

helter-skelter arrangement for looking up and computing the rents—even in those first twenty years or so of the colony—would have been highly inefficient to say the least. At this early period the preparation and keeping of rent rolls were in the hands of the Secretary of the province and the Surveyor General.⁵⁴ With the creation of the office of Receiver General, another official took a hand in the compiling of the rent rolls, for in 1678 there was a proclamation of the Proprietor ordering recording of alienations “in order that the Secretary and the Receiver General might be able to make a complete rent roll.”⁵⁵ Indeed, sometime before 1676 the Proprietor appointed two Receivers General of his rents and other dues and authorized them to appoint deputies.⁵⁶ From an early date whoever was in charge of rent rolls was assisted by the sheriffs who made the collections locally and forwarded them. A commission to the sheriffs from the governor in 1671 reads:

. . . These are therefore in the name of his said Lordship to will and Command you that you Cause a true and perfect Rent Roll to be made of all and singular the Lands in your County and in whose possession they now are & distinguish them by Debtor and Creditor and give them Credit that have paid and if they have not paid then to each piece of Land say (over against it) not paid and if there be no distress you shall likewise incert so over against the said Land you shall make a full Inquiry into all and singular the premises that you may be the better Enabled to make a Certain and Perfect Rent Roll which Rent Roll shall begin with the first Seated hundred in your County and so successively & the said Rent Roll and a true Copy thereof attested under your hand that you personally bring with you into the City of Saint Marys the first day of October next ensuing the date hereof and therein exhibite unto my self and Council who will be God willing then there to make a full Examination into his Lordships Rents and also give you such further Orders Instructions and directions touching both that and other his Lordships Affairs as to us shall seem expedient. . . .⁵⁷

From 1689 to 1715 Maryland became a royal colony and the Proprietor had continually to contend for his rights in land affairs and the custody of the land records. Between 1689 and 1694 the Land

⁵⁴ *Arch. Md.*, V, 94 ff.; Mereness, p. 59.

⁵⁵ *Arch. Md.*, XV, pp. 159, 160; Mereness, p. 60.

⁵⁶ *Arch. Md.*, XV, p. 119 ff.; Mereness, p. 59.

⁵⁷ *Proceedings of the Council of Maryland, 1667-75*, p. 70; *Arch. Md.*, V, 91.