

Tudor-Stuart society could be transplanted. Prospective investors could foresee orderly settlement in which land development would bring profits.⁹

Plans of this type for English colonies went back as far as the last third of the 1500s. Some aimed at restoring in the New World an older English political structure based on the powers of great nobles who owed allegiance to the king, but ruled within their own domains without crown interference in internal affairs. It is significant for the history of Maryland that some of these projects hoped to resettle English Catholics, who were severely treated in Elizabethan England. For example, Sir Humphrey Gilbert's plan for colonizing much of eastern North America relied on attracting Catholic gentlemen who would move to his territory with their tenants. He envisioned himself as Lord Paramount with powers to subgrant land to be held of him, not the crown. This practice had been forbidden in most of England since the thirteenth century. The investors who received these grants in turn were to create subgrants and so on down the line of subdivision. Each would acknowledge submission to the next landholder above him in a feudal pyramid, but exercise jurisdiction over his own tenants. Included would be rights for each landholder to hold courts in his own name. To us such a colonization project seems fanciful, but before Gilbert's death in 1583 a number of prospective English Catholic investors showed serious interest in his feudal utopia. In 1605, Sir Thomas Arundel of Wardour briefly promoted a similar project. He was a friend of Calvert's—his daughter Anne married Calvert's son Cecil—and Arundel may well have introduced Calvert to the history of early plans for Catholic resettlement based on feudal hierarchies.¹⁰