, 1905, p. 12.

CHAPTER VII

THE VOTERS REJECT THE POE AMENDMENT

Following the party conventions, the 1905 campaign further degenerated into another racial contest, which the Democrats bungled. Rayner and other leading Democrats put forth a great deal of vocal opposition to the amendment, and further widened the party's split. At the same time, the Republicans remained solidified; moreover, most of the newspapers in Baltimore opposed the amendment. Despite last minute efforts by the Democrats, the Poe amendment suffered a thorough defeat at the polls.

After the delay of waiting for the political subdivisions to complete their conventions, the Democrats held their state convention. Not until September 25, 1905, did the four legislative districts of Baltimore hold their conventions--the last of the subdivisions to convene. In all of these meetings, the Gorman organization insisted upon selection to the state convention of only those delegates favorable to the Poe amendment.¹

The state convention met, the band played "Dixie," and the convention badge featured a white ribbon--their symbol for "the white man's party." Senator Gorman secluded himself in an obscure theater box and generally shepherded the convention's

¹American, Sept. 26, 1905, p. 4; News, Sept. 25, 1905, p. 12.

activities.² It was to be the last convention he manipulated.

Vehemently devoted to the amendment's defeat, the News referred to the gathering as "our contemporary ancestors." As in the two preceding fall elections, the Democrats again yelled "nigger."³ They developed a platform that defended the Poe amendment; they planned a campaign of informing the white voters that disfranchisement would not affect them.⁴ The platform stated the need to "destroy" Negro suffrage's "power for evil."⁵ The Gorman leadership recognized that their hope in carrying the amendment "lay in the sedulous cultivation of every germ of race feeling that exists in the community and in inflaming...that feeling."⁶

Following the conventions, the fortunes of the organization Democrats grew increasingly worse. Their fervors for passage of the amendment helped remove rationality; the Democrats wasted much effort in fighting themselves. Under Gorman's instigation, the campaign committee asked the Democratic Legislative candidates in Baltimore to take a stand on the amendment. Most candidates refused to do so. They sensed the presence of anti-disfranchisement sentiment in the city. Only two gave support, and one of those happened to be T. Lee Marriott, Gorman's nephew.⁷ The Reform League duplicated the attempt at

²Evening Herald, Sept. 28, 1905 p. 12.

³News, Sept. 28, 1905, p. 14.

⁴Sun, Sept. 27, 1905, p. 12; Sept 28, 1905, p. 7.

⁵Ibid., Sept. 29, 1905, p. 12.

⁶News, Sept. 29, 1905, p. 8.

⁷Sun, Oct. 6, 1905, p. 16.

having the candidates commit themselves on the amendment and met with similar negative success from the Democratic candidates.⁸

When the candidates refused to support the Poe amendment, the Democratic State Central Committee called a meeting to deal with the situation. Senator Gorman came to conduct the meeting in person--an unusual circumstance.⁹ At a point of bad timing for them, they removed four ward executives who refused to "conduct the campaign as directed by the state convention."¹⁰ They replaced James E. Hubbert of the first ward, William J. Garland of the third, Ward P. Littig of the eleventh, and George B. Skinner of the fourteenth ward. The organization through Chairman Vandiver installed four men who would better conduct the campaign along the lines of the party platform.¹¹ The move most certainly did not encourage efficiency and morale among the lowly ward leaders who would do much of the necessary legwork for the election.

The removal of the ward executives helped point out the growing split in Democratic ranks. In earlier years, Gorman would have maintained better control over dissident members of the party at such a key time before an election. In this instance, the ward executives symbolized the disorganized, unintentional, inner-party revolt against the Senator's domination.

⁸American, Oct. 6, 1905, p. 16.

⁹News, Oct. 14, 1905, p. 14.

¹⁰American, Oct. 19, 1905, p. 16.

¹¹Ibid.

Journalists in other areas of the nation identified Gorman simply as a boss; they noted that in his twilight years a lessening in political astuteness became more evident.¹² The Republican American called attention to the loss of "his old time cunning" while pointing out the many errors the Senator made in the campaign.¹³ The inability of Gorman and his followers to convince the voters of their sincerity in wishing to disfranchise only the Negro proved to be a particularly bad error. Even Democratic voters showed by their votes that they somehow did not feel quite secure in placing their political rights in Gorman's hands.

The Senator certainly was out of touch with his constituents. Racial prejudice still existed strongly, but had diminished as a popular movement. By 1905, the Baltimore press had virtually removed its anti-Negro emphasis. Only the Democratic organization retained and used race to any extent. Gorman maintained his stubbornness against any compromise on the amendment and this eventually proved a key factor in its defeat.

On the same day that the organization leaders replaced the four ward executives, they received a strong jolt. Maryland's Democratic junior Senator, Isidor Rayner, dropped a bombshell into the laps of those supporting the Poe amendment. In a letter of six full newspaper columns in small print, Rayner denounced the amendment. In the wordy style so typical of his oratory, he utilized supposedly eloquent phrases when he re-

¹²New York Times, Nov. 6, 1905, p. 4.

¹³American, Oct. 15, 1905, p. 4, Sect. D.

ferred to Gorman's faction as a "political cabal" and stated that the amendment "blights and blasts our hopes" and "mows down [the] genius of...Maryland's children."¹⁴ Thus, he presented the amendment as a great threat.

The letter contained too much eloquence and hyperbole to greatly affect many undecided voters with its true ingeniousness. It did, however, upset the Gorman Democrats, including Gorman himself. The Rayner bolt evoked poorly-timed, low level mud-slinging among upper-echelon Democrats; Republicans and anti-amendment people gleefully looked on.

On October 19, the day after publication of his letter, Rayner challenged Gorman to a public debate on the Poe amendment. He wrote a public letter to Gorman, listing ten points of dispute on the amendment.¹⁵ He brought forth concern from Gorman, who obtained typed copies of Rayner's racist speeches of the past. Gorman also wrote a lengthy letter of reply but decided not to send it.¹⁶

A number of Gorman's associates, however, quickly and blindly jumped in, helping to develop the contest into a fiasco. Former Congressman Joshua Miles mailed a public letter from the Eastern Shore, attempting to damage Rayner's credibility. Over a period of many years, Miles had strongly supported Negro dis-

¹⁴Sun, Oct. 18, 1905, p. 1.

¹⁵Isidor Rayner to Arthur P. Gorman, Oct. 23, 1905, Gorman MSS. Rayner made the letter public on Oct. 19th, but dated this one the 23rd.

¹⁶Arthur P. Gorman to Isidor Rayner, Oct. 31, 1905 (not mailed), Gorman MSS.

franchisement. He claimed that Rayner had for a while also supported the movement. Miles wrote that during the 1904 General Assembly fight over the Senatorship, Rayner agreed to support both the amendment and aid Gorman in his quest for the Presidency.¹⁷ The state Senate majority leader, Thomas A. Robinson, collaborated Miles' version of the agreement.¹⁸ Rayner answered as to the impossibility of such an arrangement, claiming he had no knowledge of the amendment's structure.¹⁹ Here, the Sun interjected, pointing out that it first published the text of the Poe amendment on January 12, 1904.²⁰ The attention-grabbing Rayner possessed a bad memory, did not read the newspapers, or did not concern himself too greatly with the truth. In like manner with the petty politico and deposed ward boss of the third ward, William J. Garland, Rayner took an abrupt 180 degree turn. He offered further illustration of the emotion involved in the complexity of the decision on the Poe amendment.²¹

Other leading Democrats also spoke out against the Poe amendment. During the Rayner exchange, the aged and respected former Governor, William Pinkney Whyte, came out against the amendment.²² Over a week later, Governor Warfield granted the

¹⁷Sun, Oct. 24, 1905, p. 1.

¹⁸Ibid., Oct. 26, 1905, p. 12.

¹⁹Ibid., Oct. 27, 1905, p. 1.

²⁰Ibid., Oct. 31, 1905, p. 1.

²¹In following years, Rayner would again advocate Negro disfranchisement.

²²News, Oct. 26, 1905, p. 16; Sun, Oct. 26, 1905, p. 12.

Sun an interview. Since April 1904, Warfield had maintained a dignified silence on the measure. The organization Democrats hoped the Governor would continue to do so. Nonetheless, on November 2, he repeated his objections to the amendment. Recalling "the conduct of the Republican registrars during the Civil War," Warfield stated he would never feel safe with the white man's political rights in the hands of powerful registrars. He claimed that only his sympathy for voters in the Black Belt prevented him from speaking earlier.²³

At a mass rally in Baltimore's Philanthropy Hall, States Attorney Albert S. J. Owens vehemently opposed the amendment. Well-known Baltimore Democratic lawyers, Edgar H. Gans and William H. Marbury, did likewise.²⁴ They represented the growing number of educated men opposing the amendment. In addition, Owens conceivably represented the view of boss Rasin.²⁵ These men spoke under the auspices of the Democratic Anti-Amendment Association. To lend support, Bonaparte suggested that Congressman Wachter quietly send white Republicans to the meeting to swell the crowd.²⁶

In this 1905 election campaign, "Wild Bill" Garland exemplified some of those with limited mental faculties who joined in fighting against the Poe amendment. Garland, speaking

²³Sun, Nov 3, 1905, p. 14. Note: Edwin Warfield reached the age of 20 years in 1865.

²⁴Ibid., Nov. 1, 1905, p. 14.

²⁵Kent, Maryland Politics, p. 335.

²⁶Charles J. Bonaparte to Frank L. Wachter, Oct. 30, 1905, Bonaparte MSS.

at a level that a poorly educated man could understand, suddenly acquired principles. He expressed vexation at the impending loss of political freedom that foreigners would suffer--men who had come to this nation to gain political freedom. Garland revealed that a Democrat at his headquarters had stated, "We don't want to get rid of the Negroes only, but we want to get rid of those....Jews."²⁷

Eight local Hebrew trade unions conducted a joint meeting, demonstrating the growing suspicions of labor toward the Poe amendment. Walter Miles, "a noted labor agitator," called the measure a scheme to allow a few politicians to ally with capital and to gain unjust legislation against the workers. Further, Joseph Hettleman of the American Federation of Labor's Garment Workers Union proposed calling the amendment a "subterfuge...of the capitalist class to curb the rights of the workers."²⁸

The Republican party, meanwhile, presented a united front, fighting energetically to defeat the amendment. Bonaparte made a whirlwind speaking tour of the state and enjoyed his venture into stump politics.²⁹ He primarily emphasized the threat of the "Ring" and how passage of the amendment would allow its complete domination of the state's politics. He also kept the party single-minded in its opposition. Moreover, at a critical pre-election juncture, he solicited funds from

²⁷ Sun, Oct. 27, 1905, p. 7.

²⁸ Ibid., Oct. 30, 1905, p. 14.

²⁹ Sunday Star, (Washington, D. C.), Oct. 29, 1905, p. 4, Sect. D.

business men.³⁰ Bonaparte felt that the Republicans would need to outbid the Democrats' attempt at paying Negro voters to stay away from the polls.³¹ The election results proved his assumption incorrect, as the Negro voter would not take money to help remove his right to vote.

For the most part, the Baltimore press favored the anti-amendment side. The independent Democratic News and the Republican American had fought the disfranchisement measure throughout. They merely intensified their arguments as the election neared. The Democratic organ, the Evening Herald, mildly opposed the amendment as being too radical.³² The Democratic Sun also pretended to retain some semblance of neutrality. Yet, as the election approached, the respected Sun stated in an editorial that many genuine weaknesses existed in the Poe amendment. It pointed out that no legislation regulated the election registrars, that the amendment did not even suggest they would be good men, and that the registrars could remove foreigners from the voting rolls, if politically expedient. The Sun called the Negro in politics an increasing "menace," but stated that it would cost too much to limit the white man's suffrage in order to lessen the Negro's.³³

³⁰Charles J. Bonaparte to Robert Garrett, Oct. 19, 1905, Bonaparte MSS.

³¹Charles J. Bonaparte to Henry W. Williams, Oct. 23, 1905, Bonaparte MSS.

³²Evening Herald, Nov. 5, 1905, p. 4.

³³Sun, Nov. 4, 1905, p. 4.

In the Maryland counties, the newspapers often reflected party allegiance. The Wicomico News in Salisbury, partly owned by State Senator Marion V. Brewington, dutifully published the releases of the Democratic organization. Its entreaties to vote for the amendment did not differ too greatly from those in the geographically distant Cumberland Evening Times. On the opposite side, the Cecil Whig in Elkton, headlined the amendment as "Un-Democratic, Un-Republican, and Un-American."³⁴ The paper scoffed at the Democratic attempts to frighten the voters with the Negro bugaboo.³⁵

In Baltimore, only the World openly supported the amendment, utilizing full racist writings. It insisted that no white man would lose the right to vote as "no party would dare it."³⁶ According to the World, only Negro disfranchisement would save the voters' children.³⁷

Thus, the Baltimore World represented the tone with which the Gorman Democrats conducted the campaign. The organization Democrats published racist arguments of two and three full-column advertisements daily in most Baltimore papers. As in previous elections, they spoke throughout the state, emphasizing the Negro threat and again bringing in southern guest speakers. Gorman gave his usual dramatic pre-election speech on October 26. After having concentrated on criticizing President Roose-

³⁴Cecil Whig, Nov. 4, 1905, p. 1.

³⁵Ibid., Oct. 7, 1905, p. 4.

³⁶World, Oct. 31, 1905, p. 4.

³⁷Ibid., Nov. 3, 1905, p. 4.

velt in the two previous elections, he centered his 1905 attack on Bonaparte. Gorman called him a "common scold" and branded him inconsistent for demanding a civil service examination for a scrubwoman, yet wanting no test to vote.³⁸ In addition, Gorman's son, Arthur P. Gorman, Jr., stated that Maryland very much needed laws of disfranchisement as did the other southern states.³⁹

As the election approached, the Gorman Democrats again imported southern racist speakers. From West Virginia, former Congressman George Byrne, who edited the Charlestown Gazette, told his audience that the Negro constantly dreamed of social equality and would demand mixed schools and a repeal of miscegenation laws if given the opportunity.⁴⁰ Also, ex-Governor Charles B. Aycock of North Carolina again came to tell his audience that in earlier days he "could make a nigger speech that would raise your hair." North Carolinians, however, had removed the need for such oratory as their Negro disfranchisement had helped bring about political purity to the state. Political cleanliness came when a boss could no longer bring voters in line by yelling "nigger."⁴¹

In the final days before the election, reports and rumors of tricks and political manipulations became more evident. The News harped on the trick ballot theme, stating that in some coun-

³⁸Sun, Oct. 27, 1905, p. 1.

³⁹Ibid., Nov. 1, 1905, p. 14.

⁴⁰Ibid., Oct. 28, 1905, p. 12.

⁴¹Ibid., Oct. 25, 1905, p. 12.

ties such as Kent and Worchester, heavier black lines alerted the voter how to vote for the amendment.⁴² Some Negro women servants threatened refusal to work for those employers favoring the amendment.⁴³ In addition, some persons in the city hierarchy ordered the street cleaners to vote for the Poe amendment.⁴⁴

Outwardly, Gorman exuded confidence, insisting that the "fellows are sleeping well at nights."⁴⁵ Yet, the Democratic organization headquarters displayed anxiety. In an action very uncharacteristic to the nature of the methodical Vandiver, the Democratic Chairman displayed much concern in a hastily written note. Writing to Joshua W. Miles, he told him that Frank A. Furst, the head of the executive committee of the amendment campaign committee, had received at least thirty-five hundred dollars. This note revealed that a considerable amount of organization money came into Baltimore.⁴⁶ Further, and more important, Vandiver expressed great concern that unless they took care of the city man Rasin there would be trouble.⁴⁷

Chairman Vandiver assumed correctly, for the voters soundly defeated the amendment. In the state, 104,286 voted against the Poe amendment and 70,227 for it--a 34,059 defeat. In Baltimore, where election officials counted 75,783 votes, 48,287

⁴²News, Oct. 27, 1905, p. 20.

⁴³Evening Herald, Nov. 4, 1905, p. 12; Sun, Nov. 5, 1905, p. 16.

⁴⁴American, Nov. 6, 1905, p. 14.

⁴⁵Sun, Nov. 1, 1905, p. 14.

⁴⁶Murray Vandiver to Joshua W. Miles, Nov. 4, 1905, Vandiver MSS.

⁴⁷Ibid.

opposed the measure--a20,791 difference. Outside of the city, 13,270 more voters rejected it than supported it. Only in Gorman's Howard County and in four Eastern Shore counties did the amendment win a majority.⁴⁸ Moreover, the voters returned only a slight Democratic majority to the Legislature in comparison with the large 1903 victory. This loss indicated that the amendment actually aided the Republican increase in the election.

⁴⁸Maryland Manual (Baltimore; William J. C. Dulaney Co., 1905) p. 307.

CHAPTER VIII

PRESSURES WHICH HELPED AFFECT THE AMENDMENT'S DEFEAT

A number of factors helped produce the complete defeat of the Poe amendment. The Maryland voters refused to place too much power in the hands of any one man. At the same time, there existed some opposition to bossism and some slight tendency toward progressivism. In addition, some Democrats revolted against Senator Arthur P. Gorman's domination--for example, the Baltimore Democrats who fought against rural domination. In still another aspect of the defeat, the voters demonstrated that they just did not fear Negro domination.

Throughout the nation, many journalists rejoiced at "Boss" Gorman's defeat on the issue of the Poe amendment in the 1905 election. The New York Times called him "killed" and may have not erred much with this statement, as the Senator died the next June.¹ The St. Louis Globe-Democrat stated that the entire nation could "rejoice" over the rejection of the amendment.² The Boston Transcript expressed its delight in the defeat and insisted that Maryland's location placed her northward enough to reject "the attempt to mortgage the electorate to Gorman."³

Following the outcome, a few persons seriously attempted

¹New York Times, Nov. 11, 1905, p. 8.

²Globe-Democrat (St. Louis, Mo.), Nov. 8, 1905, p. 8.

³Boston Evening Transcript, Nov. 10, 1905, p. 8.

to explain the amendment's thorough defeat. Dr. William H. Hill attributed the defeat to the many independent voters who joined the anti-amendment voters.⁴ Murray Vandiver unrealistically insisted that eighty per cent of all white voters voted against the amendment.⁵ He also publicly placed the blame on Governor Warfield.⁶ A half dozen years later, Frank R. Kent, then the Annapolis correspondent of the Sun, blamed Rasin's "treachery" for the amendment's defeat. The city boss gave the amendment no support prior to the 1905 election.⁷ Kent completely ignored the fact that the counties handily rejected the amendment also, although they gave a smaller margin of defeat than did Baltimore.

The 1905 defeat of Negro disfranchisement in Maryland and the 1909 defeat helped illustrate the difficulty of limiting suffrage in the state. Although the 1903 election afforded the best opportunity for disfranchisement, the constitutional and procedural checks of the legislative process prevented the success of rashness. Yet, even then, the outcome of the voting would have been in doubt because of a reluctance of the voters to relinquish too much political power. The Maryland voter went to a certain point and no further. He had even turned Arthur P. Gorman out of the Senate in 1895.

⁴William H. Hill to Charles J. Bonaparte, Nov. 11, 1905, Bonaparte MSS, Box 70.

⁵Murray Vandiver to Frank A. Richardson, Dec. 4, 1905, Vandiver MSS.

⁶American, Nov. 9, 1905, p. 16.

⁷Kent, Maryland Politics, p. 336.

The Senator wished to avoid any such embarrassments in the future, and the Poe amendment afforded a useful guarantee. Nonetheless, in 1905, the voters again reacted to his attempt at grabbing excessive political power. By 1905, Maryland displayed little evidence of a progressive movement; yet, the rejection of Gorman and his amendment did suggest progressive tinges. The election resulted in a revolt against Maryland's Democratic "boss." Gorman went too far; he wanted to create a political dynasty from which his son could reap the benefits.⁸

Men so often do not reveal their motives, and I. Freeman Rasin guarded his in reference to the amendment's defeat. However, far from indulging in the "treachery" of effecting its defeat, he simply nursed his own interests. In a state characterized by rural domination, Rasin's Baltimore stood to lose most heavily in comparison to other subdivisions. In addition, the city boss found a considerable number of Negroes and naturalized citizens to be both purchasable and manageable. Disfranchisement would have removed these political tools.

In the case of Isidor Rayner, the junior Senator did not greatly enhance the anti-amendment movement by denouncing it. Still, he did foment political in-fighting among leading Democrats which hurt the organization's credibility. The fiery Rayner left his contemporaries confused as to his motives which conceivably represented some of the motives that helped the voters reject the Poe amendment. Of Jewish descent, Rayner felt a sensitivity to anti-amendment pressures of the Jewish

⁸New York Tribune, Sept. 18, 1905, p. 3.

community of Baltimore.⁹ Yet, Rayner's silence on this issue would have satisfied both Jews and the other members of the foreign community. He felt an obligation to help his lawyer son, William B. Rayner, with his election to the House of Delegates from the eleventh ward. Consisting of professional offices and expensive residences, this ward had the reputation of being a "silk-stockings" ward. Its political aspirants conducted their campaigns on a high level and paid their own expenses. This area generally opposed the Poe amendment.¹⁰ In addition, Rayner had recently established a new law office with his son and the state's Attorney General, William S. Bryan, one of the amendment's leading opponents.¹¹

Further, Isidor Rayner symbolized the anti-Gorman revolt as other men attempted to grasp their share of party power. Rayner's 1904 election as Senator brought out and whetted appetites. Conceivably, in Rayner's case that election created resentment which succeeding Gorman snubs at later Democratic conventions helped accentuate.¹² Rayner's presence in the Senate chamber could have put him in a position to learn of a growing disenchantment by his fellow Democrats with the politically regressing Gorman.¹³ Prior to the 1905 election, how-

⁹Murray Vandiver to Arthur P. Gorman, Aug. 30, 1905, Gorman MSS.

¹⁰Undated and unidentified newspaper clipping, Isidor Rayner MSS, Southern Historical Collection, Chapel Hill, N. C.; Sun, Oct. 19, 1905, p. 12.

¹¹News, Aug. 18, 1905, p. 12.

¹²Sun, Oct. 22, 1905, p. 16.

¹³New York Times, Nov. 6, 1905, p. 4.

ever, the Senate session to which Rayner belonged had not yet met.

Governor Edwin Warfield also represented an expression of independence from the Gorman political domination. During the 1890's, Gorman looked upon Warfield as a political protege.¹⁴ In addition to a political inter-dependence, Warfield and Gorman held joint economic interests. Gorman held a large block of stock in Warfield's Fidelity and Deposit Company; Warfield at one time held an interest in the Gorman Coal and Coke Company.¹⁵ Consequently, the quest for greater political independence brought no direct attacks, but an indirect attack on Gorman through the Poe amendment.

Other factors in Maryland also helped affect the amendment's outcome. There existed a true yet somewhat disproportionate two-party system, with the minority Republican party's posing a definite threat to win elections. The Republicans, however, placed considerable dependence upon the Negro Vote. Thus, they, fully realizing the great threat of the amendment, effectively marshalled their efforts and resources solidly toward its defeat. Charles J. Bonaparte's descension into party politics came at a most opportune time. He supplied both moral leadership and the political prestige of his Cabinet position.

¹⁴Arthur P. Gorman to Edwin Warfield, May 9, 1896, Warfield MSS.

¹⁵Several letters to and from William H. Gorman and Arthur P. Gorman, Jr., to and from Edwin Warfield (around 1895), Warfield MSS.

The Republicans garnered considerable help from the different anti-amendment allies. They did not remain bound to party lines but gave help whenever possible in order to bring about the amendment's defeat. Moreover, they effectively utilized the suspiciousness of the foreign community in pointing out the vagueness of the Poe amendment which constituted a threat to their political rights. They reached the foreign community first and more completely than did the Democratic organization.

The Maryland voters also unwittingly expressed a mild tendency toward progressivism when they rejected Gorman's domination. In 1905, Maryland did not display any obvious movement toward progressivism. Nonetheless, attempts at regulating the oyster industry, the entrance of the Western Maryland Railroad into the Baltimore port, and the nation's first workman's compensation law gave evidence of some voters desire for more of a contribution by the state's government. Thus, the voters suggested some adjustment in the political conditions. The Poe amendment offered Gorman and the organization too much potential power for many voters to digest. The organization displayed too much conservatism and threatened political stagnation. The voters conceivably moved "from the far right closer toward the conservative center."¹⁶

In a political arena where there existed a purchasable

¹⁶ John R. Lambert, Jr., "Reconstruction to World War I," The Old Line State: A History of Maryland, ed. Morris U. L. Radoff, (Vol. I of "Library of American Lives;" Hopkinsville, Ky.: Historical Record Association, 1956), p. 122.

vote, few voters sold and risked losing the opportunity to sell votes in the future. Many would not sell at any price.¹⁷ Also, the anti-amendment groups carefully instructed the illiterate as to how he should vote. In particular, the Negro received instruction well.¹⁸

The business community proved apprehensive of the Poe amendment. Businessmen fully realized that extensive political power offered the threat of exhaustive mulcting by an unchecked political party. They often lent support to the minority party, tending to check this threat. In this instance, the business community recognized one of the greatest of threats and reacted against it.¹⁹

Other factors contributed to the defeat of the Poe amendment. The Jim Crow laws of July 1, 1904, had pricked voter consciences slightly. Also, Roosevelt's popular re-election had somehow made racial emphasis just a little less acceptable. Basically, however, the Negro just simply offered no threat to the white populace. The white voters did not imagine that the Negroes would obtain political control. Upon the passing of the period of rabid racism, the sense of urgency toward disfranchising the Negro diminished considerably. Unlike the 1903 election, President Theodore Roosevelt publicly displayed little interest in the Maryland election. As did much of the nation, he watched the campaign, yet took care to avoid inter-

¹⁷Sun, Oct. 14, 1905, p. 12.

¹⁸Ibid., Nov. 5, 1905, p. 11.

¹⁹American, Aug. 27, 1905, p. 7, Sect. B; Sept. 3, 1905, p. 9, Sect. B.

fering in it.²⁰ Yet, the successful southern tour he made in late October and early November of 1905, influenced the Maryland voters. The South's acceptance and expressed modulation along racial lines diminished the racial threat that Democratic orators in Maryland foretold. The tour somehow made Roosevelt's square deal policy seem more sensible. Some voters responded with a degree of human decency, refused to deprive the Negro of his suffrage, and voted against the amendment.

²⁰Elting E. Morison, ed., Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, Vol. V, The Big Stick; 1905-1907 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1952), p. 27.

APPENDIX A

THE POE AMENDMENT

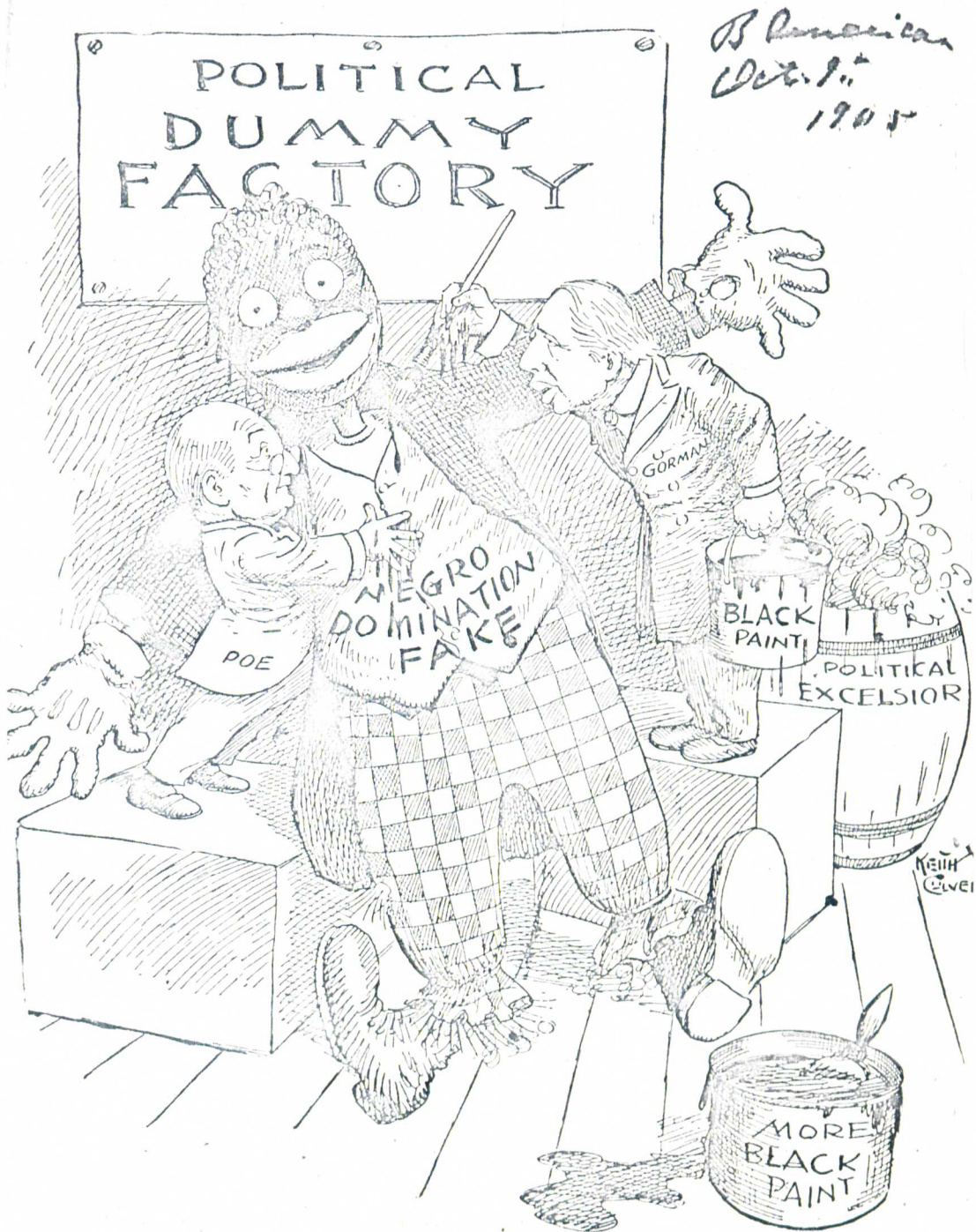
A person could vote if:

- First-- A person able to read any section of the Constitution of this State submitted to him by the officers of registration and to give a reasonable explanation of the same: or if unable to read such section is able to understand and give a reasonable explanation thereof when read to him by the registration officers; or
- Second-- A person who on the first day of January, 1869, or prior thereto, was entitled to vote under the laws of this State or of any other State of the United States wherein he then resided; or
- Third-- Any male lineal descendant of such last mentioned person who may be twenty-one (21) years of age or over in the year 1906.

No person not thus qualified by coming under some one of the above descriptions shall be entitled to be registered as a qualified voter, nor be entitled to vote.

APPENDIX B

Newspaper Cartoons
IN THE WORKSHOP



"Daub it on thick—smear it in."

"Sh-h-h, John, the secret is to put it on so smoothly that it will pass for the real thing."

Baltimore American, October 9, 1905

APPENDIX B

Newspaper Cartoons

SECURED AT LAST!

PROF. GORMAN'S
AMENDMENT
CONCERT HALL
PERFORMERS WANTED

*Baltimore
Oct 12th
1905*



Manager Gorman presents Mr. I. Freeman Rasin in his great unpopular song, "I Have to Belong to the Regulars—I Ain't No Volunteer."

Baltimore American, October 12, 1905

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