

a successful insurrection engineered by Protestant elements is in the realm of speculation.

Armed with voluminous royal instructions, Copley presided over the enactment of a new corpus of law for the province; all the earlier acts still in effect were repealed but many of the new statutes adopted the substance of proprietary laws. One of the first acts of the legislature formally established the Anglican Church and abolished the practice of religious toleration; the counties were divided into parishes and all "taxables" were compelled to contribute to their support. Several made provision for a judicial system and established various criminal offenses; others provided for the appointment and defined the duties of various administrative officers; still others regulated the economy of the province.¹⁰

Plagued by ill-health, Copley died in September 1693, leaving unsolved the many problems constituting the legacy of years of disturbance or unrest coupled with misrule or lax administration. His successor Francis Nicholson, a hardened colonial administrator (New York and Virginia) who had been named as lieutenant governor of Maryland in 1691, did not enter upon the duties of his office until July 1694. Capable, energetic, of firm purposes and inclined to be autocratic, Nicholson speedily embarked upon an ambitious program calculated to restore the province to solvency, to strengthen the royal prerogative, to support the established church, to maintain law and order, to supervise the administration of justice, to strengthen the colony's defenses, to suppress illegal trading and otherwise to complete the legislative program embarked upon by his predecessor. Such energetic measures gave rise to a constitutional struggle between the executive and the Assembly and inevitably bred opposition; a new group of dissidents arose in the province, including some such as John Coode, a leader of the anti-proprietary forces in 1689.

As part of Nicholson's program the capital was removed from the unfriendly Catholic climate of St. Marys to the Protestant community on the Severn River (Anne Arundel Town) which came to be called Annapolis. This move not only recognized religious differences but also the fact that for some years the trend of population had been steadily northward from the original settlement at St. Marys, moving up the Chesapeake Bay and the various rivers flowing into it.¹¹ It was for this same reason that the provincial legislature soon saw fit to carve out a new county along the middle and upper reaches of the Potomac and Patuxent Rivers.

What were the characteristics of the province of Maryland in the closing years of the seventeenth century? What were the characteristics of the newly-established Prince Georges County?

Plantations were scattered in open country from the head of Chesapeake Bay along both shores to the Potomac and Pocomoke Rivers and up the banks of numerous navigable waterways. The inhabitants were still clustered in greater numbers where the colony had first been seated—along the Potomac and Patuxent Rivers and around St. Marys and Annapolis. Across the Bay, plantations were concentrated along the Elk, Chester and Choptank Rivers and farther south in Dorchester and Somerset Counties.¹² There were few towns and the inhabitants generally lived at a distance from one another.

10. For the "four score and four" laws passed at the May-June 1692 Assembly see 13 *MA* 425-561. For Copley's instructions see 8 *id.* 263-70. A summary of the 1692 legislation appears in Steiner, *The Royal Province of Maryland in 1692*, 15 *MHM* 125, 139-68 (1920). On Copley see Sioussat, *Lionel Copley, First Royal Governor of Maryland*, 17 *MHM* 163 (1922).

11. 19 *MA* vii-viii; Holland, *Anne Arundel Takes Over From St. Mary's*, 44 *MHM* 42-61 (1949).

12. Morriss, *Colonial Trade of Maryland, 1689-1715*, *JHUS*, Series XXXII, No. 3 (1914) 9; Mereness, *Maryland as a Proprietary Colony* 105 (1901); *CSP, Col.*, 1693-96, No. 1916.