

oath of Coroner for this County" on March 23, 1696/7. On September 26, 1699 William Hutchison took the oath of coroner.⁷⁵

Little reference is made to the functions of the coroner in the *Liber*. The only fees for coroners provided in the statutory schedule of fees were for viewing the body of a person murdered, slain or otherwise dead of misadventure; for arresting or summoning any sheriff sued or prosecuted in any court and for taking security for his appearance; and for the arresting, summoning or attaching any other person in a case in which the sheriff was plaintiff.⁷⁶ A few allowances for holding inquisitions appear in the county levies in the *Liber* and process was served by the coroner in a few causes.⁷⁷ That the perquisites of office were small appears from the low payment, 100 pounds of tobacco per annum, imposed upon holders of the office for the public use.⁷⁸

Constable

By virtue of a statutory provision the justices were directed to nominate and appoint some inhabitant within each hundred or precinct who was to execute all precepts and warrants directed to him and who "shall in all things have the like power within the said hundred and precinct as any Constable hath or ought to have in a hundred or precinct in England by the Law or Custome of England."⁷⁹ Accordingly at the April 23, 1696 sitting the justices divided the county into hundreds and appointed constables for Mattapony, Mount Calvert, Collington, Patuxent, Piscattoway and New Scotland hundreds. At the November 1696 sitting new constables were chosen for the ensuing year for each hundred and warrants issued accordingly. At the November 1697 and November 1698 courts constables were again nominated and appointed for each hundred for the ensuing year.⁸⁰ The distinction between high constables and petty constables, the designations used in certain laws (presumably derived from English practice), is not apparent from the *Liber*.

The most important function of the constable, as revealed in the *Liber*, was the presentment to the grand jury of offenses committed within his hundred. A constable who failed to appear, after being called three times in open court, to give in his presentments might be fined, unless good cause were shown.⁸¹ The office of constable was not regarded as an office of profit, within the meaning of the 1695 act referred to above, nor was there any statutory schedule of fees for constables.

Further insight into the function of the constable is afforded by the oath appointed by statute to be taken by constables which read as follows:

[Y]ou shall swear you will well and truly serve Our Sovereign Lord and Lady the King and Queen in the Office of a Constable, you shall see and Cause that their Majesties Peace be well and duly kept according to your Power, you shall arrest all such persons as in your presence shall comitt or make any Ryote Affray or other breach of their Majesties Peace, you shall do your best Endeavour upon Complaint to you made to apprehend all Felons Barrettors Ryotters or persons riotously assembled And if any such Offendors shall

75. 20 MA 425, 546, 586; *infra* 7, 168, 547.

76. 13 MA 511, 22 *id.* 577.

77. *Infra* 279, 487.

78. 38 MA 50.

79. 13 *id.* 515. The act contained a proviso that it was not to be extended to prejudice the right of any lords of the manor appointing constables within their respective manors. A dis-senter might execute the office by a deputy approved by the justices. For five manors in Prince Georges County see Owings, *Private Manors: An Edited List*, 33 MHM 307, 322, 329, 331 (1938).

80. *Infra* 5, 64, 282, 395.

81. *Infra* 64.