

## An Archaeological Landscape

Much of what we know about the landscape and location of buildings in St. Mary's City is the result of a marriage of history and archaeology. History can help associate a name or an event with a general place. Archaeology can find a precise place and assemble evidence to describe the place based on what remains in the ground. In over thirty years of archaeology, more than 200 archaeological sites have been found in St. Mary's City.



### ***St. John's***

St. John's was built in 1638 by John Lewger, the first secretary of the colony. The house was subsequently owned by Simon Overzee, a Dutch merchant, and later by Charles Calvert, Governor and third Lord Baltimore. The building was the site of early meetings of the Assembly, and was where Mathias de Sousa became the first man of African descent to vote in an American legislative body and where Margaret Brent asked for "voyce and vote." The building served as an ordinary later in the 17th century, and also housed the legal records of the colony before the capital was moved to Annapolis.

### ***Van Sweringen***

In the 1660s, the colony built a special, unheated building to store the paper records of the province. Known as the Council Chamber, this building was later bought by Garrett Van Sweringen who added fireplaces and converted it into the most elegant private lodging house in the colony. Van Sweringen also operated the first coffee house in the English colonies in an outbuilding located on the same property.

### ***The Calvert House***

The Calvert House was built by Leonard Calvert in the early 17th century. During Ingle's Revolt, the rebels captured and fortified the house and used it as their stronghold. Leonard Calvert died at this house in 1647 after the recapture of the colony. The colonial government acquired the building in 1662 to use as the colony's first state house. The Calvert House also served as the largest public inn in Maryland from 1661 until about 1700.



### ***Out of the Wilderness***

In 1667, Cecil Calvert ordered the incorporation of St. Mary's City as the first official city in Maryland. By using fashionable, urban design ideas, the Calverts may have wanted to make a statement with their new city in the "wilderness." The following decade saw the building of numerous ordinaries and dwelling houses as well as an elaborate brick church, a brick state house, and a brick jail. These brick structures were grand considering most people lived in crude wooden houses. All the functions of government - Assembly, the Courts, the Land Office—were centered in the town.

### ***Taking Shape***

Archaeological excavations have proven that a baroque plan was used to develop the 17th-century Maryland capital. The city's road plan was similar in form to designs used in 16th-century Rome. St. Mary's City was laid out in the shape of two symmetrical triangles with the main streets meeting in the town center. Brick structures marked the corners, and principal roads closely followed the lines of the triangles. Today, visitors to Historic St. Mary's City can walk the same paths as Maryland's early colonists.



Air photo of Rome



Plan of St. Mary's City

### ***Where's the City?***

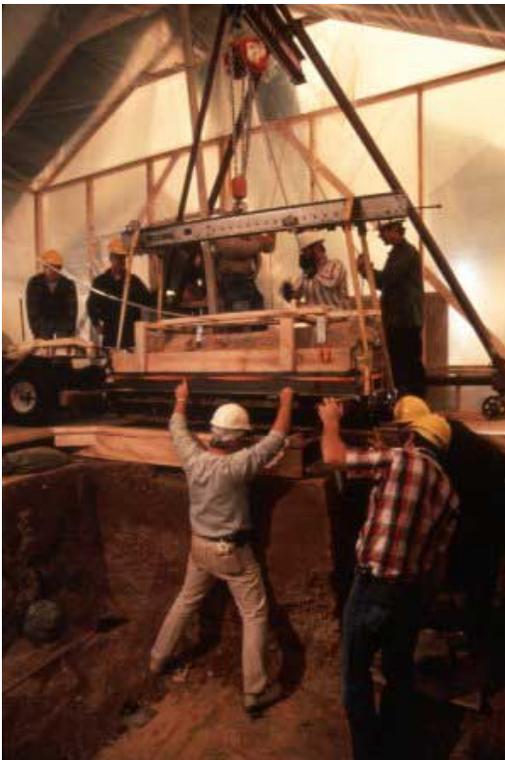
St. Mary's City, Maryland and Jamestown, Virginia were unique in the 17th-century Chesapeake. Unlike the colonies in New England, this region's population was never concentrated in towns. Instead, people lived on individual plantations spread along the Chesapeake's many rivers and creeks. As a capital, St. Mary's City was the most populous place in all of Maryland. Still, St. Mary's City was never large by modern standards. Around 200 year-round residents lived here at any one time. The population swelled when the Assembly met and in court times, bringing periodic visitors to the city in search of food and lodging.

### ***Not So Ordinary***

In the 17th century, an "ordinary" was a combination hotel, restaurant, and bar which served as a center for social, economic, and political activity. In St. Mary's City, nearly every building which stood for more than ten years served as an ordinary at some point. They were strictly regulated by law with the Assembly setting prices for food, lodging, and drink. The ordinaries ranged in quality from Garrett Van Sweringen's fine establishment to the plainer ordinaries such as William Smith's in the town's center.

### ***A Rare Find: Three Lead Coffins***

In 1992, archaeologists excavated three lead coffins at the site of the Brick Chapel in St. Mary's City. In the colonial period, burial in lead coffins was a sign of great wealth. An international, interdisciplinary team of scientists continues to explore this unique find today. Careful research demonstrates that the two largest coffins held the remains of Chancellor Philip Calvert and his wife, Anne Wolseley Calvert. The identity of the baby girl found in the third coffin remains unknown. The largest of the three lead contained the remains of Philip Calvert, the Chancellor of Maryland, who died between December 21, 1682 and January 12, 1683. The coffin was buried under the floor of the Catholic Chapel in St. Mary's City. Philip Calvert was one of the most prominent Maryland leaders in the 1600s and a key person in the efforts to develop St. Mary's City. The capital cities of the Maryland and Virginia colonies served as the burial places for many important persons. The coffin of Philip Calvert and those of his wife and daughter are the earliest known examples of lead coffin burials in British North America.



**Three Lead Coffins**

### ***William Nuthead (? - 1695) - Colonial Printer***

William Nuthead set up a printing press in St. Mary's City in 1685. His press was the first operated in the English colonies south of Massachusetts. Archaeologists have found pieces of his printing type on several sites in St. Mary's City. Nuthead's main business was in printing forms for the government. At his death in 1695, his wife Dinah took over the press. Although she could neither read nor write, Dinah Nuthead continued operating the press until the capital moved to Annapolis later that same year. She moved with her best client, the government.



### ***Remembering the Past***

Although the physical remains of the city have disappeared, its story and legacies continue. The former state house was converted into an Anglican church and stood until 1829 when it was torn down. The

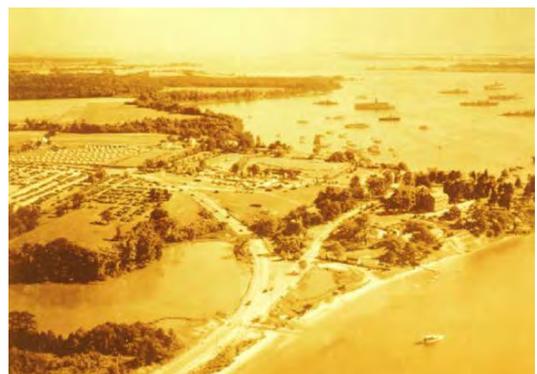


Early Photograph of Calvert Hall, St. Mary's College of Maryland

bricks were used to build Trinity Church, which visitors can see today. In 1838, John Pendleton Kennedy, a Baltimore attorney and diplomat, wrote one of America's earliest historical novels entitled *Rob of the Bowl*, a legend of old St. Inigoes which described events in St. Mary's City in the late 17th century. In 1840, the Maryland legislature created what is now St. Mary's College of Maryland as "A Monument School to the People" and a celebration of Maryland's founding site. The 19th and early 20th centuries saw a series of commemorations and

### ***300 Years Later ...***

In 1934, Maryland marked the three hundredth anniversary of the colony's founding. In spite of the Great Depression which ravaged the economy, Maryland celebrated with a massive historical event known as "The Pageant." Land was donated to reconstruct the Maryland State House of 1676 and over a hundred thousand people flocked to St. Mary's City for the celebration. In the years following the tercentennial, archaeologist Dr. Henry Chandlee Forman pioneered excavations which began the process of rediscovering the old city.



***Historic St. Mary's City - Past, Present, Future***

In 1966, the state of Maryland began the process of preserving and interpreting the original site by establishing the Historic St. Mary's City Commission. Today, Historic St. Mary's City is an outdoor museum of history and archaeology. Recognized for its historical and archaeological research, Historic St. Mary's City is rediscovering the stories of life in early Maryland. Buildings are being reconstructed and stories told based on a research program which has led the way in many areas of 17th-century Chesapeake studies. Every turn of the shovel in the soil and every turn of the page in the historical documents sheds new light on the legacies of St. Mary's City and the role which it played during the founding of our country.