

**MARYLAND TOLERATION;  
OR, SKETCHES OF THE EARLY  
HISTORY OF MARYLAND, TO  
THE YEAR 1650**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649017744

Maryland Toleration; Or, Sketches of the Early History of Maryland, to the Year 1650 by Ethan Allen

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Cover @ 2017

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## SKETCHES OF THE EARLY HISTORY OF MARYLAND,

### TO THE YEAR 1650.

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BY THE REV. ETHAN ALLEN,  
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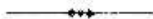
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# MARYLAND TOLERATION ;

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## SKETCHES OF THE EARLY HISTORY OF MARYLAND.



More than two years ago, the present writer drew up the following sketches, at the request of some of his younger brethren in the Ministry, who wished to have the facts of our early history before them. And at the request of brethren whom he does not feel at liberty to refuse, he now sends them forth in this form. In putting forth these sketches of the early history of Maryland, it is right he should state, that he has nothing to present, but what is already known to those who are *familiar* with its beginning and its subsequent progress. And his purpose now simply is, to set forth chronologically, such facts within his reach, as have come down to us, and exhibit and illustrate directly or indirectly its religious character and condition. He has endeavored to avoid putting down mere probabilities, aiming to let the facts, as much as possible, speak for themselves.

A. D. 1608.

### THE FIRST EXPLORATION OF CHESAPEAKE BAY AND RELIGIOUS SERVICES.

The first permanent Colony which settled in Virginia, as is well known, was a Church of England Colony ; and settled there in 1607. In June and July of the following year, the celebrated Capt. Smith, Governor of Virginia, undertook to explore the Chesapeake Bay. In his history of the Virginia Colony,\* we learn, that he left Jamestown, the second day of June, in an open barge of near three tons burthen, having in his company, a physician, six gentlemen and seven soldiers. He returned in nine days. This voyage does not seem to have been satis-

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\* 1 Vol. p. 122.

factory to him, for on the 24th of July, he set out again, in order to complete the discoveries which he had before commenced. He took now with him a physician, five gentlemen and six soldiers. He appears at this time, (1608,) to have examined the Bay and its shores to the Susquehannah pretty thoroughly; excepting that part of the Eastern shore, from Swann's point in Kent County, to the lower part of what is now Dorchester County. This he passed without examination.

But he records—and it forms a beautiful introduction to our religious history—that during the voyage of exploration, "our order was daily to have Prayer with a Psalm." Thus early, as we are here shown, two hundred and forty-six years ago, when the shores of the Chesapeake were occupied by the wild Indians—and they pagans—and its waters for the first time wafted on their surface the bark of the white man—did prayers and hymns of praise ascend in the name of Jesus to the living God. It was then, for the first time, that the shores and waters of our noble Bay resounded with the teachings of God's Holy Word, the Bible, and with the Services of His Worship. These men, the then Governor of Virginia, and those with him, were not unmindful in the wilderness and on the deep, of the God Who has all things in His hands. They were Christians, Church of England Christians, who had the book of Common Prayer. They were men who prayed to God daily, and daily offered to Him praise. Thus, with the very first sail of our Anglo-Saxon race, that ever caught the breeze upon the waters of the Chesapeake—came the Bible and the book of Common Prayer—and men of stout Christian hearts to use them. "Our order was daily to have Prayer and a Psalm—at which SOLEMNITY the poor savages much wondered." It was indeed, under the circumstances, a solemnity. It was no light thing, nor was it done in a corner. The Indian himself saw—and seeing it he wondered.

## 1612.

## THE EXTENT OF THE TERRITORY OF VIRGINIA.

In 1612, March the 12th, there was granted to the London or South Virginia Company, the Charter known as the third and last Virginia Charter. It is mentioned here, because it shows us the extent of territory given at that time to that Company.\* It states that it extended "from the point of land called Cape or Point Comfort, all along the sea coast northward two hundred miles; and from the said Point or Cape Comfort, all the sea coast southward two hundred miles. And all that

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\* 1 Hazard, 73.



space and circuit of land, lying from the sea coast of the precinct aforesaid, up into the land throughout, from sea to sea West and North-West," etc. North thus of Point Comfort, the Virginia territory included all that is now Maryland and Delaware, and one third at least of New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Maryland, therefore, that now is, was then a part of Virginia; it was all in Virginia territory and known as Virginia.

THE VIRGINIANS A CHURCH OF ENGLAND COLONY.

Now with respect to Religion in the "articles, orders and instructions," etc., set down for Virginia Nov. 20, 1606, seven months after the first Virginia Charter was issued, is found the following: "We do specially ordain, charge and require the presidents and Councils [of the two Virginia Colonies] respectively, within their several limits and precincts, that they with all care, diligence and respect, do provide that the true Word and Service of God and Christian Faith, be preached, and planted, and used," etc., "*according to the doctrine, rites and religion, now professed and established within our realm of England.*"\* In the second Charter, that of May 23, 1609,† it is said, "we should be loath, that any person should be permitted to pass, that we suspected to affect the superstitions of the Church of Rome. We do hereby declare, that it is our will and pleasure, that no one be permitted to pass in any voyage, from time to time into the said country, but such as shall have first taken the Oath of Supremacy," &c. And the third Charter empowers certain officers there specified, to administer the oath of Supremacy, which was also the oath of allegiance,‡ to "all and every person, which shall at any time or times hereafter, go or pass to the said Colony of Virginia." This oath thus prevented any one from becoming a resident in Virginia, who could not, or would not acknowledge the King, as the temporal head of the Church; and required the officers specified, to see it administered. The Colony was thus consequently made a Church of England Colony.

And while upon this point, it may be well to add, that in 1619, the Church of England was established in the Colony. And up to this time, there had been neither papists nor puritans in it. "There is reason however to believe," says Dr. Hawks,§ "that about this time, a small number of puritans sought refuge in the Colony, but it was too inconsiderable to introduce any change in the religious opinions of the people, and public worship continued to be conducted as it always had been, in conformity with the Ritual of the Church in England.¶ In

\* 1 Henning, 69.

† 1 Hazard, 72.

‡ 1 Hazard, 78.

§ Hawks' Contributions Va., p. 35.

¶ See Henning.

1631-2 was enacted the following,—“It is ordered that there be a uniformity throughout this Colony, both in substance and circumstance to the Canons and Constitution of the Church of England as near as may be; and that every person yield ready obedience to them, upon penalty of pains and forfeiture in that case appointed.” So late as 1638, twenty years after the establishment of the Church in the Colony, several laws were then made against the puritans; and so rigorous were these laws, that “none but conformists in the strict and most absolute sense were permitted to reside in the Colony.”\* These however were made by way of anticipation, for, says Bark,† “as yet there were none amongst them. They were made to prevent the infection from reaching the country.”

## 1624.

In this year, by the judgment of the Court of the King's bench, upon a quo warranto, the Charter of Virginia was annulled, and on the 20th of August, the King‡ “appointed and authorized for ordering, managing and governing the affairs of the Colony, persons residing in the parts of Virginia.” Of the twelve thus appointed, three were subsequently Governors of the Colony, and among the others was William Claiborne.§ He came out first in 1621, ‘To survey the planters' lands and make a map of the country.’ We mention his name here, because it plays so conspicuous a part in after years. In this commission, the King says, “We did resolve, by altering the Charters of said Company, as to the *point of government*, wherein the same might be found defective, to settle such a course, as might best secure the safety of the people there,

\* \* and yet with the *preservation of the interests of every planter or adventurer*, so far forth, as their present interests shall not prejudice the public plantations.”

## 1625.

This year, on the 27th of March, King James died, and was succeeded by Charles Ist. On the fourth of that month, previous to James' death, a Commission was issued appointing Sir George Yeardly, one of the before named Council, Governor, leaving out two others, but continuing William Claiborne, and adds, “Inasmuch as the affairs of state in said Colony and plantation, may necessarily require some person of *quality and trust* to be employed as Secretary, for the writing and answering such letters, as shall be from time to time directed to, or sent from the said Gov-

\* 3 Bozman, 198.

† 2 Bark, 67.

‡ 1 Hazard, 191, 192.

§ 1 Henning, 114.

enor and Council of the Colony aforesaid, our will and pleasure is, and we do by these presents nominate and assign you, the said William Claiborne, to be our Secretary of State, of and for the Colony and plantation of Virginia.\*\* In using the word *quality* in this Commission, we are shown something of the position in society of Claiborne, for it was "a word in use, in those times, signifying men of the first rank in society under the degree of nobility, and synonymous to *gentry*."†

In the proclamation of Charles I<sup>st</sup>, for the settling the plantation of Virginia, dated May 13, 1625, it is said, that the repeal of the Charter‡ "was not intended to take away or impeach the particular interest of any private planter,—the *government* of the Colony of Virginia, shall immediately depend upon ourself—[before, it had depended on the London or South Virginia Company]—and not be committed to any company, or corporation to whom it may be proper, to trust matters of trade and commerce, but cannot be fit or safe to communicate the ordering of affairs of state," etc. The officers in the Colony therefore now appointed, were to be responsible to the King—and not to the Company, as before. These commissions have been referred to here for future use in this sketch.

1627.

Gov. Yeasley was now dead; and on the 20th of March, 1627, John Harvey was appointed Governor.§ The same commission appointing him, continued Claiborne one of the Council, and also in his office of Secretary of State. Thus under three successive Governors, he was a member of the Council, and under two, Secretary of State. These commissions, says McMahon,|| "abundantly evidence the high estimation in which he was then held."

"During the years 1626, 7, 8,¶ the Governors gave authority to William Claiborne, 'the Secretary of State of this Kingdom,' as that most ancient dominion was then called, to discover the source of the Chesapeake Bay, or any part of that Government, from the thirty-fourth to the forty-first degree of North latitude. This was, as a learned Annalist (Chalmers) alleges, "in pursuance of particular instructions from Charles I<sup>st</sup> to the Governors of Virginia, to procure exact information of the rivers and the country." McMahon says,\*\* that he received these licenses from the English government—licenses to trade under which he was authorized to discover, &c.

\* 1 Hazzard, 228, 4.

† 2 Bozman, 100, note.

‡ 1 Hazzard, 204, 5.

§ 1 Hazzard, 224, 5.

|| p. 7, note.

¶ 1 Bozman, 265.

\*\* p. 7