

the earliest settlement of the lower Eastern Shore, a brief summary of occurrences will suffice for our purposes here today.

Cecil Calvert, Lord Baltimore, was concerned about possible encroachments on his dominions lying east of the Chesapeake Bay and encouraged permanent settlements there to protect his rights. In the fulfillment of that purpose, he received assistance from an unexpected source. The General Assembly of the colony of Virginia met in Jamestown in March, 1660, and passed a drastic law against Quakers, describing them as "an unreasonable and turbulent sort of people, teaching lies, miracles, false visions, prophecies and doctrines tending to disturb the peace, disorganize society and destroy all law, and government and religion." This Act forbade any further entrance of this "faith and practice" in Virginia, ordered the exile of the Quakers then resident in the colony and exacted heavy penalties for violations of its provisions.

Quakers living in Northampton and Accomack counties, the two Virginia counties lying on the Eastern Shore peninsula, petitioned authorities in the colony of Maryland for permission to settle there, and on November 6, 1661, Philip Calvert, the Governor of Maryland, issued a proclamation giving them that permission.

In any event, the two groups, and the Presbyterians and other sects that followed them, lived in complete harmony as this new region in the colony of Maryland grew rapidly, prospering under a government that afforded them the free exercise of conscience in matters of religion. This is to me a most inspiring story. Maryland was founded by the Calverts primarily as a place where English Roman Catholics could be free to worship according to the dictates of conscience. At the same time, these Calverts very carefully provided sanctuary for Quakers and nonconformists who at the time represented the very extreme of Protestantism. Together, all lived in serene unity, completely dedicated to the principle of religious liberty.

It is usually possible in history to find an individual whose character epitomizes the thinking and the feeling of his era—whose soul embodies the spirit of the time in which he lives. Such a person in the period about which we are talking, I think, was one William Stevens, who lived in Somerset County, or, perhaps we should say, on the "Eastern Shore below the Choptank."

Stevens, born in England, migrated to America, and, through Northampton County in Virginia, settled at a residence he named "Rehoboth" on the Pocomoke River in Maryland in 1664 or 1665. He appears in the records of "the Eastern Shore below the Choptank" in