

but the colonists, true Marylanders even then, had cherished too long and too fondly their own ideas of liberty, and had come too far a journey to establish them, to submit any longer to domination by any proprietor or ruler, no matter how benign. And their action constitutes perhaps the most striking example of the effort to secure local self-government shown by the colonists in any of the original thirteen colonies. By 1650 the Assembly they had set up, had been divided into two houses, the system still in use in our State today.

Possibly, if you have sat in upon some of the sessions of the Maryland House of Delegates, you may have noticed the Clerk of the House come in with a mace, which he carefully planted in its receptacle on his desk as the Speaker called the House to order, and as carefully removed at the ending of the session, to place in the House safe until the chamber should reconvene. The mace is a symbol, brought down from the earliest days, to indicate that the House is composed entirely of representatives of the freemen of the State, owing allegiance to no one but the constituents they represent. In those days the House met annually, with elections every third year. That their insistence upon conducting their own affairs did not always meet with the approval of the proprietors is indicated by the fact that in 1670 the Governor, Charles Calvert, sought to check growing opposition to his policy by disenfranchising all freemen who did not have a freehold of 50 acres, or a visible estate of 40 pounds sterling. As may well be judged from the temper of his colonists, he did not succeed in his efforts.

In the years immediately preceding the Declaration of Independence, I need hardly remind you as students of our State history, the practice of self-government had become so firmly ingrained in the residents of Maryland that on occasion they offered resistance not only to the proprietary, the royal governor, Parliament and the King, but also to what they considered the unwarrantable encroachments of the Continental Congress. As a member of the United States of America, Maryland, at an early date, took a stand which had far-reaching consequences for the good of the new nation. Her delegates refused to sign the Articles of Confederation until those States claiming territory between the Allegany Mountains and the Mississippi, north of the Ohio—Virginia, New York, Massachusetts and Connecticut—should surrender their claims. Her opposition caused these states to yield, and measureably strengthened the Union because it brought into the possession of the United States the first territory in which all the States had an interest, and out of which new States could be created.

MARYLAND DAY CELEBRATION

University of Maryland, March 24, 1939

College Park

THREE hundred and five years ago tomorrow the shores of what is now St. Mary's County were the scene of an historic event—the landing of the English colonists who were to open up in this, our sovereign State of Mary-