

HISTORICAL SKETCH OF MARYLAND

Exploration

John Cabot, a man of Italian birth employed by the English, was, in all probability, the first white man to see Maryland as he sailed along the eastern shore of Worcester County in 1498. Twenty-six years later Giovanni da Verazzano, who was another Italian working for French interests, passed the mouth of Chesapeake Bay. Half a century later the Bay was explored by Pedro Menendez Marques, the governor of Spanish Florida. In 1603 Captain Bartholomew Gilbert made a more careful exploration.

The intrepid Captain John Smith, who saw many other parts of North America, began in 1608 to carry out the instructions of the London Virginia Company to "find some spring which runs the contrary way toward the East India sea." With fourteen companions in "an open barge of two tunnes burden," Smith started up the Chesapeake. Every inlet and bay "fit for harbours and habitations" was entered, and all the islands were inspected. The results were incorporated in what Smith called "A Map of Virginia," published in England in 1612. Reprinted many times shortly thereafter, the map shows that Smith's voyagers paid close attention to the Eastern Shore, examined the Potomac carefully, but had a hazy idea of the western head of the Bay and only a generalized notion of the lower Western Shore. In 1670 Augustine Herman, a cartographer from the New Netherlands Colony, completed a more detailed map of Maryland. As compensation Lord Baltimore granted him 5,000 acres of land in what is now Cecil County.

Aborigines

To John Smith, also, we owe our first knowledge of the pre-European settlers on the land of what was later Maryland. Smith's account is bewildering with Indian names; one soon recognizes the adaptations of these same queer-sounding names in present-day Maryland. The Virginia explorer speaks of Yingoteagues, Assateagues, Marumscos, Annamesses, Wiccocomicos, Nanticokes, Conoys, Trasquakers, Choptanks, Monoponsons, Matapeakes, Ozinies, Tockwoghes, Nattwas, Susquehannocks, Conestogas, Piscattoways, Chopticos, Mattawomans, Patuxents, Aquasocks, Secowocomocos, and others. Despite this multiplicity of names, all these Indians were of Algonquin stock, save for the Susquehannocks at the headwaters of the Bay and the Anacostans on territory around present-day Washington.