

taking the keys to the chapel away from the Protestants and removing their books from the building. He was fined 500 pounds of tobacco, and the tobacco was to be used to support the first Protestant minister to arrive in the colony.

It is no wonder, then, that not only the Act of Religious Toleration, but the colonization itself of Maryland has been acclaimed, as it was by the historian McSherry, as "a mighty undertaking; standing out, in history, as an era in the progress of mankind." The spirit of tolerance and freedom of religious worship, so firmly implanted in the soil here in St. Mary's, spread throughout the colony.

My area of the Eastern Shore, directly across our beautiful Bay from this place, was an early benefactor of the tolerant attitude of the Calverts. In an era of considerable upheaval, Lord Baltimore was greatly disturbed by threats of encroachments upon his dominions lying across the Bay, which he called "The Eastern Shore below the Choptank." To meet these threats, he encouraged the settlers living in this city and the areas west of the Bay to settle on the Eastern Shore to protect his rights there. The emigration movement was not successful, but Lord Baltimore received support from a source that was unexpected. In March of 1660, the General Assembly of the colony of Virginia met in Jamestown and passed a harsh law against the sect of Quakers that had settled there, describing these devout people as "an unreasonable and turbulent sort of people, teaching lies, miracles, false vision, prophecies and doctrines tending to disturb the peace." The drastic law forbade the immigration of Quakers to Virginia and ordered into exile those already there, exacting heavy penalties for violations, including, so it is written, "the boring of the tongue with a red-hot iron."

Confronted with this act of oppression, Quakers living in Northampton and Accomack counties, the two Virginia counties on the southernmost extreme of the Eastern Shore peninsula, petitioned Calvert for permission to settle in Maryland. On November 6, 1661, Philip Calvert, the Governor of Maryland, issued a proclamation granting the petition. In all probability, these Quakers, being banished from their homes for religious beliefs and practices, had heard of the law on religious toleration which their neighbors in Maryland had enacted. The first settlement of Quaker refugees was on the south bank of the Great Annessex River, near its mouth. Shortly afterward, another settlement was made on the Manokin River. This latter group was comprised of Church of England people, who apparently had had no conflict with Virginia's restrictions on religious nonconformists and came