

rogative Court for the last thirteen years of its existence, submitted a memorial to the General Assembly. After stressing his own familiarity with the records and pointing out that the considerable unfinished business of the Court necessitated frequent reference to the records, he requested that they be returned to his custody. Accordingly, an act was passed requiring him to remove the records of the Court from Upper Marlboro to some safe place in Anne Arundel County at least nine miles from Annapolis.³² He was ordered to hire a room in which to house them and to keep them stored in chests or trunks so that they might readily be moved if the Governor and Council so ordered. Since Vallette was so anxious to obtain the records, it seems reasonable to assume that he fulfilled the requirements of the law although no clue as to the location of the storage place can be found. In any case, on November 27, 1778, the Governor and Council ordered "that all the Books and Papers belonging to the Commissaries Office, be removed to the City of Annapolis under the care of the Register of Wills for Anne Arundel County,"³³ whose office at that time was located in the State House.

A few months later, in March 1779, a law was passed ordering that the Prerogative Court Papers dating from 1760 and belonging to estates which had not been finally settled be sorted and packed and delivered to the several Registers of Wills.³⁴ The rest of the papers were similarly distributed in 1783 when the officer having custody of them was ordered to record all unrecorded original papers and sort out, list and pack all original papers for each county.³⁵ Then he was to notify the Registers to send for them. As a result, the original papers of the Prerogative Court have since then been located in the offices of the Registers of Wills for the various counties.

The volumes had meanwhile remained in the custody of the Register of Wills for Anne Arundel County. In 1823, a resolution of the General Assembly authorized him to remove the records to his "fireproof office in the courthouse of Anne Arundel County."³⁶ There the records remained until 1904, when the Register was directed by law to deliver all the records and indexes of the Prerogative Court

³² *Proceedings of the House of Delegates, 1777, f. 292-293; Recorded Laws of Maryland, Liber G. R. No. 1, 1777-1778, f. 8 (June 1777, ch. 9).*

³³ *Arch. Md., XXI, 255.*

³⁴ *Kilty, Laws of Md., March 1779, ch. 15.*

³⁵ *Hanson, Laws of Md., April 1783, ch. 9.*

³⁶ *Laws of Md., 1822, Res. No. 44.*