



Background Essay



A **region** is a place that has unifying characteristics such as climate, physical features, population, religion, language, or history. Regions make the study of geography and history more manageable.

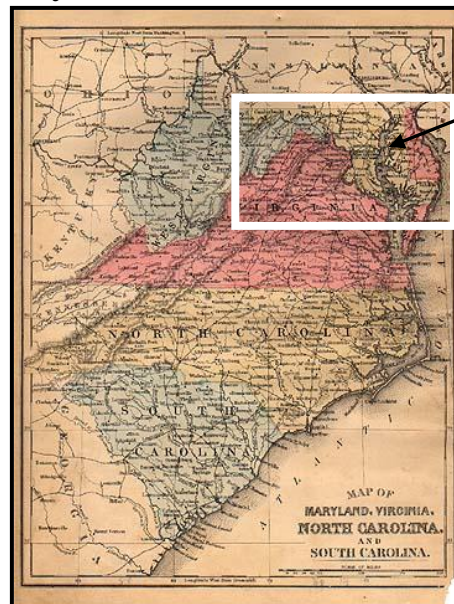
You have already learned and used the concept of regions in studying the history of the United States. The exploration and settlement of the French, British, and Spanish in the 18th Century, the original thirteen colonies along the eastern seaboard of North America, and the Louisiana Territory are a few examples of regions.

Maryland was admitted as the seventh state to the **Union** in 1788. It is located at 39⁰ N, 76⁰ W bordering Pennsylvania, Virginia, Delaware, and West Virginia. The Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean are vital to the state's livelihood and has greatly influenced the history and culture of the people of Maryland.

Nicknamed "The Old Line State," Maryland is referred to as a **border state** since it permitted slavery until 1864, but did not secede from the Union during the Civil War.

There is great debate among historians on where to place Maryland as a state. Does it belong in the more **urbanized** North where slavery was outlawed, industry was being developed, where there was a large concentration of immigrants and free blacks, and where there was the belief in the power of a strong federal government over individual states? Or rather, does Maryland belong to the more **rural** South where slavery was permitted, there was little industry, a focus on cash crops, few immigrants, and the belief of states' rights over the control of the federal government? Examine the documents that follow and answer the question: Is Maryland more northern, more southern, or should it be called a **middle ground**?

Maryland – The Old Line State



Maryland

Map of Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, North and South Carolina, 1875