

# The Southern Colonies

## One American's Story

In the 1640s fear and confusion spread through Maryland. A Puritan rebellion had been followed by the governor's death. Soldiers demanded their pay, but there was no money to pay them. No one had time to wait for instructions from the colony's owner, **Lord Baltimore**, who lived in England. So **Margaret Brent**, the governor's attorney, took action. First she rose before the Assembly to demand the right to vote. Because she was a woman, her request was denied. However, as the governor's attorney, she still had power. So to raise money to pay the troops, she sold Lord Baltimore's cattle. When Baltimore heard of this sale he was furious. The Assembly defended Brent's actions:

### PRIMARY SOURCE

“It was better for [the] colony's safety at that time in her hands than in any man's else in the province. She rather deserved favor and thanks from your Honor.”

—letter to Lord Baltimore from the Maryland Assembly

Margaret Brent acted decisively at a time when few women had political power or many legal rights. But the colonies were a new world, where unusual circumstances often led colonists to play unfamiliar roles.

## Lord Baltimore Finds Maryland

**KEY QUESTION** What kind of society was planned for Maryland?

In 1634, the second Southern colony, Maryland, was settled on the Chesapeake Bay. Maryland was also intended to be a new kind of society, free from the religious conflicts of Europe.

**The Act of Toleration** When Maryland was founded, Catholics and Protestants in Europe had been fighting each other for a century. In England many Anglicans, including King Charles I, sympathized with the Catholics. Charles supported the Catholic Lord Baltimore's plan for a colony where



Margaret Brent demands the right to vote.