Lord Baltimore and the Politics of Landscape in Seventeenth-Century Maryland

By Julia A. King, Alex J. Flick and Skylar A. Bauer

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Place matters. Politics and geography have always been intertwined as political leaders have pursued policies with geographical consequences that advance their interests and ambitions. In British colonies on the east coast of North America, appointed royal governors or Proprietors transformed physical locations to reflect their goals to consolidate political authority and attain economic benefits for themselves and for England. They built buildings that expressed their confidence and power. They decorated their homes and carriages with luxurious objects and symbols of affluence to boost their standing in the local community. But such measures of authority building did not always bring lasting results. Colonial America was marked by the fluidity of places where power was exercised on behalf of the king of England or Parliament and where limited forms of self-government evolved throughout the 17th century.

In the following pages, Dr. Julie King, Professor of Anthropology at St Mary’s College of Maryland, with Alex J. Flick and Skylar A. Bauer, shows how Maryland’s proprietary family deliberately placed relatives and friends at the mouths of large and deep rivers in order to build their power bases and govern more effectively. Unlike the situation in Virginia, where royal power was centralized at Jamestown, the Calverts in Maryland extended their presence through the development of plantation settlements that served as important political centers in their own rights.

Which one of these methods of authority building, centralized or decentralized, worked the best? While Dr. King refrains from answering this question, she describes various instances that show the fluidity of places of political significance in colonial Maryland. In addition to St Mary’s City, other settlements, including Mattapany, Zekiah Manor, and Notley Hall, took on political functions and meanings. For the Calverts, such dispersion of power was not a sign of weakness but a tool they used to enhance on-site management of extended areas. In spite of their efforts, power struggles ensued leading to charges of mutiny and sedition of some local notables. Those who were found guilty were typically banished from the colony and traces of their presence were eliminated from the political landscape. Thus, “politics of landscape” extended beyond the selection of geographical locations for the exercise of power and included intentional manipulation of collective memories.

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In July 1689, a rebel force of 250 men calling themselves the Protestant Associators marched on the Maryland capital at St. Mary’s City, where they found Colonel William Digges, a son-in-law of Charles Calvert, the Catholic Lord Baltimore and the colony’s third proprietor, barricaded in the brick state house with 100 loyalists. Days earlier, the rebels had relayed rumors of a “Catholic plot” involving Indians intent on “mak[ing] haste and kill[ing] the Protestants before the shippes come in,” using Baltimore’s delay in claiming William and Mary king and queen as a pretext for taking armed action. As the rebels “gained the Doores and windows” of the state house, the “Catholic” loyalists, reluctant to fight, “did surrender takeing with them their private armes and leaving the publick armes to the Protestants.”1

With the state house secured, the Associators, whose force had grown to 700 or 800 troops with two cannon, began an overland march ten miles north to Mattapany, Lord Baltimore’s dwelling plantation on the Patuxent and the site of the colony’s arms magazine. Reaching the site, the rebels encountered a small force at the “place where the Government then was” and laid siege to the plantation. Within hours, the loyalists had capitulated and the Associators’ principal leader, John Coode, was operating a provisional government from “His Majesty’s Garrison at Mattapany.”2

After securing Mattapany, a rebel contingent was dispatched to Notley Hall, another of Baltimore’s plantations and residence of his son-in-law Colonel Digges, located on the Wicomico River some thirty miles west of St. Mary’s City. The site often served as a meeting place for the Maryland Council, particularly when conducting business with the Piscataway and other Indian nations. Before 1684, when the proprietor returned to England (permanently as it turned out), he and his family were often in residence. Now, having lost the state house to the rebels and unable to return to his home, Digges and his family fled to Virginia, and the rebels put the dwelling into service as a prison until 1692, when both Notley Hall and Mattapany were returned to Lord Baltimore’s agents in Maryland.3

The 1689 Protestant Revolution, or Coode’s Rebellion as it is sometimes called, ended more than a half century of proprietary rule, an important moment in early Maryland history and the subject of considerable study. Researchers concluded that Baltimore’s proclivity for appointing Roman Catholics and close relatives to various provincial and county offices revealed how the proprietor had failed to heed a rising resentment toward his policies. It was this resentment that fueled the 1689 rebellion, a coup by a “small group [of colonists] primarily intent on increasing [their] own power.” Additionally, John Krugler argues, the proprietor’s “aloof” and “authoritarian political demeanor” ignored “the
likelihood that Catholic success [in Maryland] would almost certainly exacerbate Protestant fears and jealousy.”

More recent interpretations of the revolution expand on these views, adding that the 1689 rebellion and the many other struggles for political control taking place in the colony almost from the day it was established, while often considered as isolated or disconnected events, together reveal the ongoing disagreements about what, in Maryland, constituted the legitimate foundations of government. As did English people everywhere, the “inhabitants of Lord Baltimore’s colony were working out some of the most basic problems of the seventeenth-century English polity.” From William Claiborne’s refusal to abandon Kent Island in the Chesapeake Bay in 1634 through Ingle’s and Fendall’s rebellions mid-century to the 1689 revolution, these and the other coups and rebellions that took place in seventeenth-century Maryland are best understood within a larger “British narrative of constitutional adjustment, conflict and change.”

Building on the work of earlier historians, this article considers the significance of the often overlooked route the Associators took that summer. Certainly, it makes sense that the rebels would seize control of Baltimore’s plantations in their quest to replace the government with their own leaders but they left the Jesuit and Indian settlements untouched. What, then, does the location of Baltimore’s plantations suggest about Calvert family efforts to establish their political authority in Maryland in the first place? How did the Calverts (and then their enemies) use the colony’s geography to “work out the problem” of establishing (or dis-establishing) their political legitimacy? A geographical focus, including the use of archaeological data, does not necessarily change earlier interpretations but it does enrich understanding of how the Calverts, no newcomers to colonization, used their knowledge of both geography and other expeditions and settlements to inform and shape the political realities of their colony.

That the Calvert family “tied political topography to [political] loyalty” is clear in their post–1665 efforts to re-develop St. Mary’s City and establish a network of port towns in the colony. The chronic absence of such settlements was not “the product of slow institutional maturity” in government but “the negotiated outcome of tense battles between the Calverts and their subjects over the distribution
of power.” The second Lord Baltimore’s project to incorporate St. Mary’s City in 1667 was an attempt to create an “alternative political structure” for the purpose of “build[ing loyalty] to the Calvert brand.” They hoped this new structure would encourage a commercial and civic community, “cultivating humanistic civic virtues that were the bedrock of English corporate identity.” Baltimore’s subsequent effort to designate a network of eleven towns across the colony, all in locations where men loyal to the proprietor would control the nascent urban enclaves, was intended “to reshape the power structures in [Maryland]” in ways that politically benefitted the proprietary family.6

By now it is a truism that Atlantic World history is as much a spatial story as it is a chronological one. It is also the case that “particular places” within the Atlantic can reveal the complicated richness of the colonial experience in a way that trans-national or global narratives cannot. Drawing on these two perspectives, this essay examines the relationship between geography and political authority as it was worked out in one particular place in the early modern Atlantic — proprietary Maryland. In addition to documents and maps, archaeological evidence offers important evidence about how the colony’s physical spaces were materially reconfigured into politically and symbolically meaningful places, and how these places were used to legitimize or challenge political authority. Comparing the observations from Maryland with evidence from Virginia and from Baltimore’s plantations in Ireland and Newfoundland reveals what historian Lauren Benton has described as “patterns of territorial unevenness” in the expansion of empire. Baltimore’s ongoing efforts to establish his authority in the Chesapeake were informed not just by his own previous experience and the experiences of others, but by conditions unique to Maryland. His responses to those conditions reveal the challenges a Catholic proprietor faced establishing authority in the seventeenth century and have left a legacy imprinted in the modern landscape.7

Although Chesapeake historians have most often looked to colonial capitals, including St. Mary’s City and Jamestown, or even to towns as important settings for engaging questions of political legitimacy, this essay shows that political authority, at least in Maryland, was also negotiated in the presumably everyday landscape of the plantation. When the Protestant Associates marched on Mattapany and Notley Hall after securing St. Mary’s City, for example, traveling over variably maintained roads and taking control of two well-populated plantations, they did so at no small cost to their effort. In fact, the rebellion’s leaders had planned the revolution in the halls of their plantation dwellings on the Wicomico, not far from Notley Hall. Coode and his followers recognized a fundamental point about seventeenth-century Maryland politics — proprietary power was physically and materially present not only in the capital or in the wished-for towns but among the plantations, where the majority of colonists did not have to travel far to observe or be reminded of the Calvert family’s proprietary rights. Coode’s principal aim, seizing Baltimore’s power, required the rebel leader to also seize those physical spaces associated with the government.8

The Calvert family’s recognition of the importance of geography in the colonial project no doubt developed out of their longstanding interest in establishing plantations in Ireland and North America.
Sir George Calvert (1579–1632), Cecil’s father who would become the first Lord Baltimore (1625), was an early investor in the Virginia Company and the East India Company. In 1621 and 1623, he acquired land in Newfoundland through both purchase and a charter and, in 1625, two plantations in Ireland. He sold one of these plantations for land on the Irish coast at Wexford. The charter for Maryland was in preparation when George died. His son, Cecil (1605-1675), the second Lord Baltimore, inherited all of these plantations and the final work on the charter. Cecil, who, surprisingly enough never visited Newfoundland, Ireland, or Maryland, learned the importance of hands-on management from his father. Although the Calverts did not maintain a constant presence on their Irish plantations, both Newfoundland and Maryland, it was clear, required otherwise.9

The manner in which the Calverts (and their enemies) used the colony’s landscape to achieve their ends differed from how the political landscape developed in Virginia, an interesting point in that the two colonies are often united under the rubric of the “Chesapeake” due to their similarities in geography and climate. The observation is legitimate, but masks important differences beyond variations in soil types and in religion. While the Calverts literally extended their presence through the development of plantation settlements that served as important political centers in their own rights, in Virginia, long-term Governor William Berkeley took the opposite tack, doing everything he could to focus his colony’s political activity at Jamestown.10

Baltimore’s authority in Maryland derived from the 1632 charter, conceived using legal instruments to reconfigure unknown or little known territory, vesting agents such as Calvert with vice-regal powers in the appropriation and occupation of “remote and contested region[s].” The Crown, concerned with Dutch expeditions to what would become New Sweden and New Netherland, including Delaware Bay, was a willing partner with the Calverts in the effort to put English subjects in the northern Chesapeake. The charter gave the Calverts “a more absolute lordship over Maryland than any granted to that date anywhere,” with Baltimore “[ruling] as a virtual monarch.”11

That, at least, was the written ideal. On the ground, implementation of charter directives came up against geography: the harsh and dangerous physical reality of colonial environments, especially riverine regions such as those found in the Chesapeake, not only demanded heavy investments in labor but created conditions that threatened political stability. Geophysical realities meant that settlement and political control never unfolded quite so seamlessly or rationally as promised by charters or depicted on maps, shaped instead by often challenging, difficult-to-control topographic and local conditions, including the presence of indigenous populations, hostile European neighbors, and a Catholic proprietor ever intent on protecting his power. These natural and social environments with their difficult conditions and dangers fostered tensions and actions often interpreted as sedition or treason.12

Archaeological research aimed at locating and documenting settlements in Maryland beyond the capital and the few developed towns reveals the founding family used the landscape to assert their
authority, control the political movements of their subjects, and create vassals of the local Indian groups. They did this through political avenues offered by the corporate structures of the capital and of the towns and, more importantly for this study, through the plantations, including their own and those of their enemies.

The significance Cecil Calvert attached to inscribing his authority on the landscape is apparent on Augustine Herrman’s 1673 map, Virginia and Maryland as it is Planted and Inhabited. The map signified proprietary possession and authority through the marking and naming of places where the colony’s leaders met, including St. Mary’s City, Mattapany, and Notley Hall among others. The map showed the counties, all but one (St. Mary’s) named after Calvert family members, and the towns (or would-be towns) the Calverts had designated in a 1668 proclamation. Charles Calvert assured his father that “the names of all yor Lordshipps Mannors [are] Inserted [in Herrman’s map] as you direct me.” Missing from the map were the names of Calvert’s enemies, including Thomas Gerard and Josias Fendall. That the Herrman map constructed a colony as Baltimore wished it to be was not lost on Marylanders, including those antagonistic to the proprietor. In 1676 the author of an anti-Baltimore screed sent to royal authorities complained that, through the placement of the family’s seal on the map,
Baltimore “puts himself in equall computation with . . . the Kings Majesty in the great map of Virginia and Maryland, prikkinge himself distinctly in, and the Kings Majesty out[,] of Maryland.”

Maps, globes, and other instruments of representation allowed colonial administrators and political actors throughout the Atlantic World, including the Calvert family, to visualize their land claims on paper and to shape their actual form. For this reason, the Herrman map remains an important document for studying how geographical knowledge was produced in the Chesapeake. But, while the second Lord Baltimore, an absentee landlord, relied almost exclusively on maps and descriptions, his agents on the ground in Maryland, many of whom were his kinsmen, could see firsthand the extent of the family’s enterprise and its physical geography. Their presence was critical for marking the land, dividing it, naming it, and granting it on the proprietor’s behalf. And, of all of Cecil Calvert’s relatives, perhaps none was more active in establishing himself in the landscape than Baltimore’s son and heir, Charles Calvert.

Charles Calvert (1637–1715) was born at Hook House, the Arundell family manor in Wiltshire, England, three years after the Ark and the Dove arrived in Maryland. Like his parents, Charles was a recusant Catholic. As a young man, he may have been sent to St. Omers, a Jesuit school located near Calais, to further his education. Charles possibly witnessed the 1643 siege of his grandparents’ nearby home by Cromwell’s forces (his grandparents had been staunch royalists). And, he surely witnessed the challenges his father experienced in the governing of Maryland. In particular, Charles would have been in his late teens when his father struggled in 1655 to wrest control of Maryland from a group of Puritan émigrés. Following the restoration of proprietary government, in 1660, the son, now twenty years old, would have then watched as his father’s new governor, a seemingly loyal Protestant named Josias Fendall, moved to abolish the Upper House of the Assembly and with it Baltimore’s power in the legislature.

The proprietor’s enemies often used the Calverts’ Catholicism to undermine their position during these various coups and rebellions, in effect calling into question the family’s political loyalty in a Protestant nation. The conflated relationship between national and religious identity in England probably gave the Catholic Calverts a different perspective on the politics of space. The dissolution of the monasteries that began in the mid-sixteenth century, coupled with the physical destruction of church buildings had, over the course of but a few decades, effectively erased Catholicism from the English landscape and penal laws had forced the practice of Catholicism into private and domestic spaces. Out of this reconfiguration of the confessional landscape, English Catholics developed a “politically charged attitude toward space” that lasted for the next hundred years. To be Catholic in this world meant political exclusion. The Calverts knew the cost from the experiences of the first proprietor whose conversion to the faith brought an end to his political career. Cecil Calvert attempted detaching religion from politics first in the 1633 directive he gave his brother, first governor Leonard Calvert, requiring “all acts of Roman Catholique Religion to be done as privately as may be,” and again in 1649, when he asked the assembly to codify this policy in “An Act Concerning Religion.”
When Charles Calvert, who would remain Catholic to the end of his life, arrived in Maryland in 1661, the colony had been established for twenty-seven years. Through the next two decades, Charles worked to manage his family’s investment and lead the colony, first as governor and then, after his father’s death in 1675, as proprietor. As all of his relatives before him, the third Lord Baltimore took up residence in St. Mary’s City, moving into a farmhouse known as St. John’s. But, unlike most of his kinsmen and with the support of his father, Charles, whose first wife had died in 1663, left the capital in 1666 for his new wife’s plantation at Mattapany, where he built a substantial brick dwelling house. After completing the house at Mattapany, Calvert started construction on a new dwelling at one of his interior homes, Zekiah Manor, while asking the assembly to build him yet a third house, also of brick, in Anne Arundel County.

Charles used his ability to maintain more than one household in Maryland to physically insert himself into the broader landscape, not unlike Cecil’s instructions to Augustine Herrman when finalizing his Map of Maryland and Virginia. Calvert’s plantations and his travel between these sites, the capital, and other settlements provided him the opportunity to visually survey the colony in which his family had so heavily invested, and where, “in most places There [were] not fifty houses in the space of Thirty Miles.” Navigating these landscapes of dispersed settlement was time-consuming, costly, and potentially dangerous. Although the land is relatively flat with trails that crisscrossed the interior, numerous Chesapeake Bay streams, creeks, and tributaries dissect the coastal plain. Roads were in various states of repair, poorly marked, and sometimes impassable, and when those roads or paths led to the water’s edge travelers had to negotiate streams and creeks with uncertain bottoms. These challenges, plus the cost of travel, forced most colonists to live within a two- to five-mile radius of home. Planters and county justices with greater resources maintained contacts within a radius of about ten miles, and planter-merchants about fifteen to twenty-five miles. Calvert’s travels exceeded even that, sometimes taking him as far as fifty to a hundred miles from his dwelling at Mattapany, including to the Piscataway capital and New Amstel in New Netherland (Delaware).¹⁷

Travel was also heavily freighted with social and political meaning. Travelers, as part of the landscape dynamic, marked time, identified territory, and transformed space into place. Calvert’s travels allowed him to survey the colony and the frequency, form, and style of his visits provided a visual and tangible reality to a narrative framing Maryland as the Lord Baltimore’s colony. Rituals of welcome and farewell as well as practices associated with overnight accommodation further marked its social significance. This is especially important given that Calvert required the Maryland Council to meet in different locations, which it did on a far more frequent basis than the Virginia Council of State. From 1661 until 1689, 27 percent or 86 of the Council’s meetings took place at locations outside St. Mary’s City, some more than a hundred miles away from the capital. The majority of the outside meetings (62 percent) took place at venues along the Patuxent, primarily Mattapany, and along the Wicomico (17 percent), primarily Notley Hall. Other meeting locations included Newtown, Portoback, Piscataway, and Spesutia. The procession of councilors summoned and the locations visited surely generated a narrative of Calvert authority and dominion.¹⁸
When examined on the ground as well as in the documents, the Calvert strongholds of St. Mary’s City, Mattapany, and Notley Hall as well as a fourth, Zekiah Manor, reveal the family’s effort to extend their physical presence in tandem with the colony’s expanding settlement. A fifth location, a plantation owned by Josias Fendall, suggests how the proprietor’s enemies also challenged his authority through their own physical location and position within the landscape. Calvert’s response to Fendall’s actions dramatically illustrates how the Calverts literally eradicated their opposition and the memory of the opposition from the landscape, renaming and reshaping the revolutionary’s former plantation.

Following the Restoration in England, the work in Maryland to re-assert the Calverts’ authority began in 1661 when Charles Calvert arrived as governor. In St. Mary’s City, still the capital, the governor found a small settlement consisting of a cluster of houses, some better built than others but all of wood, a few ordinaries, and a “Country’s House” for holding meetings of the assembly. Plantation housing was not much better, propelling the Calverts on an ambitious and expensive plan for rebuilding their colony beginning with St. Mary’s City. Taking a cue from efforts in England to reorganize corporate charters and rebuild cityscapes, Charles’s father, Cecil, incorporated St. Mary’s City in 1667, appointing his younger half-brother, Philip Calvert, mayor along with six other aldermen. This was the same year that the Jesuits began construction of a brick chapel located at the east end of town. Less than a decade later, in 1674, the Assembly authorized the construction of a brick state house at the west end of town, completed in 1676. Mayor Philip Calvert was planning his own brick dwelling in St. Mary’s, a 54-by-54-foot mansion known as St. Peter’s that was not completed until 1679 and may have rivaled Berkeley’s Greenspring at Jamestown. All three buildings at St. Mary’s were large, imposing brick structures, designed to stand out in a colony where Governor Calvert himself had described the architecture as “very mean and little, and generally after the meanest farmhouses in England.”

The Jesuit chapel and the slightly later state house were separated by approximately one-half mile, door to door, and midway between the two buildings was the capital’s town center, where a market, store, lawyer’s offices, and at least two ordinaries have been documented through archaeology. The relationships of these structures along with the network of roads in the town have led archaeologists to suggest that the layout represented sophisticated planning using baroque principles of design. With the church and state house anchoring opposite ends of the town, “the designers of St. Mary’s City were ensuring that both visitors and residents were aware of the power of the proprietary government and the Catholic faith of Maryland’s ruling elite.” Another perspective urges caution, arguing that “this grand design at St. Mary’s” was in fact emphasizing the centrality of the capital’s market, and not the chapel, in keeping with English corporate planning. In either case, the changes suggest the family’s effort to remodel their capital and make it into an English town.

Of the three brick buildings in St. Mary’s City, only the Jesuit chapel has been explored archaeologically to any degree. Excavations there have revealed that the structure had a tile roof and at least some of the recovered brick bore evidence of plaster applied directly to its surface, which archaeologists have
interpreted as ornate exterior plastering. The use of jamb and mullion bricks treated with a red limewash unified and gave the building a more shapely form. And, the church probably had a floor made of stone imported from Europe. The chapel was a grand building, and one capable of commanding attention. It is the prominence of this chapel in the capital that makes it what John Krugler described as a symbol of Catholic success in the colony, representing an upending of Baltimore’s earlier 1633 proscription that religious matters in Maryland should be kept “as private as possible.”

The three brick buildings that went up in St. Mary’s, however, were only part of the rebuilding campaign that the Calverts hoped would reshape the landscape across the colony. Archaeological evidence recovered from plantation settlements associated with the Calverts suggests that brick construction was part of the family’s effort to not only refashion their colony’s capital but also the larger landscape. Conventional wisdom has held that both the price and shortage of labor meant that even the wealthiest and most elite colonists were forced into impermanent, earthfast structures only a few steps improved from a tobacco barn. That dire situation has been revised to acknowledge the incorporation of brick hearths and chimneys, wooden floors, and glass windows in seventeenth-century housing. Full brick buildings, however, remained rare with one important exception. The Calvert family used the permanence (and cost) of brick construction to mark a “visual, structural, and symbolic counterpoint to the wooden buildings that dominated the Chesapeake landscape.”

As the Jesuits were building their chapel in St. Mary’s, and as plans for the state house were developing, Governor Calvert was in the process of building his new house at Mattapany, now his principal residence in the colony. Mattapany, often (and mistakenly) represented as a rural or “country” home “ensconced in the wilderness,” was in fact a large manor house of brick construction visibly situated at the mouth of the Patuxent River, the same location where the Calverts had considered moving the capital five years earlier. Baltimore no doubt understood the importance of river drainages, and he and his son likely knew of contemporary discussions, some appearing in printed form, about the importance of establishing a town or port on each of Virginia’s rivers for the purpose of, as one writer put it, “reducing … Planters into Towns.” If the Calverts could not convince the assembly to move the capital, now located on a small river with poor access to the interior, or if lesser towns were slow in developing, then they were prepared to establish ports on properties they controlled and also where they lived.

Mattapany was no impermanent frontier accommodation. Excavations revealed a dwelling house measuring 25 by 50 feet in plan and supported by a continuous masonry foundation two feet in thickness. The house John Ogilby described as “brick and timber construction” was two stories over a fashionable raised basement with at least a portion of the cellar floor paved in tile and shelving against at least one wall. A central chimney heated two rooms on each floor, and an unheated lobby provided entrance for visitors. Fancy tin-glazed earthenware tiles decorated at least two hearths, most rooms were plastered, the windows were likely all glazed, and the roof was covered with Dutch pantile. Although a room-by-room inventory does not survive, one reference indicates that Charles Calvert
had a portrait of his mother, Anne Arundell, hanging in the parlor. Large quantities of table glass, wine bottle glass (some with applied seals), and brass furniture tacks suggest the accoutrements for entertaining guests, including members of the Council when they met at Mattapany on dozens of occasions between 1668 and 1689. At some point, probably in the early to mid-1670s, a defensive log palisade was erected around the dwelling.  

In 1671 the governor, with his father’s consent, decided to locate the colony’s magazine at Mattapany and not at St. Mary’s. A law passed that year had required funds to be expended “towards the maintaining of a Constant Magazine with Armes and Amunicon for the defense of this Province.” Although Calvert initially struggled to get the magazine established and stocked, records indicate powder, shot, and arms were dispensed just five years later. That year, 1676, with Calvert temporarily in England (now the third Lord Baltimore following the death of his father in 1675) and the colony in a state of unrest linked to Bacon’s Rebellion in Virginia, a guard of thirty men was stationed at Mattapany to protect both the magazine and Calvert’s house. When the proprietor returned in late 1678, he brought 315 muskets, 101 carbines, 1 blunderbuss, 1,750 pounds of powder, and 6,400 pounds of shot to be stored in the magazine. Three years later, his brother-in-law, Nicholas Lowe, petitioned the English Privy Council for permission to send 200 muskets, 100 carbines and “furniture,” 100 pistols and holsters, 100 saddles, 100 “ordinary” swords and belts, 9,000 pounds of shot and bullets, and 20 barrels of gunpowder. At least a portion of these materials went to Mattapany.

The site also served as a required point of entry for ships trading in the Patuxent, where captains paid fees and government officials recorded voyages. With its magazine, council chamber, and standing as a port of entry, Mattapany had rapidly become an important political landmark in the colony. Visitors approaching from the plantation’s landing on the Patuxent or arriving by path from St. Mary’s City entered a busy settlement with a well-appointed, imposing, and fortified brick residence unlike any other in the colony and a separate compound housing the government’s military strength. And, while many planters relied on indentured labor for their tobacco crop, the family held a number of enslaved Africans, a factor further setting the governor apart. Even the Indigenous nations recognized the importance of the site. When the great men of the Susquehannock decided, in 1674, to ask Lord Baltimore’s permission to settle in Maryland, they appeared unannounced at Mattapany, a visit which gave Calvert pause given that the Indians “Doe know that our whole Magazine lyes” at Mattapany.
In 1672, probably as his building campaign at Mattapany wound down, Calvert told his father that he was now building a “country house” at Zekiah Manor where he “resolve[d] to live in the Summer time.” No doubt the idea of a “summer house” would have appealed to Cecil Calvert, who would have been familiar with the English nobility’s use of such homes. Located deep within the interior of Charles County at the remote headwaters of the Wicomico River, Zekiah House also served as a safe haven from the coast. When Cecil warned Charles that he had heard rumors of designs on his son’s life and that his house at Mattapany was “too near the water,” Calvert assured his father he would remove to Zekiah House and “shalbe very Cautious of what shipps I goe on Board of.” He also intended Zekiah House, located along the “Carriage Road,” to serve a political function and as such the Court of Chancery met there on at least one occasion. The house was used later in an unsuccessful effort to negotiate a peace between Maryland and “northern” Indians. Calvert’s purse, though, apparently could not support a summer house of brick, although he assured his father that, the following year (1673), he planned to build a second and entirely brick house on the manor for his son, “little Cecil.” And, as Charles reported to Cecil, Zekiah Manor was the one he “chose to begin vpon,” suggesting he had plans for the many other proprietary manors situated in each county.27

As Charles Calvert worked to establish a proprietary stronghold at the mouth of the Patuxent River and a presence in the interior, he was well aware of the real and potential challenges to the family’s authority found among the planters residing along St. Clement’s Bay and the Wicomico River. Here lived his father’s old enemies, Josias Fendall and Thomas Gerard, who had in 1660 conspired to abolish the Upper House in an effort to diminish proprietary power. Both men had been banished from the colony, literally removed from the landscape, but the Calverts did not enforce the punishment as long as both stayed out of politics, and, for a while, both complied. They were soon joined in their neighborhood by future Protestant Associator John Coode, who married into Gerard’s family. Calvert, knowing he needed to keep watch on these men and their supporters, cultivated Thomas Notley, a merchant who had immigrated to Maryland from Barbados in the early 1660s and settled on the east side of the Wicomico River at Manahowick’s Neck, later known as Notley Hall.28

Notley came to Maryland with a number of other Barbadians, including Jesse Wharton and Benjamin Rozier. Along with William Digges, the son of a Virginia governor, these men became a force in Maryland government. Three married the proprietor’s stepdaughters (Elizabeth Sewall to Wharton, Ann Sewall to Rozier, and Elizabeth to Digges following Wharton’s death) and also served the Council. Notley, a planter and merchant, earned Charles Calvert’s trust and favor while serving in the Lower House and was appointed deputy governor in 1676 while Baltimore was in England. When the never-married Notley died without children in 1679, he willed his plantation and his possessions to Charles, now the third Lord Baltimore who renamed the property Notley Hall and placed his stepdaughter Elizabeth and her husband William Digges in residence. Calvert maintained a presence on the Wicomico throughout both the Notley and Digges tenures as the Council met at Notley Hall on at least fifteen occasions. He later ordered a significant amount of shot and powder to be stored at the site after establishing the magazine at Mattapany, with military exercises carried out at “Notley Hall
The plantation sat strategically near the confluence of the Wicomico and Potomac rivers with a straight line of sight to the Virginia shore, and Notley assisted the government with the collection of shipping dues in the Potomac and with identifying merchant vessels potentially afool of the law. In 1672, when the Swedish ship, Burgh of Stade, sailed up the Potomac in apparent violation of the Navigation Acts, the ship was seized and a court of admiralty convened at Notley Hall. Given that the Crown already had its suspicions about Baltimore’s enforcement of the Navigation Acts and that the record does suggest a lax attitude on the part of the Calverts, the confiscation of this ship is significant. The Burgh of Stade had ventured into Maryland waters at an opportune time for an economically-pinched proprietary government attempting to remodel its landscape. Thomas Notley served as the attorney for the ship’s captain, losing the case but benefiting handsomely when the court ordered the captain to relinquish his cargo of 50,000 yellow bricks. Along with council member Benjamin Rozier, Notley took possession of the cargo and, archaeologists suspect, began his own construction campaign at Manahowick’s Neck.

The house Notley built using both the seized yellow brick and locally-made red brick was impressive by any measure, especially so for seventeenth-century Maryland, and served as an ideal accommodation for Council meetings. Unimaginably rich goods and furnishings packed the structure’s thirteen rooms, evidenced in a room-by-room inventory taken at the deputy governor’s death. The 1679 document lists a “Great Hall,” “Best Room,” and “Counting House.” The furnishings in the Best Room alone, including a fully outfitted feather bed and bedstead, were valued at 71 pounds sterling. Wide brick foundations discovered through both archaeology and a magnetometer survey indicate the house was a T-shaped structure of at least partial brick construction, possibly two stories in height and at least 1400 square feet (and possibly 1900) on the ground floor. The house had chimneys built of red and yellow brick, tiled hearths, glazed windows, and plastered walls. The “Great Hall,” or what was the council chamber, contained 22 leather and two “Turky worked” chairs, four tables, three covered in cloth, green “hangings,” and fireplace equipment. The walls were covered with a “Lookinge glasse”
and three framed pictures, and a pewter cistern for rinsing dishes was also located in the Hall. Archaeological investigations have yielded fragments of fragile Venetian glassware, glass wine bottles, Dutch and English tobacco pipes, tin-glazed (“delft”) tablewares and fireplace tile, and German stoneware. Of special interest is an unusual brick drain originating at the dwelling and running at least 180 feet toward the river. This drain may suggest an early and unusual effort to dispose of domestic wastewater. Associated service structures included a kitchen, store, salt house, stable, and quarter. Notley enjoyed the services of five indentured servants, one believed to be Eleanor Butler, and 22 enslaved men, women, and children. Notley was one of the largest slaveholders at the time.

Of all the places discussed here, Notley Hall was the most critical to the proprietor’s relations with the several Indian nations living in Maryland. Indeed, one of these nations, the Choptico, had their town approximately three miles upriver from Notley Hall. Twelve of the fifteen council meetings at Manahowick’s Neck concerned the colonial government’s relationships with the Native groups, including the Piscataway, allies of the proprietor. Most issues had to do with the Articles of Peace and Amity signed in 1666 by the Maryland governor, the Piscataway, Choptico, and eleven other nations. These meetings often began with ceremonial exchanges of cloth, wild animal skins, peake (shell beads), and glass beads. At one meeting held in 1679, two Piscataway found guilty of murdering members of an English family at the head of the Patuxent River were sentenced to death and the execution carried out that evening on the premises with the tayac (leader), his great men, and the proprietor in attendance. Before the meeting was over, Baltimore, having asserted his legal jurisdiction over the Piscataway, informed the tayac that he and his great men could now report to the magazine at Mattapany for the loan of guns they had requested.32

With these settlements, all well beyond St. Mary’s City, taking on political functions and meanings, travel became especially important for communicating proprietary authority. The material culture of this travel is suggested by both inventory and archaeological evidence. Thomas Notley, for example, owned an expensive “whole skirted saddle velvet seated, holsters 2 p stirrups and Leather 2 Cruppers & breast plates.” In 1682, when the Assembly was considering the posting of a guard at the magazine at Mattapany, the Upper House argued for pay rates to “Exceed the Ordinary Allowance … Considering the Quality they serve in,” with an expectation that the guard’s members “be more than Ordinarily well Accoutred.” An extensive collection of horse furniture, including plain and ornate leather ornaments and a spur, has been recovered from Mattapany, some from the area around Baltimore’s house and the majority from the area around the magazine. While only the very poorest colonists in Maryland went without a horse, the Calverts and their “Champions” used dress and horse furnishings to set themselves apart from the rest of the colonists when traveling between the capital and proprietary landmarks.33

St. Mary’s City, Mattapany, Zekiah Manor, and Notley Hall became well-known strongholds, the last three established after Charles Calvert arrived in the colony. These settlements were placed in locations that monitored river or interior traffic and activities, and included some of the most elite and fashionable
architecture, sending a message about proprietary wealth, power, and authority, in particular to those who might challenge the colony’s leadership. Mattapany, Zekiah House, and Notley Hall provided places where the Maryland Council regularly made its presence known outside St. Mary’s. Expanding settlement in Maryland had already led the Calverts to create counties for the management of local business; but the loyalty of county justices appointed by the governor was not guaranteed. Calvert’s two plantations along with Notley Hall provided a more direct, better controlled proprietary presence and space for unquestionably loyal, and powerful, councilors to gather in the three most populated western shore counties along two of the region’s busiest and most important rivers.

The 1670s had started out well enough for the Calverts. Political tensions existed, manifested most often in complaints about the amount of taxes and fees the proprietor levied and, as always in Maryland, the extent (or limits) of Baltimore’s power as granted by the charter. But lines of disagreement were not set in the hard and fast way they would become, and even the Upper House, which included Charles Calvert, occasionally disagreed with Cecil Calvert. Relations with Eastern and western shore Indians “seemed at least manageable” following the 1666 negotiations that resulted in the Articles of Peace and Amity. Major building campaigns produced redevelopment work in St. Mary’s City that included a nearly finished brick chapel and plans for a brick state house, and Calvert was wrapping construction on his brick house at Mattapany. The magazine at Mattapany was in process, as were efforts to establish a network of towns loyal to the proprietor. Augustine Herrman’s map had been published and was, by 1673, in circulation, depicting these new towns and Calvert’s imprimatur across the landscape. Baltimore was even moving forward with building, of all things in this frontier colony, a “summer house” at Zekiah Manor. And, like Cecil, who had set Charles up in Maryland as governor, Charles Calvert was laying the groundwork for his own son, five-year-old “little Cis,” to have his own house built at Zekiah Manor, in brick, of course. Baltimore even went so far as to name his minor son governor when he was out of the colony, with Thomas Notley serving as deputy governor.34

Perhaps the most dramatic statement about how the second Lord Baltimore was envisioning his colony and his legacy is expressed in a portrait the proprietor commissioned about 1670. The proprietor, presumably in his English residence wearing a fashionable Persian vest, stands with his grandson, Cecil (“little Cis”) on a Turkish rug, the child attended by an enslaved African boy of 12 or 13 years. Baltimore is handing little Cecil a map of Maryland, the Potomac clearly depicted. Although this does not appear to be the map Herrman had recently produced for the Calverts, it does suggest the central role of maps in the England-bound Calvert’s world. The portrait is about space, or empire, tying together far-flung locations in the person of one Englishman, and it is also about time, or inheritance, as the older man symbolically hands off Maryland to his grandson. Equally important are the elements missing from the portrait. There is little evidence of the family’s religious faith, nor does the portrait convey any sense of the conflicts and struggles plaguing the Calverts since the colony’s founding over political control. No doubt Cecil Calvert, having spent the better part of his life focused on building

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the colony and protecting his charter rights, was at a point where he could imagine the project as a true and long-term family investment. In part, he may have owed this sensibility to the work his son, Charles, had done as governor.  

But there was trouble ahead, and it too would play out in part in the landscape. Critically, a depression in tobacco prices was creating hardship for most Marylanders, including, indirectly, Charles Calvert, who complained to his father about the high cost of building in Maryland. A proposal to cease growing tobacco for a year in an effort to drive up prices failed after extensive inter-colonial negotiations when Cecil Calvert, overruling his son and his chancellor, denied the proposal, concerned that the poorest planters would have suffered disproportionately. As money grew more scarce, Marylanders, who could not miss the building campaigns or the processions of the Calvert family and their councilors across the landscape, nor avoid the taxes and fees needed to sustain them, found little relief. The author or authors of “A Complaint from Heaven,” addressing royal authorities, claimed that excessive taxes were levied “only to maintaine my Lord and his Champions in their prince-ship.” In 1674, the assembly began to rein in the governor’s building projects when it refused to clear the carriage road to the summer house at Zekiah Manor. With the Lower House claiming the road’s repair was “unnecessary for the present,” its members effectively interrupted Charles’ effort to make use of the property and ended his plans to build a second house there for little Cecil. It also interrupted Charles’s plans for holding political meetings at Zekiah Manor. 

A year later, in 1675, the Susquehannock, who had previously shown up at Mattapany in search of a place to settle in Maryland, ignored Baltimore’s directive to locate above the falls of the Potomac and instead located below the falls on the same creek as the Piscataway, their ancient enemy. A series of thefts and violent retaliations in Virginia that had little to do with the Susquehannock nonetheless ensnared them when colonial authorities came to believe the offenders had crossed the Potomac into Maryland and taken refuge in the Susquehannock’s fort. Five Susquehannock leaders were executed by the Virginia and Maryland militias under pretense of a parley, enraging the Susquehannock and triggering raids along the frontier that would play a precipitating role in Bacon’s Rebellion. While the Maryland English were largely spared the Susquehannock’s retaliation, their allies in the siege, the Piscataway, were not. For the next four years, then, Baltimore’s treaty obligations required him to provide ongoing defensive support for the Piscataway, Mattawoman, and other groups afool of the
Susquehannock, typically by providing the treaty parties arms from the Mattapany magazine.37

In June 1676, Marylanders, economically stressed, spooked by Indian fears, and anxious about what was unfolding in Virginia, learned that Charles Calvert planned to limit the number of delegates sent to the assembly from four to two. Calvert insisted the reason for the limitation had to do with the costs to the country, but the push-back he received led him to table the plan, probably because he was also leaving for England in a matter of weeks. Significantly, one of his final acts was to instruct the colony’s residents to fortify their plantations, “fforasmuch as the province is dayly threatened to be invaded by the Indians.” In all likelihood, Baltimore did not have to tell frightened householders what to do on their plantations in order to protect themselves but, in so doing, it gave him an opportunity to warn against a different threat: “all masters of houses where such fforts shall be,” Calvert continued, shall not “entertaine any greater number then ten men able to beare Armes into any of their said fforts or houses,” or they would be “proceeded against as mutinous and Seditious persons gathered together with fforce.” Emphasizing these orders, he required all householders to record the names of those members who could bear arms with county justices.38

The resolution of Bacon’s Rebellion in Virginia did little to abate Indian fears in Maryland. The Susquehannock and other “northern” or “foreign” Indians, often lumped together and generically called Seneca, continued to leave the English alone, even as they raided Piscataway and Mattawoman settlements. In accordance with their treaty, Baltimore kept the Maryland Indians supplied with guns while trying to negotiate a peace with Indians whose identity he did not always fully know. The situation had become so bad for the Maryland nations that finally, in late June 1680, Baltimore directed the Piscataway to abandon their capital on Piscataway Creek and do what Calvert himself had done when he had felt threatened: move to Zekiah Manor and “there to seate themselves undr such fortifications as they shall think fit to Erect for their Safe guard and Defence.”39

Most colonists couldn’t distinguish Indians of different nations, and the citizens of Charles County, site of the Piscataway homeland, felt particularly vulnerable. In 1678, they elected Baltimore’s old enemy, Josias Fendall, to the assembly but the proprietor refused to sit him. Fendall, who had remained out of politics since he first betrayed the proprietor, now exploited the colonists’ Indian fears and Baltimore’s treaty obligations to provide arms to the Piscataway, encouraging and perhaps originating rumors of a Catholic-Indian alliance directed against the Protestants. The relocation of the Piscataway to Calvert’s Zekiah Manor (also in Charles County) in 1680 undoubtedly inflamed the situation and archaeological excavations at Zekiah Fort revealed that the Piscataway were indeed heavily armed. Large quantities of shot, gunflints, and gun fragments have been recovered from archaeological testing at Zekiah Fort. In particular, more gunflints have been recovered from Zekiah Fort than from many other seventeenth-century sites in Maryland, including the magazine at Mattapany. The Piscataway’s desperate circumstances forced Baltimore to dispatch his rangers to remain at and defend the new fort. Some of these rangers were Fendall’s allies and likely reported the heavily armed Indians.40
Fendall took advantage of the situation, teaming with John Coode and probably meeting with like-minded souls at Coode’s plantation as well as at his own, all within a short distance of Notley Hall on the Wicomico. Later testimony, collected when Fendall was put on trial for “mutiny and sedition” for threatening to physically harm the proprietor, revealed that he also made use of chance encounters along roadways to inflame sentiment against Baltimore and warn of Catholic-Indian alliances. And, like so many others, he made use of the Potomac River and the opportunity it presented to escape the proprietor’s jurisdiction. In this case, with a warrant out for his arrest, the fugitive brought his entire family to Nicholas Spencer’s plantation at Nomini Hall in Virginia, only to be told by Mrs. Spencer to leave immediately as she “would not disobey my Lord Propy.” Fendall left, returned to Maryland, was subsequently arrested, tried, and, in 1681 found guilty — and a livid Baltimore permanently banished him from the colony.41

The aftermath is particularly revealing in understanding how Baltimore used the power and importance of landscape. After Fendall was found guilty and exiled from the colony, he sold his real estate in Maryland, including his plantation directly across the Wicomico River from Notley Hall. This property included a house that rivaled Notley Hall, with brick chimneys, plastered walls, and glazed windows. The purchaser was none other than William Digges, Baltimore’s son-in-law, a Council member, and one of the Provincial Court justices that found Fendall guilty. There is nothing in the transaction to suggest that this was anything more than the sale of land by one individual to another. Nor is the price paid anything out of the ordinary. But, once the sale was closed, Digges immediately began erasing Fendall from the landscape. He renamed Fendall’s property Charles Town in honor of his father-in-law and began developing the property as one of the towns that would provide another politically loyal entity. Digges accomplished more than many town developers, creating lots and building an ordinary, stable, and townhouse. And, in what appears to be a final slap against Fendall, Digges never paid him for the property. The widow Mary Fendall was later forced to sue Digges for the money.42

Fendall’s departure from Maryland may have eliminated one especially vocal and even dangerous Calvert enemy, but problems remained, among them William Penn and the question of Maryland’s northern boundary. A second problem concerned the crown’s interest in centralizing control of England’s colonies, including the collection of colonial revenues. Baltimore now had unwanted oversight in how he collected fees and duties, driven by concern that the crown’s interest in Maryland shipping revenue had been poorly served for a long time. To deal with the first problem, Baltimore, as he had done so many times before, placed one of his relatives, a cousin by the name of George Talbot, in Cecil County near the Pennsylvania boundary line and then left for England, where he believed he could better defend himself against Penn’s claims. His departure, however, played a part in the escalation of the second problem. The king’s collector for the Patuxent, Christopher Rousby, whose famously poor relationship with the proprietor had already raised eyebrows in London, had taken up residence on a plantation adjacent to Mattapany where he could easily watch ships stopping at Baltimore’s property. And it was on a ship anchored in the Patuxent in 1684, with Baltimore in England, that Rousby was murdered by the proprietor’s cousin and counselor, George Talbot.43
Baltimore’s problems went beyond Penn, the Crown, and even the murder, and, as since 1634, involved colonists who questioned and challenged the proprietor’s legitimacy. The wealthier critics resented their exclusion from proprietary favor and offices while others questioned the wisdom of placing a Catholic in a position of authority over Protestants. On his departure from Maryland in 1684, the proprietor had left behind a governor and set of councilors, the majority Catholic, including George Talbot, who collectively and individually made one ill-advised decision after another, including the aforementioned killing of the King’s collector. In 1688, Baltimore directed the Maryland leaders on celebrating the birth of the Prince of Wales, a controversial event in England given the heir to the throne would be raised Catholic. The exuberance of this event was followed by a failure in 1689 to proclaim William and Mary in a timely fashion. By the time of the Protestant Revolution, in the summer of 1689, John Coode and his fellow Associates were able to marshal a significant number of planters who would take up arms against Baltimore, still in England, and his Maryland agents, mostly relatives, gathered at Mattapany.44

Yet, for all of the anti-Catholic rhetoric deployed against Calvert and his government, both before and during the uprising, the Protestant Associates appear to have left the Jesuit properties alone. If the Jesuit chapel at St. Mary’s was damaged or otherwise affected by the Protestant Associates, it was not noted in the surviving records. Indeed, the chapel remained in use in the capital for another fifteen years, revealing how “Catholic success” was only a problem when it was tied to Baltimore. The outlying Jesuit plantations, including St. Inigoes, Newtown, and St. Thomas, also do not appear to have been damaged or otherwise impacted by the Associates.45

Similarly, Zekiah Manor, where Baltimore had built his now abandoned summer house and where the Piscataway had relocated in 1681, was also left untouched, a remarkable point given how the Associates’ actions were bound up with those rumors of an impending attack on Protestants by the Catholics and their Native allies. The Piscataway settlement at Zekiah was, at the time, within ten miles of the Charles County Court House and an easy day’s travel of English settlement. Further, the Piscataway’s troubles with the Susquehannock and other northern nations had been resolved in 1682 when the Piscataway were made part of the Five Nations Iroquois covenant chain, which should have given the Associates pause if they really believed the threat of a Catholic-Indian alliance. There is no record of any effort by the Associates to interact or otherwise engage the Piscataway during the uprising, nor any record that the Piscataway expressed any interest in or support for either the proprietary government or the rebels. Even after Baltimore’s government fell, the Piscataway continued at Zekiah Manor until sometime in the mid-1690s. Their departure appears to be related to the arrival of the new royal governor, Lionel Copley, and the settlement with the Calverts, with the Indians returning to their former capital at Piscataway. There they found their former lands now occupied or claimed by the English and, within a few years, the Piscataway as an organized entity left the area for an island in the Potomac that is today part of Frederick County.46

Historians blame Charles Calvert for creating the conditions that led to the Protestant Rebellion, tone-
deaf to how his choices and actions were perceived, especially after the death of his uncle, Philip. This conclusion, as well deserved as it may be, tends to flatten and overshadow Charles’s efforts since 1661, erasing the work the son was able to accomplish, much of it with his father’s support and direction, during his quarter century of on-site management. Instead, these accomplishments become evident in a geographical approach, revealing how the Calvert family, with Charles leading the effort on behalf of his father, was able to strengthen the capital at St. Mary’s, establish proprietary strongholds at the mouths of two key rivers (Wicomico and Patuxent) as well as in the interior, identify and control other strategic points, including the Maryland-Pennsylvania and the Maryland-Virginia boundaries, and, to the extent possible, neutralize or even eliminate the memory of Calvert enemies from the landscape. Intentional or not, placing the magazine at Mattapany rather than at St. Mary’s City separated the colony’s military arsenal from the public Catholic chapel, although Baltimore’s enemies didn’t hesitate to rail against the magazine’s location at Mattapany.

Juxtaposing these projects with proprietary efforts to legislate towns, produce an extraordinary map of the colony, and sit for a richly symbolic portrait reveals the actions the Calverts took to maintain Cecil and then Charles as “Absolute lord and Propry of the Provinces of Maryland & Avalon Lord Baron of Baltemore.” As knowledgeable and experienced students of colonization, Cecil and Charles Calvert recognized the critical importance of on-site management and the use of geography to minimize threats to their rule. Controlling not just river mouths through presence and shipping ports but entire rivers (including the Potomac, the ownership of which was called out in the Maryland charter), managing Native populations through both trade and treaty alliances designed to provide a buffer for the English, emphasizing on paper (i.e., Herrman’s map) the importance of proprietary settlements, building fashionable and comfortable houses of brick that doubled as meeting spaces, and securing the colony’s firepower with the person of Lord Baltimore reveals the lengths to which the Calverts were willing to go to assert their charter rights. There would not be any Sir David Kirke (as there had been in Newfoundland) to wrest control of the absentee Calverts’ property and authority. Nor would there be only one Calvert stronghold, allowing Richard Ingle to run the Maryland governor to Virginia. This is not to say that the Calverts’ campaigns were not intended to reinforce social distinctions and, as Cecil attempted to do with the portrait, position themselves at the center of an expanding English empire. But, it does suggest the layered complexity behind the Calverts’ motives in the settlement and governance of Maryland.

These findings also suggest differences between proprietary Maryland and royal Virginia. Although leaders for both colonies were, after 1660, reacting to Restoration events in England, the governments in the two colonies responded in different ways. Berkeley’s focus remained almost exclusively on Jamestown, while the Calverts aimed to establish family properties as described above. The Calvert properties were non-corporate strongholds, where loyalty to the proprietor was not an issue. And while Berkeley struggled to have brick houses built at Jamestown, the Calverts used brick architecture to establish their claims and standing not just at St. Mary’s but at their new plantations strategically located along important waterways. Berkeley was intent on getting county leaders to build in Jamestown, and
council meetings were held almost without exception in the Virginia capital. By contrast, the Maryland Council regularly met outside the colonial capital and the Calverts do not appear to have insisted that colonists acquire lots and build houses in the capital. When colonists antagonistic to Berkeley’s leadership wanted to challenge his authority, they typically did so at Jamestown, with Nathaniel Bacon’s burning of Jamestown in 1676 the most well-known example.47

In September 1689, with Baltimore’s government out of power and the rebels working to set up a new one, the Associators created a committee for the “allotting, laying and assessing the publick leavy of this Province,” directing the committee to meet at Charles Towne, the town Baltimore’s son-in-law William Digges had established on Josias Fendall’s former plantation. Now, it was Baltimore’s turn to be written out of the landscape. When that committee met, its members were instructed not “to give or continue the former usuall title of the Lord Baltemore hitherto used in this Province in any publick Instrument doings or proceedings whatsoever but instead there of the names royall stile and title of King William and Queen Mary be for the future made use of and noe other.”

In 1692, Maryland’s incoming royal government consolidated and centralized its functions at St. Mary’s City. The magazine was relocated to the capital and the new governor moved into St. Peter’s, Philip Calvert’s large brick dwelling located on the eastern edge of the town. Mattapany and Notley Hall along with Zekiah Manor were returned to Lord Baltimore. The Maryland Council, now composed of royal appointees, resumed meeting again, with nine out of its ten meetings at St. Mary’s. Those meetings held outside the capital took place mostly north of the Patuxent, with councilors from those regions evidently complaining about the hardship of travel to St. Mary’s. When Governor Francis Nicholson arrived in the colony in 1694, he must have agreed that the colony’s expanding settlement and the capital’s relatively tiny river rendered St. Mary’s City inconvenient for many delegates to the assembly and he proposed moving the colony’s capital to Annapolis.

Although most interpretations of the move assign an anti-Catholic motive to Nicholson, and no doubt the governor was aware of the symbolism of his proposed move, in reality, the proposed move was nothing new. The Calverts had on a number of occasions considered moving the capital themselves in the direction of where Annapolis would be founded. In the 1660s, there had been discussion of moving the capital to the Patuxent, where Charles Calvert eventually established Mattapany, and, in 1683, to Anne Arundel County, where Charles Calvert had requested the assembly build him a brick house. Now, in 1694, a petition was circulated imploring Nicholson to reconsider and, of the seventy men who signed it, two names stand out: William Digges and John Coode. Their pleas went unanswered and, this time, Nicholson accomplished what the Calverts had not. In 1695, the governor’s agents began the overland process of moving all of the colony’s records north about seventy-five miles. The house at Notley Hall was soon abandoned and Mattapany was transferred to Sewall heirs. Proprietary rule was over, although the Calverts as colonial landlords continued to reap the benefits of Charles and Cecil Calverts’ work through the eighteenth century.48
End Notes


3When Baltimore sailed for England in 1684, his plan was to return to the colony, and he booked passage to Maryland from London in September 1684 and again in September 1685; events prevented his departure; see Peter Coldham, The Complete Book of Emigrants, 1661-1699 (Baltimore, 1990), 486, 545. When the revolution took place, Baltimore was reported to have been living on London’s Bloomsbury Square; see John Orlebar, ed., Records of the English Catholics of 1715 (London, 1889), xv; “An Account of the Case of Mr Iohn Woodcock [et al] touching the Death of Mr Iohn Payne and their tryall for the same,” Oct. 10, 1691, ibid., 251-262, esp. 259-262; “At a Council held at St Marys,” Apr. 9, 1692, ibid., 310-313, esp. 311.

4Carr and Jordan, 37-42; James Horn follows Carr’s and Jordan’s reasoning when he points out that the political unrest preceding the Protestant Revolution in Maryland “came from the colony’s ruling classes (or those that aspired to be part of the ruling clique) rather than from below… daily life for the vast majority of the population was little disturbed by the power struggles” that, in 1689, resulted in Baltimore’s loss of the colony; see James Horn, Adapting to a New World: English Society in the Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1994), 368-372. Most recently, Jean Russo and J. Elliott Russo summarized the events leading to the revolution through a lens that also emphasizes political stability and anti-Catholicism; see Russo and Russo, Planting an Empire: The Early Chesapeake in British North America (Baltimore, 2012), 118-123; The circumstances leading up to and changes taking place after the Protestant Rebellion have been examined by a number of scholars; see Carr and Jordan, 222 and passim; David Lovejoy, The Glorious Revolution in America (Middletown, Conn., 1987), 251-270; Stephen Saunders Webb, Lord Churchill’s Coup: The Anglo-American Empire and the Glorious Revolution Reconsidered (Syracuse, N.Y., 1998), 171-225; Michael Graham, “Popish Plots: Protestant Fears in Early Colonial Maryland, 1676-1689,” The Catholic Historical Review 79, no. 2 (April 1993): 197-216; Owen Stanwood, The Empire Reformed: English America in the Age of the Glorious Revolution (Philadelphia, 2011); John D. Krugler, English and Catholic: The Lords Baltimore in the Seventeenth Century (Baltimore, 2004), 235.

5Sutto argues that the recurring and unsettled issues at the core of most rebellions taking place in Maryland reflected unsettled controversies in England; Antoinette Patricia Sutto, Built Upon Smoke: Politics and Political Culture in Maryland, 1630-1690. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of History, Princeton University, Princeton, N.J. (2008), 11, 585; Sutto, ‘Bloodsucking Sectaries’ and


David Armitage, who has advocated for the study of “particular places as unique locations” embedded in a larger British Atlantic World, nonetheless minimizes the importance of plantation landscapes when he argues that this approach is “most fruitfully applied to … port towns and cities;” see Armitage,
“Three Concepts of Atlantic History,” in The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800, ed. David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick (Basingstoke, 2002), 11-27, 250-54. This division of the landscape has led to research that, for example in Maryland, promotes the comparison of St. Mary’s City and Annapolis as capital cities but rarely contextualizes the respective capitals in the larger landscape of which each was a part; see, for example, Mark P. Leone and Silas D. Hurry, “Seeing: The Power of Town Planning in the Chesapeake,” Historical Archaeology, vol. 32, no. 4 (1998), 34-62.

Cecil likely knew of the lesson that was probably driven home when Sir David Kirke arrived in Newfoundland and evicted the Calvert family’s representative from Ferryland. In 1627, George Calvert acknowledged the importance of a resident proprietor when he wrote to Sir Thomas Wentworth that “[I] must either go [to Avalon] and settle it in a better Order than it is, or else give it over, and lose all the Charges I have been at hitherto for other Men to build their Fortunes upon;” Luca Codignola, The Coldest Harbour of the Land: Simon Stock and Lord Baltimore’s Colony in Newfoundland, 1621-1649 (translated by Anita Weston, Kingston, Ontario, 1988), 43; George Calvert had been granted two manors in County Longford in Ireland, but took up residence in North Wexford on the Irish coast; see James Lyttleton, “The Lords Baltimore in Ireland,” in Exploring Atlantic Transitions: Archaeologies of Transience and Permanence in New Found Lands, Shannon Lewis-Simpson and Peter E. Pope, eds. (Rochester, NY, 2013), 259-266.


Christopher Tomlins, “The Legal Cartography of Colonization; the Legal Polyphony of Settlement: English Intrusions on the American Mainland in the Seventeenth Century,” Law and Social Inquiry, vol. 26, no. 2 (2001), 315; Tomlins notes that charters ultimately did not work not because of local environmental realities but rather because of differences among English plural cultures brought by migration into unavoidable proximity. Benton, Search for Sovereignty, 40-103. See also Philip D. Morgan, “Conclusion: The Future of Chesapeake Studies;” in Early Modern Virginia: Reconsidering


13Christian J. Koot, “The Merchant, The Map, and Empire: Augustine Herrman’s Chesapeake and Interimperial Trade, 1644-1673,” The William and Mary Quarterly, 3d ser., 67, no. 4 (2010), 603-644; “Governor Charles Calvert to Cecilius, Lord Baltimore” Apr. 26, 1672, in The Calvert Papers: Number 1, Maryland Historical Society [MHS], (Baltimore, 1889), no. 15, 252-276, esp. 272; the placement of Baltimore’s coat of arms in relationship to the king’s suggested how the Calverts perceived their authority in the colony; ; the use of the word, “prikking,” in this instance refers to its meaning for incitement, instigation, or provocation; see A Complaint from Heaven with a Hue and Cry, and a petition out of Virginia and Maryland, 5:138-139.

14Benjamin Schmidt, “Mapping an Empire: Cartographic and Colonial Rivalry in Seventeenth-Century Dutch and English North America,” The William and Mary Quarterly, 3d ser., 54, no. 3 (July 1997), 549-578; Cecil Calvert never came to Maryland, nor does it appear he ever visited his family’s plantations in Avalon (Newfoundland) or Ireland; Travel was a way by which many early modern governors could establish the presence of the state, see Piia Einonen, “A Travelling Governor,” in Physical and Cultural Space in Preindustrial Europe: Methodological Approaches to Spatiality, ed. Marko Lamberg, Marko Hakanen, and Janne Haikari (Lund, 2011), 124-151.

15There is some uncertainty about whether or not Charles Calvert attended St. Omers, although Geoffrey Holt concludes that he did; see Geoffrey Holt, St. Omers and Bruges Colleges, 1593-1773: A Biographical Dictionary (London, 1979), 56; archaeologist Ed Chaney points out that, if Holt’s conclusion is correct, Charles would have only been 8 years old at the time (instead of the typical 11 or 12 years old), but Chaney suggests that Charles may have been sent early as a result of the English revolution, including the siege of Wardour Castle that took place in 1643 when Charles was six years old; see Edward E. Chaney, Archaeological Investigations at Mattapany, unpublished report on file, Maryland Archaeological Conservation Laboratory, Jefferson Patterson Park, and Museum, 42 and footnote 56; Chaney also points out that Charles’ uncles and grandsons attended St. Omers. Krugler (personal communication, 2012) has suggested that tutors home-schooled Charles; Alexandra Walsham, The Reformation of the Landscape Religion, Identity and Memory in Early Modern Britain and Ireland (Oxford, 2011), 142; Krugler, English and Catholic, 192-20.

16Walsham, The Reformation of the Landscape; Peter Davidson, “Recusant Catholic Spaces in Early Modern England,” in Catholic Culture in Early Modern England, ed. Ronald Corthell, Frances E. Dolan, Christopher Highley, and Arthur F. Marotti (Notre Dame, 2011), 19-51; Frances E. Dolan, “Gender and the ‘Lost’ Spaces of Catholicism,” Journal of Interdisciplinary History 32, no. 4 (2006), 647; Krugler found that George Calvert likely did not resign from his position as the king’s Secretary
simply because he decided to live openly as a Catholic, but that “Calvert had long subordinated his religious feelings to his political career;” English and Catholic, 64-65.


Almost all studies of early modern travel focus on long-distance journeys or religious pilgrimages. Everyday travel has gone, for the most part, under-studied and un-theorized. For an exception, see Laura A. Ambrose, Plotting Movement: Epistemologies of Local Travel in Early Modern England, 1600-1660 (Unpublished dissertation) (Ann Arbor, 2008); Einonen, “Travelling Governor, 124-151; The Council, which served as the Upper House of the Assembly and as both the Provincial and Chancery courts, was, aside from the proprietor, Maryland’s most powerful political entity; Carr and Jordan, Maryland’s Revolution of Government; David W. Jordan, “Maryland’s Privy Council, 1637-1715;” in Law, Society, and Politics in Early Maryland, ed. Aubrey C. Land, Lois G. Carr, and Edward C. Papenfuse (Baltimore, 1977), 65-87; Alex J. Flick, “Att A Councell Held Att: The Politics and Mobility of Maryland’s Council, 1637-1695,” St. Mary’s Project, on file, St. Mary’s College of Maryland (St. Mary’s City, 2009); the primary source for meetings of the Maryland Council in the seventeenth century is the published Council Proceedings, including volumes 3, 5, 8, 15, 17, and 20. Flick’s analysis of council meetings taking place outside the capital, which covered the period from 1637 through 1695, revealed three important points: first, Council mobility – that is, meeting beyond the confines of St. Mary’s City – spiked after periods of rebellion, with Council travel serving to reassert proprietary authority and provincial stability. Second, certain proprietary landholdings, including Governor Charles Calvert’s home at Mattapany and his deputy governor’s dwelling at Manahowickes Neck (Notley Hall), served both practical and symbolic political purposes as meeting space for the Council. Third, meeting location was often used to imply a sense of either neutrality or advantage in diplomatic negotiation; the listed meeting locations are all in Maryland. The Council also met outside Maryland at Newcastle, New Amstell, and Appaquimimn.

19Main, Tobacco Colony; Carson et al., “Impermanent Architecture”; Musselwhite, Towns in Mind, 106-108; St. Peter’s has not yet been excavated by archaeologists but its plan was uncovered in the early 1940s by Henry Chandlee Forman; see Forman, “The St. Mary’s City ‘Castle,” Predecessor of the
Williamsburg ‘Palace.”’ William and Mary Quarterly, 2d ser., vol. 22, no. 2 (1942), 136-143. A similar campaign of architectural development was underway in Virginia, much of it focused on Jamestown or its neighborhood at the urging of Governor Berkeley; see Graham et al., “Inheritance and Adaptation,” 476-479.


21 Krugler, English and Catholic, 226.

22 Archaeological study is a time-consuming and often expensive endeavor, and much archaeological evidence tends to come from publicly-supported programs such as those operated by Historic St. Mary’s City, Historic Jamestowne, The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, and so on. As a result, the body of available evidence can be biased, representing settlements deemed significant through 21st-century preservation strategies. These biases are countered in part by the policies and regulations of Sections 106 and 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, which addresses “historic properties,” including archaeological sites that may be affected by Federally-funded or assisted development (the information presented in this essay about Mattapany derives from NHPA-driven work). Still, many settlements, including Notley Hall, Fendall’s plantation, and Zekiah Manor, are on private land and are generally inaccessible. The archaeological sites described in this essay are known because of the generosity of a number of property owners; Carson et al., Impermanent Architecture in the Southern American Colonies”; Graham et al., Inheritance and Adaptation, 476; Cary Carson has identified builders like Calvert and his cronies as fashion leaders who paid attention to style trends as a way to identify social equals in an increasingly wider world and not necessarily to communicate with those of lesser status; see Carson, “Banqueting Houses and the ‘Need of Society,’” 730-732. This paper argues that, while communicating among social equals using brick houses no doubt had adaptive value, these houses were also put to work as statements of authority and power directed towards those who might have impure political motives, whether or not they shared the proprietor’s elite standing.

Archaeological investigations were conducted at Mattapany in 1983 and again between 1991 and 1998. The house is located on property now owned by the United States Navy, which sought the information for the purpose of identifying the site’s significance and avoiding any further development that might impact the site. As a result, while much is known about Charles Calvert’s Mattapany, the site remains essentially intact; see Dennis J. Pogue, “Seventeenth-Century Proprietary Rule and Rebellion: Archaeology at Charles Calvert’s Mattapany-Sewall.” Maryland Archeology, vol. 23, no. 1 (1987), 1-37; Edward E. Chaney, Archaeological Investigations at Mattapany; King and Chaney, “Lord Baltimore and the Meaning of Brick Architecture;” and King and Chaney, “Lord Baltimore’s Neighborhood”; John Ogilby described Mattapany as a “fair house of Brick and Timber, with all Out-houses, and other Offices therto belonging at a place called Mattapany... where [Calvert] and his Family reside;” John Ogilby, America: Being the Latest and Most Accurate Description of the New World (London, 1671), 189; For a period in 1676, the Council alternated its meetings, one week in St. Mary’s and the next at Mattapany; see “At a Councell held at Mattapenye,” Jul. 6, 1676, in Browne, ed., Proceedings of the Council of Maryland, 1671-1681, 97-98.


Lettr of Advice [from the Council to the Governor],” Oct. 10, 1678, ibid., 195-196.

Cary Carson discusses the importance of what he describes as “party houses,” including summer houses, in “Banqueting Houses,” 725-780; “Governor Charles Calvert to Cecilius, Lord Baltimore,” Apr. 26, 1672, in Calvert Papers: Number 1, MHS, no. 16: 27.

The vote taken to abolish the Upper House was made at Robert Slye’s plantation on the Wicomico, before Baltimore had established a presence on the river; Thomas Gerard had, in 1670, established a :banqueting house” in Westmoreland County, Virginia; see Carson, “Banqueting Houses,” 746-747; Notley had purchased the Manahowick’s Neck plantation from Thomas Gerard.


com/2010/11/follow-yellow-brick.html (accessed February 17, 2016); in addition to Notley Hall, quantities of yellow brick have been recovered across the river at Fendall’s plantation and at Westwood Manor; see Strickland and King, An Archaeological Survey of the Charleston Property, 28-31; Allison Alexander, et al., The Westwood Manor Archaeological Collection: Preliminary Interpretations (St. Mary’s City, 2010), 79-80. Yellow brick and yellow brick fragments have been found at four other plantation settlements in the Wicomico and Allen’s Fresh, and there is a good possibility that the smaller but still significant numbers of yellow brick found at Mattapany and at St. Mary’s City came from this cargo.

The illustration of the Notley Hall plan is based on Thomas Notley’s inventory, limited archaeological investigations, magnetometer survey, and input provided by historians at The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, including Cary Carson, Ed Chappell, Willie Graham, Jeffrey Klee, Carl Lounsbury, and Mark Wenger; Inventory of Thomas Notley, April 12, 1679, Inventories and Accounts, Liber 6, folio 576-596; Archaeological investigations at the privately-owned Notley Hall were considerably more limited than at Mattapany. The work consisted of the excavation of 329 shovel test pits, holes one foot in diameter 25 feet apart, sub-surface probing, and a magnetometer survey. A foundation was discovered in one of the shovel tests, and the magnetometer survey revealed a foundation measuring 20 by 40 feet with a back wing of 20 by 30 feet. The magnetometer survey suggested the house had an earthfast addition of 20 by 25 feet; At his death, Notley owned the services of eight indentured servants and 31 enslaved individuals; the majority of these people were at Notley Hall while the balance lived at Bachelor’s Hope, a second plantation owned by Notley several miles from Manahowick’s Neck; Eleanor Butler was the celebrated Irish servant who married an enslaved African named Charles and whose descendants sued for their freedom; see Skylar A. Bauer, Julia A. King, and Scott M. Strickland, Archaeological Investigations at Notley Hall, Near Chaptico, Maryland (St. Mary’s City, 2013), 16-17; Unfortunately, no inventory or list of Charles Calvert’s possessions in Maryland survives, but it would be unusual if the governor also did not own a sizeable labor force.


Sutto, Built Upon Smoke, 279-301, 305.

For a detailed discussion of the painting, see Kim F. Hall, Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England (Ithaca, 1995), 232-236; Hall, who has completed one of the few detailed analyses of this important painting, makes no reference to the proprietor’s faith. The portrait painter, Gerard Soest, was from the Netherlands and had a moderately successful career accepting commissions from the gentry; Historian Edward Papenfuse argues that Charles Calvert laid the groundwork that made the colony especially profitable for the family in the 18th century (personal communication, 2011).


43 Similarly, Baltimore had depended on William Stevens, who had rendered “exceptional services” for the proprietor, relocating from the Mattapany neighborhood in 1665 to Maryland’s Eastern Shore, where he “preserved Baltimore’s claims in that region against encroachment from Virginia;” see Carr and Jordan, Maryland’s Revolution of Government, 42; Christopher Rousby’s murder was one of the most bizarre cases of murder, arrest, escape, and re-arrest known for the Chesapeake. See Antoinette Sutto, “You Dog… Give Me Your Hand: Lord Baltimore and the Death of Christopher Rousby,” Maryland Historical Magazine, vol. 102, no. 4 (2007), 240-257.


45 In 1704, the Maryland legislature passed an “Act to Prevent the Growth of Popery in this Province;” this law, which forbade the public practice of Catholicism in Maryland, followed similar laws passed throughout the English empire. The chapel at St. Mary’s City was closed, dismantled, and the bricks transported a mile downriver to St. Inigo’s Manor; Edwin W. Beitzell, The Jesuit Missions of St. Mary’s County (privately printed, 1976), 44.

46 The arrival of Francis Nicholson as governor in 1694 did not bode well for the Piscataway; unlike Baltimore, Nicholson was largely indifferent to the Piscataway and at first worked to remove them from lands he wanted open to settlement. After the Piscataway had left Maryland for Virginia in 1697, however, Nicholson and his Council reconsidered the nation’s importance for trade and defense, and worked to encourage their return. The Piscataway returned in 1699 to what is now Heater’s Island, located in the middle of the Potomac River in Frederick County, Maryland; see Alex J. Flick, Skylar A. Bauer, Scott M. Strickland, D. Brad Hatch, and Julia A. King, ‘A Place Now Known Unto Them:’
The Search for Zekiah Fort (St. Mary’s City, 2012); see also James Merrell, Cultural Continuity among

47 Building on the work of Lois Green Carr, Lorena Walsh, and John C. Coombs, Cary Carson has
considered the desire and ability to build brick houses with standardized plans, acquire slaves, and
participate in a ‘fashionable consumerism’ as part of a growing strategy to facilitate communication
among strangers while “enforcing a master’s rule over all those domestics who were expected to do the
manor lord’s bidding;” the implication is that these material goods created markers of identity, which
was no doubt true in many cases. Conversely, these goods could be used to identify political masters
among otherwise equally wealthy men; see Carson, “Banqueting Houses and the ‘Need of Society,’
729, 731-733, 754-756; Warren M. Billings, A Little Parliament: The Virginia General Assembly in the
Seventeenth Century (Richmond, 2004); see also Martha W. McCartney, “Documentary History of
(Williamsburg, VA, 2000), 148.

Mary’s City to Anne Arundell, Now Called Annapolis” (Annapolis, Maryland).

Cover Image: Reconstructed State House of 1676, courtesy Historic St. Mary’s City.
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