

HISTORICAL SKETCH

EMBRACING AN ACCOUNT OF THE

PROGRESS OF INVESTIGATION CONCERNING THE PHYSICAL FEATURES AND NATURAL RESOURCES OF MARYLAND.

INFORMATION ACQUIRED DURING COLONIAL DAYS REGARDING THE PHYSICAL FEATURES AND NATURAL RESOURCES OF THE STATE.

The Chesapeake Bay was probably known to some extent to the Spaniards early in the 16th century, as there is good evidence that a special expedition was sent to the region many years before the English attempted to establish themselves in any part of the American continent. An account of this expedition is to be found in a book¹ published at Madrid in 1723.

Although the Chesapeake Bay was doubtless thus early entered by Spanish explorers, the first account of the physical characteristics of the Maryland area was given by Captain John Smith,² who, in an open boat with a few companions, began an exploration of the Chesapeake Bay and its numerous tributaries in the year 1608. During the two trips which he made into the upper portion of the Chesapeake during the summer of that year, the shores of the Bay were surveyed as far as the Susquehanna river. The harbor of Baltimore was probably entered and the Potomac river was ascended as far as the falls above Georgetown. The intervening portions of the country were also explored, and the map which Captain Smith prepared shows with remarkable correctness the outlines of the regions which he visited.

¹ *Ensayo Cronologico para la Historia de la Florida por Don Gabreil de Cardenas y Cano.*

² *The Generall Historie of Virginia, London, 1624.* See Bibliography.