Introduction

In 1831, over seventeen thousand free people of color and over ten thousand enslaved people called Baltimore home. Enslaved and free black workers played a critical role in the city's early growth. They built and repaired ships in Fell's Point, excavated clay for bricks in south Baltimore, and swept streets in the Western Precincts around today's Lexington Market. White artisans excluded free black workers from craft apprenticeships and employers relegated black workers to the most difficult, dangerous, and lowest-paying jobs in the city.[1] Baltimore and Maryland's white elected officials denied free black households many of the basic rights that they claimed for themselves. Free black men and women living in Maryland could not vote. They could not testify in any criminal trial or freedom suit.[2] Since 1826, they had paid taxes but their children could not attend Baltimore's public schools.[3]

Despite these challenges, enslaved people also found advantages in Baltimore, the possibility of a better life, and opportunities for freedom. In 1845, Frederick Douglass recalled the "marked difference" between his experience with slavery in Baltimore and the Eastern Shore, writing:

> "A city slave is almost a freeman, compared with a slave on the plantation. He is much better fed and clothed, and enjoys privileges altogether unknown to the slave on the plantation."[4]

Baltimore offered enslaved men and women the opportunity to earn wages that often went to purchasing their own freedom or the freedom of family members. Historian Seth Rockman explained, "When slaves gained some control over the wages they earned, freedom was typically not far behind."[5]

As the city's black population grew in the early nineteenth century, free and enslaved black people moved farther out from the center of the city into the surrounding neighborhoods. Historian Christopher Phillips described the change between 1810 when "nearly half of the city's free Negroes lived in the central wards" and 1830 when "less than 10 percent resided in that part of the city." Many black residents moved to the city's "Western Precincts", where "developers had responded to the population boom by laying out new streets and erecting cheap tenement housing." While not wholly segregated from the city's white population, most free black residents lived among the "maze of alleyways and court-yards" where "black family dwellings interspersed with those of laboring and poor whites."[6]

The growing black population also supported the growth of new African American institutions, including many of the city's oldest black churches. In 1815, Bethel Church purchased a property on Saratoga Street near Gay Street from John Carman, a white abolitionist.[7] Sharp Street Church, established in 1787, occupied a building near Pratt Street (where the Baltimore Convention Center is located today).[8] Before the U.S. Civil War, the city's black churches served not only a religious purpose but also provided a offered mutual support, a space for education, and a platform for political action within Baltimore's free and enslaved black communities.

The growth of Maryland and Baltimore's free black population came, in part, through changing agricultural practices made it more difficult to turn forced black labor into profit. Slaveholders manumitted enslaved people by the thousands.[9] Many of these free people came to Baltimore where they could find work, educational opportunities, and a community supported by black churches and social organizations.[10]

As free black people (and, to a lesser extent, enslaved people) gained some measures of self-determination in Baltimore in the years before the Civil War, white Maryland slaveholders and their supporters reacted to the growing free black population in the state by subjecting free and enslaved black workers to violent attacks and new forms of oppression. New state laws threatened free black men, women, and children with re-enslavement.

Local abolitionists and activists like William Watkins (c. 1803 – c. 1858) and George Alexander Hackett, among many others, worked to protect the free black community from the state's racist actions. Their collective efforts helped to preserve what opportunities free black people in Baltimore had already secured but repressive policies led many black Baltimoreans to leave the state. As a result, Baltimore saw almost no growth in the black population in the 1850s. Phillips described the period as Baltimore's transition from "a place of refuge to one of repression".[11]

But circumstances soon changed again for free black Baltimoreans. In a single decade, the city saw tremendous changes. The Civil War started in April 1861; free and enslaved black Marylanders enlisted in the U.S. Colored Troops beginning in 1863; Maryland emancipated all enslaved people under a new state constitution in November 1864; the U.S. Supreme Court issued the decision *In Re Turner* overturning Maryland's regressive "apprenticeship" law in 1867; and the adoption of the Fifteenth Amendment to the United

States Constitution in 1870 granted black men the right to vote. These changes, brought about by both local activism and new federal support, led to an unprecedented expansion of formal civil rights and opportunities for black people in Baltimore. Outside of of the city, however, white Marylanders took violent racist actions against the state's newly emancipated free black population that forced many people to become refugees. Thousands of black Marylanders moved from rural counties to Baltimore or Washington, D.C. for protection from violence, for access to education and social services, and for for better job opportunities.[12]

With a tremendous period of growth, by 1870, 330,741 African Americans lived in Baltimore City and County.[13] Black men could vote and black children could attend segregated public schools. Aspiring black teachers could enroll for training at the Baltimore Normal School, established on Courtland Street near Saratoga Street in 1865, or at the Centenary Biblical Institute, established at Sharp Street Church in 1867).[14]

Throughout this period, activism in Baltimore did not stay isolated in the city. Instead, early activists and organizers worked in partnership with networks of individuals and organizations across the state and nation—abolitionist organizations, black churches, fraternal groups, and the Convention Movements that brought African Americans together around issues of justice and equality. Baltimore activists hosted regional and national meetings including the first regional conference for black Methodists at Sharp Street Church (1846), the Maryland State Convention of Free Colored People (1852), the State Colored Convention of Maryland (1862), and the Colored Men's Border State Convention (1868). The Colored Conventions Project summarizes the importance of black activism in this period, writing:

> The convention movement took place during critical decades which witnessed devastating race riots and the growing popularity of the American Colonization Society; the Fugitive Slave Law and the proliferation of derogatory representations of Blacks; the Civil War and Reconstruction; and the rise of repeated Black disenfranchisement in legal, labor and educational spheres in the late nineteenth century. Speakers at conventions responded to these issues by calling for community-based action that gathered funds, established schools and literary societies, and urged the necessity of hard work in what would become a decades-long campaign for civil and human rights.[15]

For Baltimore, the key factors in these changes include:

- Baltimore's growing free black population and shrinking enslaved population before the Civil War and the renewed growth in the city's black population following the war.
- The organization of black churches and fraternal organizations and their efforts to secure independence from affiliated white organizations in their leadership and decision-making.
- The federal support for black people in Baltimore, particularly the Union Army, during and after the Civil War.

The Presentation, of a gold snuff box to the Rev. R.T. Breckenridge, Bethel AME Church, 1845. *Courtesy Library of Congress.*

The city's growing black population in the mid nineteenth century supported the growth of both existing black churches and the foundation of new churches and religious organizations. Churches established (or expanded) within this period include:

- Sharp Street Church (1787, nonextant)
- Bethel AME Church (c. 1817, nonextant)
- St. James Episcopal Church (1824, nontextant)
- Oblate Sisters of Providence (1828, nonextant)
- Orchard Street Church (1837, rebuilt 1859, 1882, extant)
- Union Baptist Church (1852, nontextant)
- Ebenezer AME Church (1865, extant)

Historian J. Gordon Melton observed the frustrations that black churches experienced in this period as they sought to secure independent black leadership:

> Through the 1820s, both Sharp Street and Asbury remained as the African churches attached to the one Baltimore charge. Then in 1830, one of the three Baltimore ministers, Joseph Frey, was given the specific charge of serving the two Black congregations. Two years later, the two churches were set aside as the "African Methodist Episcopal Church in the City of Baltimore" and incorporated as a single entity. The members of Sharp Street reacted to these events by annually petitioning the Baltimore conference to assign a Black preacher as the minister in charge. Their petition was annually tabled. Eventually, in reaction to the failure of their annual petitions, beginning in 1848 (at the first MEC general

> conference after the Southern conferences had departed), Black Methodists from Sharp Street and other Black congregations began to lobby for the organization of an all-Black Conference to include the churches in the care of the Baltimore Conference.[16]

The Civil War led to changes in the organization of the church:

> Thus it was that the 1864 General Conference accepted petitions to organize the African American congregations into Annual conferences (albeit segregated ones). Beginning 1864 with the Delaware and Washington Conferences, The MEC organized a set of conferences for Black members across the nation.[17]

Other social organizations beyond churches also played an important role in this period. For example, George Hackett was involved with founding the Douglass Institute (1865) and the Gregory Aged Women's Home (1867). Ann Prout member and Sunday school teacher at Bethel became president of the association in charge of the home.[18]

In the next section, this context elaborates on three themes for understanding civil rights advocacy in Baltimore during this period. Individuals and groups worked together to:

- Promote the abolition of enslaved black people
- Protect the rights of free black people
- Establish schools for black people

Associated Places

Within Baltimore City, very few of the structures associated with this period of community building, self-help, and nascent civil rights activism survived. Some examples of notable losses include the blocks around Courtland and Hamilton Streets that once housed some of Baltimore's most prominent black families, along with Union Baptist Church, Bethel A.M.E. Church, and the Baltimore Normal School. Nearly all of these buildings fell to demolition in the early twentieth century.[19] In south and southwest Baltimore, many buildings used by Baltimore's early black activists were torn down for the redevelopment of the University of Maryland Urban Renewal Area and the Camden Yards Industrial Park, as well as the construction of the Baltimore Convention Center and I–395/I–95.

Some early landmarks associated with this post Civil War period of growth in the city's black population *do* survive:

- Ebenzer AME Church – built in 1865 on a site the congregation has owned since 1839;
- Orchard Street United Methodist Church – built in 1882 but incorporating elements of earlier structures from 1837 and 1859;
- The John Wesley Chapel on Hughes Street – a site the congregation began occupying by 1838.

In addition to churches, hundreds of dwellings in the Fell's Point, Federal Hill, and Mount Vernon National Register Historic Districts were at one point occupied by free and enslaved black people before and after the Civil War. Notable among these neighborhoods is the Sharp Leadenhall local historic district, which was in part for its long history as an African American community.

Promote the abolition of enslaved black people

In the early nineteenth century, slavery in Maryland began to change in significant ways. Importantly, an increasing number of farms stopped cultivating tobacco with enslaved labor. Instead, many farms turned to growing grain and produce, less labor-intensive crops that relied more on the labor of European immigrants than enslaved black people. Seeing diminishing profits in holding large numbers of enslaved people, rural slaveholders, especially in western and central Maryland, began to manumit, granting legal freedom, to hundreds of people they had held in bondage:

> In the state's northern and western counties, farmers became increasingly dependent upon diversified agriculture, in which slavery played a diminishing role. On the Eastern Shore, soil exhaustion and declining tobacco prices forced farmers to abandon tobacco, manumit their slaves, and cultivate their farms with free black and white farmhands.[20]

Many members of the state's growing free black community supported the emancipation of their family, friends, and neighbors who continued to be held in slavery—sometimes saving money to purchase the freedom of a family member or assisting a friend in escaping to Pennsylvania, New York, or Canada.

Another factor that contributed to the rising number of manumissions and the growth of abolition in Baltimore was the movement by the Society of Friends (better known as the Quakers) and, to a more limited extent, the Methodist Church, to advocate against the slave trade and slave holding more generally. For example, in 1778, Maryland Quakers "called on one another to free their bondsmen and abjure slaveholding".[21] One notable early abolitionist in Baltimore was Elisha Tyson (1750–1824) whose opposition to slavery was reportedly recognized when 3,000 black people joined his funeral procession in 1824.[22] Tyson's summer home still stands in the Stone Hill neighborhood. From the late 1700s up through the Civil War, Quaker meeting houses in Baltimore City, and other Quaker settlements in central Maryland, played a critical role in promoting abolitionist sentiment and in providing support for enslaved people to escape on the "Underground Railroad".

Between 1800 and 1860, the proportion of Baltimore City residents who held slaves declined, the share of Baltimore's total population held in slavery also declined, and the share of the black population living in freedom grew. Nearly one-third of city residents held at least one enslaved person in 1800. But by 1850, slaveholders made up close to one percent of the city's white population. Enslaved people made up 9% of the city's population in 1790, under 2% in 1850, and barely 1% in 1860. A small minority of the city's black population, just 20%, were free in 1790. By 1830, over 75% of the same population was free and over 90% was free in 1860.[23]

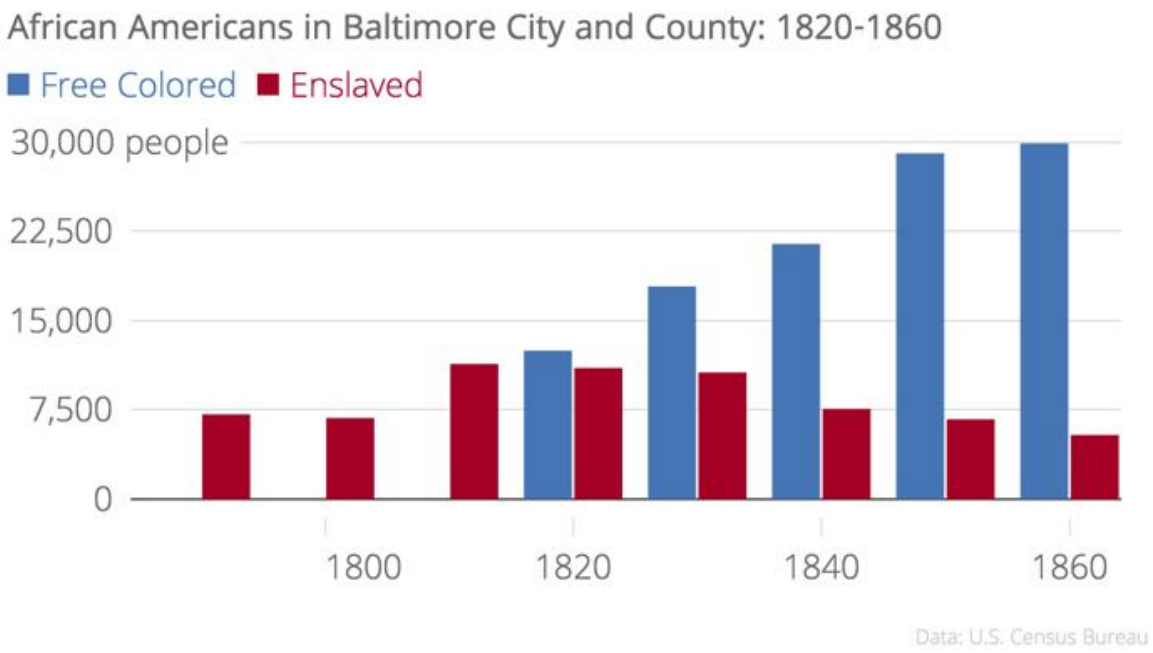


Chart: African Americans in Baltimore City and County, 1820–1860

Due to the Methodist Church's support for abolition, enslaved and free black people in Maryland often either joined or affiliated with it. Outside the city in Baltimore County and other nearby counties, black Methodist churches became the nucleus of communities of free blacks who, among other things, were critical to the success of the Underground Railroad. One example of this is the free black community that built the Howard Methodist Episcopal Church in Port Deposit, Maryland in 1853 (a building later demolished in 1981). Examples of pre-Civil War free black communities in Baltimore County include Glen Arm around the Waugh Church, where services began as early as 1829 (the first chapel constructed in 1849); the community around the Piney Grove Church built in 1850; and the Troyer Road community that formed around the Mount Joy African Methodist Episcopal Church and the Union United Methodist Chapel (both built between 1850 and 1877).[24]

Supportive abolitionists remained a minority in a state where most white residents and the government itself supported slavery. Historian and abolitionist William Still observed the challenges facing enslaved black people attempting escape through Baltimore in his 1872 book *The Underground Railroad*:

> Baltimore used to be in the days of Slavery one of the most difficult places in the South for even free colored people to get away from, much more slaves. The rule forbade any colored person leaving there by rail road or steamboat, without such applicant had been weighed, measured, and then given a bond signed by unquestionable signatures well known. Baltimore was rigid in the extreme, and was a never-failing source of annoyance, trouble and expense to colored people generally, and not unfrequently to slave-holders too, when they were traveling North with 'colored servants' ... But, not withstanding all this weighing, measuring and requiring of bonds, many travelers by the Underground Rail Road took passage from Baltimore.[25]

Baltimore City became a hub for fugitives headed toward the Susquehanna River and Wilmington, Delaware (where abolitionists like Thomas Garrett waited to assist) or escaping north through Baltimore County.[26]

Within the city, railroads were an important part of the infrastructure for escape. The Pratt and Charles Street Depot for the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad and, after 1850, President Street Station on President Street (and still extant) likely saw hundreds of fugitives pass through on their escape north, including Henry "Box" Brown (who escaped from Virginia in 1849), William and Ellen Craft (who escaped from Georgia in 1848), and, most famously, Frederick Douglass in 1838.[27] Born into slavery around February 1818, Douglass first arrived in Baltimore around 1828. On September 3, 1838, he escaped from slavery in Baltimore, traveling by train to New York City, and soon moving to New Bedford, Massachusetts.

The significant resistance white and black abolitionists encountered in Maryland only grew from the 1830s through the 1850s. Following Nat Turner's slave rebellion in Southampton, Virginia, on August 21, 1831, slaveholders in Maryland panicked over rumors of impending revolts in Maryland encouraged by abolitionists. Historian Sarah Katz noted:

> Reports in well respected papers like *Niles' Weekly Register* and the *Baltimore American* lent credibility to such rumors, thereby adding to the hysteria. Although the papers contradicted themselves with each issue, they reflected the frenzied fear among whites that the nation's slaves were prepared to rise up in a violent bid for freedom.[28]

Katz continued:

> Exaggerated reports of slave revolt alarmed Baltimore in 1831; so did a fear of abolition societies. Many supporters of slavery thought the antislavery movement encouraged insurrection. ... Some Baltimoreans went so far as to accuse abolitionist societies of holding midnight military drills to prepare blacks for insurrection.[29]

In response to these fears, the Maryland State Legislature placed new restrictions on enslaved and free black people in the state with the goal of encouraging free blacks to move out. In 1832, the legislature moved to prohibit free blacks from entering the state, banned free black Marylanders from owning firearms without a certificate from county officials, and outlawed the sale of alcohol, powder, and shot to blacks. Under the new policies, African Americans could no longer hold religious meetings unless a white minister was present, although the legislature excepted congregations in Baltimore City from the new law.

In addition to restrictions on African Americans, the penalties for anyone caught assisting enslaved people in their escape were severe. One notable example was Charles Turner Torrey. In 1842, Torrey organized an Underground Railroad route from Washington to Baltimore, Philadelphia and Albany. He moved to Baltimore in late 1843 and, in June 1844, was arrested and confined to the Maryland Penitentiary. Torrey died in prison from tuberculosis on May 9, 1846 and a memoir telling the story of his life and death inspired action from abolitionists throughout the United States and Europe.[30]

Baltimore City Jail, c. 1855–1860. *Courtesy Enoch Pratt Free Library, mdcp030.*

The Baltimore Jail, designed by local architects James and Thomas Dixon and completed in 1849, is one of the few extant examples in Baltimore of a site associated with the detention of escaped slaves and abolitionists. Up until 1864, the jail held hundreds of "runaways" along with Marylanders, both white and free black people, who assisted enslaved people as they fled to freedom. The Warden's House from the original jail complex still stands on East Madison Street though the remainder of the original complex was largely demolished in the 1960s. The Warden's House was one part of the penal system for slavery in Baltimore that also included a number of private slave jails operated around the Baltimore Harbor, although none of these buildings survive.[31]

The passage of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, pushed by Southern slaveholders to stem the flow of enslaved people moving north to freedom, led to expanded efforts by abolitionists to support the Underground Railroad and growing violence on both sides. Baltimore was no exception to this national effort. One notable early challenge to the Fugitive Slave Act came in 1851 is the Christiana Riot (also known as the Christiana Resistance), where Baltimore County slaveholder Edward Gorsuch and several others were wounded seeking to recapture four enslaved men who had escaped to the farm of abolitionist William Parker in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.[32]

Baltimore and Maryland slaveholders called on the Baltimore police, as well as local police and courts in northern states, to support their efforts to recapture escaped enslaved people. Historian William T. Alexander observed a "remarkable" growth in the "activity and universality of slave hunting" under the new law citing the example of a Baltimore police officer who killed William Smith, an alleged fugitive in Pennsylvania, while attempting an arrest:

> The needless brutality with which these seizures were often made tended to intensify the popular repugnance which they occasioned. In repeated instances, the first notice the alleged fugitive had of his peril was given him by a blow on the head, sometimes with a club or stick of wood; and being thus knocked down, he was carried bleeding and insensible, before the facile commissioner, who made short work of identifying him and earning his ten dollars by remanding him into slavery. In Columbia, Penn., March, 1852, a colored person named William Smith was seized as a fugitive by a Baltimore police officer, while working in a lumber yard, and, attempting to escape the officer drew a pistol and shot him dead.[33]

A variety of forces began to challenge the institution of slavery early in the Civil War. In April 1862, the emancipation of enslaved people in Washington, DC created new opportunities for enslaved blacks to escape from bondage, especially in the counties adjoining the district. Also of importance, in 1863, the federal government began recruiting for the new U.S. Colored Troops, enlisting over 8,700 black men in six Maryland regiments.

Unidentified African American soldier in Union uniform with wife and two daughters, c. 1863–1865. *Courtesy Library of Congress.*

Following the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation, George A. Hackett, a local business owner and member of Bethel AME Church, would frequently:

> ...hire a wagon, go on a plantation, fill it with slaves, and with a six-barrelled revolver in each hand, defy the master to prevent it.[34]

President Lincoln's 1863 Emancipation Proclamation did not apply to enslaved people in Maryland. However, in 1864 Maryland passed a new state constitution abolishing slavery. The new provision also disenfranchised white Marylanders who had left the state to fight for or live in the Confederacy and men who had supported the Confederacy within the state. Under this arrangement, the Maryland legislature approved the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution abolishing slavery nationwide on February 3, 1865.[35] However, with the restoration of voting rights for many Confederate sympathizers and veterans following the end of the Civil War, the state legislature voted against the Fourteenth Amendment (guaranteeing the rights of citizens and other persons) on March 23, 1867. Three years later, the state rejected the Fifteenth Amendment on February 26, 1870.[36]

Protect the rights of free black people

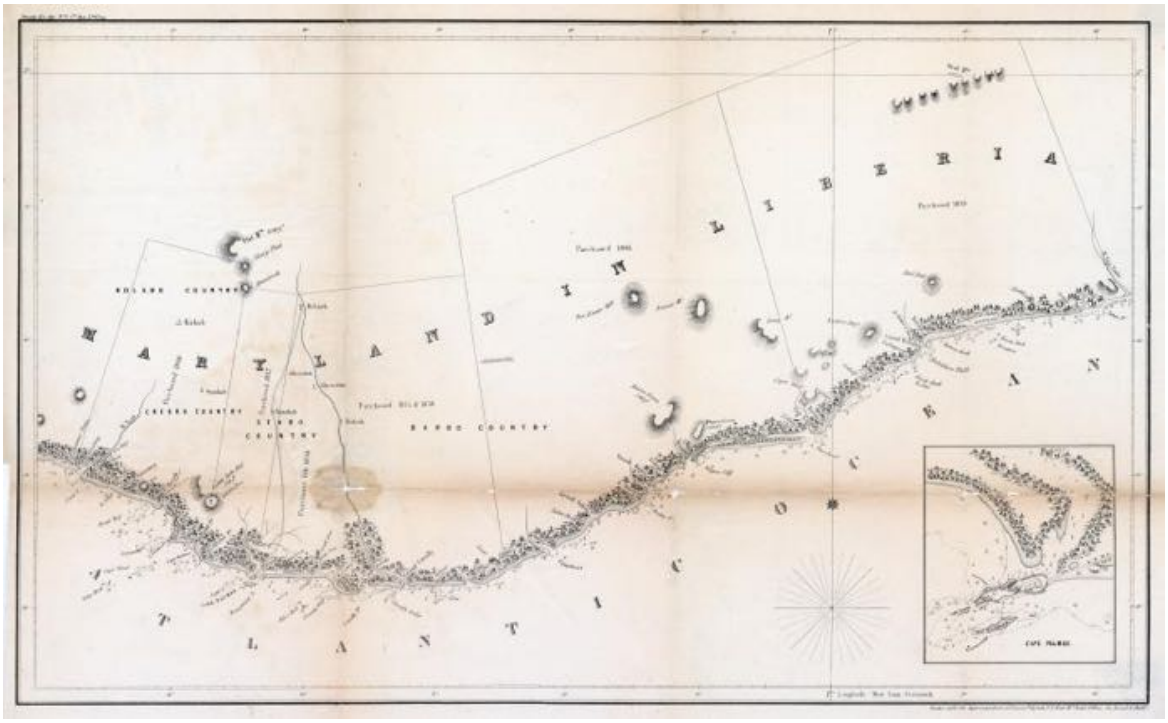
In addition to their opposition to slavery, free black people in Baltimore resisted oppression in a variety of ways before and during the Civil War. Notably, African Americans in Baltimroe adn Maryland were leaders opposing the Colonization Movement that sought to relocate African Americans. Baltimoreans also resisted the efforts of whites to prevent black freedom that included threatening re-enslavement for everything from contract disputes to outright kidnapping. Following the Civil War, African Americans continued their

opposition by fighting attempts to replace enslavement with an apprenticeship system that functioned as *de facto* enslavement. Their efforts established a foundation for the rise of the more formal Civil Rights Movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Facing the challenges of prejudice, repression, and exclusion, free black residents of Baltimore organized around three main goals:

- Resist the Colonization movement in Maryland
- Oppose efforts to reenslave free black people
- Organize black workers in response to white violence

Resist the Colonization Movement in Maryland



Maryland in Liberia, 1853. *Courtesy New York Public Library, 1261070.*

The Colonization Movement in Maryland first organized on a statewide level in 1827 when a group of loosely organized regional and county societies united to form the first state group. The project received an annual grant of $1,000 from the Maryland General Assembly to transport free black Marylanders to the American Colonization Society's settlement in Liberia. When the group sent only twelve emigrants to Liberia in 1828, the state soon terminated its appropriation the following year. Support for colonization was renewed following Nat Turner's Rebellion in August 1831 leading the state to reinstated an appropriation of $10,000 a year for twenty years settle free black Marylanders in Liberia.[37]

Black Marylanders reacted strongly to the state's removal efforts. In *Freedom's Port: The African American Community of Baltimore, 1790–1860*, historian Christopher Phillips recounts African American resistance to the efforts by the Maryland Colonization Society to encourage free blacks to migrate from Maryland to Liberia, noting:

> The pervasively hostile sentiment against colonization throughout the period and the equally persuasive demeanor of the Baltimore junto forced the Maryland Colonization Society to abandon recruitment effort on the state's Western Shore. Of the emigrants sponsored by the Maryland State Colonization Society between 1832 and 1841, only fifty (less than 8 percent) were from Baltimore.[38]

Black activism helped to ensure the failure of the Colonization Movement as an effort to remove manumitted slaves from Maryland. In a twenty year period, from 1831 to 1851, only 1,025 emigrants were sent to Liberia while the number of recorded manumissions during the same period was 5,571. The latter figure likely understates the total number of enslaved people freed in that period as not all slave owners filed manumission documents.[39]

Not all black Baltimoreans opposed colonization. Most famously, Daniel Coker, the founding pastor of Bethel AME Church, emigrated to Liberia in 1820. But, as Phillips writes, the "conflict over colonization offered black Baltimoreans the opportunity to further the evolution of their own community as distinct and autonomous." Phillips continued to note:

> Whether for or against colonization, Baltimore's black community unified around a principle far more compelling; racial progress. Baltimore's black society became, in the words of one historian of urban African Americans of the antebellum North, a "community of commitment."[40]

Even the representatives of the Maryland Colonization Society heard the opposition so loudly that they could articulate the character of the arguments. In 1838, the group's traveling agent John H. Kennard reported to the board of managers summarizing his understanding of black opposition to colonization:

> They are taught to believe, and, do believe, that this is their country, their home. A Country and home, now wickedly withholden from them but which they will presently possess, own and control. Those who Emigrate to Liberia, are held up to the world, as the vilest and veriest traitors to their race, and especially so, towards their brethren in bonds. Every man woman and child who leaves this country for Africa is considered one taken from the strength of the colored population and by his departure, as protracting the time when the black man will by the strength of his own arm compell those who despise and oppress him, to acknowledge his rights, redress his wrongs, and restore the wages, long due and inniquitously withholden.[41]

The Maryland State Colonization Society ended active operations in 1863, shortly after the beginning of the Civil War. Largely unsuccessful, organized resistance to colonization helped lay the groundwork for further advocacy efforts by black Baltimoreans . This advocacy took place primarily in black churches, such as Sharp Street and Bethel AME Church, but likely also in the homes of free black residents. In addition to these historic sites, the membership and leadership of the Maryland Colonization Society included some of the state's most prominent residents and a number of residences associated with those individuals are still extant in the greater Baltimore region.

Oppose efforts to re-enslave free black people

Free black people faced other threats beyond the Colonization Movement. They could be illegally kidnapped and sold south, as was Solomon Northrup on a visit to Washington, DC, or arrested and sold into slavery to repay debts or cover the cost of imprisonment. The Maryland General Assembly played an active role in suppressing African American Marylanders. Three notable examples include the following.

First, in 1854, the Maryland legislature passed a law requiring blacks who broke labor contracts to work without pay for their employers.[42] This state-sanctioned oppression was both a way to discourage black workers from asserting some measure of control over their own labor and a way to exert another means of free labor from African Americans.

Second, in 1859, following John Brown's October raid on Harper's Ferry, Colonel C.W. Jacobs, a member of Maryland's House of Delegates from the Eastern Shore, introduced a bill to re-enslave or expel free black residents of Maryland. George A. Hackett led black opposition to the Jacobs Bill in Baltimore. Hacket came from a pioneering family. His father, Charles Hackett, was one of the founding trustees of Bethel Church in 1815. George himself spent ten years working as a seaman before becoming an independent business owner — first operating a livery stable and later a coal yard.[43]

In his efforts to defeat the Jacobs Bill, Hacket circulated petitions and organized weekly meetings, mostly at Bethel Church, to "formulate their position". On February 9, 1860, at 3:00 am in the morning, the black opponents of the Jacobs Bill gathered at Bethel for an "indignation service". Lawrence H. Mamiya writes:

> Indignation services, as they were called, originated with the Bethel congregation in the mid-nineteenth century to mobilize the black community and publicly express its views on serious black offenses.[44]

African American opponents helped to defeat the bill and were joined in opposition by pro-slavery Democrats who saw the proposal as a threat to the state's practice of "quasi-freedom" where the ready mix of free and enslaved labor provided significant advantages to slaveholders. Historian Frank Towers quotes editor Frank Key Howard, writing in the *Daily Exchange* on March 7, 1860 that if the bill became law:

> ...not only will a class pour into take the place vacated by the negroes, who hate and are jealous of slaveholders, but a revulsion will be produced in the sentiments of thousands...[45]

A third notable example of the Maryland General Assembly actively legislating oppression in the years before the Civil War came 1860. At that time, the legislature outlawed manumission by deed or will. "At the same time, the General Assembly establishes a mechanism for free blacks to renounce their freedom and become slaves. In response to the worsening legal climate, many free blacks decamp for Pennsylvania and other northern states."[46]

In addition to opposition by Maryland's African American communities, some of the state legislature's proposals to place new restrictions on free black Marylanders met resistance from white Marylanders as well. For example, in March 1842, a public meeting was held at the Exeter Street Church, chaired by Richard Frisby, Esq., a white lawyer, in response to a proposed bill before the Maryland Senate entitled, "An act for the better security of negro slaves in this State, and for promoting industry and honesty among the free people of color". The meeting supported a resolution that the proposed bill "is well calculated, on account of its obnoxious and oppressive provisions, to produce among our citizens painful agitations, both political and religious, which may endanger the prosperity and peace of the State.[47]

Organize black workers in response to white violence

Workers, both white and black, faced significant challenges due to a turbulent Antebellum economy that saw a series of major national recessions: 1836 to 1838, 1839, 1843, 1857 and 1858. In this period, black workers were excluded from specific trades and even physically attacked.

Historian M. Ray Della, Jr. cites the example of typographers who successfully organized to maintain wage scales and exclude black workers and "underpaid apprentices" from their trade. Other efforts were less successful:

> ...in 1847 a "memorial" from a number of citizens for a law to prevent free Negroes from huckstering hay or straw was referred without result to the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Delegates. In a similar attempt, a petition to bar free Negroes from any mechanical branch of trade did not result in any legislative action. Another unsuccessful organized attempt to oust Negroes from their employment took place in 1859 as the "Stavegut Society" sought work on the city railroads, but for no less than $1.25 a day, while Negroes had been working for $1.00.[48]

Black resistance to such proposals was joined by white employers who benefited from the flexibility of employing free black, enslaved, or white labor as they liked.

When legal attacks on black workers failed, some turned to violence. In May 1858, a group of white workers attacked black workers at a brickyard near Federal Hill. Della describes an 1859 attack on a group of black ship-caulkers at a Fells Point shipyard:

> Labor riots continued into 1859 as a group of Negroes putting copper on the bottom of a boat at Fells Point on June 28 were attacked and beaten by whites when they refused to stop work. The culprits were caught but were released as there were no white witnesses, and the "reign of terror" on Baltimore's Negro laborers continued.[49]

Labor strikes were another tool that whites used to suppress black workers. In 1865, white caulkers went on strike to exclude black caulkers from the shipyards. When the strikers won, Isaac Myers, George Hackett, William F. Taylor, John W. Locks, and Causemen Gaines, all laymen at Bethel AME Church, organized the cooperative Chesapeake and Marine Railway and Drydock Company in February 1866. This black-owned business eventually employed 300 skilled black workers. Isaac Myers went on to organize the Colored Caulkers Trade Union Society in 1868 and in 1869, after white workers excluded black workers from the new National Labor Union, organized the Colored National Labor Union. The Chesapeake and Marine Railway and Drydock Company lasted until 1884 and is memorialized today at the Frederick Douglass-Isaac Myers Maritime Park.

Establish schools for black people in Baltimore

Expanding educational opportunities for black Baltimoreans and employment opportunities for black educators was a key goal in the broader efforts of "racial progress" articulated by the movement opposing colonization.

In 1797, the Maryland Society for the Abolition of Slavery, a Quaker abolitionist group, opened the Baltimore African Academy for the children of free black parents. These were the first schools for African Americans in Baltimore. In 1826, the Maryland General Assembly authorized the creation of the Baltimore City school system for white children under the age of ten and the first school, known as Public School No. 1, opened on September 21, 1829. Public Schools No. 2 and No. 3 (also for whites only) opened soon after and by the end of the year, enrolled 269 students. African Americans recognized the injustice of being forced to pay school taxes that supported white only schools, and black leaders in Baltimore petitioned the city government to provide either tax relief or schools for black children. These petitions were presented in 1839, 1844, and 1850. In each case, the Mayor and City Council rejected them even thought there is evidence the proposals had bi-racial support. The 1850 petition, for example, had signatures from 90 black and 126 white Baltimore residents.[50]

The beginning of the Civil War in 1861 and emancipation in Maryland in 1864 transformed the landscape of black education in Baltimore. In 1864, a group of thirty white businessmen, lawyers and ministers (mostly Quakers) formed the Baltimore Association for the Moral and Educational Improvement of Colored People with the goal of establishing a black public school system. Within a year, the group had established seven schools in Baltimore with 3,000 students enrolled. At its peak in 1867, the group had set up more than 100 schools in the city and on the Eastern Shore.[51] In 1865, the Baltimore Normal School was founded to begin training black teachers. The Freedmen's Bureau, created by Congress that same year, was headquartered in Baltimore and played an important role in promoting black public schools across the state.

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1. Whitman, *The Price of Freedom*, 164. ↩
2. Maryland State Archives and University of Maryland, College Park, “A Guide to the History of Slavery in Maryland,” 10. ↩

3. Baum, *Brown in Baltimore*, 25. ↩
4. Garrison and Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, 34. ↩
5. Rockman, *Scraping By*, 65. ↩
6. Phillips, *Freedom's Port*, 104–5. ↩
7. Mamiya, "A Social History of the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Baltimore," 230. ↩
8. Melton, "African American Methodism in the M. E. Tradition." ↩
9. Maryland State Archives and University of Maryland, College Park, "A Guide to the History of Slavery in Maryland," 10. ↩
10. Ibid., 10. ↩
11. Phillips, "'Negroes and Other Slaves'," 342. ↩
12. Fuke, *Imperfect Equality*. ↩
13. U.S. Census, 1870↩
14. Today, the Baltimore Normal School continues as Bowie State University and the Centenary Biblical Institute as Morgan State University.↩
15. Foreman and Colored Conventions Project Team, "Colored Conventions." ↩
16. Melton, "African American Methodism in the M. E. Tradition," 18. ↩
17. Ibid., 19. ↩
18. Mamiya, "A Social History of the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Baltimore," 241–42. ↩
19. The impetus for demolition included a street widening program that followed Baltimore's 1904 fire, the construction of Preston Gardens in the late 1910s, and, the construction of the Orleans Street Viaduct in the in 1935. See the profile on Preston Gardens for more on the history of the Courtland and Hamilton Street area.↩
20. Maryland State Archives and University of Maryland, College Park, "A Guide to the History of Slavery in Maryland," 12. ↩
21. Brugger, *Maryland, A Middle Temperament*, 167. ↩
22. Tyson and Citizen of Baltimore, *Life of Elisha Tyson, the Philanthropist*. ↩
23. Phillips, *Freedom's Port*, 16–26. ↩
24. E.H.T. Traceries, "African American Historic Survey Districts - Baltimore County." ↩
25. Still, *The Underground Rail Road*, 136. ↩
26. Maryland State Archives, "Flight to Freedom." ↩
27. Maryland Public Television, "Pathways to Freedom | Underground Railroad Library | Museums and Historical Sites." ↩
28. Katz, "Rumors of Rebellion," 329. ↩
29. Ibid., 330–31. ↩
30. Lovejoy, *Memoir of Rev. Charles T. Torrey Who Died in the Penitentiary of Maryland, Where He Was Confined for Showing Mercy to the Poor*. ↩
31. See the Baltimore Heritage post on the Baltimore Jail.↩

32. Kuhn, “Maryland and the Moderate Conundrum.” ↩
33. Alexander, *History of the Colored Race in America*, 208. ↩
34. Mamiya, “A Social History of the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Baltimore,” 240–41. ↩
35. The Thirteenth Amendment took effect on December 18, 1865.↩
36. The Fourteenth Amendment took effect on July 9, 1868 and the Fifteenth Amendment on March 30, 1870. The Maryland State Legislature voted to ratify both amendments nearly a century after they came into effect: April 4, 1959 for the Fourteenth and May 7, 1973 for the Fifteenth.↩
37. Maryland State Archives, “Maryland State Colonization Society Overview,” 1. ↩
38. Phillips, *Freedom’s Port*, 226. ↩
39. Maryland State Archives, “Maryland State Colonization Society Overview,” 3. ↩
40. Phillips, *Freedom’s Port*, 226. ↩
41. Maryland State Archives, “Maryland State Colonization Society Overview,” 3–4. ↩
42. Towers, “Job Busting at Baltimore Shipyards,” 238. ↩
43. Mamiya, “A Social History of the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Baltimore,” 239. ↩
44. Ibid., 240. ↩
45. Towers, “Job Busting at Baltimore Shipyards,” 239. ↩
46. Maryland State Archives and University of Maryland, College Park, “A Guide to the History of Slavery in Maryland,” 30. ↩
47. Sun, “Meeting in Opposition to the Bill Relating to the Colored Population.” ↩
48. Della Jr., “The Problems of Negro Labor in the 1850s,” 25–26. ↩
49. Ibid., 27. ↩
50. Baum, *Brown in Baltimore*. ↩
51. Ibid., 25–26. ↩