Jesuit Slaveholding in Maryland, 1717-1838

Thomas Murphy, S.J.

STUDIES IN AFRICAN AMERICAN
HISTORY AND CULTURE

Edited by
Graham Russell Hodges
Colgate University

A ROUTLEDGE SERIES

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IN MARYLAND,
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Thomas Murphy, S.J.

Routledge
New York & London / 2001

Published in 2001 by
Routledge
29 West 35th Street
New York, NY 10001

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group

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10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available from the Library of Congress.

ISBN 0-8153-4052-4

Manufactured in the United States of America

For my Aunt,
Marian Cashman
and for my friend,
Scott Brodeur, S.J.

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Acknowledgments

I BEGIN WITH MY FAMILY. IT WAS MY GOOD FORTUNE TO GROW UP IN Massachusetts, near Boston, an area so permeated with history that it was an ingredient of the atmosphere. My parents, John and Betty Murphy, my stepmother, Norma Murphy, my grandparents, my aunts, uncles and cousins have always encouraged me to exploit my birth in this setting. My mother, Betty, made me into the reader that I am today, and from an early age I enjoyed having the newspapers read to me with an ear to history by my paternal grandparents, John and Agnes Murphy. My father, John, my aunt, Margaret Murphy, and my maternal grandmother, Marion G. Daley, spent many hours walking me around Boston or driving me through the New England countryside. My deep thanks go to all—both those still in the space and time that is accessible to the historian and those who have gone ahead to God. During the final stages of preparation of my dissertation, my Aunt, Marian Cashman, passed on suddenly. I dedicate this book to her with fond memories of her loving encouragement over so many years.

The Society of Jesus, which I joined in 1987, has likewise fostered my interest in history. Three provincial superiors of the New England Province have propelled me along the way—Bob Manning, Bill Barry and Bob Levens. Bob Manning also later became my local superior at Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley in Berkeley, California, joining Michael Boughton at Fairfield University, Connecticut and Charlie Moutenout at Berkeley in the same role of coaxing me to fulfill my mission to produce this dissertation. I also recall with thanks the interest of two formation directors, Jim Gillon and Jim Lafontaine. All of these men have listened to my struggles, celebrated my successes with me, and shown a great deal of conviction that I could accomplish this project.

I have lived in four Jesuit communities during the research and writing of my dissertation and now this book —the Fairfield Jesuit community, Leonard Neale House in Washington, D.C., the Jesuit Community at the Jesuit School

of Theology in Berkeley, California and the Seattle University Jesuit Community. All the Jesuits whom I have lived with during this process have shown great support and affection throughout. In the climactic months of the dissertation, especially, when I was also preparing for M.Div. comprehensive examination, my fifteen companions at Chardin House in Berkeley kept me going with their prayers and warmth. There are a few individual Jesuits, however, whom I wish to single out for special thanks. First of all, there is Scott Brodeur, who shares the dedication of the dissertation, and whose enthusiasm for the idea has persisted from the beginning. Gary Menard's computer skills have been indispensable to putting the dissertation in final form. Mark Bosco and Chris Weekly have also been good friends in the Lord, listening to my discouragement and helping me to place setbacks in perspective against the opportunities and the achievements. Joining them as good Jesuit companions have been Joe Wagner and Jim Prehn, whose invitations to dinner or a movie usually came along at just the moment that I needed a break. Steve Maekawa, O.P., who has a lively interest in history himself, has always been willing to listen to my tales of the Jesuit slaves. Brian Dumont of Boston has likewise been a willing listener and confidant, going back to the early writing days at Fairfield.

The History Department at Fairfield University fostered me as a fledgling instructor of undergraduate students and cheered me through my comprehensive exams in 1992. They have been willing to examine my proposals and drafts for the dissertation, and I recall with appreciation all their interest in my career over the years. Particular thanks go to Richard De Angelis, William Abbott and Patricia Behre.

At the University of Connecticut, I am grateful for the help I received from two dissertation directors, Karen Kupperman and Larry Goodheart. Allen Ward has been a good friend ever since I began as a teaching assistant at Storrs in 1983. I thank, too, the other members of my committee—Kent Newmyer and Altina Waller. I am also grateful to Ron Coons for his help, particularly during my return to the doctoral program after several years away.

Tom Buckley, S.J. of the JSTB faculty deserves special gratitude. He read my dissertation manuscript in its later form, and has offered many helpful suggestions about writing for publication. I am grateful for Tom's permission for me to participate in his Church History seminar in the spring semester of 1997, and for his friendly suggestions about various professional opportunities.

Since the fall quarter of 1999, I have been a member of the History Department faculty at Seattle University. There I have received unstinting encouragement from Tom Taylor, the Chair, Dave Madsen, Jacquelyn Miller, Kan Liang, Danny Bernstein and Theresa Earenfight. I am particularly grateful to Arthur Fisher and Patrick O'Leary, S.J., for inviting me to guest-lecture in their Jesuit History course during the winter quarter of 2000.

So many people have been so good to me that these acknowledgements are the hardest part of this book to write. I fear that many have been left out, but

I know that the Lord has a better memory than I do, and will smile upon the kindness of one and all. As I come to the end of this challenging enterprise, so soon after grace-filled ordinations to the diaconate and priesthood, I am aware of what a lucky and blessed man I am.

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Introduction

ON OCTOBER 16, 1771, FATHER JOSEPH MOSLEY, S.J. MADE THE FOLLOWING entry in the baptismal register of St. Joseph's Church, Talbot County, Maryland: "Matthew, negro of ours, Talbot. Godparents were Thom., Negro of ours, and Peg, Negro of Chas. Blake."¹

Mosley's use of the phrase "negro of ours," referred to the slaves owned by the religious order to which he belonged, the Society of Jesus, or Jesuits. To this day, "ours" is a Jesuit expression referring to whatever things that this Roman Catholic religious order of men hold in common. It can refer to the membership which unites Jesuits into the Society—it is quite common for a Jesuit to refer to another Jesuit as "one of ours." The expression may also refer to material possessions, which the Society holds collectively rather than individually. For approximately the first two centuries of Jesuit presence in Maryland, those possessions included other human beings. By 1838, the year that they decided to hold a mass sale of their slaves, the Jesuits owned 272 slaves on six plantations totalling 11,607 acres in the state. This study is an attempt to measure the ties which bound the Jesuits to their slaves, as well as the events which finally led the Jesuits to loosen those ties.

Despite clear evidence that their management of plantations was a fiscal and economic failure, Jesuits remained entrenched slaveholders for political, theological, intellectual reasons and social reasons. In the last quarter of the eighteenth century, the twin shocks of the Church's temporary suppression of the Jesuit order and the American Revolution's achievement of religious liberty essentially ended the political motivation for Catholic clergymen to own slaves in what had become the United States, inducing some discussion among the priests of Maryland about ending the practice. However, no drastic change took place until the 1830's, when the Society of Jesus, now restored and antic-

ipating that American Catholicism would urbanize under the influence of massive European immigration, decided to sell its slaves in order to devote more energy to ministry in the cities. The expectation that large numbers of white Europeans would need priests triumphed over any thought that the Jesuits' slaves and plantations had a premier claim to their owners' ministry. Jesuits thus ignored Catholic abolitionists like the Irish politician Daniel O'Connell, opting instead to dispose of their slaves in a mass sale.

I began thinking about a dissertation on slaveholding by Jesuits in Maryland during my two years in Jesuit philosophy studies at Loyola University of Chicago (1989–1991). I was sent from my native Boston to study with some two dozen other young Jesuits drawn from several sections of the United States. The American Assistancy of the Society of Jesus is currently divided into ten provinces, and these provinces have all the distinct identities and friendly rivalries of the “several states” of the nation. It was not unusual for classmates to tease each other about the backgrounds of each other's provinces. When the target of a barb was a member of the Maryland Province, it was almost certain that the man would be joshed about the fact that his ancestors in the religious life had once owned slaves. It seemed like a perfect opportunity to portray a young Maryland Jesuit as the heir to a system of oppression and reaction. I myself participated in this ribbing; it seemed like a good way for a northerner to score some points against southerners. As time wore on and the jokes grew stale, however, I began to wonder about the real story of Maryland Jesuit slaveholding. By the time my religious superiors asked me to follow my philosophy studies with the pursuit of a doctorate in history, I knew what topic I wished to write about: What was the real story behind the stereotyping?

Early in my research, I discovered that the basic narrative of Jesuit slaveholding has already been reconstructed over the past generation by four fine historical studies. The first was “The Slaves of the Jesuits in Maryland,” a master's thesis written at Georgetown University in 1974 by Peter C. Finn, S.J. in an effort to reconstruct the rise, daily proceedings, and termination of the slaveholding. Two other studies were written by Robert Emmett Curran, S.J. In an article published in 1983, “‘Splendid Poverty:’ The Slaves of the Jesuits in Maryland, 1805–1838,” Curran concentrated on the decline of the Jesuit slave system during the decades just before their final, mass sale of slaves in 1838. A decade later, in *The Bicentennial History of Georgetown University: Volume I, from Academy to University 1789–1889*, Curran placed the continuation and eventual termination of the slave system within the context of the founding and solidification of that Jesuit school in Washington, D.C. Curran believed that the desire of the Jesuits to provide a sound financial foundation for that school and open further ones had a major role in the decision to sell the slaves.² Like Finn, Curran worked to recapture a tale that had been in some danger of being lost or ignored. Finally, in 1996, Edward F. Beckett, S.J. published “Listening to our History: Inculturation and Jesuit Slaveholding.” Intended as an internal

reflection for members of the Jesuit order, Beckett's work argues that the facts of Jesuit slaveholding show that these men were overly influenced by the environment of British North America. Rather than challenge its ethos, the Jesuits succumbed to their eagerness to demonstrate that Catholics could be loyal Englishmen and embraced values they should have challenged.³

The facts uncovered by Finn, Curran and Beckett make several things clear. Jesuit slaveholding began subtly; the earliest documented record of its existence dates only to 1717.⁴ It seems likely that the Jesuits, like other landowners in the Chesapeake colonies, turned to slaveholding as the supply of indentured servants immigrating from the British Isles grew smaller during the second half of the seventeenth century.⁵ There is also the strong possibility that many, if not most, of their slaves came to them as gifts from lay people eager to serve as benefactors of the Church. If so, the fact that the official teaching of the Roman Catholic Church condemned the African slave trade while presenting slave labor itself as a natural proceeding of human society would have allowed the recipients of these second-hand slaves to gloss the question of how the slaves had reached the United States. In any case, there is no record whatsoever of colonial Jesuits deliberating whether to turn to slaveholding; we simply know that they did.⁶ It is also probable that the Jesuits of colonial Maryland worried about the possibility that the government might confiscate property belonging to Catholics, and so tended to avoid documentation of their possessions.

Beginning in the late eighteenth century, however, there is evidence that, while still proceeding within the context of their Church's doctrinal and philosophical approbation of slavery, the Jesuits conducted a long and painful debate over whether and how to end their personal participation in slaveholding. Paradoxically, the quantities of Jesuit slaves grew even as the Society hesitated over the matter. There were 192 slaves in 1765, and 272 just before abandonment of the practice in 1838.

The reconstruction of the narrative of Jesuit slaveholding has not completed the story, however. What is needed still is a reconstruction of the moral universe of these Jesuits—the ideological paradigms and experiential biases through which they analyzed the world they lived in and through which they approached the moral decisions they had to make. It is impossible to complete the study of Jesuit acculturation in British North America and the United States without addressing this broader question. It is reasonably clear that there were three overriding patterns of thought that influenced the conduct of Jesuit slaveholding—a feeling that slaveholding was politically advantageous for Catholic planters whose civil liberties were insecure in a predominantly Protestant colony, a fear that profit and the acquisition of wealth were goals that would separate Christians from God, which led to consistent financial maladministration of the farms, and a theological conviction that members of the superior white race were called to exercise paternal care over members of the inferior black race. The Jesuits' decision to abandon the practice of slaveholding was

delayed by their insistence on reconciling any change with these traditional ideals. It was not inevitable, however, that these ideals should have become the principle means through which they analyzed their dilemma. How did those attitudes originate and strengthen in the Jesuit mind to the point of making it very difficult for these men to dispose of their slaves?

Furthermore, when the Jesuits did cease their slaveholding, they made the significant decision to sell their slaves en masse instead of setting them all free. How did their traditional attitudes influence this decision to sell rather than manumit? These questions can only be answered if we engage the Maryland Jesuits on their own terms, approaching their world through the eyes with which they themselves saw it.

Furthermore, the tone of general American Catholic historiography suggests a prodigious need for greater objectivity in evaluating the slave question. Before the decrees of the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) urged Catholic scholars to undertake a more impartial study of Church history, the tone of Catholic historiography, on almost any topic, was usually apologetic. An occasional historian like Theodore Maynard (*The Story of American Catholicism*, 1941) attempted to be more objective, only to be ostracized by opposition from powerful bishops.⁷ More typically, if errors and embarrassments could not be hidden, they were glossed over. An example of that style was the article “The Survival of the Catholic Faith in Southern Maryland,” by John LaFarge, S.J., which appeared in 1935 during the tricentennial celebrations of the founding of the colony. LaFarge openly regretted that Jesuits had owned slaves in the United States, but argued that at least they had a benevolent style of governing which set a humane example for other slaveholders. LaFarge felt that while they failed to change the system, the Jesuits at least showed the least offensive means of proceeding within it.⁸

The Council’s call for less defensiveness in the Church’s interactions with the rest of the world created a greater openness to critical analysis of the Catholic past by Catholics themselves. A new tendency to look unabashedly at problematic aspects of the Church’s past meant that Jesuit slaveholding received due mention in two general histories of the American Church which appeared during the 1980’s. These were *American Catholics: A History of the Roman Catholic Community in the United States* (1981), by James Hennesey, S.J., and *The American Catholic Experience: From Colonial Times to the Present* (1985), by Jay Dolan. Both were objective scholars who focused on narrative reconstruction, and their impartiality was a departure from the apologetic LaFarge approach. The nature of their comprehensive studies prevented Hennesey and Dolan from giving slavery more than passing attention in their books, however. Ultimately, when it comes to their treatment of Jesuit slaveholding, Hennesey and Dolan must be identified with the Finn-Curran approach of reconstructing the basics of a long glossed over narrative as even-handedly as possible. They did not treat thoroughly the moral paradigms that

determined the manner in which the Jesuits functioned as slaveholders.

Other pressures than historiographical objectivity were exerting themselves on Catholic scholarship concerning slavery, however. The Council's call for greater objectivity coincided with the height of the civil rights movement in the United States—the year of the Council's close, 1965, was the same year that saw Martin Luther King's march on Selma, Alabama, and the enactment of the Voting Rights Act. Many Catholics reacted to this combination of events by making a collective examination of conscience on the race question. It was natural that when some Catholic historians considered their Church's slaveholding, they showed a direct moral outrage that reacted sharply against the LaFarge approach. A typical expression of this righteous anger may be found in Cyprian Davis' book *The History of Black Catholics in the United States* (1990). Davis' theme was not so much an objective study of African American Catholics as it was a celebration of the faith of a community who never ceased claiming as their own a Church which historically treated them with a mixture of outright injustice and unthinking neglect, both before and after abolition. Davis concluded that

The story of African American Catholicism is the story of a people who obstinately clung to a faith that gave them sustenance, even when it did not always make them welcome. Like many others, blacks had to fight for their faith; but their fight was often with members of their own household. Too long have black Catholics been anonymous. It is now clear that they can be identified, that their presence has made an impact, and that their contributions have made Catholicism a unique and stronger religious body.⁹

There is a major theological place for such a meditation within the Church, but Davis' approach has serious historiographical limits. Is it fair to evaluate the moral decisions of the antebellum Jesuits according to the ethical standards of the late twentieth century, when slavery is universally condemned? There is a clear need to try to see the world as these men themselves saw it at the time they made their decisions.

The moral outrage epitomized by Davis has been accompanied by the rise of still another method of pondering Catholic slaveholding, the effort to use the Church's eventual turnabout on the issue as a historical precedent for those seeking reform in today's Catholic Church. The issue of whether and how the Church can change its doctrines has been a great preoccupation of the post-Council Church, which has been marked by a tension between great demands for vast reforms and vast institutional resistance to further reform. One key query that has emerged has been this: how can an institution that proclaims itself incapable of error adapt itself to social and doctrinal change? Slaveholding, one issue on which the Church clearly changed its teaching late in the nineteenth century after hundreds of years of defending the practice, has attracted attention from theologians who wonder whether and how the Church

can accommodate its moral theology to such matters as changing views on human sexuality, the status of women, and the structure of the priesthood.

Two examples of this use of the slaveholding issue may be found in the article "Development in Moral Doctrine," by John T. Noonan, Jr. (1993) once presented as part of the Warren Lecture Series on Catholic Studies at the University of Oklahoma, and the book *Infallibility on Trial: Church, Conciliarity and Communion* by Luis M. Bermejo (1992). These types of studies collect much historical information of great value, taking great care to trace the legislation of popes and councils, but do so primarily to make a broader theological point. The objective reconstruction of the past is not their priority; they are more interested in the fact of that the theology of slaveholding was destroyed by a Church of reform than they are in what that theology actually said to a Church of tradition. Ultimately, therefore, these studies also do not fill the gap in our objective understanding of the moral universe of the Jesuit slaveholders.

Ironically, the increased attention to Catholic slaveholding within the Church itself has not been paralleled by all that much interest in Catholic slaveholding by mainstream historians. That is regrettable, for the record of the Maryland Jesuits as slaveholders shows that they were exceptions to many of the general theses about the typical motives and conduct of American slaveholders that historians have offered recently.

Just as there has been a revolution in Catholic historiography since the 1950's, so there has also been a revolution in the general historiography of slaveholding. Furthermore, in comparing these two subsets of the historiographical discipline, the similarities of transition from apologetic to critical to moralistic approaches has been striking. Eric Foner has described the old apologetic approach to slaveholding, with its thesis that it was a civilizing masters devised a benevolent institution to deal with the natural backwardness of the enslaved. Apologists argued that plantation life was marked by good standards of living for the slaves, gentle punishments, and true reciprocity between masters and slaves.¹⁰ This thesis is a good description of the ideals that the Jesuits, at least, said they had for their slaves. Neither in the case of the Jesuits or any other masters, however, did it fit reality.

Revision began in 1956, when Kenneth Stampp's *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South* reconstructed plantations as places of persistent conflict between masters and slaves, a conflict caused by the clash between the master's desire to earn the greatest possible income and the slaves' constant efforts to undermine the slaveholding institution through both direct and passive aggression.¹¹

Whatever the general accuracy of Stampp's thesis, it does not fit the Jesuit picture very neatly. The accurate model of a Jesuit plantation is a place where there was a clash between masters ambivalent about profit and slaves eager to undermine the institution through direct and passive aggression. So, the

Stampp's thesis only half fits the Jesuit situation. The slave resistance on the Jesuit plantations may have been as motivated as much by resistance to the control the masters tried to exert over the religious lives of the slaves as it was by resistance to efforts to get the slaves to work harder.

Stampp's thought began a discussion which eventually produced a thesis of slavery as a ruthless engine of economic prosperity that was practiced with capitalistic efficiency and prodigious profit. This analysis reached its culmination with the work of Robert William Fogel and Stanley L. Engermann, first writing together in *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery* (1974) and later by Fogel writing alone in *Without Consent or Contract: The Rise and Fall of American Slavery* (1989).

In their joint work, Fogel and Engermann focused in a provocative way on the accomplishments that slaves themselves were able to make during their bondage, to the point where some critics wondered whether their thesis left room to question why slavery had ever been abolished. They responded:

We have attacked the traditional interpretation of the economics of slavery not in order to resurrect a defunct system, but in order to correct the perversion of the history of blacks—in order to strike down the view that black Americans were without culture, without achievement, and without development

for their first two hundred and fifty years on American soil. . . . One of the worst consequences of the traditional interpretation of slavery is that it has diverted attention from the attack on the material conditions of black people that took place during the decades following the end of the Civil War. By exaggerating the severity of slavery, all that has come after it has been made to appear as an improvement over previous conditions.¹²

The view that the slaves made an indispensable contribution to the early American economy through their work for the welfare of their masters would have startled the Jesuits, who constantly stressed in their writings the burden of governing and caring for these resistant people. Furthermore, the Jesuit record modifies the idea that the living standards of slaves should only be measured materially. For example, living conditions for the Jesuits' slaves declined sharply once they were sold to new masters in Louisiana in 1838, and this decline was spiritual as well as material.

Jesuits were self-consciously moral men, well versed in centuries of theology and ethics, who attempted to conduct slaveholding in a manner which they hoped would be pleasing to God. They were, however, resistant to the abolitionist agenda.

In addition, major writers on the connection between slaveholding and organized religion have had little to say about the Jesuits. Albert J. Raboteau and Eugene Genovese both overlooked the slaveholding experiences of the

Jesuits in their books. Raboteau's *Slave Religion: The 'Invisible Institution' in the Antebellum South* (1978) focused almost exclusively on the experience of Protestant slaves.¹³ His more recent study, *A Fire in the Bones: Reflections on African American Religious History* (1995) does contain a chapter on black Catholics, but the emphasis is on the experience and reflection of slaves rather than their masters, despite a passing reference to the Jesuits.¹⁴ While Raboteau's approach is in laudable accordance with the recent historiographical trend of concentrating on the experiences of "outsider" groups whose perspectives have traditionally been neglected in mainstream American historiography, it leaves a gap in our understanding of how Jesuit slaveholders justified their practice to themselves.

Genovese had little to say about American Catholic slaveowners or slaves in *Roll, Jordan, Roll* (1974), despite his strong interest in how slaveholders tried to manipulate religion to hold slaves in obedience, in how slaves, in their turn, tried to manipulate religion as a tool in their struggle for freedom, and in how slaveholding in Protestant North America compared with the more Catholic derivatives in Latin America.¹⁵ His more recent study of slaveholders' religion, *The Slaveholder's Dilemma: Freedom and Progress in Southern Conservative Thought, 1820–1860* (1992) focused on what Protestant slaveholders thought about medieval Catholicism rather than on what they thought of the Catholic Church in their own time in the South.¹⁶ Genovese thus missed an opportunity to study some key differences between other slaveholders and Jesuits, most notably the fact that when Jesuits defended slavery, they tended to regard it as a necessary evil rather than a positive good.

While zeal for profit may have characterized the general class of American slaveholders, the Jesuits were too ambivalent about profit to fit into such a category. Their unease about wealth had direct consequences: their farms were disastrously unproductive until the sale of their last slaves. Moreover, far from having an uncomplicated determination to wring as much sweat out of their slaves as they could, the Jesuits seem to have come to regard slaveholding as a cross they had to endure for the sake of the religious salvation of their slaves. They persisted in a belief that the slaves constituted a trust given to them by God, and that the success of their supervision of them would be measured by whether or not the slaves were received into Heaven. At the very least, Jesuit slaveholders were an exception to the general rule of slaveholding in the United States. It is just possible that their experience bids us to revise our analysis of that general rule.

Jesuits in Maryland may also have been the exception to the general manner with which slaveholding was conducted within the Roman Catholic Church. When Stanley Elkins wrote *Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life* (1959), he believed that slavery in the United States was a far more rigid, racist and inhumane institution than its counterpart in Latin America. Elkins credited this difference, in part, to the Roman

Catholicism of the Latin Americans, which he saw as leading to a more benevolent approach to slaves and slaveholding than the British Protestantism that dominated slaveholders in North America. Elkins found a flexibility in Latin American practices that led to quick and flexible manumissions as well as social mobility for freed slaves.¹⁷ The Jesuits of Maryland may have been Catholic, but their lives and those of their slaves unfolded in a vastly different way from Elkins' scenario, showing that Catholicism itself could produce pluralistic methods of slaveholding.

Maryland Jesuits departed from Elkins' reconstruction in almost every particular. They were cautious about manumissions, often changing their minds after deciding to carry them out. They did little to challenge the inhospitable reception generally given to free blacks in Maryland, in fact keeping blacks in bondage rather than sending them forth as small businessmen in a prophetic challenge to the Maryland marginalization of the free African American. In *Slavery and Freedom on the Middle Ground: Maryland during the Nineteenth Century*, Barbara Jeanne Fields described this hostility of Maryland society to manumission.¹⁸ Comparison of her findings with the reluctance of the Maryland Jesuits to manumit their slaves helps to confirm her perspective that Maryland was not a place where a freed slave could easily prosper. Their record shows that the Maryland Jesuits did little to challenge that moral climate of opposition to freed blacks. Interestingly, Fields never mentioned the Jesuit slaveholders in her book, despite its exclusive focus on a state where they owned so many, and where their record had so much to add to her thesis.

Finally, a study of the thought of the Maryland Jesuits offers a chance to expand our understanding of why Catholics in the United States generally resented the abolitionist movement. Various explanations have been advanced for this hostility. In *American Catholics*, James Hennesey emphasized how white Catholic immigrants feared competing for bottom-level jobs with freed slaves. Also, Hennesey stressed how much those immigrants saw the concern of abolitionists for Blacks in the distant South as hypocritical, given that such reformers were simultaneously exploiting and discriminating against the white poor in their own Northern cities while proclaiming a nativist hostility to Catholicism.¹⁹

The Maryland Jesuits were resistant to abolitionism, however, long before immigration and nativism became vivid issues in the 1830's. Their opposition was based on abolitionism's origins in Protestantism, which Jesuits saw as a heresy, all of whose manifestations and derivatives must be resisted. The writings of Brother Joseph Mobberly, S.J. (1783–1827), the most prolific Jesuit author on the slavery issue, show a resistance to private interpretation of the Bible and the idea that anyone other than pope, bishops and priests could exercise authority in the Church. Mobberly saw abolitionism as both a consequence and a proponent of these two heresies, either of which he feared would lead to religious and social anarchy. Slavery became for him a necessary, pater-

nalistic evil for the preservation of order: he said he regretted that it had been introduced into the United States, but he knew not how Americans, let alone Jesuits, could rid themselves of that institution.²⁰

How the Jesuits of Maryland came by, treated and finally disposed of the “Negroes of Ours” is the topic of this book. The first question, how they originally acquired slaves, is addressed in Chapter One, “Property and Religious Liberty: The Emergence of Jesuit Slaveholding,” which demonstrates why Jesuits found the owning of chattel to be indispensable to the Catholic struggle for civil liberty under English rule. These political factors overruled even the compelling economic and social forces which pushed Maryland as a whole to become a slaveholding society during those years.

Chapter Two is entitled “Real Poverty and Apparent Wealth on the Jesuit Farms,” and argues that the fragmentary and chaotic nature of the surviving financial records indicates that the Maryland Jesuits had an ingrained financial carelessness which resulted in a chronic indebtedness to their London superiors of the English Province of the Society of Jesus. This disregard was partly due to the Jesuits’ greater professional interest in ministry than farm management, but it was also made possible by the generosity of lay Catholic planters in Maryland, whose benefactions to the Jesuits allowed the order to escape the worst consequences of their fiscal mismanagement. Another matter that was given priority over the general administration of the plantations was the pastoral care which the Jesuits felt they owed their slaves, which was caught up in the ineradicable mixture of social paternalism and racism with which the Jesuits regarded their chattel.

Chapter Three, “Doubt and Debate: Jesuit Questions about Slaveholding,” demonstrates how events such as the suppression of the Jesuit order by the Church between 1773 and 1814, the American Revolution, the emergence of the early American republic, and the arrival of refugee priests from the French Revolution stimulated some argument among clergy in Maryland as to whether slaveholding by priests should continue. These discussions actually led to the adoption of a gradual manumission policy in 1814, but it was repealed six years later without having been implemented. Chapter Four, “Preaching versus Practice: Jesuit Theory and Conduct of Slaveholding” offers an explanation for this failure to change, showing that even while talking of about ideals of mildly conducted slaveholding and possible manumission the Jesuits continued to govern their slaves harshly even amid changing times.

A major cause of the impulse to retain slaveholding is traced in Chapter Five, “Brother Joseph Mobberly and the Intellectual Antecedents of Jesuit Antiabolitionism.” The Jesuits’ conviction that abolitionism was a derivative of Protestant heresy blinded them to the valid arguments of the anti-slavery movements of the early nineteenth century. A counterweight to this bias toward keeping the slaves is explored in Chapter Six, “To Serve the Slave or the Immigrant?” As the Jesuits foresaw the coming massive migration of white

European Catholics into the seaports of the East Coast, some grew increasingly inclined to view their black slaves as an impediment to ministry with Catholics of sounder moral character, greater religious promise, and white race.

Chapter Seven, "The End of Jesuit Slaveholding, 1838," ponders the climactic events that brought the Jesuits' to their decision finally to sell all their chattel. In context, the decision to sell rather than free the slaves can be seen as a compromise among the various positions that Jesuits took on the question of slaveholding in general. By selling instead of freeing their slaves, the Jesuits remained consistent with their heritage of antiabolitionism and their sense of official Church teaching. That they disposed of their personal slaves, however, gave the Jesuits their desired availability to the white urban Catholic immigrant. An epilogue, "A Slaveholding Both Anglo-American and Catholic," assesses the lessons of the Jesuit experience.

Underlying all these chapters is a broad thesis that the Jesuits always had their unique motives for slaveholding. It is tempting to classify them as typical Maryland slaveholders. They began the practice around the same time as it generally emerged in the colony, and they abandoned it as it was in overall decline throughout the state. All the social and economic factors that influenced other slaveholders influenced them. However, the Jesuits always had their own reasons, springing from their status as professional, Catholic men of God and participants in the Anglo-American culture that produced the United States.

Historiography has passed through several phases in evaluating slaveholding: championing it, measuring its efficiency, condemning it, reconstructing its narrative and using its example to shed light on pressing issues of today. Slaveholding has received enough attention that we are no longer shocked by its existence or its extent. It is timely, therefore, to look beyond the basic tale of Jesuit slaveholding and study the moral assumptions upon which its conduct and termination were based. A belief system which was initially based upon the political expediency of holding black Catholics in bondage so that all Catholics might have religious liberty combined with ambivalence about profit and a theological justification of moral, social, and racial paternalism of betters toward their lessers to create the network of Jesuit slaveholdings. In the later decades of the eighteenth century, this practice survived ecclesiastical suppression and political revolution to endure a climate of antiabolitionism in the early nineteenth century. Finally, however, it gave way to the demands of immigration. In reconstructing how the moral sensibility of the Jesuits gave meaning to these events, this dissertation proposes to offer a greater understanding of the elaborate historical experience of Jesuit slaveholding in the colony and state of Maryland.

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JESUIT SLAVEHOLDING IN MARYLAND,
1717–1838

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CHAPTER ONE

Property and Religious Liberty: The Emergence of Jesuit Slaveholding

AS OVERSEER OF ST. INIGOE'S PLANTATION BETWEEN 1806 AND 1820, BROTHER Joseph Mobberly, S.J. often visited the nearby hamlet of Centreville, Maryland on business. Centreville was a Methodist stronghold, and the Roman Catholic Mobberly often found himself drawn into theological debate during his visits there. One prominent figure, whom Mobberly did not name in his diary but recorded as simultaneously holding the roles of magistrate, storekeeper and minister, "pretended to be a man of very extensive reading." He frequently challenged Mobberly's beliefs.

One day, sometime between 1815 and 1817, the storekeeper and Mobberly quarreled about whether Saint Augustine of Hippo had been a Calvinist. The storekeeper insisted that Augustine was indeed a Calvinist, probably attempting to communicate that this patristic father of the Church had at least been an intellectual forbear of John Calvin's doctrine of predestination. Mobberly relied strictly on the chronological facts for his rebuttal: "that is impossible, because Saint Augustine lived several centuries before Calvin was born." Mobberly recorded that each proponent repeated his position several times, neither yielding at all. Finally, the frustrated Jesuit turned his back and strode out of the store, chiding himself "for having indulged so long in conversation with a Methodistic Ninnyhammer."¹

The doctrinal affinity of Augustine and Calvin is a matter for theologians to resolve. It is possible for a historian, however, to discern more subtle supporting evidence for Mobberly's claim. Jesuits had embraced enough of Augustine's social philosophy to be justified in claiming him as one of their own. Augustine's specific views on slavery influenced the Jesuit's everyday treatment of their slaves, as Chapter Three of this study will discuss more fully. However, Augustine's broader philosophy of the relationship between the church and sec-

ular society was of even greater importance in disposing Jesuits toward slaveholding in the first place. His portrayal of history as the faithful's struggle to attain the righteous "city of God" while living within the sinful "city of man" rang true for Jesuits as they tried to build the Roman Catholic Church in the unfriendly climate of predominantly Protestant Maryland. In the pursuit of their difficult task, Jesuits discerned that the possession of slaves was another means by which they could protect their Church from its enemies.

Throughout the colonial period, the Jesuits dealt with a hostile culture by establishing little "cities of God"—their own plantations—throughout Maryland's "city of man." Within these private enclaves, the exercise of the Catholic religion could proceed in relative harmony. This land had to be developed, however, for sufficient income was necessary in order to keep the plantations in Catholic hands. Jesuits could themselves not farm fulltime without neglecting their priestly duties. Therefore, servants were an important support to the Jesuit plantation apostolate from the earliest years. Eventually, the possession of slaves came to serve a wider goal, the Jesuits' assertion of their own right and the right of Catholic laymen in the colony to be accorded the full rights of English subjects.

This situation endured until the American Revolution, making it unlikely that the Jesuits would seriously consider the abandonment of their slaveholding before that time. Their struggle throughout the colonial period for religious liberty and property rights is well-known, but the utility of slaveholding in their struggle has not received adequate attention. There is a need to reexamine Jesuit colonial political philosophy in the light of its implication for the possession of slaves. So far reconstructions of the Jesuit propositions about Catholic rights to worship and property ownership have ignored the implications of these propositions for this issue.²

The evolution of their political philosophy took place within a context of sectarian struggle, which the Jesuits interpreted mystically, as the manifestation of a deeper conflict between good and evil. They regarded the good forces of the Catholic Church as arrayed against worldly Protestant heretics. In an effort to imbibe the mystery of this struggle, Jesuits turned to Augustine, particularly to *The City of God*, his book responding to the sack of Rome in the year 410 C.E.

To Augustine, the misfortune of Rome was another act in the constant drama of sin's mysterious power to thwart the progress of the reign of God. "I must speak also of the earthly city—of that city which lusts to dominate the world. . . . From this earthly city issue the enemies against whom the City of God must be defended."³ He went on to speak of the spiritual challenges that faced Christians as they struggled to maintain their fidelity to God and community with one another amid the pressures of daily life. The danger was that until the second coming of Jesus Christ, the Christian would be forced to live simultaneously under the influence of both cities. The believer's challenge was

to avoid overshadowing by the human dimension. Translated to the Maryland situation, this theological formula guaranteed that political imperatives would rank with spiritual, theological and intellectual influences in encouraging Jesuits to persist in slaveholding throughout the colonial era.

Study of the connection between the struggle for political liberty of Catholic colonists and their slaveholding is important, for it can augment study of a possible connection between the emergence of political liberty for all white male freeholders of the Chesapeake and the evolution of a slaveholding system. Lower class Protestant colonists did not have to deal with the burden of religious minority in pressing their case for liberty, but the upper class Catholics of Maryland, including the Jesuits, did.

According to one reconstruction, the liberties of white planters in late seventeenth century Virginia were secured through the emergence of an elaborate system of African slave labor. Social and economic tensions increased as the population of Tidewater Virginia grew; many white settlers finished their term of indenture but had little prospect of obtaining land. Bacon's Rebellion of 1676, in which planters on the western edge of the Virginia colony rose up against the largescale owners to their east, was a symptom of this problem. The eventual replacement of a white indentured laboring force by an enslaved black labor force contributed to conditions which finally allowed poor whites to develop modest prosperity they might not otherwise have obtained, to own small amounts of land, and to share a modicum of the social prestige enjoyed by largescale, slaveholding planters. The result was to secure for all white male freeholders a right of participation in a republican government and a superior social status simply by the fact of their whiteness. These factors, this reconstruction concludes, greatly defused the potential for class conflict in the Chesapeake.⁴

The problem faced by the first Jesuit planters of Maryland, however, was not the pursuit of upward mobility. Most of them were of high English birth, "Popish Gentlemen of good families," according to a commentary of Peter Atwood, S.J. in 1718.⁵ Indeed, in early seventeenth century England, on the eve of Maryland's colonization, only the sons of the gentry could afford to travel to the mainland of Europe for the Jesuit novitiate and subsequent clerical education that was banned in England itself. Roman Catholicism largely died out among most lower class Englishmen during the reign of Elizabeth I because they generally lacked the means to provide for a private space for the practice of the faith. Only those poor who managed to cluster near Catholic businessmen in London or around gentry estates in the countryside found havens for devotion. The result was that the first Catholic settlers of Maryland, while a small minority of the colony, were also its elite until at least the late 1640s. The large majority of the first settlers were lower class Protestants.⁶ This situation of Catholic elitism was unique in "the entire history of English North America."⁷

After decades of threats and occasional repressions, Catholics were effectively eliminated from political participation in Maryland by the Glorious Revolution of 1689 and remained so until the American Revolution of 1776. The exclusion began when Maryland Protestants took advantage of the deposition of the Catholic James II in favor of the Protestant monarchs William and Mary to bar Catholics from government. This event was known locally as the revolt of the Protestant Associators.⁸ As far as Catholics were concerned, it was no longer enough to be a propertyholder in order to vote. The exceptional impediment to Catholic civil rights thus became religious minority status rather than social class. Jesuits remained the intellectual leaders of the Catholic planters of Maryland, however, and led the way in articulating resistance to this imposed settlement. They developed a political philosophy which regarded landholding and slaveholding as avenues to the procurement of civil rights for themselves and their coreligionists. Examination of this philosophy may augment studies of white people of the Chesapeake, in general, found slavery to serve their own purposes. For Catholics, at least, more was at stake in the tradeoff between slavery and freedom than simple political participation and social prestige. They used the fact of their slaveholding to argue the case for their own religious liberty.

Much of their spiritual and intellectual formation prompted Jesuits to conduct slaveholding for what they told themselves were fundamentally altruistic reasons, as part of a paternal responsibility for the spiritual and material welfare of lower class people and people of darker color whom the Jesuits regarded as needing the direction of others. The political motivations for their slaveholding, however, revealed that this rationale of selflessness was not wholly accurate. Jesuits, like their peers, thought of their self-interest when they practiced politics. Moreover, the self-interest they pursued in this matter resulted in a Church which accorded spiritual freedom to slaves even while holding them in material bondage. Jesuits' theological, political, and social activities thus intermingled generosity and repression in a paradoxical way.

It is not possible to understand the weight the Jesuits attached to land ownership in the Maryland colony unless one comprehends their experience as fugitive, landless priests in Elizabethan and Jacobean England. The English government feared that the Jesuits were agents of the papacy and Catholic Spain in a conspiracy to overthrow the Protestant settlement. From 1585, it was high treason for a Jesuit even to be present in England. This policy was reinforced after Jesuits were implicated in the so-called "Gunpowder Plot" to blow up the houses of Parliament in 1605.⁹ While many Jesuits continued to enter the country secretly, they fell dependent on the willingness of sympathetic householders to conceal them.

This dependence on the English gentry lessened Jesuit freedom to choose and conduct their own apostolates. Their occupations became chaplaincy and tutoring behind the doors of manor households rather than open proclamation

of the Gospel.¹⁰ This was a frustrating situation for most Jesuits, whose spiritual heritage and personal dispositions inclined them toward a bold public evangelization of the English nation. They were restless at the gentry's willingness to privatize religious practice in return for the government's tacit consent to leave upperclass Catholics alone. An open break with the gentry, however, would have cost the Jesuits not only financial support, but also possibly their lives.

On balance, therefore, life in England was disappointing to many Jesuits by the middle third of the seventeenth century. Those who traveled to Maryland from 1634 were responding to this frustration, and to the hope that in the New World they might be able to proceed more freely.¹¹ This hope was not to be fulfilled entirely, but from the start of the colony Jesuits fully shared in the typical desire of colonists to seek their own land rather than dwell perpetually on estates belonging to others.

Their eagerness to leave England led to Jesuit acquiescence in the conditions which the first proprietor of the colony, Lord Baltimore, imposed on all Catholic settlers proceeding to Maryland. In the interests of domestic peace within the settlement, and in hopes that the Protestant colonists would refrain from sending complaints to the government in London, Baltimore directed Catholics to keep their religious observance private and not engage in polemics with their neighbors.¹² Baltimore may have devised this strategy following his failure to secure a colony at Avalon in Newfoundland, where sectarian bitterness was a major impediment to success. This experience made him all the more determined to promote Catholic discretion from the outset of Maryland.¹³ The result was that the Jesuits were impelled to seek a zone of privacy for Catholic practice immediately—their own landholdings.

Jesuits joined Lord Baltimore in articulating an important paradigm for the new colony. Baltimore's promotional literature for his settlement envisioned Maryland landholdings as analogous to the medieval manors of England—not only in terms of their legal classification, but also in terms of their social structure. They would be class-based, with landlords, tenants and servants in descending order.¹⁴ Thus was devised a patriarchal order that would provide an important context for the emergence of slaveholding.

Most importantly, there was an aspect of Catholic life on the gentry estates of England that the Jesuits were determined to continue on their own farms. Back home, lower class Catholics who went to work for the gentry as servants found, on these large estates, a private space in which to carry out religious devotions that the penal laws denied them a public right to perform. In the gentry homes, domestics and estate workers could attend the liturgies at which Jesuits and other priest chaplains presided. Thus, gentry estates became the nuclei of what small pockets of Catholic population survived in the English countryside.¹⁵ If there was indeed to be no public promotion of religion in

Maryland, in accordance with Lord Baltimore's wishes, this model appeared to be the best alternative for Catholic proceeding there as well.

A slight revision of this model, in which the Jesuits joined the laity as estate owners, became the paradigm for Catholic community among the English settlers of Maryland. This model regarded the farms as fundamentally conducted for the good of the upper and lower classes living together in a unity of soul. Catholics who came to a Jesuit estate in Maryland were drawn first of all by their common religion, and only secondarily by their diverse social roles.

The early Maryland manor is believed to have fulfilled three main functions. First, it provided an overwhelmingly male population with a community to live in until they could afford their own households. While working for the manorial lord, they could learn the skills of farming tobacco and maize, as well as accumulate equipment for their eventual own farms.¹⁶ To these reasons, we may add the thought that a Jesuit manor, in particular, provided a safe place for the practice of Catholicism. For Protestants, the manor rather quickly fulfilled its function and passed from the scene toward the end of the seventeenth century.¹⁷ However, for Jesuits, the manor remained a key ideal. They continued to regard the colony itself a "manor writ large" until the Revolutionary War.¹⁸

Important theological and historical currents within Counter-Reformation Catholicism encouraged this persistence in manorialism. The Church of this era envisioned itself as a "perfect society." This expression did not signify a morally flawless Church, but a Church in accordance with a definition of perfection found in medieval scholastic philosophy—a self-sufficiency in every respect, "a society having all the means at its disposal to reach its own end."¹⁹ The Jesuits hoped that their Maryland manors would become such entities, places where Catholics could gather for prayer because economic productivity had made them places where the Church would be free to pursue its goal of union with God through Catholic practice.

Following the Council of Trent (1545–1563), the "perfect society" paradigm also came to be understood as involving a parallelism between church and state. Each should have its own sphere, within which each would have all the means at its disposal for the work proper to its own sphere. In Catholic countries, this meant that the Church developed its own parallels of several governmental institutions ordinarily associated with secular rule, such as law courts and administrative agencies, but to handle the business of the Church rather than that of the state.²⁰ The Jesuits of England and Maryland were not in a position to create parallel secular government, but they could and did develop attempt to develop parallels of secular *social* institutions, such as manorial estates and, in Maryland, plantations.

Under the pressure of the persecutions which Jesuits faced in Elizabethan England during the years immediately following Trent, they altered church-state parallelism into the proposition that the world was divided into rigid

spheres of influence for church and state, with each having all the means to function autonomously within its own sphere, but also with neither having any right to intrude on the specific business of the other. Fatefully, the Jesuits would accept parallels for the regulations for slaveholding according to this model. The state would codify it as a social institution, while the Church would limit itself with the spiritual lives of slaves.

The influence of this parallelism on the English Catholicism that would give birth to the Maryland Jesuit manors can be measured by examining two sets of comments made forty six years apart during the sixteenth century. At his execution in 1535 for failing to acknowledge the royal supremacy over the English Church, the former lord chancellor Thomas More (1478–1535) remarked that he died “the king’s good servant—but God’s first.”²¹ The logical implication of More’s declaration was that the good English Catholic would obey the papacy before the Crown. This was characteristic of a medieval outlook that the Church enjoyed supremacy over the state in every particular. In 1570, this belief seemed to be reaffirmed when Pope Pius V excommunicated Elizabeth I and exhorted English Catholics to work for her deposition, violently if need be.²²

A Jesuit who reentered England after this decree, Edmund Campion (1542–1581) realized that he would only be able to do priestly work there if he could convince the authorities that Jesuits sincerely held the belief that it was wrong for priests to interfere in the business of the state. Therefore, Campion took More’s thesis and revised it, making church and state parallel—equal but separate entities. He informed the Privy Council that he had never intended, and in any case was strictly forbidden by his religious superiors, to deal with the political issues facing the English crown. These were not part of his vocation, so Campion claimed that he had been trained to keep himself away from them.²³

At his trial for treason, Campion emphasized that Jesuits were “dead men to the world; we only traveled for souls; we touched neither state nor policy; we had no such commission.”²⁴ Campion concluded his defense with an emphasis on the obedience due to Elizabeth I in all temporal matters.

Some have equated Campion’s thought with More’s identification of himself as a loyal servant of the King.²⁵ The truth, however, is that Campion was much more willing than More to give the state autonomy within its proper sphere. Campion wanted the government to abstain from ecclesiastical interference in return for Jesuit abstinence from politics, so his only disagreement with the Elizabethan state was to deny its right to regulate religious practice.

Campion’s successors on the Jesuit mission to England matured his philosophy of political reticence. Robert Southwell, S.J. (1561–1595), for example, addressed “An Humble Supplication to Her Majestie” in 1593. In this treatise, Southwell tried, once again, to convince Elizabeth I that the Jesuits were pre-

pared to be docile on other political questions in exchange for their religious liberty:

Disloyalty shall never be found the sequell of any Article of our Religion; which more than any other tieth vs to a most exact submission to your temporall authority, and to all points of allegiance, that either now in Catholique cuntries, or ever before in Catholique times, were acknowledged to be due any Christian prince. . . . It is a point of the Catholique faith (defended by vs against the Sectaries of these dayes) that Subiects are bound in Conscience, vnder pain of forfeitting their right in heaven, and incurring the guilt of eternal torments, to obey the iust lawes of their princes . . . in all . . . civil and temporall respects, we are as submitted and pliable as any of your Maiesties best beloved subiects.²⁶

There are two reasons why this rigid division of church and state was important for the emergence of Maryland Jesuit slaveholding. First, it encouraged the Jesuits to establish small private enclaves, their manors, where they attempted to function as unobtrusively and self-sufficiently as possible and thereby ensure the survival of their faith. The means to religious liberty was always discretion. Therefore, Jesuits and other Catholic elites resorted to a policy of regarding Maryland as “the manor writ large” in lieu of formal laws protecting Catholic rights.²⁷ In their attempt to make their enclaves self-contained, Jesuits would accept whatever labor they needed—indentured servants at first, slaves when the supply of indentured laborers began to run low.

Second, their theory of church-state separation adversely affected the Jesuits’ ability to participate in the debate over how the colonial government should regulate the emerging institution of slavery. Significantly, this result came about because the Jesuits, pursuing their ideal of temporal abstinence to a logical conclusion, demanded exemption from service in the Maryland Assembly.

The Maryland Assembly was an important institution in colonial America—the first such body to be established in a North American English colony from the settlement’s founding.²⁸ At least three of the first seven Assemblies were general meetings. All freemen, including the Jesuits, were summoned to participate.²⁹ Had this tradition continued, the Jesuits would have been drawn more deeply into the political process than they wished to be.

The issue of the Jesuit presence in Maryland became an important means for acting out a struggle between the proprietor and the assembly to determine who would have the greater law-making power. Lord Baltimore believed that the assembly’s role should be subordinate to his own decisions; the legislature was to advise and consent but not initiate policy on its own. A strict interpretation of the colonial charter supported Baltimore’s opinion: it spoke of a unitary process in which the proprietor would propose and enact laws with “the advice assent and approbation of the Free-men of the said Province.”³⁰ From

the beginning, however, the Assembly wished to devise laws on its own.³¹ Since Baltimore was inclined to regulate Jesuit activity and the assemblymen were not, during the first decade of the colony defenders of the Jesuits were usually also advocates of legislative supremacy.³²

The conventional interpretation of the Jesuits' own role in this controversy is that they wanted to establish a Catholic ascendancy in Maryland and actively lobbied Catholic assemblymen to vote accordingly.³³ There were three Jesuit activities that convinced Baltimore of Jesuit aspirations for a Catholic ascendancy—their desire to have their manors exempted from political, military and financial obligations, their willingness to accept gifts of land from native Americans without seeking proprietary permission, and their evangelization among both the indigenous peoples and the Protestant settlers.³⁴ However, what the Jesuits really wanted was recognition of their right to live without interference on their manors.

The Jesuits envisioned each of these goals as only pursuing and expressing their deeper desire for a more secure network of private manors. They wanted to exempt the land from secular obligations so that it might be more fully private and private in its Catholicism. Jesuits were willing to accept land from the natives because they were eager to establish their private manors as quickly as possible. Even the evangelization of the Protestants was to be done passively: the Jesuits hoped that Protestants would be drawn by the word and example of the priests to visit the manors and so be converted. The annual letter of the missionaries to the English Provincial in 1639 said:

To the hope of the Indian harvest, are to be added also no mean fruits reaped from the colony and its inhabitants, to whom, on the principal feast days of the year, sermons are preached, and the expositions of the catechism given on the Lord's Day. Not only Catholics come in crowds, but very many heretics. . . . Our people cease not daily to engage in their divine employment, and to dispense the sacraments to those that come, as often as circumstances demand.³⁵

An important reason that the evangelization of the Protestants was envisioned so passively was that the Jesuit mission to Maryland, in its earliest years, regarded itself as primarily directed to the conversion of the native Americans. Work among the English settlers was secondary to the prospect of winning natives to Christ. Many Jesuits who volunteered for the Maryland mission spoke of the chance to work among the native peoples as their primary motivation in migrating.³⁶

Had they really been as politically ambitious for a role among the English settlers as Baltimore regarded them, the Jesuits would not have persistently claimed an exemption from service in the Assembly throughout the sessions that debated Baltimore's wish to limit their role within the colony. They sent proxies named Thomas Cornwaleys, Cuthbert Fenwick and Robert Clarke to

the Assembly of 1637–38, which refused to accept their votes.³⁷ The Jesuits did not really believe they should sit in the assembly; they sent the proxies because the law required them to do so. They did not fight the dismissal of the proxies, a telling sign that representation in the colonial government was repugnant to their doctrine of abstinence from temporal affairs.

In fact, negotiations between Baltimore and the English Province of the Society of Jesus in 1642 resulted in a compromise in which the exemption of Jesuits from further summons to the Assembly represented their side of the bargain. Baltimore wanted them to abandon the land claims they had received from native Americans without the proprietor's permission; the Jesuits demanded the exemption from officeholding in return. This result was due to the negotiating tactics of the English provincial, Henry More (1587–1661), a great-grandson of Thomas.³⁸ His demand for the exemption shows that he leaned closer to the theory of Campion regarding church-state relations than to those of his own ancestor.

This accommodation, coming just eight years after the founding of the colony, set up one of the most important reasons why the Maryland Jesuits acquiesced in the later emergence of slaveholding in the colony. It ensured that the Jesuits would not be party to the process that began in the Maryland Assembly as early as the 1660s, the statutory definition and regulation of slavery. The Assembly early adjudicated such issues as enslavement of negroes for life and a ban on interracial marriages.³⁹

This situation was acceptable to the Jesuits because the writings of a premier English Jesuit political philosopher, Robert Persons, assigned the regulation of slavery to the temporal realm as early as 1606. Parsons believed that the temporal order “helps to gouerne well the Commowealth, in peace, aboundance, order and prosperitie . . . handleth the Ciuill affaires of the Realme, and Commonwealth, as they apertaine to the temporall good, and prosperitie thereof.”⁴⁰ The regulation of property, both landed and chatteled, was what determined “the temporall good and prosperitie” of Maryland with its planting-based economy. Jesuits found it entirely natural that the Assembly should be the party to regulate slavery.

Henry More's decision of 1642 gave the theories of Campion and Parsons about church-state separation formal recognition among the Jesuits in Maryland. This decision provided an unappreciatedly early beginning to a theme often regarded as appearing in American Catholic history only during the Revolutionary War, the idea that priests should remain aloof from politics while only the Catholic laity pursued the full rights of citizenship.⁴¹

Because Campion's theory of parallelism between church and state and Person's division of labor between the two were both embraced by Henry More in his settlement with Baltimore, the legislature's assumption of jurisdiction over slaveholding signified for the Jesuits of a generation later the end of their eligibility to comment on the future of slavery. Publicly, they could neither

advocate its adoption nor advocate its abolition; the only role left to them was to set examples of good moral conduct for masters through the treatment of their own slaves.

When slavery was discussed within the Assembly, records of the proceedings indicate that the debates were brief and superficial. Decisions were reached quickly, with little dissent.⁴² The presence of the Jesuits might have at least extended this process. There is no evidence that they would have sought to abolish slavery, but their thought regarding the spiritual lives of slaves and the religious liberty of all was different enough from Protestant conceptions of the same issues to suggest that Jesuits might have at least sought to place some Catholic influence upon the slave codes. It would have been particularly intriguing had they contributed to the debate on the relationship between baptism and temporal status as a slave. The latter seventeenth century was a time when several colonial legislatures, including Maryland's, passed laws denying the proposition that Christian conversion would necessitate the manumission of a slave.⁴³ Jesuits embraced this proposition willingly, raising their chattel as both Catholics and slaves from birth. Had Jesuits been in the legislature, they might have championed the perspective that these slaves had a right to their Catholicism, thus upholding the proposition that the basic human right to religious freedom extended even to people without any other civil rights.

There was a deeper level on which the absence of the Jesuits from the Assembly after 1642 hurt the Maryland colony itself. Seventeenth century Maryland was a place of great political immaturity and instability. Settlers proved unable to express and resolve philosophical differences within stable political institutions, instead resorting to violence, uprisings, and manipulation. One reason for this situation was the prolonged political ascendancy of recent immigrants in political office due to high mortality rates and the general failure of the colony's population to reproduce itself naturally during the early decades of settlement.⁴⁴

The Jesuits might have contributed to an earlier stabilization of this situation had they remained active in officeholding. Their experience in accommodating themselves to a difficult political situation in England, combined with their extensive intellectual formation, especially in philosophy, and their tendency to value social stability, all qualified them to make public policy. They exerted indirect influence on the process through the Catholic lay planters whom they educated and ministered to. In fact, until the revolution of 1689, a disproportionate number of the Catholic laity served in elective office.⁴⁵ The Protestant majority's resentment of the predominance of the Catholic minority was a major cause of the revolution of 1689.⁴⁶

The fact that there was a Catholic ascendancy makes the Jesuits' abstinence from it between 1642 and 1689 all the more striking. It is a powerful indication of the depth of their desire to live in privacy on their landholdings. It is possible that their theory of the "manor writ large" emerged only after, and in

response to, the 1689 Revolution. The Jesuits were characteristically English in that they devised political theory only in response to actual events, and shunned *a priori* reasoning. This underlying point is true, but the Maryland Jesuits took their underlying philosophy from thought shaped long before 1689, in response to events in Elizabethan England.

There were deeper, more human reasons why the Jesuits came to regard landholding as so important. There were three criteria by which to measure the full integration of new arrivals into Chesapeake society. These were to become a planter, to marry and raise children, and to participate in the political decisions of the community.⁴⁷ The Jesuit vow of chastity barred them from the second criteria, while the crucial decision of Henry More in 1642 barred them from the third. Thereafter, the Jesuits were left with only the first goal, the pursuit of planting. From the beginning, they pursued the accumulation of land with great zeal—perhaps because it was the one outward sign of success they could demonstrate to the rest of the colony.

Jesuits first exploited the proprietor's policy of awarding land to gentlemen settlers who paid for the transportation of indentured servants from England in 1634. 400 acres were to be granted for each servant thus imported.⁴⁸ One Jesuit alone, Thomas Copley, earned entitlement to 28,000 acres through his diligent response to this offer.⁴⁹ Copley, therefore, must have imported sixty-five servants. However, the Jesuits only took possession of 8000 of the acres they thus earned.⁵⁰

Therefore, the missionaries decided to press for the restoration in Maryland of the medieval English law of mortmain, by which the Church would receive the right as an institution to hold its own land in perpetuity, able neither to transfer or sell it. Recognizing the medieval origins of mortmain, some historians have concluded that their advocacy of it meant that Maryland Jesuits desired to return to a medieval English conception of the church-state relationship. Some believe that the Jesuits regressed to this position after arriving in the Chesapeake.⁵¹ This argument is echoed by those who stress the importance of medieval papal bulls to the Maryland Jesuits.⁵² However, to focus only on the Jesuit desire for mortmain is to take a narrow view of their wider goal. They wanted to use mortmain as part of a creative synthesis of the best of medieval philosophy and the Campion-Persons theory of church autonomy in its own sphere. This desire is best illustrated by their nuanced approach to the colonial charter. They championed the charter's provision supporting mortmain, and ignored the provision that only the proprietor could dispose of native American land.

The Charter granted to the first Lord Baltimore by King Charles I indeed provided that mortmain be secured in Maryland. However, within England there was considerable doubt that the monarch had the arbitrary prerogative to overrule the Parliamentary statutes that had ended the practice a century earlier. The struggle between Crown and Parliament for supremacy added spice to

this uncertainty. Another complication was a further act of Parliament, passed in 1585 and amended in 1604, which made it a capital felony to “wittingly and willingly receive, comfort, and/or maintain any . . . Jesuit.” Lord Baltimore, anticipating the victory of the Puritan party in the English Civil War, refused to concede mortmain in Maryland for fear that a strict interpretation of this later legislation might then cost him his life.⁵³

Henry More apparently recognized Baltimore’s dilemma and sympathized with it. As part of the compromise of 1642, More agreed to an arrangement whereby the Jesuits would own land as individuals rather than as a corporate body. In effect, colonial Maryland law would not recognize the corporate existence of the Society of Jesus, but it would treat individual Jesuits like any other Englishmen in their personal right to own property.⁵⁴ While this was not what the Jesuits had initially wanted, it was an advance over the situation in England itself, where they could not own property under any conditions, either corporately or individually. At least an important individual right of Englishmen had been guaranteed to them by the proprietor, and the Jesuits defended his guarantee for the remainder of the colonial period.

After 1642, the only ways left for individual Jesuits to obtain land was either to buy it outright or receive it as a gift from other English settlers. This simple fact suddenly made the system of indentured servitude much more important to the Jesuits. Who would be willing to sell or give them land? An obvious source was the Catholic lay planter elite, including those who emerged as landholders after initial service as indentured servants. Having their own indentured servants became a way for the Jesuits to assure the emergence of a class of benefactors in later years, donors who would provide them with both land and chattel in gratitude for Jesuit assistance to their passage to the colony.

The Jesuits quickly proved willing to assist indentured servants to Maryland for reasons that went far deeper than the practical need for assistance in the working of the land. Unlike Massachusetts Bay, where most of the migration from England took place during the first decade of settlement, Maryland continued to absorb large numbers of immigrants for most of the seventeenth century. These immigrants fulfilled two crucial economic functions, providing a supply of labor for the tobacco crop and the replenishment of a population as yet unable to reproduce itself naturally due to high and youthful mortality rates.⁵⁵

For the Jesuits, however, these new arrivals served two additional functions: the chance to exercise their project of converting lower class Englishmen to and upholding them in Catholicism, as well as a chance to increase the number of Catholics in the Maryland colony itself. The Jesuits regarded this as an important proactive task for themselves because they did not trust the English Catholic gentry’s enthusiasm for Catholic colonization. As early as 1605, Robert Persons, S.J. felt that odds were against the project of “transferring Englishe Catholiques to the Northen partes of Americe” because the rich

would not wish anyone to go and the poor would follow their advice.⁵⁶ Thus the Jesuits came to regard themselves as the only trustworthy champions of Catholic immigration to Maryland. Underscoring this fact is the discovery that they never completely abandoned the practice of sponsoring Catholic servants who wished to immigrate to Maryland, owning indentures well into the nineteenth century.⁵⁷

Religion has been an overlooked motivation for migration to Maryland, at least when it comes to people who were recruited to the Jesuit manors. In general, people who emigrated from England to the Chesapeake were people of little wealth, low social standing—illustrative of those Englishfolk who were obliged to work with their hands for a living, either in agriculture or the craft trades. They came from a broad geographical cross section of English society.⁵⁸ Many factors impelled people to emigrate, but unemployment was probably the strongest one. Few left their homes in the English countryside with the intention of proceeding overseas, but ventured on to the Chesapeake as an expediency when they could not find work in English cities and seaports.⁵⁹ It is probable, however, that Catholic emigrants were more likely than others to have known from the beginning that Maryland was their goal, due to its reputation as a haven for Catholicism.

The eighteenth century was a time when the slave trade was more important than the recruitment of indentured servants in meeting labor needs in Maryland. The importation of some indentures continued, however, and it is probable that slaves were reserved for work in the fields while the indentures received the skilled work of the plantation—clerkships, carpentry, masonry, housekeeping and, tutoring for the planter's children.⁶⁰ These were skills that pointed to upward mobility once the indenture expired. It was in the Jesuits' interest to cultivate Catholic laymen of such skills, since they could go on to become important benefactors of Church activities.

In 1729, a wealthy planter named James Carroll left "all my servants . . . and chattels" to some Jesuits.⁶¹ This was the type of gifts that Jesuits counted on receiving from their lay neighbors. Such bequests vindicated the policy that the Jesuits had begun, long before the eighteenth century, of nurturing Catholic indentured servants. As early as 1638, the annual report of mission activity sent to superiors back in England recorded the Jesuits' interest in engaging indentured servants primarily as a means of protecting the faith of those servants:

We bought the contracts of two Catholic indentured servants in Virginia. Nor was the money ill-spent, for both showed themselves good Christians; one, indeed, is extraordinary. Some others have performed the same charitable act in buying from that place Catholic servants, of whom there are a great number. For every year a great many sell themselves into bondage for Virginia, and, as they live among persons of the worst example and are utterly deprived of any spiritual means, they generally make shipwrecks of their souls.⁶²

There is no indication here that the Jesuits placed their practical economic need for these servants first. What was important to them was that Catholic servants be brought to the Jesuit plantations so that they could practice the faith in a protective and encouraging environment. It seems likely that servants were encouraged to stay on the farms whether they were needed or not as long as those farms were the safest place for their Catholic devotional practice.

This prioritization of religious over economic need would eventually become a motive for the acquisition of slaves as well. Just as they initially saw an opportunity to salvage the faith of indigent Catholic immigrants from the British Isles by bringing them to the Jesuit manors, the Jesuits later saw the need to protect slaves from assertions by some Protestants that slaves were not worthy of Baptism. In 1749, George Hunter, S.J. affirmed that the “greater glory of God” demanded that all slaves be recognized by their masters as “members of Jesus Christ, redeemed by his precious blood.”⁶³ The one way to illustrate this point was for the Jesuits to obtain slaves and treat them according to Hunter’s affirmation of their humanity and Christianity. Keeping them in Jesuit hands was one way to make sure that such slaves received catechesis and the opportunity to persevere as Catholics. Jesuits like Hunter saw the desirability of financial self-support for the plantations as a means of serving the deeper goal of establishing the plantations as such havens of religious liberty that even slaves could be spiritually free there. The plantations’ importance as a place of refuge for the reign of the Catholic God took priority.

The idea that the Jesuits may have initially seen little to distinguish the status of indentured servants and African slaves is encouraged by a list of Jesuit indentures from 1638. In an attempt to claim reward under Baltimore’s conditions of plantations, which promised land for each servant sponsored on the journey to Maryland, the Jesuits submitted this list to officials of the colony. It included “Matthias Sousa, Molato . . . Francisco, a Molato . . . black John Price.” These servants were imported in the same manner as “white John Price” and “Charles the Welshmen.”⁶⁴ It may be presumed that they were worked in a similar manner, too.

Jesuit political philosophy indicates that what ultimately distinguished white from black labor for them was the equation of the right to purchase one’s own property with Englishness. What separated “white John Price” from “black John Price” was that the former, as a British subject, could go on to buy his own land once his indenture expired.

Robert Persons, S.J. made this Jesuit identification of property rights with Englishness in a written rebuttal to some opinions of Justice Edward Coke in 1606. As a Catholic dissenter, the basic issue for Persons was, what made a man English? Coke had argued that an indispensable component of Englishness was membership in the established Church. Persons answered, fatefully for the future emergence of slaveholding among his confreres in Maryland, that religious liberty transcended nationality but that what really set

apart an Englishman was his right to buy, own and sell property. It was this equation of Englishness with property-holding that motivated Maryland's Catholics to join the patriot cause during the American Revolution; they fully agreed that taxation without representation was an affront to English liberty.⁶⁵

Persons argued that the right to worship God preceded the establishment of the English state or any other state; it was a birthright for all human beings due to the universal or "generall large commission" of Jesus Christ to the apostles to spread the faith throughout the world and govern the Church everywhere.⁶⁶ Persons noted, "That is Catholic, and undoubtedly trew, which everywhere, is one and the same. And this both in tyme, place, and substance."⁶⁷ Therefore, religious affiliation lay outside the regulation of the secular state of one mere nation.

The state emerged much later in history; Persons liked to point out that nearly half a millenium separated the conversion of England to Catholicism under Pope Gregory the Great and the Norman Conquest, which he took as the beginning of the modern English state.⁶⁸ The state emerged at that much later time to protect the rights of property owners.⁶⁹ Persons pointed out, however, that property owners were relatively few and far between; "a good patrimony . . . is not every man's case." He asked, "what riches, or inheritance have those men . . . which are born without landes or liuings?"⁷⁰

Persons' answer to this question, that the rights left to the propertyless were spiritual and therefore placed under the protection of the Church, pointed to the Jesuit regard for the spiritual lives of their slaves. Slaves were, by definition, people who could not own property. Jesuits, however, also stressed constantly that these same slaves, eligible as they were to receive the Gospel, were as human as any English people who lacked land. Therefore, slaves were as free religiously as anyone else.

Jesuits, therefore, developed a consistent record in Maryland of guaranteeing the rights of slaves to worship as Catholics. They always allowed them to be baptized and married, and to receive the Eucharist. Having Catholic slaves on hand, moreover, also proved to be a convenient way of demonstrating Person's point that the right to religious liberty was separate from, and prior to, superior to and more universal than the rights of being English.

While the Jesuits thus based the right to religious liberty on an encompassing humanity, they based the right to own property on narrow nationality. It was Englishness that awarded the right to own land. Furthermore, this right to own land was not in the gift of the state. In 1642, the Jesuits denounced as unjust "laws, formerly passed in England and unjustly observed there . . . 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."⁷¹ It would be a mistake to overemphasize the appearance of the words "community" and "ecclesiastical" within this passage, which broadly claims a clear right for every English individual to own

land. Again, the presence of African bondsmen in Maryland dramatized this point. Who could be less English than an African without land? His skin color dramatized the race and nationality that English Catholics and Protestants shared rather than the religious issues that divided them, and his landlessness suggested that only people of color should be landless.

The emergence of slaveholding and the inferiorization of blacks were entangled parts of a systemic process, and it is impossible to designate one of these two factors as taking priority over the other.⁷² The Persons philosophy, however, suggests that this debate could be settled more clearly by imagining the English perspective as nationalistic as well as racial. For Catholics, at least, “English over Black” was as important an expression than “White over Black.”

There are indications that just as the Jesuits initially provided little sense of a division of labor between white and black servants, so too they did not always clearly divide labor between masters and slaves either. Jesuits were quite willing to join in manual tasks when the occasion demanded it. This willingness to humble themselves may be traced to an important book of the English Catholic heritage, Thomas More’s *Utopia*. This work provided many models for the conduct of the Jesuit manors in Maryland.

Thomas More became a hero to all Catholics of English heritage after his execution in 1535.⁷³ For Jesuits, this tie assumed a more personal aspect through the connection of Thomas’ great-grandson Henry More, whose role in securing their manors and political philosophy in Maryland was so decisive. Two themes of the fictional country of Utopia—rejection of religious coercion and the proposition that civic peace was more important than doctrinal conformity—formed ideals of conduct for Maryland Catholics.⁷⁴ To them, these fictional ideals of Catholic discretion became more important than what More said about the supremacy of church over state on the scaffold in real life.

It is, therefore, pertinent to examine the models of servitude that More constructed in the same book, and compare them to what little we know of Maryland Jesuit proceeding.

An important justification for Utopian slaveholding helps to explain complaints by Maryland Jesuits that they experienced a conflict between their vocation to apostolic labor and the demands of plantation work. More’s Utopians believed that certain low, material tasks hindered the educated elite from contemplation of higher, more spiritual matters. Hunting and the slaughter of livestock were believed to make the person performing them act less humane, so such tasks were to be left to the less educated.⁷⁵ Compare this insight with the conviction of Maryland Jesuits that they must be as free as possible from the day to day activities of their plantations so that they might pursue priestly work—the preparation of homilies, the riding of the circuit to celebrate the sacraments for the laity, and the tutoring of children from upper class Catholic families. Jesuits often complained that the assignment to do both the tasks of

plantation management and clerical duties ensured that neither was performed well.⁷⁶

Utopians strove to make any worker above the level of slave as “free from physical drudgery as the needs of the community will allow.” That would free him for the cultivation of his mind,”the secret of a happy life.”⁷⁷ This was an obvious incentive for Jesuits, with their intellectual heritage and theological interests, to leave the mundane needs of their plantations to servants.

Utopians also stressed, however, that there should not be too sharp a division of labor between upper class people and servants; they should work together on important projects. For example, the preparation of meals should be done together. The creative side of cooking was left to the ruling class, who devised the menus and planned the courses while the slaves pursued “all the rough and dirty work.”⁷⁸

When Father Joseph Mosley was assigned as the lone Jesuit at a mission station in Tuckahoe, Maryland, from 1765–1787, he honored this Utopian insight by joining his slaves in work. The only difference between them was that Mosley lived in a “miserable dwelling house” while the slaves had “a much worse.” In 1766, the slaves accomplished the messy task of plastering the priest’s house for Mosley, but he himself built a brick chimney after choosing the type of bricks he wanted and hauling them five miles from market. In a letter to his sister, Mosley noted “I have my own grain, and make my own bread.”⁷⁹ Eighteen years later, when Mosley was able to resume correspondence with his sister after the long hiatus of the Revolutionary War, he noted that “Since the commencement of the War, I’ve built on my farm a brick chapel and dwelling house.” Concerning this latter accomplishment, Mosley noted how difficult it was to do under wartime conditions, when nails, in particular, were in very short supply.⁸⁰

This comment echoes the flexibility shown by the Utopians in time of war. Officers in the Utopian army were often put to work usually done by slaves, such as digging fortifications in the interest of quick completion by many hands.⁸¹

As the Jesuits grew more and more preoccupied with securing their landholdings as enclaves for the protection of Catholic religious observance, simultaneously noticing more and more the difficulties involved in making a living with these landholdings, More’s insight about the desirability of the upper class pursuing manual labor in emergencies came to have a greater and greater influence on Jesuits management of their plantations. Jesuits showed a similar openness to manual labor in emergencies, even carrying it further than the Utopian soldiers by working alongside rather than replacing the slaves. Their willingness to do so was in the spirit of this passage from *Utopia*:

they believe that the only way to earn happiness after death is to spend one’s life doing good works. . . . In short, they behave like servants, and work hard-

er than slaves, not only for the community, but also for private individuals . . . the more they make slaves of themselves, the more everybody respects them.⁸²

In Utopia, “The normal penalty for being too aggressive in religious controversy is either exile or slavery.”⁸³ That was certainly not the explicit reason why any individual was enslaved by the Jesuits. However, the deeper insight of this statement was that the institution of slaveholding was somehow linked to the price that society had to pay for a climate of religious toleration. This was certainly a proposition that the Jesuits in Maryland accepted by treating their slaveholding plantations as devices for the protection of religious liberty.

Utopian slaves were often used as tools to teach moral lessons to the whole country. Slaves were chained in gold as part of a didactic effort to persuade Utopian freemen not to covet that metal.⁸⁴ The Jesuits hoped that the kind treatment of their slaves would serve as a didactic reminder to other masters that they should not view their pursuit of riches as the most important thing in their lives, and that they should concentrate on the just governance of the less fortunate committed to their care. George Hunter’s observations of 1749 that Jesuits were called to set a charitable example of the treatment of slaves was made in that spirit. Jesuits sought to teach by clothing the slaves in kindness rather than gold.

More portrayed the Stywards, supervisors of servants in Utopia, as officials responsible for striking a balance between mandating the laborers to work all the time and leaving them completely idle. The result was to be time balanced between work and leisure.⁸⁵ Regulations devised by the Jesuits in 1722 for the observance of holydays by slaves in Maryland show the influence of this balanced philosophy. Despite pressures to make the slaves work every day of the planting season, they were given five holydays completely off during the summer, including Ascension, Whit Monday, Whit Tuesday, Corpus Christi, and Assumption. On other important feast days of the summer, they were to be allowed to attend Mass or a prayer service before proceeding to the fields. However, those servants who worked within the household were to take all the holydays completely off from work.⁸⁶

The Jesuits thus entered the eighteenth century with their unique way of governing their slaves and operating their plantations. The task that remained to them was to defend this right, and they produced two important political philosophers, Peter Attwood, S.J. (1682–1734) and George Hunter (1713–1779) who brought their case to a maturity of political expression.

Attwood’s contribution was composed in 1718 and was called “Liberty and Property: or, the Beauty of Maryland Displayed, Being a Brief and Candid Search and Inquiry into her Charter, Fundamental Laws and Constitution, by a Lover of his Country.” It was written in response to the crisis of the Old Pretender’s Rebellion.

The German princes of the Hanoverian dynasty had just succeeded to the British throne in preference to the Catholic members of the House of Stuart, who had the better hereditary claim but the inferior political one. A Protestant Parliament had enacted the Act of Settlement, limiting the crown to professed Anglicans. Jesuits and the Catholic laity were suspected of plotting to aid the “king across the water” in France, the Stuart pretender, James Edward, in his efforts to overthrow George I. Within the Britain itself, there was an outburst of fear that absolute monarchy was about to be restored under “papist” influence.⁸⁷

This apprehension spread to Maryland. In 1715, the Maryland Assembly imposed an importation tax “on all Irish Papist Servants imported into the Province.” An additional levy of twenty shillings was imposed “on all Irish Servants being Papists” through an act of May 28, 1717.⁸⁸ There were indications that the Assembly might proceed further, stripping the Jesuits of all their property. As a precaution, the Jesuit owner of the Newtown plantation, William Hunter, temporarily signed his land, slaves and other effects over to a sympathetic lay friend, Thomas Jameson, for ten shillings⁸⁹. The deed of this transfer provided what is now the earliest known surviving legal documentation of Jesuit ownership of slaves in Maryland.

The issue of Irish indentured servants is important to understanding the emergence of slaveholding in the Chesapeake. The major social difficulty of the indenture system was that each year it graduated into the Chesapeake economy numerous young settlers with limited prospects for prosperity. Fearing the potential of such frustrated young men for violence, planters often welcomed the importation of African slaves as an alternative to further white immigration.⁹⁰

Imagine, however, the special Jesuit and Catholic predicament in this situation. Given the continuing Protestant tendency to portray the Jesuits as plotters against the political and social order of both England and Maryland, Jesuits were particularly vulnerable to charges that they were behind any revolt of the restless freedmen. This suspicion was probably a factor in the denial of political rights to Catholics at the time of the 1689 Revolution. The Irish, with their record of hostility to the British Crown, were a particularly provocative group to have present as indentured servants in such an atmosphere. Other planters may have turned to slave labor out of economic motivations, but the Jesuits had the extra pressure of finding a labor pool whose composition would not arouse the hostility of suspicious neighbors.

The year 1715 may have been the crucial moment in the general transition from indentured to slave labor. After this date, the number of servants no longer kept pace with the number of slaves entering the colony.⁹¹ Not coincidentally, this was the very same year that the Assembly cracked down on the importation of Catholic indentured servants. This evidence suggests that the

special circumstances of religious intolerance forced the Jesuits to rely even more on slave labor than the typical Marylander came to.

Whatever circumstances forced them to do, however, Jesuits like Attwood clung to the argument that any subject of the Crown had inalienable rights that should be unaffected by religious affiliation. It was Attwood's understanding that *any* English subject who settled in Maryland was to be granted a free tract of land, on which they could live according to all the rights and privileges of Englishmen.⁹²

As Englishmen, Jesuits like Attwood felt that they shared an ancient right to buy, own and sell property. As far as they were concerned, this was a right based on Englishness alone, and not on whether one was a *Protestant* Englishmen. Moreover, this right was not dependent on the crown; the king could neither grant nor deny this right. He had only the duty to recognize it and guarantee it. As George Hunter put it, Catholics desired "that they may be assured they shall not at any time be molested or affected by any law touching their Religion or Property uncommon to their fellow subjects."⁹³ Efforts by Parliament to take away these rights from English Catholics struck the Jesuits as violations of the true spirit of the Constitution.⁹⁴

When the Jesuits decided that property ownership was a function of English nationality, they produced the side effect of neglecting the civil rights of people who did not happen to be English subjects. Had they based the claim to property ownership on humanity, as they did in the case of religious liberty, they would have found it difficult indeed to justify holding other human beings as property. But since Jesuits decided to limit land ownership to a right of Englishness, they missed an opportunity to affirm a universal right to economic liberty.

It was the Jesuit view of religious liberty that was exceptional. The idea that property was an English right made the Jesuits reflective of conventional political thought. Their only quarrel with the Bill of Rights passed by Parliament in 1689 was that it limited the ancient property rights of the English to Protestants. Jesuits quite agreed with John Locke when he wrote that political power is delegated by the people who happen to own property for the protection of their property.⁹⁵

The theory that Maryland Jesuit thought was characteristically English is instructive here, especially as regards the notion that such thought flowed from experience rather than theory.⁹⁶ Jesuits made no attempt to impose an *a priori* political philosophy upon their conduct in Maryland. Rather, they adapted a pragmatic approach in reaction to events. They affirmed the universality of religious liberty and the particularity of property ownership because developments in Maryland suggested to them that such a combination of policies would be the best way for the Catholic Church to survive there.

A crucial consequence of their political theory was that Jesuits developed a great sensitivity to exercising all the same property rights as their fellow English

colonists. They also realized early on that to claim such a right was not enough; one had to also exercise it. In fact, one also had to be *seen* to exercise this right. If their Protestant neighbors had property, Catholics not only had to have it, too, but they also had to prompt Protestants to see that they had it. In that spirit, as mission superior, Attwood was willing to make the first public concession that Jesuits actually owned slaves in 1718. In doing so, he explicitly laid claim to a right to do so.⁹⁷

Attwood combined a lengthy documentation of the colony's founding and its early legislation regarding religious liberty and property rights with a protest over the more recent denial of those freedoms to Catholics. Everything he wrote was designed to demonstrate his case that Maryland was meant to be religiously blind. All Englishmen who came to Maryland had the same rights:

All Christians enjoyed not only ye free use of their religion, but an equal share, in all their Rights, Places, and Privileges . . . there was also an entire liberty and full enjoyment of all other rights, privileges and immunities for all subjects of Great Britain, as to buy and sell, to take profits and enjoy, to transmit to their heirs, or to convey and bequeath unto any other wt goods or chattles, lands or hereditaments, and in a word, all their estates, or any part thereof, whatever, real or personal . . . both Clergy and Laity of all persuasions, and consequently of ye Roman Catholics among ye rest, were ever deemed to be qualified to purchase, buy, sell, or possess any lands or estates in Maryland.⁹⁸

Attwood protested the injustice and inconvenience of taking these rights away from Catholics, noting that the Jesuits had a great practical need for this land, their only potential source of subsistence. To deprive them of this means of livelihood on account of their religion would be a form of molestation.⁹⁹

Here Attwood made a remarkable statement: it was wrong to take away his right to own a slave just because the master was Catholic. This treatise had the effect of definitively incorporating Robert Persons' political philosophy within Maryland Jesuit thought.

The second important Jesuit document in support of property holding in colonial Maryland came four decades later. In 1757, George Hunter, S.J. (1713–1779) produced "A Short Account of the State and Conditions of the Roman Catholics in the Province of Maryland, Collected from Authentic Copies of the Provincial Records and Other Undoubted Testimonies."

Protestant Maryland experienced a renewed anti-Catholic panic in the 1750s, as the French began infiltrating the neighboring Ohio Valley and allying themselves with the native Americans there. French Jesuits had a historical presence among the indigenous peoples of Canada, and it was suspected that their English confreres in Maryland would collude with them in stirring up transAppalachian peoples against the British Crown. Meanwhile, the English Jesuits might also assist the enemy by inciting slave revolts in the Chesapeake