

the election districts in the Board of County Commissioners. Thus Washington County in 1860 authorized its County Commissioners to erect new election districts whenever necessary. In Charles County the Commissioners have been authorized to change the lines on petition since 1870 but apparently do not have the power to erect new districts. The County Commissioners in Calvert and Talbot counties are authorized to divide the present election districts into precincts to meet the requirements, while this power is conferred upon the election supervisors in Harford County.

The fact that the election district is frequently modified by increasing the number of election precincts within it and also the fact that the number of election districts has little or nothing to do with the delegated powers of representation, except as a general means of designating units of territory, would seem to indicate that it is losing its significance as a political subdivision since it possesses no organic political life within itself as in the case of townships which occupy analogous positions in other states.

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTIES.

### ALLEGANY COUNTY.

Few counties in the State have a less varied history regarding their boundaries and none were erected with simpler phraseology. According to the Acts of the Assembly passed in 1789:

All that part of Washington County which lies to the westward of Sideling Hill creek, shall be and is hereby erected into a new county by the name of Allegany County.

That brief statement indicates the early settlements of Allegany County as constituting a part of its eastern neighbors. Prior to 1776, when Washington County was erected, the rapidly increasing number of inhabitants in the vicinity of Fort Cumberland had been residents of Frederick County with the county seat at Frederick. Subsequent to its formation, until the erection of Garrett County in 1872, the Allegany County courts exercised jurisdiction over all the western section of the State, including Garrett County. The boundary line between Garrett