

## **4.6 - Records of the Houses - St. Thomas Manor**

### **Background on the House at St. Thomas Manor**

In 1642, Andrew White, S.J., established St. Thomas Manor and St. Ignatius Church at Chapel Point, partially because the native Portobaccos, Pomonkeys and Piscattaways were receptive to Christianity. Other colonists, however, ensured that peace would be short-lived. In 1645, Puritan sympathizers William Claiborne and Richard Ingle captured St. Mary's City and looted the properties held by Catholics. Father White and Thomas Copley, S.J., were arrested near Chapel Point and transported back to England.

In 1647, Cecil Calvert, Lord Baltimore, secured control over the colony and soon thereafter issued a patent of more than 2,000 acres along the Port Tobacco River to the Maryland missionaries. By the end of the eighteenth century, the Jesuits had purchased contiguous lands and operated a 500-acre tobacco plantation known as St. Thomas on the east side of the river and rented out a 2,500-acre tract, Cedar Point Neck, to tenant farmers.

Several prominent Jesuits resided at St. Thomas Manor, including several Maryland Superiors and members of the Neale and Fenwick families. The priests of this House also worked closely with the Carmelite nuns, who in 1806 established a monastery near Pomfret (Charles County) on a 1,000-acre plantation supported by enslaved labor. (The Carmelite Monastery was transferred to Baltimore in 1831.)

Like the other plantations operated by the Jesuits, slavery was central to St. Thomas Manor's success. The Province's 1838 sale of 272 enslaved people included 46 individuals from St. Thomas, many of whom were separated from their families.

St. Thomas Manor and St. Ignatius Church have remained important sites for the Province. In 1958, the Jesuits established Loyola-on-the-Potomac Retreat House (Faulkner, Md.) to serve Catholics from the Baltimore-Washington region. In 1973, the parish sold all of its land, with the exception of the 23 acres comprising St. Thomas Manor and St. Ignatius Church, to the state of Maryland.

### **Bibliography**

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