

to being the first civil regime to recognize freedom of conscience. The fact that within sixty years after the passage of this law Catholics were severely repressed under an "Act to prevent the growth of popery" does not detract from the boldness of Lord Baltimore's action in the mid-seventeenth century.

The downfall of Charles I and the rise of the Commonwealth were more serious events for the Maryland residents than for other colonists in America. But Oliver Cromwell left Lord Baltimore in undisturbed charge of the Province.

Emboldened by this, Governor William Stone attempted to reduce the Puritan settlements on the Severn but came close to losing his life by execution after a decisive victory for the settlers in Providence (Annapolis).

Growth and Expansion

The newcomers to other parts of the geographical charter limits of the Province, Proprietary, or Palatinate (as it was sometimes called) were not so bellicose as those in Providence. Settlement soon went far afield from the old Yaocomico village. By the end of the seventeenth century eight counties had established themselves, each with its court and complement of officials. The towns were few; great estates abounded, from whose river fronts trade and traffic departed. The great commerce was in tobacco, which even substituted for currency during much of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Until custom-house centers were set up (1683), there was nothing to break the power of the landed gentry. Gradually what Indian troubles had existed were smoothed out by treaty, such as that of 1652 when the Susquehannocks submitted under the poplar tree said to be the one still to be seen in Annapolis, on the St. John's College campus. The Proprietors, always a line of Calverts with the title "Lord Baltimore," continued, until the death of the sixth and last in 1771. In the time of James II, who desired to have all lands under the Crown, and again in the "Revolution" (before William and Mary held the throne securely), the Calverts had difficulties, but these were not reflected in any disadvantage to the Province. Neither the virtual outlawry of the Proprietors after 1691 (lifted with the accession of the Fourth Lord Baltimore) nor the establishment of the Church of England as the "official" religion proved too disturbing. If Puritanism waned, there was certainly room made for the settlement of other dissenters, notably Quakers. Culturally the three most important