

Charles Calvert, requiring him to prepare for an election.²⁶ At the election occurring in the following April Richard Preston is recorded as a Delegate to the Assembly and Daniel Jenifer as a Burgess. Before this time there are no records of representation of Dorchester County in either House. It therefore seems probable that the County was erected in the latter part of 1668 through proclamation of the proprietor, Cecilus, Lord Baltimore. On the 6th of May, 1669, we have the record²⁷ of the appointment of commissioners to keep the peace in Dorchester County and in the commission it is stated that "we will that the said County extend to Great Choptank River, including the South Side thereof to be accounted and taken to be within the said County of Dorchester"

The next reference to Dorchester County is in the records of the Council meeting at St. Mary's on the 22d of October following in a minute of the order to the sheriffs of Somerset, Dorchester, Talbot, and Baltimore counties regarding the seating of persons "on the Seaboard Side of Delaware Bay from the Bounds of Virginia to the degree 40 Northerly Latitude."²⁸ From this it may be inferred that the bounds of the county at the time of its erection were the Choptank River on the north and the Nanticoke River on the south, on the west Chesapeake Bay, and on the east a disputed boundary. It should be remembered that at or just before this time Lord Baltimore had received a confirmation of his charter from Charles I, and that he was claiming with increasing vigor his rights to the Delaware territory. On the other hand the Dutch through their deputation of 1659 and subsequent correspondence were asserting with equal vigor their rights to the territory of New Sweden which they had recently subjugated. Four years before the establishment of Dorchester County the captured possessions of the Dutch, as far as the east bank of the Delaware, had been given to the King's brother, James, Duke of York. The Duke's representative thought it wise to claim both sides of the Delaware and by 1668 had commenced to give grants in the Delaware territory. Lord Baltimore was evidently eager to establish his claims to the Delaware territory by the

²⁶ Md. Arch., 2: 185.

²⁷ Md. Arch., 5: 52-54.

²⁸ Md. Arch., 5: 56.