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W. Willoughby

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BERNARD C. STEINER & J. H. HOLLANDER & W. W. WILLOUGHBY

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Editors

BEGINNINGS OF MARYLAND

1631-1639

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BALTIMORE

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BEGINNINGS OF MARYLAND

THE FIRST SETTLEMENTS AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CAPITAL AT ST. MARY'S

INTRODUCTION

The twenty-fifth of March is the day on which the first colonists sent out by Lord Baltimore landed on the soil of Maryland. In 1903, that day was celebrated throughout the schools of the State as Maryland Day, and the establishment of that custom seems to make a re-statement of the beginnings of the settlement of the Province, a task worthy of accomplishment. The attempt is here made to trace these beginnings, with the same minute care with which the citizens of Massachusetts have traced the beginnings of their Commonwealth. No one has attempted to do this in an elaborate fashion, since the publication of the Archives of Maryland has unlocked the treasures of our early records. A careful study of these printed records yields many new details, and additional facts of interest, with reference to the Kent Island Colony, are found in the manuscript records of the English Court of Admiralty.

Lady day in March is a fit time for the beginning of things. With the feast of the Annunciation, all mediæval Christendom began the new year, and tenants of land throughout England remembered it as the quarter-day, when rents were paid. No fitter day could be chosen than this as the natal day of that State which is Terra Marize. No other day was so well suited for the first settlement of

the province and no other name could have been given to the place of settlement than the name which was hers to whom the day was dedicated and hers from whom the province took its name. The pious men in the first company of settlers must have thought with pleasure on this coincidence of dates when they landed on the bank of the Potomac. Spring was at hand and with it bloomed Maryland into life.

The little band that began the provincial history of Maryland had sailed from England¹ on November 22, 1633. The reverend chronicler of the voyage, that "discreet" Jesuit, Father Andrew White, remembered that it was St. Cecilia's Day, and thus all Maryland's beginnings had the gracious patronage of woman. The narrative of Father White has reached us in various forms. Written shortly after the landing, in both English and Latin, the former was transmitted in at least two copies, one to Sir Thomas Lechford and one to Lord Baltimore. The copy sent Lechford² came into possession of the Maryland Historical Society in 1894 and has been published by them, while that sent Baltimore was used by him as a basis of a little pamphlet³ spread abroad by him as an advertisement of his colony and known as "A Relation of the Successful Beginnings of the Lord Baltimore's Plantation in Maryland," 1634. The Latin narrative, sent to White's ecclesiastical superior, Mutius Vitellesetis, or Vitelleschi, was preserved in the Jesuit archives, and was translated by N. C. Brooks for the Force's Tracts,⁴ while the narrative itself, with a translation by J. Holmes Converse, was edited by Rev. E. A. Dalrymple and published by the Maryland Historical Society.⁵

¹ 35 Fund Pubs. 23, 26.

² 35 Fund Pubs., Calvert Papers, No. 3, ed. by C. C. Hall.

³ Reprinted as Shea's Early Southern Tracts, 1, 1865, as edited by Brantz Mayer.

⁴ Vol. 4.

⁵ 7 Fund Pubs. On p. 117 is a sketch of Father White's life.

CLAIBORNE AND HIS ENTERPRISE

The charter of Maryland had been granted to Cecilius Calvert, second Lord Baltimore, on June 20, 1632, and he had at once taken measures to send an expedition to occupy his new province. The delay of fifteen months before the expedition started was due not alone to the necessary preparation for the voyage, but also to the opposition of the Virginians.⁴ They claimed that their rights were infringed by Baltimore's charter and pointed out that, while the old Virginia company still existed, in 1623, an order in Council had assured the "Adventurers and Planters" that their estates should receive no prejudice, but should be fully and wholly conserved, all changes made being merely in the form of government. These pledges had been renewed several times, yet now they find a large tract of land contained in the limits of the company's charter given to another. As the adventurers in Virginia were, in a manner, tenants in common, their claim could not thus be wiped out and their estates preserved. Worst of all, the new charter gave Baltimore, a Roman Catholic, two-thirds of the Chesapeake Bay, or the "Bay of Virginia," and cut off the Virginians from the profitable Indian trade in the north. That trade had been carried on by them for twenty-five years, and they had issued commissions for men to exchange "truck" for furs from year to year. Among these traders had been William Claiborne, a younger son of a Westmoreland family,⁵ who had come to America as

He was born in London about 1579, ordained as a secular priest 1605, and became a Jesuit in 1609. He had taught candidates for the priesthood in Spain and at Douay and Liège. He acquired the Indian language, located himself at Mattaponi, prepared an Indian grammar and catechism. In 1644, he was seized by Claiborne's men and sent to England with Father Fisher, charged with violating the law as to missionary popish priests. He never returned to Maryland after his release but died under an assumed name in London on Dec. 27, 1656. Father Fisher returned to Virginia in 1648.

⁴ Council, 5 Md. Arch. 175, 3 Arch. 19.

⁵ Second son of Sir Edward Cleburne or Clayburne. Neill, Found-