

This importance of a county is not of recent development for it may be detected among the earlier records of the first settlers along the Potomac. Yet, in spite of the prominent place which the counties occupy in the popular parlance, there are few subjects regarding the origin of which there is more uncertain knowledge on the part of the local inhabitant. The date of erection of the home county and the manner in which it was set apart are alike but vaguely known. This ignorance is doubtless due in great measure to the age of the counties and the many modes of incorporating or erecting them which have been employed. These have varied from the personal announcement of the Proprietor, as in the case of old Worcester County, to formal legislative enactment or the insertion of new sections in the constitution of the State by the delegates at constitutional conventions. The original limits of the counties are often vaguely known or actually undeterminable, while in several instances, such as Baltimore County, there exist no extant records indicating exactly the manner or time of their erection. The nearest it is possible to come to the date of the formation of some is based upon the finding of the name or the reference to some county official in the contemporaneous legal records.

The preparation of large scale maps of the counties of the State by the Maryland Geological Survey has necessitated the exact delimitation of the counties and this in turn has called for the careful study of the legal records relating to them and their boundaries from the settlement of the State in April, 1634, to the present day. The results of these investigations are summarized in the following pages.

#### TIME OF ERECTING COUNTIES.

Among the first impressions received from a study of the records dealing with the origin of the individual county is the fact that there has been apparent no single well established mode of procedure by which the counties have come into being and that the great majority of the twenty-three counties, with Baltimore City, which now constitute the State of Maryland, were already erected prior to the Revolution and