

## PREFACE

Father Andrew White's *A Briefe Relation of the Voyage Vnto Maryland* is one of the most important first-hand accounts of the early European settlement of North America. It is reprinted here from the Maryland Historical Society Fund Publication no. 35 (1899). Father White's original manuscript was given to Leonard Calvert, who was the brother of Lord Baltimore, leader of the expedition, and first governor of the province. Calvert sent it to Sir Richard Lechford, his business partner in England, in May 1634. The *Briefe Relation* is of singular importance in the understanding of the voyage and first settlement of the Maryland colony in 1633 and 1634, and of the larger social and political context in which these events occurred.

By all accounts, Father White's career was as exciting as the time in which he lived. During his seventy-eight years, he was a priest of the order of the Society of Jesus, a scholar, a teacher, a missionary, a student of American Indian languages, and an advisor to the Lords Baltimore in shaping their plans to establish the Maryland colony. He suffered for his religious convictions. As a Catholic priest, he was twice arrested, imprisoned, and banished from his native England. When, at age fifty-five, he stepped ashore with Leonard Calvert and the first Maryland settlers at St. Clement's Island on March 25, 1634, he had already seen much of Europe. He survived repeated contests with fever in the New World to continue his missionary work among the English settlers and the Indian nations he found on the shores of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.

Father White's *Briefe Relation* allows us the privilege of seeing the New World through the eyes of the "first adventurers." It enables us to walk in the footsteps of the 140 men and women who crossed a vast ocean aboard the *Ark* and the *Dove* to carve a settlement out of the wilderness and to build a new society founded on principles of freedom and opportunity.