

failed to spur Maryland during the final five years of the war.

Prelude to Revolution

The accession in 1751 of Frederick Calvert, a "gay young blade," to the title of Lord Baltimore meant less interference from the Proprietor; therefore Marylanders transferred their complaints against the Proprietary to the British Government. Conflict between French and English only sharpened the point. Debts to English merchants and taxes on imports led Maryland, this time in common with other colonies, to take drastic action. Maryland takes credit for first refusing to pay taxes under the Stamp Act; actual repudiation took place in Frederick County on November 23, 1765. The British Parliament repealed the Townshend Acts in 1770, but a strong feeling of rebellion remained. Support of Boston was vigorous after that port was closed; and the Boston Tea Party of December 16, 1773, had its Maryland counterpart when a tea ship, the *Peggy Stewart*, was burned in Annapolis harbor on October 19, 1774.

The first Provincial Convention, composed of ninety-two men representing every county in Maryland, met June 22-25, 1774 in Annapolis. Denouncing the British blockade against Boston, the Convention proposed breaking off trade relations with Great Britain and selected delegates to attend the First Continental Congress. When the Convention met on July 26, 1775, following the Battle of Lexington, it proceeded grimly to the business of preparing for war and organizing a civil government apart from that of the Proprietary which, although mainly inactive, was still the legal government. A year later, a Convention was elected for the express purpose of framing a new constitution, which was adopted on November 8, 1776.

The Revolutionary War

From the first skirmish in Boston to the surrender at Yorktown, Maryland troops saw service. Despite frequent alarms, only twice did the British—at Vienna and in Cecil County enroute to Philadelphia—invade Maryland soil. General Smallwood's regiment formed Washington's rearguard at the Battle of Brooklyn and enabled him to withdraw his army successfully. Three Marylanders, John Eager Howard, Mordecai Gist, and Otho Holland Williams commanded the Maryland Line with distinction during the Southern campaigns. Baron Pulaski organized his famous Legion in Baltimore, while both Baron De Kalb and Lafayette spent considerable time in Maryland.