

come up for a hearing. It was not until the close of 1674 that the Charles County Court had its own court house; before this it held its sessions at inns, or possibly in some instances in private houses.

During the nine year period covered by the present volume the records of the Charles County Court show the ill effects of the frequent changes in the clerkship. Four court clerks held office during this period, two of whom, Boughton and Bonner, seemed to have lost office through financial irregularities, and a third, Gibbon, died not long after taking office. It would appear that these three clerks, when they were appointed, were recent arrivals from England, and had doubtless come to Maryland with Proprietary promises of civil preferment. The court record for this period, defective and fragmentary as it often is, indicates that the newly arrived holders of the clerkship had considerable acquaintance with legal forms. Missing in this period are the picturesque and oftentimes coarse and sordid descriptive details of criminal and civil cases as recorded by earlier clerks, neighborhood men, who were less versed in technical legal phrase but more familiar with the personalities and local backgrounds of neighborhood squabbles and feuds. Although these newly imported clerks were apparently better legal technicians than their local predecessors they have left behind them a record which contains for us much less of human interest. One of them, Boughton, appears to have studied law in Gray's Inn, London. There is also conclusive evidence that these newcomers often failed, either intentionally or from indifference, to make entries in the court records in many instances, especially in criminal cases, which should have been recorded. Probably this was because their reward in fees, at so much an engrossed line, was less for these entries than it was in the case of civil actions where the losing litigant was obliged to pay for the entries in the court record as part of the "costs" charged against him.

The character of the various matters which came before the court and are entered in the court record is discussed in detail under various headings in the Introduction which follows. The record gives us a picture of seventeenth century life in a Maryland community having a population of something like two thousand souls, and, it may be added, in a community having a strongly litigious urge.

The Committee on Publications takes this occasion to call attention to the irreparable loss which the study of American colonial law, and more especially early Maryland law, has suffered in the recent death of Judge Carroll T. Bond, late chief judge of the Maryland Court of Appeals. His two books, *The Court of Appeals of Maryland*, and *Proceedings of the Maryland Court of Appeals, 1695-1729*, together with his other writings and addresses on colonial law, gave him an unrivaled position in this field. During the past twelve years five