

Volume 12

Number 016

America's First Century: Maryland I

Lead: Long after England had taken the road to reform, Roman Catholics loyal to the Crown still found themselves isolated and facing discrimination. Many found a home and freedom of worship in Maryland.

Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.

Content: Even decades England abandoned Catholicism, many regions, including Ireland and parts of Scotland, and many prominent noble families, Norfolk, Arundel, Northampton, still adhered to the old faith. One such family, the

Calverts, the Lords Baltimore, renewed an ancient attachment to Rome in the 1620s, taking advantage of the rather generous and tolerant attitude of the Stuart monarchs, James I and Charles I. They quietly converted to Catholicism.

About the same time, family head George Calvert, First Baron Baltimore and former principle secretary of state, became intrigued by the investment opportunities afforded by the burgeoning colony of Virginia. He began to petition the Crown for a large proprietary grant at the northern end of the Chesapeake Bay. Calvert envisioned it as refuge for his fellow Catholics who would go there, worship freely

and make him lots of money.

Calvert died in 1632 and grant, issued in June of that year, was conferred on his son, Cecil, second Baron of Baltimore. It consisted of almost seven million acres carved from Virginia. Lord Cecil never saw his beloved Maryland. He spent the balance of his life defending that grant from rival claimants on both sides of the Atlantic. He sent instead, his younger brother Leonard Calvert. In late February 1634, they arrived, took possession of Baltimore land, purchased land from native Americans and established St. Mary's near the mouth of today's Potomac River. Next time: a troubled start. This series, *America's First Century*

anticipates the 400th anniversary of the founding of Jamestown, next year in 2007.

**At the University of Richmond,
this is Dan Roberts.**

Resources

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<http://www.usahistory.info/southern/maryland.html>

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