

Pilgrims. Happily the choosing of one's faith, whether religious or political, is no longer a burning issue in America, but we should ever remember that it is not an issue today only because men and women like those landing in St. Mary's County took up arms to kill it.

Moreover, there was an additional matter at stake. It concerned the whole principle of freedom, and involved the broad question of self-determination. The Maryland Pilgrims put forth their efforts for the dignity of the human race. Theirs was a bold and dangerous proceeding because to pursue such a course meant danger of death or of penal servitude.

In those days, unhappily, minorities right here in America had to fear for their lives, for no other reasons than that they were minorities. From the very first, Maryland became the sanctuary of those unhappy exiles. But Maryland went further than that. With the adoption of the Act of Toleration in 1649, our State became the first and only American colony whose Government pledged itself to the protection of the human conscience.

No one could believe that such an example could go unproductive. It might well be called the Maryland Way. Merely to believe in liberty, to wish for it, to interpret dreams of it, was not enough for our Free State forefathers. They took action upon their beliefs. They wrote it into the tablet of our laws. Soon other colonies followed the example. Today, our citizens, the inheritors of the Maryland Way, have derived an undoubted advantage. Our citizens early formed the habit of liberal thinking and of liberal action. It was a natural sequence that they formed the habit of progressive Government.

The spirit of the early Maryland Pilgrims, which as ever characterized our citizens, still manifests itself. It came down to us through the war of the Revolution. It expressed itself at the Annapolis Tea Party, when the Peggy Stewart was burnt; at the Battle of North Point, which gave us the Star Spangled Banner, it resides today in our people, who still insist upon deciding their own problems, without unnecessary interference, without recourse to prejudice or backward looking.

Another and more earthly reason which brought the Ark and Dove to our Shores, was that the Pilgrims were looking for a desirable place to live, and history does not record that they regretted their choice. Generations following them agreed that they could not have found a more desirable location. Here they found a tide-water rich with the yield of its produce; here was fertile soil to grow their crops; rivers to link the inland settlements with the water front; here were mountains where scenic grandeur united with minerals and timber; here was a climate that was temperate, and a geographical location that was central; here was the threshold of the South—the gateway to the North.

In the State House at Annapolis there is preserved the Great Seal of Maryland. On it is depicted an image with which all are familiar, the Calvert Coat-of-arms, upheld on one side by a fisherman, on the other side by a farmer. That was the ancient symbol of Maryland, the people upholding the Government. The modern symbol is no different except that others have come to the help of the fisherman and the farmer. If we were to add the professional and business people, the scientists and the craftsmen, the picture would not be changed, it would only be completed. If we were to note the great contribution since made by Maryland women, the symbol would be adorned. Thus is