

## RS#08.1

### Teacher Guide to the Resources

#### Document G: United States Urban Population: 1820

##### Background Information:

- Baltimore between 1790 and 1840 was the nation's third-largest city behind New York and Philadelphia.
- In the first decades of the 1800s, people of color accounted for more than 20 percent of the population of the city compared to roughly 10 percent of the population in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. By 1818, Baltimore had the largest black population – more than New Orleans, Charlestown, Philadelphia, or New York – in part due to the migration of freed people from the countryside where economic advances was minimal. For example, in 1829 Governor Ridgely manumitted all of slaves at the time of his death. Even though all 339 enslaved individuals were not immediately given freedom based on the state laws to protect the young and old, many were freed. It is likely that many of the newly freed went to Baltimore since most lacked the capital to purchase land. Remaining in the countryside also meant prolonging the indignities of slavery, such as annual labor contracts to white employers and encounters with roving patrollers. The city, in contrast, promised better wages, personal autonomy, the resources of a growing free African American community, while still being close to family members who may still be held in bondage in the countryside.
- Baltimore's freed population exploded between 1790 and 1840. By 1820, African Americans were primarily free, but two of every five people of color in the city remained enslaved. By 1840 close to 18,000 free African Americans lived in the city. This is in stark contrast to the city's adjacent neighbors to the north. Areas like Baltimore County, home to the Ridgely family, had at least twice as many slaves as free people of color. John Ridgely inherited Hampton in 1829 from his father. Even though the Governor manumitted his slaves, John Ridgely hired his sister's slaves and relied on the ex-slaves who were not immediately freed to work the estate. Eventually, he bought approximately seventy-seven slaves who were in bondage until 1864. Even though most of the states in the North banned slavery by the late 1700s, Maryland does not end enslavement until 1864.
- Large portions of the remaining population of Baltimore were immigrants, mostly of Irish and German descent. Some came as indentured servants although this practice of servitude quickly disappeared. Between 1820 and 1826, one-tenth of European arrivals to the United States entered through Baltimore. During the early 1830s, Baltimore attracted more immigrants than Boston, Philadelphia, and New Orleans.

##### Guided Questions/Teaching Suggestions:

Ask students:

- What is the topic of the graph?
- What year does the graph represent?
- According to the visual approximately how many people lived in Baltimore?
- Why did the author place Baltimore in the center of the graph?
- Based on this data, what do we know about Baltimore compared to the other cities included in the graph?
- Based on this document, is Maryland more Northern, more Southern, or represents the middle ground?