

Original.

[Sharpe to Calvert.]

26th Dec^r 1757 transmitted by Capt. Somerville

Sir

Having at length had the pleasure to receive your three Letters dated the 7th of April 13th of July & 12th of August last I shall now give an answer to those parts of them that seem to require one. I am glad to find that His Lordship approves of my having dismissed M^r Edward Tilghman from the office of Keeper of the Eastern Shore Rent Rolls & that he has no other objection to M^r W^m Thomas's being continued in that office than that he lives on this Side the Bay. Since that is the Case I must take the Liberty to assure you that this accidental Circumstance is so far from being disadvantageous to His Lordship's Affairs that it is really of great Use & Benefit & enables M^r Thomas to bring those Rentalls out of Confusion into Order with Abundance more ease to himself & to every one else concerned than if he resided on any Part of the Eastern Shore. You know it is not the Business of a Rent Roll Keeper to ride about & look after the several Tracts of Land the Rents whereof may at any time happen to be disputed, that is the Business or Duty of the Farmer who may be charged with such Rents, & whose Interest it is to recover them; The Rent Roll Keeper is only concerned with the Farmers & the Agent & ought in my opinion to reside if possible in or near the Place where the Farmers can most conveniently attend on or meet him & where Recourse might on occasion be most readily had to the Land Records. This place then can be no other than Annapolis because here all the Records are kept & hither all the Sheriffs (who are now the Farmers) are obliged to come three or four Times a year to make their Returns to the Provincial Courts & to pay the Excise & Land Tax to the Commissioners of the Loan Office. There are many Conveniences or Advantages besides that arise from the Keeper of the Eastern Shore Rent Rolls residing here w^{ch} it would be tedious to enumerate but which Experience has discovered; while the Impropriety of a Keeper of the Western Shore Rent Rolls residing on the Eastern Shore is exceedingly obvious, & I may add likewise that if the Agent was also to become an Inhabitant of this City there would not be often such Delay in doing Business as there must necessarily be at present.

As M^r Tilghman for Reasons best known to himself did while he was in Office enter in the Books the Names of a great many Tracts of Land that have not paid Quit Rent these hundred years, if ever; the Farmers on the Eastern Shore are thereby laid under prodigious Difficulties & find themselves