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False Emissaries: The Jesuits among the Piscataways in Early Colonial Maryland, 1634-1648

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False Emissaries: The Jesuits among the Piscataways in Early Colonial Maryland, 1634-1648

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ABSTRACT

Historians of seventeenth-century Maryland have tended to paint the Native Piscatways and their related cultures as the passive victims of colonization. Although these indigenous inhabitants were characterized as friendly and welcoming by English observers, their passivity is often cited by historians as the reason for the Piscataways' eventual disappearance from their traditional lands. Drawing primarily from the annual reports and other materials composed by the English Jesuits of colonial Maryland, this thesis attempts to reconstruct the Piscataway perspective and provide appropriate motives for the Piscataways' interactions with Europeans and their subsequent conversions, arguing that within the Piscataways' cultural context conversion could be seen as a means of forming an alliance with the English colonists. As they were also threatened by the Susquehannocks, the tribe that had benefitted from affiliations with the English colony at Jamestown, the Piscataways made a calculated response to the arrival of the new colonists, believing that these newcomers could serve as a buffer from their traditional enemies and also provide access to the European goods that served both utilitarian and spiritual purposes. To form their alliance the Piscatways, as evidenced by the actions of the tayac Kittamaquund, reached out specifically to the English who were most frequently among them: the Jesuits. The Piscataways viewed their relationship with the Jesuits as reciprocal in nature. Both parties asked things of the other, and received material assistance and support. However, the Jesuits were not the emissaries of the Maryland colony that the Piscataways believed them to be. Conflict between the Jesuits and the political leaders of the colony, including Lord Baltimore and the governor of the colony, over claims to land and the Jesuits' privileged status rendered the priests outliers in Maryland's colonial society. At this time of conflict, the Piscataways provided the Jesuits with a secure setting in which to conduct their work, and as a result the priests wrote about their indigenous converts as their true and most supportive congregation. In this sense, the alliance that the Piscatways had forged was secure. However, the connection between the Jesuits and the rest of the colony was not, and when the religious order suffered the attacks of the English Civil War and as a result were forced to withdraw from their Native converts, the Piscataways found that they had failed to ally themselves with the colony as a collective whole. Thus, it was neither through inaction nor docility, but instead through a strong but misdirected effort that the Piscataways found themselves without effective allies and eventually had to abandon their traditional lands. However, their interactions with the Jesuits were fundamental in shaping the politics of both Maryland and Virginia.
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This thesis is dedicated to my teachers.
Historians of seventeenth-century Maryland tend to paint the Native inhabitants of what would become the new colony as the passive victims of an English occupation. Most narratives are either directly or obliquely complimentary of Maryland’s indigenous inhabitants, pointing out the luck Lord Baltimore’s group of colonists had in choosing land that was occupied by a more peaceful, welcoming people than those with whom the English settlers of Jamestown would ultimately interact. The result of such a characterization is to subsequently credit the Piscataways’ friendly attitudes as the reason they were unable to secure a lasting place Maryland’s colonial society, as they made way for the new arrivals and were ultimately pushed out of the region. By looking only at the final outcome of colonization, historians have failed to recognize the Piscataways’ own motives in their interactions with English colonists and the diverse ways they actively sought to secure their interests. They did not offer peace because they lacked the initiative to act in another way, but because such a welcome served as part of a calculated negotiation to obtain protection, material benefits, and spiritual power. As a result, although colonization did occur, the Piscataways and their Native neighbors had an equal hand in dictating the course of action that process would take.

Clayton Colman Hall, a member of the Maryland Historical Society and editor of the 1910 Narratives of Early Maryland, which is still the definitive compilation of primary sources cited by historians today, offers a traditional account of colonial
Maryland in which the Piscataways are depicted in a passive role. In his introduction to the 1635 narrative *A Relation of Maryland* Hall first identifies the more “salubrious situation of St. Mary’s upon a high bluff overlooking the river” in contrast to the “malarious” location of Jamestown as the cause of the former’s success. But Hall also contends that equally important as the colony’s geographic location was the fact that “[t]he lot of the Marylanders was moreover cast among the Pascataways, a gentle and peaceful tribe of Indians, who received them with hospitality and gladly furnished them with shelter and provisions.”¹ Nearly eighty years later, historians were still relying on this trope of the peaceful and welcoming indigenous inhabitants to explain the experience of colonists in Maryland. In his extensive survey of the history of the colony, Robert J. Brugger claims that “[t]he settlers could hardly have hoped for such a welcome” and Marylanders benefitted from a “lucky draw” because “[t]he tribes living within Baltimore’s grant...were truly peaceful.”² Moreover, for Brugger the presence of Europeans on the Piscataways’ land was not questioned by them because they possessed a “pristine sense of property” such that “in the minds of the Indians, tribal land belonged to everyone,” a fact which the new arrivals were able to exploit.³

Narratives such as these suggest that there was something uniquely passive and friendly in the attitude of the Piscataways, a fortuitous quality which rendered them eager to welcome new neighbors and be open to conversion. Hall and Brugger are not entirely at fault for their assessments of the Piscataways’ temperaments, however, for they were relying on the testimony of the European settlers of Maryland. When speaking of the

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³ Ibid., 9.
eagerness with which the Native inhabitants shared their food and resources, the Jesuit Father Andrew White, a participant in the first wave of Maryland’s colonization, attributed the generosity to their “being (as they all generally be) of a very loveing and kinde nature,” a claim which would be supported by a later Jesuit report that stated “in their disposition they are docile.” Writing from a similar perspective, the author of *A Relation of Maryland* sought to overturn Captain John Smith’s published conclusions “that the People are War-licke, and have done much harme to the English” by insisting that “the Natives are not onely become peaceable, but also friendly.” The mistake of later historians was simply to take these narratives at face value and fail to reconstruct a more comprehensive understanding than those captured by the descriptions of the early settlers. While many were interested in understanding the deeper motivations and experiences of the English colonists, the same attention was rarely, if ever, applied to the Native inhabitants. Brugger’s only attempt to explain the reasoning of the Piscataways is to suggest that Father White “may have portrayed a people who knew the futility of resistance,” a theory which only serves to paint them as a culture which cultivated passivity.

To understand the course of events in early colonial Maryland, the Piscataways cannot be characterized as passive participants in the process of colonization, nor should their conversions to Christianity be attributed solely to the efforts, or perhaps the exaggerations, of Jesuits and their written accounts. In contrast to this assessment, it is

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clear that the Piscataways acted with purpose and considerable experience in their interactions with the Jesuits and other colonists. In addition to the informed choice the Piscataways made when allowing English settlers to occupy land in their territory, those that converted had their own motivations for associating with and taking up the ceremonial practices of the Jesuits. The attributes of conversion, including wearing English clothing, adopting new patterns of behavior, and acknowledging new social relationships, were initiated by the Piscataways within their own cultural context as a means of forming and securing an alliance with the colonists of Maryland. As evidenced by the Piscataways’ leader Kittamaquund, conversion was not a failure to resist but an action taken with the intent of providing lasting protection and other benefits for his people. Unfortunately, conversion served not to link the Piscataways to the entirety of the English colony but instead to one faction in complicated, internal political struggle: the Jesuits. The Piscataways did succeed in forging an alliance, but when their allies the Jesuits fell out of political favor with Lord Baltimore and the governor of the colony, the Piscataways found that the benefits of their association were fleeting.

**Part I – The View from Yaocomaco**

When the *Ark* and the *Dove*, the two ships that carried the first wave of English settlers bound for the new colony of Maryland sailed up the Chesapeake in 1634, the Piscataways’ reaction to the appearance of English colonists was not one of naiveté, but rather a calculated response that was the result of many generations of interactions with Europeans. The Piscataways approached the English with the objective of extracting both
material and military assistance. Moreover, they did not just see the English as presenting the possibility of this assistance in some vague way; rather, they were well-experienced in the use of European goods and were able to anticipate exactly what forms of support the occupants of the Ark and the Dove could offer. Anthropologist Helen C. Rountree argues that “from the 1640s...the native people were sophisticated consumers who knew what they wanted and would not settle for second best.” Therefore, “[b]y and large all efforts to deny the Indians the goods they really wanted were doomed to failure” because when refused desired items by a particular contingent of traders, they would bring their furs elsewhere.7

The indigenous peoples of the Chesapeake had plenty of time to develop such preferences since throughout the sixteenth century the waterway had been explored by both the French and the Spanish and had been named the “Bay of St. Mary’s” by conquistadors in Florida as early as 1570. When Captain John Smith explored the Chesapeake north of Jamestown in the summer of 1608, he found various tribes already in possession of European goods. His was not the only visit to the Piscataways by an occupant of Jamestown, for from 1610 to 1621 Virginians including Samuel Argall, Thomas Savage, and Henry Spelman travelled north hoping to establish their own footholds into the fur trade.8 The most successful of these was Henry Fleet, who had spent five years as a captive of the Nacotchanks as a young man and was perhaps more fluent in their language than English by the time of his release. He was also among the

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8 J. Frederick Fausz, “Present At the ‘Creation’: The Chesapeake World That Greeted the Maryland Colonists,” Maryland Historical Magazine 79, no. 1 (Spring 1984), 7-8.
few to have prolonged interactions with the Piscataways in particular, for in 1631 he visited the Yoacomoacos, very close to the eventual location of St. Mary’s City.9

Fleet reports that he was instrumental in incorporating the area that included the Piscataways into the European fur trade, by instructing them to preserve their beaver pelts for trade rather than ceremoniously burning the excess as was their practice. However, when he returned to collect pelts the following year he found that another trader had already arrived. Despite having missed out on the opportunity to acquire an enormous haul of furs, the Patawomeck werowance still offered him 114 pelts to preserve good relations as well as an additional 880 pounds of beaver from other tribes. Fleet then moved on to trade with the Massawomecks, an Iroquoian nation that had recently moved into the area and were causing trouble for its long-time inhabitants. From Fleet’s perspective, he had found what historian J. Frederick Fausz has termed “the pelt-man’s Eldorado”—a new foothold from which to extract the most valuable resource the Chesapeake had to offer to its European colonists, among a people who were seemingly as yet unattached to a particular trader.10 If Fleet could secure a connection, he alone could reap the available wealth from this relationship. To do so, Fleet needed the approval of the tayac (the Piscataways’ leader) so that the more firmly entrenched tribe could serve as middlemen in the trade with the new arrivals. It was only with this approval secured that Fleet was able to obtain the wealth he envisioned from the area.11 But viewing this encounter from Fleet’s perspective fails to acknowledge the many reasons the Piscataways would be equally amenable to forming ties of loyalty to

9 Ibid., 10.
European traders. Since the English had settled at Jamestown, the Piscataways had watched their own traditional enemies grow wealthy from trade, and more importantly, reap military support from their alliances with traders. Thus, “accustomed to dealing with incursions by other peoples,” as historian James Merrell has described the Piscataways’ situation, they were able to reason how best to use the appearance of the latest arrivals to their advantage.12

However, even with the understanding of how an alliance with the English could be beneficial, the Piscataways’ initial reaction to the appearance of new ships on the Chesapeake was defensive, further evidence of their long experience with Europeans and a clear refutation of the notion that their welcoming attitude was a result of their naïveté and “loveing and kinde nature.” Rather, William Claiborne, a Virginian and successful fur trader, used his knowledge of the Piscataways’ past interactions with the Spanish to attempt to shape the outcome of this new meeting. Claiborne was opposed to the establishment of the Maryland colony, because in the creation of the new colonial borders his own land and trading outpost on Kent Island were suddenly transferred from Virginia to Maryland. Because all lands of the latter colony were under direct control of the proprietor, Claiborne’s claims to them were no longer assured. In an attempt to dissuade settlement, he had warned the Native inhabitants that the English ships were in fact “6 Spanish ships…comeing to destroy them all,” and the Piscataways and their affiliated tribes reacted by arming themselves in anticipation.13 As a result, the colonists aboard the Ark and the Dove were initially met with hostility. This deception was but the first in a series of conflicts between Claiborne and officials in Maryland, and he would later be

charged with attempting to rally the Indians against them.\textsuperscript{14} However, with the help of Henry Fleet who acted as an interpreter, Governor Leonard Calvert was able to set up a meeting with the Piscataways’ tayac, convince them of their true identity, and overcome their initial hesitations.\textsuperscript{15}

Once the national identity of those aboard the \textit{Ark} and the \textit{Dove} was cleared up, the Piscataways were in fact eager to gain the military and material advantage of an association with Europeans in an effort to protect themselves from their most dangerous enemies, the Susquehannocks, “who come sometimes upon them, and waste and spoile them and their country,” as the Father White observed.\textsuperscript{16} The Susquehannocks were among those who had become powerful as the result of a successful trade relationship with residents in Virginia.\textsuperscript{17} Based on this model, and hoping to fight fire with fire, the Piscataways actively sought an alliance with the new arrivals. To cement this relationship and use the colonists as a military barrier against future assaults, they invited the settlers to live on their lands, selecting a location ideally suited for the Piscataways’ own interests. The land for St. Mary’s City, which was the name given to this first settlement, was freely offered by the Wicomicos, a related Piscataway tribe, and included what had been a Wicomico village called Yaocomaco. It proved to be ideal for the colonists due to the presence of an already cleared field which facilitated farming and its location on the Chesapeake, as travel by ship was the only feasible means of transportation at the time.

\textsuperscript{14} Thomas Yong, “Excerpt from a Letter of Captain Thomas Yon to Sir Toby Matthew (1634)” in \textit{Narratives of Early Maryland, 1633-1684}, Clayton Colman Hall, ed. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1910), 53-6.
\textsuperscript{15} White, “A Brief Relation (1634),” 41; “A Relation of Maryland (1635),” 72.
\textsuperscript{16} White, “A Brief Relation (1634),” 42; “A Relation of Maryland (1635),” 74.
and would serve as the capital of the colony until that designation was moved to Annapolis in the late seventeenth century. The colonists praised its many attributes, proclaiming that “the land is good, the arye wholesome and pleasant, the River affords a safe harbor for ships of any burthen, and a very bould shoare; fresh water, and wood there is in great plenty, and the place so naturally fortified, as with little difficultie, it will be defended from any enemie.”

Viewed from a European perspective, the Wicomicos were abandoning valuable land for the benefit of the colonists, or as one historian attests, the “Indians proved friendly” and “shortly agreed to quit the area peaceably, leaving their fields and dwellings to the adventurers.” A narrative such as this adds support to the depiction of the Piscataways as pliant, welcoming, and friendly to the new arrivals and lacking a substantial motive of their own. But the reality is that this location, described by Father White as “as noble a seat as could be wished, and as good ground as I suppose is in all Europe,” was not as valuable to the Native inhabitants, and intentionally locating the English there was a strategic decision for the Piscataways’ own benefit. First, locating the English further inland and away from the coast would have meant that they would be located in the best area for obtaining furs and thus have had direct access to the fur trade and would not have needed Indian allies as intermediaries. So allowing them to settle on the coast limited their economic independence in the Chesapeake and insured a need for mutual support. Second, having the English nearby would provide the Piscataways with closer access to the European technology with which they were already familiar and

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18 “A Relation of Maryland (1635),” 73.
20 White, “A Brief Relation (1634),” 41.
21 Rountree and Davidson, Eastern Shore Indians of Virginia and Maryland, 208.
create a trade outlet for surplus food in the form of corn, fish, and oysters, as well as tobacco. From the first moments of their arrival, the English colonists affirmed this aspect of their relationship. Father White claimed that the land had been purchased "for axes, hoes, cloth and hatchets" and the author of a Relation of Maryland reported that "of Fish, the natives brought them great store, and in all things dealt very friendly with them." Thirdly, and most importantly, the colonists would serve as a geographic buffer from further attacks by the Susquehannocks; to get to the Piscataways, their enemies would first have to maneuver around the English. As A Relation of Maryland concedes, the "Indians of Yocomaco fearing, had the yeere before ur arrival there, made a resolution, for their safety, to remove themselves higher into the Countrey where it was more populous." Thus the village whose abandonment had already been decided prior to the Ark's and the Dove's arrival was repurposed to provide a strategic advantage and secure new military allies and trade partners, because, as historian James D. Rice points out, "by welcoming the Marylanders they created a hefty obligation that the colonists would have, according to Algonquian values, to reciprocate." What the Europeans perceived primarily as complacency to their arrival was in reality a strategic move, as the piece of land upon which the English began to build their settlement was the location that had borne brunt of Susquehannock attacks.

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23 White, "A Brief Relation (1634)," 42; "A Relation of Maryland (1635)," 75.
24 "A Relation of Maryland (1635)," 74.
The European interpretation of these realities of war did not deny their existence but instead used these circumstances to further characterize the Piscataways as docile, lacking the brutality to resist the attacks from their enemies and asking the English to resist in their place. Although Father White conceded that Susquehannock attacks “made them more willing to enterteine us” he attributed this to the fact that they were “like lambes” ready to “yeeld themselves” and “glad of our company.”27 The Relation of Maryland presents the same justifications from the opposite angle, not speaking directly of the docility of the Piscataways but instead of “[t]he Sasquehanocks (a warlike people that inhabite between Chesopeack bay, and Delaware bay).”28 In both circumstances, the Piscataways are denied any true credit in their negotiations and planning, instead citing their collective and unmalleable “very loveing and kinde nature” or, in the case of Father White, Divine intervention, as he calls the circumstances of settlement at St. Mary’s “miraculous” and concludes “Digitus dei est hic [This is the finger of God].”29

But it was not just the Susquehannocks moving in from the north that proved a threat, but also other tribes that had relationships with European allies. At the time of the Maryland colonists’ arrival, the Piscataways were “caught in a vice,” threatened from the North by the Susquehannocks pressing even farther south as they themselves were intruded upon by the Iroquois, and threatened from the South and the West by the Powhatan confederacy. Although the Piscataways were similar in organization to the Powhatans, they were “both small and weak” in comparison.30 The troublesome presence of Jamestown to the Piscataways had become clear during the Second Anglo-Powhatan

27 White, “A Brief Relation (1634),” 42.
28 “A Relation of Maryland (1635),” 74.
29 White, “A Brief Relation (1634),” 42.
30 Ferguson, Moyaone and the Piscataway Indians, 24.
War. In 1622 the chief Opechancanough and his Powhatan-Pamunkey alliance led a series of surprise attacks against the Virginia colonists, killing nearly a fourth of the colonists who had settled along the James River. The governor’s response to these raids reinvented diplomatic relations between Jamestown and the Powhatans and their allies, for instead of seeking to completely eliminate the confederacy through military defeat, they instead conducted twice-yearly raids with the objective of securing as much food supply as possible. Fausz argues that this turned the Powhatans into “Red Peasants” who provided the Virginia colony with enough to corn to leave their own laborers devoted to cultivation of the cash crop of tobacco and securing the colony’s financial success. The Virginians were only able to accomplish this with the assistance of other tribes such as the Patawomekes, Accomacs, and Accohannocks, who were all eager to join the Europeans in attacking their traditional enemies in the Powhatan Confederacy.

The alliance between Jamestown and the Indians was not one-sided, as the colonists continued to make strikes that benefited the northern tribes. Such attacks included the May 1623 poisoning of a gathering of Powhatan war chieftains and an assault in November against the Piscataways. In the latter, Governor Sir Francis Wyatt led 90 men up the Potomac and into the Piscataways’ territory, decimating a village in the Accokeek area in an attempt to protect the neighboring Patawomekes. As Fausz explains, “That so many Englishmen would journey so far and fight so fiercely for an Indian ally reveals the existence of an inter-ethnic interest group of some importance.” In other words, these trade relationships and alliances were not the result of chance

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31 Fausz, “Present At the ‘Creation’,” 9.
32 Ibid., 9-10.
interactions or of individuals taking advantage of encounters that happened to present them with assistance or material benefits. Rather, the situation on the Chesapeake involved complicated political alliances that were not only taken seriously by their members but involved multi-faceted responsibilities. Trade goods representing wealth and religious significance, food necessary for survival, and military assistance that may not be strategically necessary for all members but came from the notion of mutual aid, were woven together to create complicated and co-dependent relationships.

Wyatt's actions on behalf of the Patawomekes had far-reaching consequences, with the ultimate result of creating more enemies for Virginia. Having experienced an unprovoked attack, the Piscataways and other northern tribes were encouraged to ally with the beleaguered Opechancanough against the Virginians. Furthermore, it meant that when the *Ark* and the *Dove* sailed into the Piscataways' territory, the Native inhabitants had additional reasons to welcome the new arrivals, beyond the general rivalries between tribes that had pre-dated the presence of Europeans. Seeing the newfound strength their enemies possessed with the military support of Jamestown, it was possible that these new arrivals presented a force that could act as a counter-balance. Thus, the narrative that the Lord Baltimore's colonists found it fortuitous to have encountered a group of Native Americans whose dispositions were welcoming and pleasant is simply false. Rather, they encountered a group who, through experience and a strategic vision, hoped to use the presence of Europeans to their own material and military advantage and who set out to create an "an inter-ethnic interest group" of their own.

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34 Fausz, "Present At the 'Creation'," 10.
What was perhaps fortuitous, if anything, was that these Europeans already represented a faction naturally opposed to the forces in Virginia and would not immediately seek to assist the occupants of Jamestown in their own Indian campaigns. Because the colony represented a Catholic endeavor and claimed territory that had once been designated as a portion of Virginia, those on the *Ark* and the *Dove* were already aware that their very presence involved walking a delicate political tightrope, and they had equal need of the Piscataways’ support. The alliance that was struck was thus not a result of the passivity and friendliness of the Piscataways and neighboring tribes but because “[t]he Yoacomacos, other Piscataways, the Patuxents, and the Maryland colonists desperately needed one other [sic]” because they shared a common enemy, having “all experienced the hostility of the Virginians and had much to fear from powerful and fur-rich neighbors, both Indian and English.”

Scholars of the Chesapeake, including those referenced above, have taken care to show the complexity of the relationships between diverse tribes and European allies, but what historians have failed to appreciate is the methods the Piscataways used to attempt to create and preserve their new relationships, and the ways the political and religious divisions among the colonists in Maryland worked against the Piscataways’ efforts to entrench their alliance in a relationship of mutual support. Many historians, including Fausz, have noted how the fur trade along the Chesapeake “divided Englishmen from other Englishmen and Indians from other Indians in a fiercely competitive struggle for lands, markets, and trade goods.” But here Fausz is referencing the competition between colonies, such as Maryland and Virginia, and that between individuals, such as

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35 Ibid., 15.
the turmoil instigated by William Claiborne. The division between the political and religious authorities within Maryland and the impact that tension would have upon the Piscataways proved to be as instrumental to the larger narrative of indigenous peoples and the fur trade as the battles between colonies. Although the leaders of Maryland’s government, including the governor Leonard Calvert, were eager to secure an alliance with the Piscataways upon landing in Maryland with the objective of obtaining peaceful access to the land they believed their charter entitled them to, later it was the Jesuits who proved to be the most consistent link between the colonists and their Indian allies. Thus it was to the Jesuits that the Piscataways reached out, for these were the Englishmen who were most consistently among them and who were the most eager to interact. What the Piscataways failed to fully understand was the growing rift between that religious order and the government that had initially sent them, and how the priests no longer (if they had ever) served as emissaries for the rest of the colony.

After considering the many motives the Piscataways had to seek the support and mutual aid of European allies, the conversions of the Piscataways can be interpreted as an attempt to link themselves culturally, economically, and politically with the colony of Maryland as a collective whole. However, divisions between the Jesuits and Maryland officials (including Lord Baltimore himself) meant that the link the Piscataways had forged was of a far more limited nature than they had ever intended. Likewise, the misunderstandings over the religious identity of the colony and the disputed privileged status of its priests that led to the rift between the Society of Jesus and the Lord Baltimore himself meant that the Jesuits would turn to the Piscataways in their own time of need, finding in their converted communities the necessary support to continue their mission.
Because the missions themselves did not endure, one consequence of the pillaging during the English Civil War, scholars have reported the interactions between missionaries and Indians in Maryland as a tangent of the greater colonial narrative. To do so, however, misses completely the way these two groups, both fighting the effects of exclusion and persecution, saw in each other a method of mutual support. It was not due to a lack of experience or effort, but only because the Piscataways, as led by the tayac Kittamaquund, aligned themselves with the outliers of the Maryland English society, that they failed to secure for themselves a more integral role in the entangled network of colonial alliances as it was forming. Nonetheless, their interactions with the Jesuits and resultant contributions to the political infighting were central to the narrative of colonial Maryland as the presence of these political and religious factions helped to dictate the course in which the entire enterprise unfolded.

**Part II: A Congregation in Want of a Catechist**

For most historians of early colonial Maryland, the most significant fact to be noted about the Jesuit missionary activities among the Piscataways is that ultimately they were a failure. Whatever admiration scholars are willing to offer to the Society is always qualified with an account of the unfortunate end of the missions. In the words of historian Raphael Semmes, “One cannot help but admire their self-sacrificing zeal, however futile the object they had in view.”\(^{37}\) Distracted by the outcome, scholars pay little attention to the fourteen years that preceded this failure, and instead move on, just as the Jesuits did,

to the order’s vast manorial system, their ministry to the English population, and their acquisition of vast numbers of African slaves. Many narratives about the colony operate under the presumption that these other topics deserve more consideration because they endured. And indeed, the events surrounding the end of the missions were sordid. Having been released from imprisonment in England in 1648, Father Thomas Copley returned to the Jesuit mission on the Potomac River for which he served as the superior to find its chapel destroyed, its Indian converts deserted, and the past decade of work having been in vain. His losses were just one among many when in 1645 the English Civil War boiled over into Maryland and the Protestant Richard Ingle carved a path of destruction through the colony, encouraging his mob of followers to target property owned by Catholics and anyone who refused to take the oath of allegiance to Parliament.38 Fathers Copley and Andrew White were arrested and transported back to England in chains; the three remaining Jesuits in the colony somehow escaped to Virginia, where they soon died in unknown circumstances.39 Although the Society of Jesus returned to Maryland, never again would its work among the Native inhabitants regain its former foothold and match its prior level of success.

However, the impermanence of the Jesuit mission among the Native peoples of Maryland does not undermine its importance. Without this mission, the Jesuits would not have survived as a religious order in Maryland. Much has been said about the difficulties the Jesuits encountered in gaining access to and communicating with the Piscataways and their affiliated tribes, and how at such times the missionaries turned their attentions to the

European population, serving those who were already Catholic and striving to convert the Protestants who composed the majority. But the moments when Jesuits faced the opposite difficulty deserve equal attention. As tensions between the Society of Jesus and Lord Baltimore, the proprietor of the colony, grew and privileges awarded to the priestly class were increasingly circumscribed, the Jesuits found a secure footing among their Native congregations. At these times it was the Piscataways who secured the Jesuits’ status and validated their existence in the colony. Without them, Lord Baltimore would have had greater opportunity to remove the Jesuits from the colony entirely, an idea he is known to have contemplated and taken action to execute.40 The mission among the Piscataways may not have endured, but only through its existence, albeit temporary, did the Jesuits manage to maintain their presence in the colony, participating in the development of Maryland’s society even today.

In 1634, those aboard the *Ark* and the *Dove* sailed up the Chesapeake Bay with the intent to plant an English colony that would be a safe haven for English Catholics. But even more importantly, it was an economic venture meant to generate income for the Calvert family. This was not the first attempt that the family had made. The recent Catholic convert George Calvert, the first Lord Baltimore, originally used the income from his estates in Ireland to establish a colony in Newfoundland that he named Avalon. When he crossed the Atlantic in 1627 to settle in that colony he brought his household with him, including his wife and most of his children, but he found the winters too cold and the colonists too sick for the colony to prosper. Cutting his financial losses, he abandoned the project, but before leaving the New World he first sailed to Virginia to...

investigate if the land there was more suitable for habitation. Assured that it was, he returned to England to see if the king, Charles I, would be generous enough to grant him another charter to attempt a colonial venture a second time, now with the added complication of settling on lands for which there already existed an English claim. After a long political struggle with outraged members of the Virginia Company he succeeded, only to pass away and leave the entire enterprise in the hands of his eldest son, Cecil Calvert, the second Lord Baltimore. Cecil organized the venture, recruited colonists, continued to meet the legal challenges presented by the Virginia Company, secured assistance from the Society of Jesus, and financed the colony. But unlike his father, he never crossed the Atlantic and never visited the colony with which his name would forever be associated. Instead, he appointed his brother Leonard Calvert as governor and entrusted him with the care of the approximately 140 colonists. Among their number were two Jesuit priests, Fathers Andrew White and John Altham, a lay brother named Thomas Gervase, and their thirty indentured servants. This original Jesuit contingent set an unbroken pattern for the Maryland mission, as there were never more than five Jesuits in the colony at a given time, and the total number sent there before 1658 never exceeded eighteen.

One of the reasons that the Jesuit missionary activities in Maryland have received relatively little attention from scholars is that both their achievements and as well as the primary source documents that recount them pale in comparison to their compatriots in New France. Thus, any scholar specifically interested in the Jesuits as missionaries is

more apt to seek out the voluminous *Jesuit Relations*. Although there is no evidence of any contact between these two missionary networks, a comparison of the two can still reap helpful information.\footnote{Codignola, “Roman Catholic Ecclesiastics”.} Church historian Luca Codignola, in his careful assessment of the two endeavors, sees little distinction between the training backgrounds and objectives of the two groups of Jesuits, the primary difference being the fame awarded to the latter due to their publications.\footnote{Ibid.} Other historians have argued, however, that the fundamental difference between the two communities was the financial backing that the French Jesuits received. By 1643 the French Jesuits had baptized 2,700 Native American converts, a feat that the Maryland Jesuits did not even come close to matching.\footnote{Axtell, “White Legend,” 5-6.}

Another issue is the careful legal parameters in which the English Jesuits were forced to operate, in contrast to the machinations of the French. Whereas the French were boastful of their many accomplishments, those in Maryland “seemed almost reluctant to put their ideas and impressions on paper.”\footnote{Cushner, *Soldiers of God*, 306.} They also adopted a code in their writings. No priest was referred to by his true name, a habit they had also practiced while operating in England itself, as evidenced by the fact that Father Thomas Copley appeared in the official reports as “Philip Fisher” when the government raided the Jesuit Residence at Clerkenwell.\footnote{Edwin W. Beitzell, “Thomas Copley, Gentleman,” *Maryland Historical Magazine*, Vol. 47, No. 3 (Sept. 1952): 215.} In fact, it was not until the late nineteenth century that American historians figured out that the “Thomas Copley” who appeared in the records of the Maryland Assembly was the same as the “Philip Fisher” who was documented in Jesuit...
sources. It was not just names that appeared in code. “Parishioners” could be presented as “customers,” “priests” as “gentlemen,” and “chapels” as “houses.” Clearly, the Maryland Jesuits were operating in a culture of secrecy, one that originated from their experiences ministering in a country where being a Catholic priest put one’s very life in danger.

The organization of the Catholic Church in England in the early seventeenth century was somewhat unique and life for Catholics in this state-sponsored Protestant country proved to be tricky. Although many Catholics continued to live in England despite the penal law system that made it difficult through a series of stiff fines to abstain from attending Anglican services, the rule of thumb seemed to be to simply not draw too much attention to one’s aberrant beliefs. Some Catholics chose to make public statements about their faith, but on the whole those who practiced quietly and put on a good front about being Anglican were left to their own devices. Although it has been argued that the first Lord Baltimore George Calvert’s resignation of his position as Secretary of State occurred strictly for political reasons, it is worth noting that this happened immediately following his public conversion to Catholicism. Yet this was not the end of his political career, as his personal relationship to the king assured his continued place in English society. It was at this time that James I granted him lands in Ireland and the associated title of Baron of Baltimore.

49 Ibid., 209.
51 Krugler, English and Catholic, 16-7.
52 Ibid., 49, 69.
53 Ibid., 74.
The policies of the particular monarch were important for each generation of English Catholics to navigate, but despite the fact that efforts had been made to overturn Catholicism completely, the truth was that it endured, if only as an underground movement. This was especially true during the reigns of James I (r. 1603-1625) who was involved in negotiations for a time to marry his son to the Catholic Spanish infanta and of Charles I (r. 1625-1649) who married the Catholic Henrietta Maria of France. For political reasons they both maintained a gentle hand with the Catholics in their realm, which for the latter meant a happy alignment with the timing of the foundation of Maryland.54

The more difficult part of being Catholic in Protestant England was obtaining access to priests, which were fundamental for the laity to participate fully in their faith by receiving the sacraments. Although it was generally acceptable to be Catholic in England, it was punishable by death to be a Catholic priest in England, as this implied an alliance with the pope instead of an allegiance to the English monarch. As a result, the priesthood operated differently in England than in most areas. England was no longer formally incorporated in the Catholic Church, as there was no bishop and no secular hierarchy. Instead, it was considered a mission district, in which the regular orders and secular priests acted independently of each other. In 1623 the English province of the Society of Jesus was officially created with Richard Blount in charge as provincial.55 A report compiled by a papal envoy in 1637 reported that there were about 500 secular priests, 160

Jesuits, and less than 200 members of other orders in England. With no bishop to command them but operating under laws which restricted their movements, the Jesuits improvised, developing special relationships with members of the English gentry. Some Catholic nobles could afford private chapels and the financial support of a priest whom they would secretly keep as a member of their household. The system was beneficial to both sides; the gentry were able to exercise more control by personally selecting the man who would minister to their families, a privilege usually reserved to the bishop who would appoint secular clergy to a particular parish. Many of the Jesuits’ ranks would eventually be filled by the sons of noble families, who were sent away to be educated and would return to their home country to continue the cycle of ministry. And the Jesuits received economic support, shelter, and a base of operations for their missionary activities directed at the populace at large. The gentry were performing their Christian duty by helping the Catholic Church to endure the supposed temporary period of heretical rule. With this generous support from members of the nobility, the number of priests in England, including those who were Jesuits, slowly increased throughout the reign of James I, despite the looming threat of the execution.

Most Jesuits in England were English, but were forced to leave the country to continue their educations and to be ordained. Many of these would finish their studies at Oxford or Cambridge but would join the order outside of England at around the age of

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56 Codignola, “Roman Catholic Ecclesiastics”.
57 Krugler, English and Catholic, 113.
twenty-five. They would then continue at the Jesuit colleges such as those at Louvain and Valladolid. Later, often under an alias, they would return to England. Despite the dangers, their numbers were not insignificant. One estimate claims that there were 374 Jesuits in 1636 servicing an English congregation of 50,000-60,000 people or about one percent of the overall population.

This was true of almost all of the Jesuits who would later travel to the colony of Maryland; they were not only English by nationality but also products of an education abroad. The lives of two of the most active and important Jesuits involved in the Maryland mission clearly illustrate the entangled nature of Jesuit relationships to the system of influence involving Catholic gentry as well as ties outside England. Father Thomas Copley, who would eventually become the superior of the Maryland mission, was born in Madrid, but his grandparents had been one of the wealthiest untitled families in England at the advent of Queen Elizabeth's reign. Because they refused to convert, they decided to emigrate to Catholic Spain, but upon the death of the Protestant Queen in 1603 Copley and his siblings were returned to the family's estates in England. Two of Copley's sisters had already taken religious vows when he left to join the Jesuits in Louvain, transferring the substantial inheritance he was due to receive as the eldest son to his younger brother William. After finishing his studies he returned to England and had charge of the temporalities in general (he was responsible for ordering food and supplies)

59 Cushner, Soldiers of God, 300.
60 Krugler, English and Catholic, 148; Bossy, “Reluctant Colonists,” 149; Codignola, “Roman Catholic Ecclesiastics”.
for the London residence before becoming involved in the Maryland mission, when he began to work closely with a teacher from his old college, Father Andrew White.  

White was born in London and educated in France and Spain before being ordained and returning to England in 1605 as a priest and again in 1612 as an active Jesuit missionary. For the next two decades he bounced between teaching assignments at Jesuit colleges and duties in the English mission, and it is unclear when he and George Calvert first came in touch with one another. One of Calvert’s duties as Secretary of State was to monitor Catholic activity in England, which may have brought White to his attention. The first confirmed contact between the two is the letter Calvert wrote to White in 1628 from the Avalon colony in Newfoundland, perhaps requesting the Jesuit priests who showed up in the settlement the following year. Thus, even this early contact involved an act of patronage with Calvert, the wealthy nobleman, requesting priests for his extended and far-removed household.

The Jesuits that Calvert selected to participate in the settlement of his colony on the Chesapeake can be seen as operating in an extension of the English system. He believed that like all members of the gentry he could hand-select (and reject) the priests who would be ministering to his household. But the Jesuits, having been chosen, expected their half of the bargain as well: financial assistance and general support for the propagation of the faith. It is easy to see how in this system of secrecy, delicate political entanglements, and the need for mutual support, misunderstandings began to arise. Scholarship about the early colony tends to focus on the tensions between the second Lord Baltimore and the Jesuits in Maryland, with many authors feeling compelled to

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62 Krugler, English and Catholic, 113.
explain how Cecil Calvert could enforce seemingly "anti-Catholic" policies. But before the issue of how the Jesuits fell out of favor can be resolved, the nature of their preferential relationship must be explained. Although tensions arose when the Jesuits began asking for special privileges, their previous status had been one of favoritism. The Jesuits had had every reason to believe that they were in Lord Baltimore's good graces; there was a job he needed done, and they alone had been eager, not just willing, to do it.

Despite later tensions, at the outset of the colonial venture the Jesuits really had been chosen and other equally valid possibilities had been rejected as unsuitable. Lord Baltimore had the option of recruiting assistance from other orders or the secular clergy as well. In fact, on George Calvert's first colonial venture, the Avalon colony in Newfoundland, he did both. Five priests eventually accompanied him when he resettled his family in the New World in 1627: two Jesuits and three secular priests. The Jesuits, Alexander Baker and Lawrence Rigby, did not arrive in the colony until 1629 and Baltimore's motivations for adding them to the community are not clear. However, through the timing of their presence it can be inferred that they filled a need that was not being met. Regardless, the religious groups did not get along, which may have been why when Calvert made his second attempt at colonization, he realized he needed to choose sides. Calvert picked the Jesuits, further proof that led them to believe they had developed a special relationship with the Lord Baltimore.

For the Jesuits, this indication of preference for involvement in the Maryland venture was further affirmation of their victory in a long-standing feud. It had not always

63 See, for example Krugler, "Lord Baltimore, Roman Catholics and Toleration," 49-75.
64 Codignola, “Roman Catholic Ecclesiastics”.
been so clear that England should operate as a mission district. In 1625 the pope debated re-incorporating the province and sent Richard Smith to install himself as bishop. Many in the English Catholic community were extremely displeased by this decision. The regular orders, including the Jesuits, detested that the independence they had grown accustomed to utilizing would be limited. The gentry knew that open presence of a bishop would bring additional anti-Catholic resentment and increase their likelihood of getting caught by the system of penal laws. As a result, the attempt was a disaster.

Pegged with the less-than-glorious nickname of “the archpriest,” Smith was run out of England in 1631 and the pope stopped meddling. In this context, by choosing Jesuits to accompany the colonists, Baltimore had taken a side in a pre-existing quarrel. Like the rest of the Catholic gentry, he preferred this missionary order over secular clerics and their associated papal involvement. This was yet another way to indicate that the Society of Jesus was the preferred organization to take up the work at hand.

Moreover, the Jesuits were well-suited to the process of colonization. The second Lord Baltimore faced the difficult reality that English Catholics were simply not eager to emigrate. Although the situation in England was not ideal, it was tolerable and a series of known and understood problems were preferable to the unknown challenges that the wilderness of the Chesapeake would present. Clergy generally felt the same way; most saw the struggle to convert heretical Protestants and keep the Catholic Church in England alive as more pressing concerns. Moreover, those whose ritual life was centered on the preparation of food, care for the dead, and the sanctity of specific geographic locations,

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66 Ibid., 114.
as well as the country itself, were “not psychologically well adapted for transplanting itself across the Atlantic,” as historian John Bossy has suggested.67

But the Jesuits were different. Secular clergy and other orders could be expected to minister to the Catholic population of Maryland. But missionary endeavors, particularly among Native Americans, were one of the Jesuits’ primary goals, rendering them eager to participate in the settlement. Bossy has even suggested that Jesuits drew the converts to their order from the members of the English congregation who felt that the Anglican Church was too stifling for those with “the vocation of a spiritually active ministry,” in other words, a desire to become a missionary.68 By choosing the Jesuits, Lord Baltimore also associated himself with their network of recruitment. They were well-organized and disciplined, possessed a system of communication that spread across England and the rest of Europe, and the hope was that the order could continue to help him find additional priests as well as Catholic families to settle in the colony.69

Thus, it is not surprising that an early “advertisement” for the Maryland colony is attributed to Father Andrew White. In 1633 he wrote a report now called “An Account of the Colony of the Lord Baltimore” which was to be passed along to the General in Rome, promoting the endeavor and explaining its geographic suitability. White’s descriptions, which are profuse with praise, are based primarily on information gathered by the first Lord Baltimore, who had in fact travelled to the Chesapeake, as well as an account published by John Smith.70 White is keen to communicate the potential economic gains

68 Ibid., 152.
that the colony will offer, with its bounty of fish, woodlands for lumber, "fruitful vines," fertile soil, and navigable rivers "where there is such a lucrative trade with the Indians, that a certain merchant in the last year exported beaver skins to the value of 40,000 gold crowns." But before all this he opens with the most important goal of the enterprise, which serves to present the Jesuits as essential to its success, for "the Most Illustrious Baron has already determined to lead a colony into those parts, first and especially, in order that he may carry thither...the light of the Gospel and the truth." In White's composition, two central functions of the Jesuits are evident: the work that they will conduct in the colony as well as the influence they have to promote and endorse its success.

The first Lord Baltimore also had personal connections to members of the Jesuit order, many of whom would prove to be key players in the founding of the Maryland mission. First, it is possible that in 1629, during the campaign to resist the establishment of a Catholic episcopal system in England, George Calvert met Richard Blount, the Jesuit provincial, and they discussed a possible collaboration. Working together in Maryland would benefit both parties: Calvert would get Blount’s financial support, connections, and influence, and Blount would receive a link to a possible refuge in the event of increased prosecution of Catholics or even the imposition of the feared secular hierarchy.

Perhaps the most important benefit that the Jesuits offered that secured a place for them in the Maryland venture was their financial resources. Beginning in 1625 the Jesuits

71 Ibid., 8-10.
72 Ibid., 5.
in England experienced a steady growth in income, increasingly taking in more than they needed to directly support their English community. In 1625 they had the income to support 380 men, which was 8 fewer than their actual population. But by 1628 their income could support 440 men, which was 22 more than were present in the province. Later, they were even able to support a group of 13 German Jesuits who were fleeing the Thirty Years War. This control of funds peaked in 1636, when an income that was the equivalent of £11,271 could easily support 567 members, when the order in the English province only amounted to 514.\textsuperscript{74} At the same time, legal prohibitions against the Catholic Church owning lands meant that the Jesuits had limited ways to utilize their excess funds.\textsuperscript{75} This meant that the 1634 colonization of Maryland could not have come at a more suitable time for Jesuit financing. If nothing else, the Jesuits who accompanied the colonists could be expected to support themselves.\textsuperscript{76} But Bossy strongly implied in a 1982 article that based on the number of servants the three original Jesuits brought with them, these extra funds were syphoned off to invest in the Maryland colony, claiming that "it was in short, not just a Catholic venture, but a specifically Jesuit one."\textsuperscript{77}

If this is true, it is clear that long before arriving in the colony the Jesuits believed themselves to be on firm footing. But even if they did not provide substantial funding to the colonial project, they had plenty of other reasons to feel secure in their relationship to the proprietor of Maryland and his official representatives. They alone seemed excited at

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\item \textsuperscript{75} Bossy, "Reluctant Colonists," 156.
\item \textsuperscript{76} Krugler, \textit{English and Catholic}, 168.
\item \textsuperscript{77} Bossy, "Reluctant Colonists," 162.
\end{itemize}
the prospect; despite the first Lord Baltimore’s earlier involvement with secular priests, for this colonial venture he had restricted his solicitations to the Society of Jesus, many members of which were personal acquaintances, if not friends of his. Furthermore, the Jesuits possessed a zeal for missionary activity and a network of contacts that could attract future colonists. And they served a fundamental role in Maryland society by providing religious services to the Catholic colonists.

The writings of the Jesuits themselves, especially the annual letters that were sent to the General of the Society in Rome (in this case Mutius Vitelleschi) each year, emphasize the importance of the task of ministering to the Catholic members of the colony. The letters were actually composed by the Provincials of the Society, but consisted of the reports that the Provincials had received from the various priests under their charge. As the Maryland colony was considered by the Society of Jesus to be part of the English Province, these letters were drafted by Richard Blount or his successors Henry More and Edward Knott, referencing the writings of likes of Andrew White and Thomas Copley, but would have also contained information about events in England.

The first of these letters, dating from 1634, clearly articulates the two primary tasks of the Jesuits in Maryland, as “[t]heir purpose was, not only to work among the colonists, but also to devote themselves to procuring the conversion and salvation of the barbarians.”78 In the early years of the colony, it seems that due to their limited numbers, the Jesuits were never able to accomplish both these goals simultaneously. In the beginning, their efforts were focused almost entirely on the English population of the colony. Partially, this was not by choice. As the 1638 letter relates, “[t]he rulers of this

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78 “Extracts from the Annual Letters (1634),” 118.
colony have not yet allowed us to dwell among the savages, both on account of the prevailing sicknesses, and also because of the hostile acts which the barbarians commit against the English...Meanwhile, we devote ourselves more zealously to the English."\(^{79}\)

Given the relative freedom to practice Catholicism in Maryland, this was probably not a disappointment at first. And the authors are keen to report that these devotions were paying off as the Catholic community was thriving, on par with congregations in England. "As for the Catholics," reports the 1638 letter, "the attendance on the sacraments here is so large, that it is not greater among the Europeans, in proportion to the number of Catholics."\(^{80}\)

The presence of priests to perform the sacraments was necessary for the Catholic laity to practice their faith. The Jesuits spoke clearly to this role that they performed in the community, when they said that they "have buried very many, and baptized various persons."\(^{81}\) But they were also the only formal connection to the organized Church, so their duties were extended even further, filling the role of teachers and catechists. They wrote about the religious instruction they provided for the "more ignorant" as well as the formal lectures that were offered to the community. And lastly, they spoke of their role as nurses to the very ill, an all too common occurrence in the early years of settlement.\(^{82}\)

They even managed to save two Catholic servants from Protestant Virginia, by buying their indentures and transferring them to Maryland.\(^{83}\) In these reports the Jesuits painted a vivid portrait of their service to the colony and their entanglements with the personal and

\(^{79}\) "Extracts from the Annual Letters (1638)," 119.
\(^{80}\) Ibid., 122.
\(^{81}\) Ibid., 123.
\(^{82}\) Ibid., 122-3.
\(^{83}\) Ibid., 123.
religious lives of the colonists. These anecdotes present the Jesuits at their most confident, secure in their role and integral to the functioning of the colony. Although an internal document written for the eyes of the religious leaders of the order, their argument would be no less true if presented to Lord Baltimore. He brought them to Maryland to provide a religious connection for the Catholic members of the colony, and they were fulfilling this duty.

The confidence of the Jesuits at this time was also grounded in the fact that despite the prohibitions against work among the pagan Native inhabitants, the Catholic community was growing, as they had secured the conversion of numerous Protestant heretics. The Jesuits’ achievements among the Protestant population was partly a response to the fact that the Anglican community did not have a minister in the colony until 1650 and therefore relied on visits from clerics in Virginia and lay services. Most of the Jesuits’ success was communicated through stories of individual converts, the narration of which occupied a considerable percentage of the letters in which they appear. For example, there is the story of the sworn heretic, who vowed that he would never convert to the Roman Catholic faith, until he fell sick and was attended at his bedside by a Father who was able to baptize him. After this, the patient miraculously recovered. There was also the man who, reduced in circumstances, was forced to sell himself as an indentured servant into Maryland. Not until he was saved from being shipwrecked during a storm was his faith restored. Soon finding himself severely ill, he received all the sacraments on his deathbed, but at night a light was noticed in the vicinity of his tomb,

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84 Krugler, English and Catholic, 163.
85 “Extracts from the Annual Letters (1638),” 120-1.
"even by Protestants." The 1640 letter recounted the story of a man who, having decided to convert, was alarmed to discover that his house had caught on fire. When it escaped the flames relatively unscathed he saw this as divine affirmation of his decision. The miraculous nature of these stories validated the Jesuits’ work as connected to some higher purpose. It also affirmed their status as integral members of the colony, as only their presence allowed these men who wished to convert to receive the sacraments and be saved.

Success in this initial period was thus primarily defined by the existing Catholic community and several English Protestant converts. In this sense, it was orthodox to the experience of the English province, in which Jesuits and other clergy operated with the backing of a noble patron and serviced the needs of a clandestine Catholic congregation. But as the Jesuits in Maryland saw that support begin to slip, their emphasis turned to the newer element in the equation that was only present in the context of the New World: Native Americans. A comparison of the content of the earlier letters with those that came a few years later indicates both the physical and spiritual alteration of the Jesuits’ work, as well as their shifting political alliances. The letters of 1634 and 1638 are filled with stories of service for the English Catholic community while the letters of 1639 and after are focused almost entirely on the conversion of Native Americans. One factor that explains this is the fact that continued access to indigenous populations was only maintained after 1639, but the place of these stories as the sole subject of the letters to the General indicated which efforts were the most important for him to hear about. Even when their service to the English Catholic population was mentioned, it was couched in

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86 Ibid., 122.
87 "Extracts from the Annual Letters (1640)," 133.
explanations of continued service to recent Native American converts. When the geographic location of each Jesuit was reported in 1642, Father Philip (alias Thomas Copley) was stationed in St. Mary’s although he would have greatly preferred “to labor in the Indian harvest, if he had been permitted to do so by his own people, who could not do without his services.” And when he continued to remain at this posting, it is said that he did so “in order that he might take care of the English, who live there in greater numbers, and also of the Indians not living far distant.”

The other factor that explains the transferal of the priests’ attentions was that the Jesuits’ roots were not as deeply embedded in the English community as they believed. Their sense of confidence proved misplaced, predicated on the experience of working within the Catholic community in England, but deflated due to the very same tensions that resulted from that system. Although Maryland has long been lauded by historians as “the Catholic colony” and a haven for religious toleration, these monikers, although based on qualities that differentiated Maryland from the likes of Virginia and New England, do not reflect the reality of political and religious life in the early colony. Although Baltimore was Catholic, he never made any attempt to establish an exclusively Catholic population, nor did he ever try to make Catholicism a state-sponsored religion. If he had, his charter would have been revoked, as this would have transgressed against the laws of the Anglican mother country and attracted the King’s ire, no matter how lenient his policies. Rather, George Calvert and his son Cecil shared a common vision of an economically profitable, English colony, in which Catholics could be an unmolested

88 “Extracts from the Annual Letters (1640),” 133.
89 “A Narrative derived from the Letters of Ours, out of Maryland [1642]” in Narratives of Early Maryland, 1633-1684, ed. Clayton Colman Hall (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1910), 134-5.
component of the population. None of these objectives trumped any of the others, and as a result the Calverts were forced to operate under the existing legal system. They affirmed their loyalty to the English monarch and had no intentions to establish a radically new society. However, this meant that many of the actions the Lord Baltimore made of political necessity came into conflict with Jesuit interpretations, in which they saw themselves as both essential and privileged members of society.

This tension was apparent even before the *Ark* and the *Dove* set sail. Those involved in the Virginia Company who were opposed to the creation of Maryland on economic grounds used this controversy over religion as an easy means to attack the venture.⁹⁰ In the wake of these challenges, Cecil Calvert published a paper titled “Objections Answered Touching Maryland” that attempted to assuage the anti-Catholic prejudices and fears that had arisen in response to the approval of the charter. In this document he affirmed the loyalty of the colonists, and reminded readers that with the encroachments of the Swedes and the Dutch in the Americas it was important to have as many “Englishmen, although Roman Catholiques” as possible. Moreover, Catholics were still a minority and fears that “they should grow strong enough of themselves to supresse the Protestants in those parts” were unfounded because “there are already at least three times as many Protestants there, as there are Roman Catholiques in England. And the Protestants in Virginia and New England are like to increase much faster by new supplies of people yearley from England, etc. than are Roman Catholiques in

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Maryland.\textsuperscript{91} To combat threats to the security of the colony, the image that Calvert attempted to present to the public was not one of Catholic strength and influence, but of their merely having a role in a majority Protestant system.

The voyage to establish the colony had several false starts as new political intercessions questioned whether those aboard had all taken the appropriate Oath of Allegiance to the crown, a statement which Catholics often attempted to avoid because it included a denunciation of papal authority. In White's account of the voyage he began by saying that "on St. Cecilia's day, the 22 of November 1633 with a gentle Northerne gale we set saile from the Cowes about 10 in the morning" but some historians have suggested that this departure from the Isle of Wight was actually a second stop where the Jesuits, their servants, and perhaps some other Catholic settlers boarded "furtively" so that those passengers could avoid taking the proper oaths.\textsuperscript{92} Eventually Calvert was able to surpass the legal challenges that prevented his colony from getting off the ground, but this incident had revealed that the settlement's association with Catholicism was a threat to its security.

Continued legal battles with the Virginia Company prevented Cecil Calvert from accompanying the first wave of colonists on their trans-Atlantic voyage.\textsuperscript{93} But this unfortunate circumstance led to the authoring of a document that provides further insight into the proprietor's intentions towards his Catholic colonists. In 1633 he handed to his brother Leonard, whom he had named governor of the colony in his own absence, and

\textsuperscript{91} Cecil Calvert, "Objections Answered Touching Maryland" in Bradley T. Johnson, The Foundation of Maryland and the Origin of the Act Concerning Religion of April 21, 1649 (Baltimore: John Murphy & Co., 1883), 29.


\textsuperscript{93} Krugler, English and Catholic, 120.
other leading gentlemen a letter that would later be titled "Instructions to the Colonists by Lord Baltimore." Several pages long, it provided clear guidance for many issues that reveal the delicate political position the colony occupied. Baltimore ordered that upon arriving in Virginia, the colonists were to avoid Jamestown, particularly its fort, lest they attract unwanted opposition. Only when they were firmly established should they send a messenger to the governor "to give him notice of their arrivall." It also addresses the logistical, practical matters of settlement: the surveying of land, the building of houses, the planting of corn, and the making of salt.

However, the very first of these instructions regarded the practice of religion, and was specifically directed at Catholics in the group. Baltimore was clear that this colony would be a unified effort between Catholics and Protestants and that every possible course was to be taken to preserve the peace. The warning to the Catholics was "that they suffer no scandall nor offense to be given to any of the Protestants...and for that end, they cause all Acts of Romane Catholique Religion to be done as privately as may be, and that they instruct all Romane Catholiques to be silent upon all occasions of discourse concerning matters of Religion." Although the Catholics in this first wave of settlement were not in the majority, they were almost exclusively among the wealthier, ruling class of colonists. Yet, the burden of modified behavior fell on their shoulders; Catholicism could be practiced, but they were to maintain many of the social expectations regarding religious practice as it was expressed in England. With this instruction, Baltimore clearly

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94 Cecil Calvert, "Instructions to the Colonists (1633)" in Narratives of Early Maryland, 1633-1684, ed. Clayton Colman Hall (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1910), 17-8.
95 Ibid., 22-3.
96 Ibid., 16.
stated that although Catholics were welcome in his colony, their religion was not meant to be its identifier. The key to his instructions is the use of the word "privately." While modern connotations of this word place it as the opposite of "public," Baltimore may also have been referencing its early meaning of "not shared by all Christians."98 Historian John Krugler has argued that Baltimore’s religious policy was grounded in the "assumption that religion was essentially a private matter," which is a significantly different characterization than other historians who have presented Calvert’s Maryland as a paradise of "religious freedom."99 But Krugler’s portrayal is consistent with the way the Catholic community operated in England and was also a logical policy for Baltimore to follow given the political situation.

Once it is understood that Baltimore had placed restrictions on religious practice, his later disapproval of Jesuit actions shows a consistency of policy, not a sudden combative turn against members of his own faith. From the very beginning, the Jesuits did not fully accept this regulation and instead encouraged the leadership to behave as though Catholicism was a state-sponsored religion. This was the crux upon which their later conflict with Lord Baltimore would rest: they refused to circumscribe their behavior as a concession to the delicate political situation that Baltimore knew to be fundamental to Maryland’s survival. The Jesuits’ actions upon arriving in Maryland reveal this tension between their perceived purposes and the delicate nature of their activities. Father White reported that when the Ark and the Dove first sailed up the Potomac and eventually landed at the island they would name St. Clements, the Jesuits disembarked and “first

offered [the sacrifice of a mass], erected a crosse, and with devotion tooke solemn possession of the Country." The cross may have been acceptable to all the Christian denominations on board, but the mass that accompanied its construction was exclusively Catholic in nature. In direct contradiction to the instruction to practice "as privately as may be" the Jesuits and the Catholic congregation instead performed a public spectacle.

Though this act was clearly condoned at the time or it would not have been permitted, another version of the same event shows that it is also not completely accepted. The above account came from one of two versions authored by Father Andrew White. He wrote two narratives of the colonists' arrival, one in English that was sent by Leonard Calvert back to his associates in England, and a second in Latin that was distributed to fellow Jesuits. With the exception of additional offerings of thanks to God in the latter, the two versions vary little. The description above comes from the English version, so it is clear that White had no intentions to conceal the public offering of a mass from colonial officials. However, a third relation also exists. This one was published in English in 1635, and although it is not attributed to a particular author, much of its material was clearly drawn from White's Relation. This particular version was intended to recruit new immigrants to the colony, as it also included information about the land allotments that would be made to new settlers as well as lists of materials that should be brought with them, including clothing, food, and other supplies. The way the same series of events on St. Clements was reported in this text reveals the tactfulness that was needed when presenting the colony to a public audience. The author reported that upon arriving on the island "they set up a Crosse, and tooke possession of this Countrey for our

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100 White, "A Brief Relation (1634)," 40.
101 Hall, ed. Narratives of Early Maryland, 27.
Saviour, and for our Soveraigne Lord the King of England.\textsuperscript{102} Here, all references to Catholicism have been dropped. In fact, there is no evidence that priests were even present, and in its place is a statement affirming loyalty to the monarch.

Once established in the colony, tensions between the Jesuits and government officials slowly increased as the former sought additional privileges they believed they deserved due to the investments they had made in the colony, the essential services they provided to it, and their unique social class, which would have been recognized in any other Catholic-sponsored government. First, there was the issue of land: Maryland’s charter indicated that it was a proprietary colony, meaning that all land was under the direct control of the proprietor, Lord Baltimore, and that this right would pass exclusively to his heirs. Thus, only Cecil Calvert could authorize the distribution of lands. In 1637 Father Thomas Copley arrived in the colony as the superior of the mission. One of his first acts was to petition for more land, including the full amount that Fathers White and Altham should have been awarded for the servants they brought with them in 1634, as well as additional lands that Copley and Father John Knolles deserved for the nineteen servants that accompanied them.\textsuperscript{103} As land was to be distributed with 2,000 acres for every five men brought over, the Jesuits should have received 28,000 acres. Although they obtained numerous land grants including 2,000 acres at St. Inigoes and 400 acres of land in the town of St. Mary’s, their acreage did not even come close to the promise

\textsuperscript{102} "A Relation of Maryland (1635)," 71.

figure.\textsuperscript{104} Copley also had their existing lands transferred to a secular trustee so that they could not be seized due to any prohibition against the Catholic Church owning land.\textsuperscript{105}

Real tensions over land ownership developed when Lord Baltimore learned that the Jesuits had been granted lands by the Patuxent, Native American allies of the colony and one of the tribes affiliated with the Piscataways. The 1639 annual letter reported that Father John Brock “remains in the plantation of Metapannayen, which was given us by Maquacomen, the King of Patuxent, and is a storehouse of this mission, whence most of our bodily supplies are obtained.”\textsuperscript{106} Maquacomen had been especially targeted for evangelization for he had seemed more amenable to conversion, and Father White devoted a significant amount of time to his instruction. The Jesuits’ presence must not have been unwelcome, as evidenced by the gift of land. But for reasons that were not clearly articulated the Jesuits’ reports Maquacomen “by degrees began to grow indifferent” until “the salvation of Maquacomen being despaired of”\textsuperscript{107} Father White left the Patuxent in search of better harvests.

Legislation passed in March of 1638/9 demonstrates how the Jesuits’ acquisitions of lands from Native American allies without the government acting as an intermediary was seen as a direct threat to the power of the proprietor. This was not new, as the charter of Maryland gave complete control over land to Lord Baltimore and his heirs. However, the new law rearticulated this idea by specifying that the exact circumstances of the Jesuits’ land acquisition were expressly forbidden: “neither shall he obteine procure or

\textsuperscript{104} Cushner, \textit{Soldiers of God}, 303, 325.

\textsuperscript{105} John D. Krugler and Timothy B. Riordan, “‘Scandalous and offensive to the Government’: The ‘Popish Chappel’ at St. Mary’s City, Maryland and the Society of Jesus, 1634 to 1705,” In \textit{Mid-America: A Historical Review}, Vol. 73, No. 3 (Oct. 1991): 195.

\textsuperscript{106} “Extracts from the Annual Letters (1639),” 124.

\textsuperscript{107} Ibid., 125.
accept of any Land within this Province from any Indian to his own or the use of any other then of the Lord Proprietarie or his heirs. In the annual letter of 1642 the Jesuits complained directly to the provincial and by extension to Rome about the issue of land grants, claiming that lawmakers “have not feared to violate the immunities of the Church…that laws of this kind formerly passed in England and unjustly observed there, may obtain like force here, to wit: that it shall not be lawful for any person or community, even ecclesiastical, in any wise, even by gift, to acquire or possess any land, unless the permission of the civil magistrate first be obtained.”

Additionally, there was the issue of erecting churches. In the charter, Lord Baltimore alone was granted the “licence and power, to build and found Churches, Chappells, and Oratories…to cause them to be dedicated, and consecrated according to the Ecclesiasticall Lawes of our Kingdom of England.” This further restricted practicing Catholicism openly, as all public places of worship had to be dedicated for Anglican use. Calvert understood this to mean that chapels in private homes were acceptable, as they had been in England. Discretion, again, was essential. In his 1634 Relation White had described the traditional shelter of the Piscataways, “an halfe oval forme 20 foot long, and 9 or 10 foot high” and later went on to say that “in one of these houses we now doe celebrate…till we get a better, which shall be shortly as may be.” And in the annual letter of 1640, the author speaks of the baptism of a Piscataway man

109 “A Narrative derived from the Letters of Ours [1642],” 140.
111 Krugler, English and Catholic, 124.
which took place in “a little chapel, which for that purpose and for divine worship he had erected out of bark, after the manner of the Indians.” At this point it is clear that the Jesuits had designated at least one specific structure for religious purposes, but the seemingly temporary nature of this building and its indigenous manner of construction may have avoided any serious controversy.

However, in 1637 when Father Copley arrived in the colony and had the Jesuit landholdings transferred to a lay trustee, he also had some of the lands resurveyed and patented. A deed was issued for the section known as the “Chapel Land” on July 27, 1641 which described it as “a parcel of Town land lyeing nearest about the new Chappell at St. Maries,” implying that a new chapel must have been constructed there prior to 1641, presumably a more permanent building to replace the Indian structure. Such an edifice would directly violate the charter, rendering it invalid and by consequence removing Lord Baltimore from power. It was at this time that Calvert made overtures to purchase the land containing the chapel back from the Jesuits, placing its operations directly under his control. The negotiations over this sale indicate the strained relationship between both parties. Presumably, the transaction was finalized in 1642, with Leonard Calvert acting as his brother’s agent. But when Cecil Calvert heard that the price had been set at two hundred pounds sterling, he refused to pay. What followed was a series of lawsuits involving the representatives of both sides as well as government officials such as the magistrate Giles Brent who had ruled on the contract. The case was interrupted by the English Civil War and subsequent plundering of the colony by Richard Ingle, and it was

113 “Extracts from the Annual Letters (1640),” 131.
not until 1662 that the matter was resolved. Archeological excavations of the site in the 1980s revealed large amounts of charcoal, indicating that this was one of the buildings burned by Ingle and his mob in 1645. Thus, Lord Baltimore was not incorrect in his assessment that the presence of a chapel had the potential to become a focus of an anti-Catholic campaign.

Lastly, there was the issue of the special status in the colony that the clergy believed they deserved. In any country where Catholicism was the state-sponsored religion, laws had recognized privileges for the church and clergy. These could include direct financial assistance, especially in the matter of missionary activities, as well as tax exemptions or other legal exclusions. Cecil Calvert did not conceive of his colony as a primarily Catholic endeavor, but as an English one, and thus subject to the oversight of the king as well as the legal restrictions of England. But the Jesuits, knowing the proprietor to be Catholic as well as the majority of leading, landowning colonists, seemed to disagree. In the beginning, however, the Jesuit provincial overlooked this matter in favor of assured participation in the colony. In regards to the agreement with Lord Baltimore, he said that “since it is not the less evident that, as affairs now are, those privileges, &c., usually granted to the ecclesiastics of the Roman Catholic Church, by Catholic Princes in their own countries, could not possibly be granted here without grave offence to the King and State of England (which offence may be called a hazard both to the Baron and especially to the whole colony).” Unlike the Jesuits associated with the explorations of the French and Spanish empires, in this English context they would

115 Beitzell, “Thomas Copley, Gentleman,” 211-2; Archives of Maryland, IV, 266, 293-4.
merely be gentlemen adventurers and fellow colonists, expected to support themselves and their servants as did all other settlers. They came to this agreement with some hesitation, however. Father Edward Knott, the English Provincial, in his recollection of the negotiations dated Nov 17, 1641 spoke of the support the Jesuits would need to properly perform their duties. “As for living on alms, there was no hope whatever for that. Yet the Fathers desired not to be preoccupied with the care of providing for their temporal wants; they wished to be free for spiritual things and for the duties proper to their state...At length after a long deliberation a conclusion was arrived at; the best thing to do seemed to be this that the Fathers should accept the same conditions, agreements, and contracts as the rest of the colonists.”

Perhaps they had not fully believed Calvert’s dedication to his arguments or thought that once the venture was firmly away from the shores of England he would more strongly assert his Catholic identity, for the Jesuits were clearly disappointed by their treatment. When they complained about the prohibition of acquiring land to the provincial, they included the caveat that “occasion of suffering has not been wanting from those, from whom rather it was natural to expect aid and protection.”

The Jesuits initiated a campaign for recognition of their special status through a small but significant boycott. Laying claim to their special role as devotees of religious matters only, the Jesuits failed to attend the assembly meeting of January 25, 1637/8 and instead “Robert Clerke gent appeared for them [Thomas Copley, Andrew White, and John Altham] & excused their absence by reason of sickness.”

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118 Spalding, Catholic Colonial Maryland, 24
119 “Extracts from the Annual Letters (1640),” 139-40.
120 Archives of Maryland, I, 2.
dropped the premise of a ruse entirely, and records indicate that at the assembly meeting "Rob'. Clerke made answere for them that they desired to be excused from giving voices in this Assembly, and was admitted."\textsuperscript{121} By conceding to this request, the assembly acknowledged to a certain degree the possession of a separate status.\textsuperscript{122}

On March 19, 1638/9, a law made its way into the Assembly records that spoke directly to the role of the Jesuits in the colony and stated that "Holy Churches within this province shall have all her rights and liberties."\textsuperscript{123} This declaration was too vague to possess any operative power, but its mere presence indicates that the privileges owed to the Church were a topic of conversation. The Jesuits seemed to be mobilizing the proprietor's own assembly against him, but in reality they only had complaints about the rest of the legislation that was passed, including regulations on the fur trade and land ownership. The turning point in the relationship between the Jesuits and the proprietor came in 1640 when the former, believing that they were not being treated fairly, petitioned the government for special recognition of their status as priests. Father Copley wrote to Lord Baltimore requesting changes. Among their requests were greater freedom from restrictions to work among the Native American populations, tax exemptions, and the right to acquire land on their own. This was a direct confrontation to Baltimore's policies concerning the role of Catholicism in Maryland society.\textsuperscript{124}

In response to these requests in 1641 Lord Baltimore began making attempts to replace the Jesuits by recruiting secular clergy. He contacted the "Congregatio de Propaganda Fide" in Rome, which was the office that had been established in 1622 to

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\textsuperscript{121} Ibid., 5.
\textsuperscript{122} Krugler, \textit{English and Catholic}, 171.
\textsuperscript{123} Archives of Maryland, I, 83
\textsuperscript{124} Krugler, \textit{English and Catholic}, 166, 171.
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coordinate missionary activities between all regular orders and secular operations, and a list of fourteen possible recruits was compiled.\textsuperscript{125} Two or three of these were selected, but the Jesuits were successfully able to use their influence to prevent the actual arrival of any of these recruits.\textsuperscript{126} Despite the fact that Baltimore's intentions did not reach fruition, they do demonstrate how unsettled the Jesuits' position in Maryland had become.

Although there was still a significant English Catholic population for them to minister to, they recognized that individually they were no longer perceived as essential fixtures in society. Just like in England, they served an important function but were easily replaced at the whim of their noble patron. There is no surprise, then, that as tensions with Lord Baltimore and his representatives increased, their center shifted to the foundational purpose of their presence: the conversion of Native Americans. The Jesuits showcased the importance of their work among the Piscataways and their related tribes and in their annual reports used the Piscataways' treatment of them to reassert their status as privileged members of society.

Once the settlement at St. Mary's had been established, the Jesuits made a few initial attempts at evangelizing among the Native population, but found their movements restricted by outbreaks of violence, sickness, and direct orders from colonial officials and instead concentrated on serving the English colonists. But once the Jesuits turned their attentions to the Piscataways in earnest, their efforts were not in vain. The authors of the annual letters were of course eager to communicate the success of their endeavors to their superiors, so the accounts are plentiful with conversion stories. For example, there is a lengthy account of an Indian condemned to death for the murder of an Englishman, but as

\textsuperscript{125} Codignola, "Roman Catholic Ecclesiastics".

\textsuperscript{126} Krugler, \textit{English and Catholic}, 177-8.
a result of the efforts of the missionaries he was persuaded shortly before his execution and “imbued with the necessary knowledge and washed in the sacred font, prepared himself for death.” Once he was executed the convert was buried in the Catholic cemetery with a formal ceremony so that “the barbarians might understand...Christians...hold their souls dear, and are easily reconciled to them, if they repent.”127 There was also the time, detained for seven weeks along the Potomac when the ship he was travelling aboard became stuck in the ice, that Father White secured the conversion of the leader of the village he had taken refuge in, along with several other important men.128 There were indeed so many new converts that there did not seem to be enough time or space to recount them all, and instead the authors of the reports frequently deferred to listing villages or headmen.129

The Jesuits expressed concern not just for the well-being of the Piscataways’ souls, but their health as well. “When famine prevailed among the Indians” the Jesuits stepped in “that we might not appear to neglect their bodies, for the care of whose souls we had made so great a voyage, though corn was sold at a great price, nevertheless we considered it necessary to relieve their want of bread by assisting them.”130 And the priests also offered their skills at healing. The most important patient that they tended to was the tayac of the Piscataways. When the healers of his own tribe “had in vain tried every remedy,” Father White applied his own medicine which included “a certain powder of known efficacy mixed with holy water, and took care the day after, by assistance of the boy, whom he had with him, to open one of his veins for bloodletting.” White reports that

127 “Extracts from the Annual Letters (1639),” 128-9.
128 “Extracts from the Annual Letters (1642),” 135.
129 Ibid., 135.
130 “Extracts from the Annual Letters (1640),” 132.
immediately the man’s health began to improve, and upon recovery was “resolved as
soon as possible to be initiated into the Christian rites.”  

Another story of Jesuit life-saving intervention features a Native man “called an
Anacostian…but now a Christian” who was mortally wounded by a Susquehannock
arrow. Father White happened to be nearby and was able to attend the patient.
Anticipating his death from the severity of the wounds, White heard his confession, read
to him from the Gospel, and applied a relic of the “Most Holy Cross” to the injury.
Lastly, he instructed the man “to commend himself to her [the Blessed Virgin’s] most
holy intercessions, and to call unceasingly upon the most sacred name of Jesus.” Before
leaving, White made arrangements for the man to be buried in the chapel. Thus, White
was shocked when the same man pulled up beside him in a canoe the following day,
having miraculously recovered from his wounds. The man attributed his recovery to “the
most holy name of Jesus.”  

Although these stories of healing always seem to conclude with the achievement
of the Jesuits’ stated goal of conversion, they also had a larger message. Taken together
as a collection, accounts of the Jesuits providing food, health care, and instruction, as
well as performing the sacraments, ran parallel to the reports of their work among the
English population. In the same way that they positioned themselves as integral to the
success of Calvert’s colonial venture, they argued that the roots they had dug into the
Piscataways’ society were equally entrenched. In these later letters, the message did not
change, but the location had; the work the Jesuits were performing was both productive
and essential, but now their arena had shifted to the indigenous population. There was

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131 “Extracts from the Annual Letters (1639),” 126.
little differentiation between the kind of care that each population needed. By moving to minister among the Piscataways, the Jesuits maintained their usefulness without having to significantly alter their pattern of work.

Also significant in these reports was the way the Jesuits depicted the Piscataways as respectful of the missionaries and eager to have them present in their communities. This was particularly true of the relationship between Father Andrew White and the tayac of the Piscataways, known as Kittamaquund. They seemed to get along from the very beginning, as White reports “being treated by him very kindly at the first interview.” Kittamaquund grew so fond of the priest that “he was afterwards held by him in greatest love and veneration.” The evidence of this was that he insisted the priest live in his household, because he was “unwilling that the Father should use any other hospitality.” His wife, the “queen” was equally hospitable, and was “accustomed to prepare meat for him and bake bread, with no less care than labor.”133 Father White’s decision to stay with Kittamaquund was strategic, for it was believed that if the tayac could be converted the rest of his people would follow.134 White’s investment in the cause was a resounding success. After he was healed by Father White as recounted above, the tayac was baptized, along with his wife and daughters, as well as “another of his principal men.” Just after this ceremony, a second was held in which the tayac and the “queen” were “united in matrimony in the Christian manner.”135

These accounts stand in stark contrast to difficulties the Jesuits were experiencing back at home. Among the Piscataways their efforts were appreciated and encouraged, whereas in St. Mary’s their success was thwarted by their fellow Catholics. The story of

133 “Extracts from the Annual Letters (1639),” 125.
134 Ibid., 127-8.
135 “Extracts from the Annual Letters (1640),” 131.
the conversion of the tayac appears as an inversion of their relationship to the proprietor. “Catholic identity stressed loyalty, obedience, and charitable donations to the Church and its representatives,” explains historian Angela Feres, but it was only “[a]mong the native people, [that] the Jesuits received the traditional respect and donations they expected.”136 However, in the annual letters the Jesuits’ descriptions of the “respect” offered by the Piscataways was even more specifically tailored to their experience in the English mission. Kittamaquund, not Lord Baltimore, was a noble patron who sought their help, assistance, and consult. Moreover, living among this particular family seems to invoke another traditional pattern of behavior, the practice of English noble families serving as patrons of individual priests. Lord Baltimore may have attempted to revoke his patronage from the likes of Father White, but the Jesuit seemed to have found another household to protect him.

Moreover, Kittamaquund adopted the actions of the Jesuits and began to behave as a missionary himself. In the account of the Indian sentenced to death described above, the tayac acted as translator. When it was clear that the priests were having difficulty communicating with the prisoner, “the pious emperor...of his own accord, he added his assistance to accomplish the end. He not only did not refuse to perform the office of a faithful interpreter, conveying to the man the things, which he had received from Father White, to be impressed; but also of himself added some things so apposite and efficacious that, that he...at length drew over the Indian to the Catholic side.”137 Accounts such as this made it clear that in these narratives composed by the Jesuits, the Piscataways’

137 “Extracts from the Annual Letters (1639),” 128.
responses to ministry were as important as those of the English. In this case, however, they chose to support and assist the efforts of the priests, even championing their message and embracing it as their own. Compared with Lord Baltimore, who urged silence and discretion in matters of religion, the tayac was an evangelist eager to do whatever was necessary to bring new members into the fold.

The depiction of the Piscataways as eager to have the Jesuits among them could be interpreted as a device to indicate the missionaries’ level of success. But the priests also had the option of using a different strategy to communicate this idea, by hyperbolizing the difficulties that needed to be overcome to accomplish their goals. This trope may have in fact been more familiar to a European audience, or at least would have been more familiar to the authors themselves prior to their Atlantic crossing. In their letters of application submitted to the provincial Edward Knott to participate in the Maryland mission they spoke frequently of martyrdom, which was clearly an expected outcome of such a venture. In a letter dated July 22, 1640, the hopeful candidate Franciscus Mather listed “an extreme thirst after the good of souls and a great desire of martyrdom, a facility in learning languages (which I gather by having learned English and Dutch in less than two years) finally a strong body and good health” among the “talents” he possessed “which are requisite for such a mission.”138 In fact, other letters went further and even articulated an eagerness for martyrdom as the ultimate testimony of devotion to the cause. John Cooper, who in fact met his death in Maryland, wrote emotionally of the cost that needed to be paid to successfully convert Native Americans. “O, how happy

138 Franciscus Mather, “Letter of Franciscus Mather, 22 July 1640.” 39584 Correspondence-Society of Jesus (1640) [2 Z9-23]. 01/01/1640-12/31/1640 Box 2, Folder 13. Maryland Province Archives of the Society of Jesus, Booth Family Center for Special Collections, Georgetown University Library, Washington, D.C.
should I be eyther to dye in this iourney, or in the midst of so glorious a harvest!...so for hazarding (if I may so terme it) my life & health for his love I shal also find health increased and life prolonged.”

Perhaps less dramatic than death, descriptions of suffering were also a way to prove good work, as it equated their efforts with those of Christ. In his letter of July 26, 1640, Francis Parker (who ultimately was not selected to travel to Maryland) spoke of anticipating “a hard journey, want of all humane comfort, paynes to be necessarily undergone in the gaining of soules, continual hazard of life, etc.” But as Christopher Morris assured in a letter of July 27, 1640 these sufferings would “be made easy and supportable by the frequent memory of my Saviours vinegar and gall, nakednesse & hard bed of his crosse.”

Yet, the annual letters do not delve into these themes to any significant degree. The Fathers do experience sickness and death, but these sufferings are not the central focus of their reports, nor are they firmly associated with the conversion of Indians or even life in a foreign land. Therefore, the authors’ choice in describing the relatively comfortable lifestyle among the Piscataways and the ease of conversions paints these communities as a source of stability and support for the work of the Jesuits at a tumultuous time when they were in conflict with their own people.

The way the Jesuits wrote about their activities among the Piscataways reveal the extent to which that Native community had become their source of stability in the Maryland colony. The Jesuits had overestimated their importance in the success of the

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142 “Extracts from the Annual Letters (1638),” 119; “Extracts from the Annual Letters (1640),” 132-3.
English settlement. Although they had been the order best suited to the tasks demanded of a colonial enterprise, their very enthusiasm had gotten in the way as they chafed at Lord Baltimore’s instructions to keep religion private and operate within the existing Protestant system. They had expected the proprietor to act as their patron, financially support their endeavors, and acknowledge their special contributions. When they protested his failure to do so, Cecil Calvert reacted by seeking to replace them. Now a replaceable commodity, the Jesuits turned to the Piscataways to both prove their own usefulness and entrench themselves in a new network of security. They found a new patron as well, in the form of the tayac Kittamaquund, who asked for their help and encouraged their efforts. The rest of the Piscataways, too, were presented as welcoming and in need of the Jesuits’ presence. As a priest described them, “if at any time they meet a teacher clearly explaining these things [the immorality of the soul, or of the things that are to be after death], they show themselves very attentive as well as docile, and by and by are seriously turned to think of their souls.”143 This description does not point to priests toiling among savagery and martyrdom, but instead speaks to a congregation in want of a catechist.

**Part III: The Ties of Conversion**

Although it has been demonstrated how the conversions of some Piscataways proved integral to the Jesuits’ mission and outside support, the question remains as to the motivations for such behavior on the part of the Piscataways. Some historians, such as James Axtell, have raised the question of the sincerity of Native American conversions in

143 “Extracts from the Annual Letters (1639),” 130.
Maryland, citing the speed with which they occurred and the fact that there is little evidence that the alleged converts continued to practice Christian ceremonies once the Jesuits were removed from them. By contrast, the Jesuits in New France would often require a period of at least years of education and testing before they would perform a baptism on an Indian convert. But the sincerity of conversion does not need to be measured only on the scale of adherence to Catholic doctrine and can also be considered in the light of what the Piscataways themselves thought they were acquiring through such a ceremony. If it can be accepted that the Jesuits did not fabricate the events described in their reports wholesale, buried within the overarching narrative of their successful and important missionary activities are hints at the Piscataways’ own motivations for conversion and what they in turn hoped to gain from their interactions with these priests. To speak only of the Jesuits’ efforts and intentions is again to deny the complicated nature of these relationships, which were shaped by the desires and behaviors of two groups, not one. Just as historians of the political and geographic history of the settlement of Maryland often accepted the English observers’ characterization of the Piscataways as “very loveing and kinde” and offered little else to explain their actions, it is important not to describe conversion as only the direct result of what the Jesuits did, while ignoring the choices the Piscataways made and what actions they took as a result of those decisions. Historian Allan Greer warns that “[i]n missionary writings, the pious Indian usually appeared as an actor in someone else’s drama.” In his works concerning the French Jesuits in New France Greer reminds his audience that “in all the American fields of Catholic evangelizing, Indians tended to be regarded primarily as the objects of apostolic attention: there was a tendency for their spiritual achievements to be credited, so to speak,

to the missionary’s account. This perspective remains equally true in the written histories of Maryland, and so Indians’ perspectives of their own conversions must be considered when interpreting the accounts of the missionaries. To accomplish this, the numerous recent studies that have been made of the interactions between Native Americans and French Jesuits can serve as models of appropriate questions and methodologies that can be applied to the mission in Maryland.

Jesuits were of course interested in reporting conversion narratives because such accounts spoke to their own success and the importance of their presence in the colony. For these priests conversion was not just the acquisition of Christian beliefs but also a change in lifestyle and behavior, as such as when converts dressed differently or limited their sexual interactions to one sanctioned spouse. However, seen from a Piscataway perspective, one way conversion can be perceived is not as a rejection of traditional Native lifeways as the Jesuits presented it to their superiors, but as the cementing of an alliance between the Piscataways and the officials of the Maryland colony. Tracy Neal Leavelle, another historian who studies the conversion experiences of Native Americans and French Jesuits, argues that conversion was rarely “a simple movement away from one settled identity or set of practices toward another equally stable identity or ritual regime” but instead “the movement itself represented a significant element of conversion, a substantive engagement with difference that left none of the participants unchanged.”

What better way to demonstrate an alignment of interests then to utilize the material goods offered in their interactions, to invite mutual participation in ceremonial and

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When looking at the relationships between French Jesuits and the Huron-Wendat, historian Erik K. Seeman argues that practicing “parallel customs...allowed for understanding across cultural boundaries.”\textsuperscript{147} The Jesuits themselves admitted to struggling to communicate with their Native audience, stating “the difficulty of this language is so great, that none of us can yet converse with the Indians without an interpreter,” thus bringing into question the degree to which converts understood the nuances of Catholic doctrine.\textsuperscript{148} However, the inner beliefs of individual Piscataways do not have to be probed to see that the outward forms of conversion served to link these individuals ever more tightly to the English authorities. Leavelle claims that when Native Americans “accepted the missionaries...and incorporated them into their communities, as French representatives, as spiritually powerful men, or as teachers of Christianity, they invited the priests to form lasting social bonds through ritual and exchange.”\textsuperscript{149} The fact that the tension between the Jesuits and Maryland officials may not have been fully revealed to the Piscataways does not alter their intentions of pursing a union with the Maryland colony via the representatives that came among them, the Jesuits.

Most obviously, interaction with the Jesuits and later, conversion, offered the benefit of material goods acquired through gifts and trade. The notes of Maryland’s council record Father Thomas Copley’s order of “one hundred and fifteene yards of truck-cloth; one dozen \(\frac{1}{2}\) of axes; 14 small hatchets; 4 dozen of knives; & I dozen of howes” with the understanding that these goods were “to be traded with the Indians of

\textsuperscript{148} “Extracts from the Annual Letters (1642),” 137.
\textsuperscript{149} Leavelle, \textit{Catholic Calumet}, 75.
The Jesuits did not shy away from admitting their use of this enticement in missionary activities. The priests often made excursions away from St. Mary’s with the intent of securing converts and in addition to supplies for their own sustenance and those items necessary for performing baptisms they also brought “another casket full of trifles, which we give the Indians to conciliate their affection—such as little bells, combs, knives, fish-hooks, needles, thread and other things of this kind.” Clearly, Native Americans were eager to obtain these goods and the Jesuits were often well-received when offering them. But what must be considered is the role trade goods played in traditional Native American religious spheres, for valuable objects did not just signal material wealth but also spiritual power.

The impact of trade with Europeans for Native American cultures has held the attention of many historians, who have in recent studies sought to overturn the notion that trade was valuable simply because of the value and utility items such as metal tools and cookware brought, instead encouraging an analysis of its spiritual benefits. Looking specifically at burial customs and the trade objects found in Huron-Wendat ossuaries, Seeman overturns Bruce Trigger’s conclusions that conversion occurred for strictly material gains and instead notes that “also important were the items’ religious implications. For the Wendats, material objects possessed spiritual power. This was expressed most clearly in deathways, as the bereaved gave the dead gifts to be brought to the afterlife, and they offered presents to friends and ritual specialists as tokens of the reciprocal ties that bound a community together.” Historian James D. Rice sees the same implications for the Piscataways and argues that for such a beleaguered nation,
access to “spiritually potent goods” could “strengthen a werowance’s hand, both within his nation and in diplomatic affairs.” Long before contact with Europeans, trade networks passed along valuable items such as copper and shell beads. These networks were controlled by chiefs because these figures were already spiritual leaders in the community and thus had the authority to handle such goods. These items were “the most spiritually potent” due to the very fact that they travelled such a distance and “came from the outside.” Such goods were then “conspicuously displayed as a reminder of chiefly legitimacy.”

From this perspective, the acceptance of trade goods offered by the Jesuits does not signal an abandonment of traditional religious practices but rather a conformity to an indigenous worldview in which these objects held sacred significance; donning European clothing or jewelry did not necessarily signal a strict adoption of Christian spirituality as Europeans understood it, but could mean an adherence to the traditional Piscataway understanding of social and religious power structures. In Jesuit reports the use of English goods is always spoken of in conjunction with something more, an overall desire to change behavior, as when they report that “[t]hey exceedingly desire civill life and Christian apparrell.” While Jesuits were keen to include descriptions of the Piscataways and others utilizing these goods as indications of the civilizing improvements that they rendered among those to whom they evangelized, the priests failed to consider the ways such goods reinforced traditional understandings of social power of those with access to rare and “spiritually potent goods”. This seems especially true when considering that those who were most often reported to don such attire were

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154 Ibid., 60.
155 White, “A Brief Relation (1634),” 44.
tribal leaders. The Jesuits of course centered their efforts around indigenous leaders, hoping that the conversion of a tayac or werowance would result in the conversion of all those whom he led. But their reports that “[t]he Werowance of Paschatoway desired the Governor to send him a man that could build him a house like the English” and that “[t]he Werowance of Patuxent, goes frequently in English Attire, so doth he of Portoback”\textsuperscript{156} speaks to the ways the possession of European goods became a status symbol among the indigenous elite. The Jesuits themselves noted that indigenous leaders “in personal appearances are scarcely anything removed from the multitude” save for “some badge; either a collar made of a rude jewel, or a belt, or a cloak, oftentimes ornamented with shells in circular rows.”\textsuperscript{157} Despite the fact that the Jesuits meant to downplay these indicators of status, they were striking enough for outsiders to notice, and perhaps the fact that diverse members of the tribe “in many things shew a great inclination to conforme themselves to the English manner of living” speaks to their desire to advertise, through cultural practices, their political affiliation with the English settlers and their associated wealth and military power.\textsuperscript{158} For the Jesuits, donning European clothing signaled a step on the path of belief in Christ, but for the Piscataways, such sartorial choices advertised access to and an alliance with the source of those goods.

Moreover, gift-giving had additional implications in Piscataway culture that extended beyond owning an item of value, for giving a gift meant receiving one in return. If one was not to be offered at that moment, it created “a general sense of indebtedness on the part of recipients, and such obligations could be called in at important moments to gain support for chief’s decisions.” Therefore, gifts “could be conceived of as a way of

\textsuperscript{156} “A Relation of Maryland (1635),” 88.
\textsuperscript{157} “Extracts from the Annual Letters (1639),” 125.
\textsuperscript{158} “A Relation of Maryland (1635),” 88.
maintaining a sense of reciprocity and balance within a relationship” because when offered in a diplomatic exchange they “created a sense of reciprocity that made peaceful relations possible.” What was exchanged was as important as the act itself. When goods were both valuable and exotic, they possessed a spiritual dimension that served “as a reminder that diplomacy constituted an encounter not just between humans but also between the spiritual beings from which the participants derived their power.” The inversion of beliefs between the Jesuits and the Piscataways should be noted here. Whereas the former offered material goods in an effort to civilize their converts, a prerequisite for acquiring Christian morality and spirituality, the latter saw the very exchange as a spiritual act in and of itself.

Even the Maryland Jesuits’ most acclaimed convert, the tayac Kittamaquund, demonstrates that for the Piscataways, conversion was more than an adoption of new beliefs but was also the assumption of spiritual power and political advantage. In 1639 Father White was engaged in the conversion of the King of the Patuxent, but when this relationship turned sour for reasons that the Jesuits failed to report, White turned his attentions to Kittamaquund instead, with an unmatched degree of success. A series of three supernatural events, or as the Jesuits would prefer, miraculous circumstances, were credited with bringing about the tayac’s conversion. The final event was the sickness he suffered that was cured by Father White, which was already mentioned in the earlier discussion of his conversion. But prior to this both Kittamaquund and his brother, the previous tayac, had dreams that involved the English. In his, Kittamaquund saw three groups standing in three different directions, each accompanied by a different god. In one direction was his own father, in the next “an obstinate heretic from England,” and

159 Rice, Nature & History in the Potomac Country, 60-1.
lastly—standing together—were Father White and the Governor. The Jesuits interpreted this dream, with the help of the subsequent episode in which Father White cured Kittamaquund of his illness, as a statement about the tayac’s newfound trust in the priests and the religion they proffered. But it is clear that Kittamaquund’s attentions were not as circumscribed within the religious sphere as the priests would have their audience believe. Not only did Father White and the governor appear together, occupying the same physical and symbolic direction, but Kittamaquund offered them the same respect, for, following his dream, “he treated both the Governor and the Father with the greatest affection.”

The unity of religious and secular officials that Kittamaquund perceived to be true in his dream was reinforced with the continued presence of both at all major events marking his conversion. And although the Jesuits are keen to report the advances in the tayac’s doctrinal education, his conversion was very much a public, and not a private experience as we would categorize it today. Nor was it even an individual act, as Kittamaquund’s entire family and community were also involved. In this sense, the ceremonies that accompanied his conversion can easily be seen as serving a greater purpose in the eyes of the tayac, the ceremonial forging of an alliance between his people and the English settlers. From the very beginning, when control of events lay more clearly in Kittamaquund’s hands, the entire process was conducted with both Native and English witnesses and participants. For example, when the tayac announced his intent to convert (by “abjuring the superstition of the country, to take the part of Christ”) he “held a convention of the empire in a crowded assembly of the chiefs and a circle of the

160 “Extracts from the Annual Letters (1639),” 125-6.
161 Ibid., 125-6.
common people, Father White and some of the English being present." The Jesuits wanted indigenous witnesses to these ceremonies with the idea that having witnessed the example of their leader, other conversions would soon follow. But for Kittamaquund, the opposite was also true; the Jesuits were representatives of the Maryland colony and their participation secured a connection to the English population as a collective whole.

This attitude was reinforced in subsequent ceremonies. The Jesuits spoke of the tayac’s eagerness to convert, yet report that “the thing being considered in council,” he delayed his baptism “until it could be performed with splendid display, in the greatest solemnity, and in the sight of his countrymen.” Here Kittamaquund acts in consultation with his entire community and defers until representatives from both political spheres could be present. His expectations aligned with those of the Jesuits, who anticipated that “the Governor and other distinguished men of the colony contemplate honoring, by their presence...the Christian sacraments and the second and better birth of the Tayac.”

While the Jesuits rendered this sentence to emphasize the governor’s interest in spiritual matters and approval of their accomplishment, it is equally true that the presence of the governor and his affiliates would serve to affirm the political importance of the tayac and as an acknowledgement of the steps he was taking to align himself with these other leaders. For Kittamaquund, the presence of the colonial officials could be perceived as respect for him, not for the priests. And indeed, these hopes proved true as “[t]he Governor was present at the ceremony, together with his secretary and many others.”

While the Jesuits report this detail to make assurances that the leaders of the colony

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162 Ibid., 127.
163 Ibid., 129.
164 Ibid., 129.
165 “Extracts from the Annual Letters (1640),” 131.
supported their spiritual endeavors at a time of tension between the two authorities, seen from the perspective of Kittamaquund, this was a ceremony that forged a link between himself, his people, and all of the English men of authority, not just those who administered the spiritual domain, especially as mutual participation and cooperation was a recurring theme of the ceremony. The culminating event, which occurred later in the afternoon during the tayac’s marriage to his first (and now only) wife, was the erection of a large cross, “in carrying which to its destined place the king [tayac], governor, secretary, and others, lent their shoulders and hands.”166 In such a scene the fractures within the English community are concealed and what is brought into focus is the creation and shared efforts of “an inter-ethnic interest group” as forged by the political leaders of both cultures.

Accompanying Kittamaquund’s conversion was a change in his cultural practices, such as his devotion to a single wife and decision to refrain from eating meat when prohibited by Catholic tradition. But significant among these cultural changes were the material additions to his daily life through the inclusion of trade goods introduced as the result of the new alliance he had established. In the list of changes affirming his conversion the Jesuits report that Kittamaquund had “exchanged the skins, with which he was heretofore clothed, for a garment made in our fashion.”167 These details were important for the Jesuits to include in their reports because they signal what the church hierarchy would perceive as the civilizing nature of their efforts; that with conversion came also the abandonment of a heathen and sinful way of life, such as the taking of multiple wives. But Kittamaquund’s sartorial choices would have had a different

166 Ibid., 131.
167 “Extracts from the Annual Letters (1639),” 127.
resonance for the fellow members of his tribes, marking not his abandonment of a
traditional lifestyle but instead advertising his connection to and ability to reap material
benefits from the English.

In the discussion of the tayac's conversion the Jesuits are also eager to report that
he, in the spirit of a true Christian, forgoes material wealth and values the newly acquired
“true knowledge of the one God” above all. But the context of this report rather serves
to underscore the material exchange that did occur, as well as the connections
Kittamaquund formed with the political authorities in Maryland, as the above quotation
was spoken by the tayac not to the priests but to the governor, “when explaining to him
what great advantages from the English could be enjoyed by a mutual exchange of
wares,” as the annual letters report. For Kittamaquund, discussions of religion were
inseparable from material concerns and the making of a political alliance. Moreover, this
alliance was affirmed in the period immediately following the tayac’s baptism with both
material and political assistance. First, the Jesuits provided food to the Piscataways
during a famine caused by the drought of the previous summer. And when shortly
thereafter a neighboring indigenous leader, “[t]he King...of the Anacostans,” requested
that a Jesuit visit his people, the priests refused this request in favor of remaining with
Kittamaquund’s people. While the Jesuits explained their decision as necessary “lest they
may seem to abandon prematurely our present tender flock,” the connotations of limiting
their contacts speaks to the fact that Kittamaquund had access to benefits of associations
with the English that other groups lacked.

168 Ibid., 127.
169 Ibid., 127.
170 “Extracts from the Annual Letters (1640),” 132.
171 Ibid., 132.
It is significant that after this initial show of mutual cooperation in the form of material assistance, Kittamaquund made the perhaps the greatest demonstration of his confidence in the alliance he had forged. For it was then that he entrusted his child, a daughter who was only “seven years old,” to the care of the English. She was sent “to be educated among the English at St. Mary’s, and, when she shall well understand the Christian mysteries, to be washed in the sacred font of baptism.” The circumstances of this transfer are most interesting, as they depart from the normal progress of the Jesuits’ missionary efforts and illustrate the apparent connections between conversion and a claim of association with the secular authorities of the colony. First, the author of the annual letter makes it clear that this is no case of charity, but a true sacrifice on part of the tayac, as the only description that is provided of the girl other than her familial relations and age is that she is one “whom he [Kittamaquund] loves with great affection.” Second, sending the girl to St. Mary’s is unusual, at least in this early stage of the Maryland colony. The tayac of the Piscataway who reigned before Kittamaquund was mentioned in an annual letter as wishing to give up his son to Father White’s “instruction...for seven years,” a plan which seems not to have been carried out perhaps due to the leader’s subsequent death, and other werowances are mentioned as making the request “that some of their children may be brought up amongst the English,” but again there is no evidence that this was ever carried out. Therefore, no other Indian is mentioned in the letters as actually being fostered in this way, so all other conversions were accomplished in the field. Sending her to the colonial capital in essence meant removing her from the influence of the Jesuits and out of the sphere of Father White who had been the

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172 Ibid., 132.
173 Ibid., 132.
174 “Extracts from the Annual Letters (1639),” 126.; “A Relation of Maryland (1635),” 88.
successful teacher of her mother and father. Indeed, the Jesuits seem to lose interest in the
girl and the only reference to her in the annual letters is a passing statement two years
later that she is faring well, claiming that “the young Empress (as they call her) of
Pascataway was baptized in the town of St. Mary’s and is being educated there, and is
now a proficient in the English language.”\textsuperscript{175} They dwell no further on her progress or
instruction (failing even to note that her new baptismal name was “Mary”), perhaps
because they could claim no credit for it. It seems that the girl was fully in the hands of
the political authorities, and as the Jesuits’ relationship with the secular officials became
ever more fractious, their role in life of the tayac’s daughter became negligent.

This, then, speaks to the reasons for her fostering and the heart of Kittamaquund’s
intentions for his daughter when encouraging her own conversion. Sending her to St.
Mary’s was not strictly to promote her religious education, but to deepen the political ties
between his people and the Maryland colony as a whole, as fostering the child of a leader
was a traditional Native practice to establish an alliance.\textsuperscript{176} The necessity of her receiving
a political education, by learning and adopting English lifeways (of which religion could
be considered but one element) and forming relationships with eminent members of the
colony, is fully realized with the consideration that contrary to Piscataway tradition,
Kittamaquund intended to see his daughter named the next tayac in the event of his own
death. Moreover, Mary’s official guardian was the most politically powerful figure in the
colony, the governor Leonard Calvert, although her upbringing was also to be overseen
by yet another influential person, Margaret Brent. Brent’s authority in the colony was
most clearly demonstrated when she was charged with the maintenance of Leonard

\textsuperscript{175} “Extracts from the Annual Letters (1642),” 135-6.
\textsuperscript{176} Axtell, “White Legend,” 2.
Calvert’s estate and legal affairs after his death in 1647, but her influence over Mary Kittamaquund’s life was even more significant, for when Mary was still a young girl she was married to Margaret’s brother, Giles Brent. Giles was also a politically potent figure, as he was placed in charge of the colony during Leonard Calvert’s absence that happened to coincide with Richard Ingle’s attack on the colony. Moreover, it was Giles who most attracted William Claiborne’s ire as a result of his rival claims to a trading post on Kent Island. Marrying Mary Kittamaquund may have been yet another power grab on the part of Brent, for if she was to inherit her father’s territory (as the English would have perceived such a transfer of title) he could claim, through his wife, ownership of vast tracts of land. Brent’s interests aside, it is clear that Mary Kittamaquund’s conversion and fostering in St. Mary’s did more than provide a proper Christian environment as the Jesuits insinuated in their report, but also placed her directly into the sphere of the political elite of the colony, a move that attests to her father’s intentions of a protracted and robust association between the two peoples.

However, while the story of Mary Kittamaquund serves to illustrate her father’s objective of an alliance with the English, the events following her conversion reveal how deeply his hopes failed to be realized. First, in the very same paragraph of the same letter in which the Jesuits reported that Mary’s baptism had occurred, they also state that “we fear that we may be compelled to abandon Pasacataway, on account of its proximity to the Sesqueshanni, which nation is the most savage and warlike of these regions, and hostile to the Christians.” It seems that the Jesuits’ presence and the material comforts they offered were fleeting, soon to be retracted when their own lives were endangered.

Ironically, their claims also imply that rather than securing the military support of Kittamaquund's new allies, his conversion served to further provoke his traditional enemies. If the Jesuits could not protect themselves they were also unable to protect the Piscataways. This was far from speculation, as in the same letter they report that “[a]n attack having recently been made on a place of ours, they slew the men whom we had there, and carried away the goods, to our great loss.” Kittamaquund may have secured the attentions and sympathy of the Jesuits, but this was not a direct link to the military assistance he anticipated. The Jesuits describe a hopeless situation, claiming that “unless they [the Sesquesehanni] be restrained by force of arms, which we little expect from the counsels of the English, who disagree among themselves, we shall not be safe there.”

What has failed the Piscataways in this instance was not the strength of their alliance with the Jesuits, but the disparate interests within the Maryland colony.

Second, not only did Mary Kittamaquund fail to succeed her father as tayac, but the English authorities were instrumental in rejecting her claims. According to the records of the Council of Maryland, Kittamaquund “apoynted his daughter to be Queene” which was “Contrary to their Custome” and thus “the Indians withstood itt.” Historian Raphael Semmes argues that Kittamaquund was adopting yet another English custom by attempting to pass his rule to his daughter, as Piscataway tradition would trace such authority not from a father to his children but through the matrilineal line.

Kittamaquund’s unorthodox choice then, although obviously in his own self-interest, can also be seen as one which he anticipated would be favorable to the English. The tayac’s people instead nominated the man Weghucasso, whose familial connections to royalty

178 “Extracts from the Annual Letters (1642),” 136.
179 Archives of Maryland, III, 403.
180 Semmes, Captains and Mariners of Early Maryland, 437-8.
were distant but ancient, to be the new heir. The matter was resolved with the intervention of the colonists’ governor and his council, who supported the choice of Weghucasso. English records go so far as to claim that he “was by the English chosen Emperour” thus laying full responsibility for the selection in the hands of the colonial council.\footnote{Archives of Maryland, III, 454.} Apparently, the government’s loyalties to Kittamaquund as an individual and respect for him as a convert in both religious belief and English habits either never existed in the first place or did not extend beyond his death. Moreover, Mary’s conversion, education, and marriage—all completely unique from all other members of her tribe and seemingly rendering her most qualified to rule in the eyes of the English—did not influence the council in her favor.

Last, Kittamaquund’s entire purpose of placing Mary within the care of the English at St. Mary’s is thrown into doubt with the consideration of the way she was treated by her guardians. The tayac’s daughter was the ward of Leonard Calvert, the governor and one of the most powerful men in the colony. Interestingly, in March of 1643 Margaret Brent, “guardian to mrs Mary Kitomaqund” brought a suit against Calvert, demanding that a large portion of his goods be withheld by the court “in an action of debt to that value.”\footnote{Archives of Maryland, IV, 263.} A later record claims that this debt was “due to the said orphan [mary Kitomaqund] by the assumption of the said Leonard, for so much of her estate remaining in his hands vpon acc’ of his guardianship.”\footnote{Ibid., 264.} Semmes argues that this lawsuit implies Calvert had failed to maintain the proper upkeep of his ward and that Margaret Brent was simply forcing the courts to intervene by raising capital for the girl.\footnote{Semmes, Captains and Mariners of Early Maryland, 437.} If this is true, then

\footnote{Archives of Maryland, III, 454.}
\footnote{Archives of Maryland, IV, 263.}
\footnote{Ibid., 264.}
\footnote{Semmes, Captains and Mariners of Early Maryland, 437.}
Mary Kittamaquund was clearly not an important concern for Calvert, and the strength and benefits of her connections to the political elite of the colony, as well as their concern for the Piscataways in general, can be called into question.

However, the lawsuit cannot be considered without acknowledging the fact that the person who heard this petition, or at least entered it into the record was “Giles Brent,” who was at the time of the suit already the husband of the girl in question. Curiously, in the first entry she is referred to as “mrs. Mary Kitomaqund,” a seemingly open acknowledgement of her connection to the man whose name appeared shortly after her own, but in the second she is called “mary Kitomaqund orphan.” Perhaps this second was an attempt to further legitimize her need for the funds. This may have succeeded because in May of the same year “foure kine, three yearling heifers, one yearling bullock, two bull calves, & 2. cow calves of his Lop s. stock” were recorded as being “Sold vnto mrs. Mary Kitomaquund.” However, the name of Giles Brent again appears, this time as one of three men who decided in her favor. Moreover, the livestock were “in the possession of mrs. Margarett Brent” at the time of the sale, and at least one petitioner claimed that the suit was contrived such that “mrs margar. Brent was pretended to defraud him of his right to the tobaccos.” Although it is possible that the lawsuit arose out of a true need to provide for Mary Kittamaquund, the constant presence of the Brents in the affair leads to speculation that it was some attempt to manipulate the governor’s wealth and obligations in their own favor. This would not be the first time the two were seen to maneuver within the court system with intention of increasing their own resources. Giles

185 Archives of Maryland, IV, 264.
186 Ibid., 263-4.
187 Ibid., 270-1.
188 Ibid., 265, 270-1.
Brent had been formally accused of failing to hear court cases until those involved had settled their personal debts to him, and although he was not found guilty of any wrongdoing, he had his property legally transferred to his sister so that it could not be confiscated. And in 1642 it was rumored that he would attempt to remove Kent Island, where his plantation was located, from the jurisdiction of Maryland, a maneuver that would be echoed in his later attempts to claim all Piscataway lands as part of his wife’s inheritance.189

In either scenario, Mary is unable to fulfill the role that her father envisioned when he placed her in the care of his potential allies. In the first, she has been abandoned by the man who held the true influence her father sought to ally with, her own unimportance a reflection of the English’s attitude toward the people they had initially approached as equal allies. In the second, Mary was not serving as an emissary between two ethnically diverse but unified peoples, but instead as a pawn in the power play within the fragmenting English community. Either way, Mary Kittamaquund’s usefulness in the English community was not what her father had intended. He allowed her to be fostered (and converted) in St. Mary’s City as an offering to establish a relationship of mutual interest and cooperation with the colonists. The fact that this relationship was not reciprocated in the way he intended does not undermine the sincerity with which it was given. When his conversion and those of other Piscataways are seen from their perspective, not as an act unto itself but instead as one component in the process of establishing such a relationship, their motivations are more clearly understood.

Yet, Kittamaquund’s choice of fostering his daughter among the English did have a lasting influence upon the politics of both Maryland and Virginia, as Giles Brent did

189 Booth, Seeds of Anger, 45.
make claims to the Piscataways’ lands through the authority of his wife. Such claims, however, proved fruitless except to reap animosity among the leaders of Maryland. George Talbot, the head of a commission of deputy governors who was charged with running the province while Charles Lord Baltimore was in England, wrote of Brent’s attempt in the most unflattering terms, during the negotiations between the heirs of William Penn and Charles over the boundaries of their respective colonies. According to Talbot, “the Like of Capt Brent... pretended a right to the most part of Maryland.” However, Brent “could doe noe good on’t after a great bustle about it.”\textsuperscript{190} Things grew so uncomfortable that the couple withdrew to Virginia in 1646 where Brent established an estate that he titled “Peace.”\textsuperscript{191} One can only speculate how Brent’s attempt to acquire lands through his wife would have been received if the Piscataways had been the respected and politically potent allies that Kittamaquund had strived to make them, and if his daughter had been the Piscataways’ leader as he had also desired. Instead of finding themselves as influential leaders in Maryland, Giles Brent and Mary Kittamaquund would ultimately help to shape the affairs of the colony they fled to, Virginia. The eldest of the six or seven children that they had together was Giles Brent, Jr., who would go on to play an instrumental role in Bacon’s Rebellion.\textsuperscript{192} Although some historians such as Semmes have acknowledged the fact that the opening attacks of the Rebellion were waged against the Susquehannocks, the traditional rivals of the tribe of Brent’s mother, historians as yet have not fully analyzed this possible source of motivation for one of the

\textsuperscript{190} “Reports of Conferences between Lord Baltimore and William Penn, and Their Agents (1684)” in\textit{ Narratives of Early Maryland, 1633-1684}, ed. Clayton Colman Hall (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1910), 446.

\textsuperscript{191} \textit{Archives of Maryland}, I, 332.

\textsuperscript{192} Semmes, \textit{Captains and Mariners of Early Maryland}, 440-1; Elizabeth Rigby, “Maryland’s Royal Family,” \textit{Maryland Historical Magazine} 29, no. 3 (September 1934), 220-1.
key players in the uprising. Rather, the younger Brent’s current claim to historical notoriety is being the first to be divorced in Virginia when Mary Brent, his cousin and wife, secured this legal separation after accusing him of abuse and cruelty. Seeing this sad epilogue as the only true fruit of Mary Kittamaquund’s fostering may be why historians have not looked into the complexities of her life more closely. However, it is the intention with which her conversion was made, and not its ultimate outcome, which is significant in understanding the Piscataways’ actions.

Merrell argues that Kittamaquund’s failure to fully connect himself with the Maryland colony arose from the fact that he too was an outlier among his own people. Having killed his own brother to become the tayac and adopted the English practice of declaring his daughter his heir, Kittamaquund’s policies were ultimately rejected by his own people, who preserved their traditional forms of inheritance which they forced the English to acknowledge. However, the means through which Kittamaquund attempted to enact his alliance with the colony may have contributed to its failure. Kittamaquund’s intentions may not have been mutually received and reciprocated by the English because the Jesuits were not the appointed emissaries of the political leaders of the colony that the tayac perceived them to be. In fact, the animosity between the two English parties may have served to discredit Kittamaquund as his legitimacy was tarnished by his affiliations with the troublesome Jesuits.

When taken together, the actions of the Piscataways and the Jesuits, in particular their relationships to one another, reveal a completely new narrative of the fate of

193 Semmes, Captains and Mariniers of Early Maryland, 441; Bruce E. Steiner, “The Catholic Brents of Colonial Virginia: An Instance of Practical Toleration” The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 70, no. 4 (October 1962), 398-9.
194 Merrell, “Cultural Continuity among the Piscataway Indians,” 556.
indigenous peoples in colonial Maryland. It is not enough to say that the Piscataways had motivations; their motivations and the decisions they made based on them were fundamental in shaping their history. The Piscataways were not a genial and pacified people who disappeared from the area around St. Mary’s city because they were too welcoming and gentle, gifting away their lands out of sheer generosity, and unable to defend themselves from their enemies. They were not pushovers, who through a failure to resist had nothing left to give. Rather, they were a people with strong political leaders who worked hard to obtain military assistance, an economic advantage for the tribe, and a secure role in the larger network of alliances that encompassed the Chesapeake. Ultimately, their failure was not a failure to act, but a false assumption about the best place to direct their efforts. They had channeled their negotiations through the Jesuits, a natural choice as those were the people who visited them, offered them goods, and spoke to them about the lifestyle and habits of the colonists. The Jesuits asked things of the Piscataways, including food and shelter, and to alter their patterns of behavior. Piscataway culture would interpret this as a reciprocal relationship; that to ask for something was to give something in return. And in the eyes of the tayac Kittamaquund, the Jesuits seemed to be delivering. At important ceremonies and events they brought the leaders of the Maryland colony to the Piscataways, where they stood shoulder to shoulder in front of representatives from both cultures. However, the Jesuits proved to be false emissaries. Due to their own disputes over religious practice and patronage, the Jesuits did not speak for the government of Maryland colony and more often spoken against it. The Piscataways had made a true alliance, for in their distress the Jesuits needed the affirmation of those that they had converted. But their alliance had been not with the
colony as a whole, but with a group of outliers who lacked the power and influence that they had seemed to advertise. Thus, the Piscataways were left vulnerable to the incursions of the Susquehannocks and the political manipulations of the English on both sides of the Chesapeake. It was a missed opportunity, and although this was not the final interaction between the Piscataways and the Maryland colony, before the end of the century they were pushed ever further from their land around the colonial capital, moving farther north until eventually making an alliance with the Iroquois and disappearing from the colonial records of Maryland.\textsuperscript{195}

\textsuperscript{195} Joseph J. Snyder, “The Piscataway Indians of Early Maryland,” \textit{Chesapeake Bay Magazine} 12 (June 1982), 23.
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