

probably did not see this policy as the social experiment we judge it to have been. The plan was born of political necessity, not of utopian dreams, and despite some lapses, it worked until 1689.¹⁷

Although the charter provided little accountability to the crown, this fact did not enable the proprietor to be a tyrant. He needed settlers and a successful enterprise required their cooperation. He could not treat Maryland inhabitants in ways that seemed to them unreasonable and hope to keep them in his colony. Consequently government in Maryland developed in much the same way as it did in other colonies, with an assembly of freemen who successfully acquired the power to initiate legislation and with courts of law that resembled those of contemporary England. Indeed, over the years the very fact that the proprietor had such great powers led Marylanders to insist on cleaving more closely to English law than did the courts and legislatures of other colonies.¹⁸

George Calvert's vision of a feudal society never came into being and there is little evidence that his son tried to force Maryland inhabitants to live under manorial jurisdictions. In an unpeopled country land was cheap and wages were high. Immigrants might start out first as servants and then become tenants of a manor lord, but soon they could pay for land of their own. About sixty lords of the manor were created over the first thirty years, but they never played the role the Lords Baltimore had planned for them. Seventeenth-century Maryland became a land of yeoman planters, not a land of great lords of manors to whom all lesser inhabitants owed obedience.¹⁹

Cecil Calvert had the wisdom and skill to modify policies as necessary. When he died in 1676 his rule had survived years of English civil war and colonial disruption