

The profiles stand as independent entities, but they also form the basis for three companion monographs: the first will analyze the political history of the colony from its inception through 1715; the second, from the return of the colony to the Calverts through the effective end of proprietary government in 1774; and the third, from the provincial conventions that began in 1774 through the ratification of the federal Constitution. These monographs will not adhere to the traditional but overly narrow conception of early American politics as institutional history. They will not be mere descriptions of the powers of the proprietor and governor or recitations of the role of the Council or accounts of the rise of a representative assembly. They will correlate legislators' professional and economic interests, social status, family background, political experience, education, national origin, religious affiliation, geographical distribution, and other variables, in the hope that a broader vision and interpretation of the Maryland political process will be made manifest.⁵

The underlying purpose of the research project thus is not solely to produce a biographical dictionary, but to fashion, coordinate, and interpret a corpus of evidence that will, as Lawrence Stone has written, "make sense of political action, identify social reality, and describe and analyze with precision the structure of society and the degree and the nature of the movements within it."⁶ In the truest sense, then, this book represents only a beginning.

SESSION LISTS

The session lists, basically drawn from the official journals of the Assembly, represent as nearly as possible a record of election or attendance. Where dates or knowledge of membership come from other than the Assembly journals, sources are footnoted. To avoid confusion because of frequent variations in the spelling of names in colonial and state records, first, middle, and last names have been standardized, but distinguishing characteristics, such as "Jr.," "John of John," and "III," are retained. It should be noted that the biographical profiles exclude freemen invited to attend, but not elected to, the first few sessions of the Assembly but include all proprietors, governors, and men elected or ordered to attend by special writ.

Governor. Prior to 1777 the actual title of the governor changed from lieutenant general during the first proprietary period to governor during the time of royal rule and to lieutenant governor after 1715, when the Calvert family regained control of the colony. For purposes of clarity and because the duties of the office, irrespective of title, remained essentially the same, the term governor is used throughout the session lists, complying with the constitutional designation adopted in 1776.

Acting Governor. When the governor expected to be absent from the colony, he usually selected the senior councillor as the acting governor. Upon the death of a governor, the senior councillor (normally referred to as president of the Council) served as chief executive until the arrival of a duly commissioned governor. Footnotes to individual assemblies explain the occasional variations in this nominating process. The constitution of 1776 imposed consistency on the appointment of acting governors. It stipulated that upon the death or resignation of a governor, the ranking executive councillor would assume the position of acting governor and would immediately

5. Already in progress at the Hall of Records and an outgrowth of the biographical research is a quantitative analysis of legislative behavior in the eighteenth century. Funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, this project will seek to analyze every piece of legislative action between 1715 and 1789, involving more than 2,600 roll-call votes, and all motions, committee assignments, reports, bills, resolutions, and petitions.

6. Stone, "Prosopography," 47.