

of the Western Branch. The Big Patuxent above this point at that time had been explored to little or no extent and even into the eighteenth century was known as Snowdens River rather than the Big Patuxent. This divergence in the use of local terms is frequently encountered where only parts of the natural features were known at the period of the first settlement.

Old Charles County was not of long duration. By the 28th of September, 1653, Lord Baltimore had issued instructions to discharge Robert Brookes and in July, 1654, the Governor, by the advice of his Council, repealed the act of 1650 "touching the Erecting Some part of the South Side of Patuxent River into a County by the Name of Charles County." At the same time the Governor decided to

"Erect make and appoint both sides of Putuxent River into one County by the name Calvert County Bounded on the South Side with Pynehill River or Creeke to the head thereof and from thence through the woods to the head of Putuxent River being the Northerly bound of St Maries County, and bounded on the North Side with the Creeke upon the Westerne Side of Chesapeake Bay called the herring Creeke and from thence through the woods to the head of Putuxent River being the Southerly bound of Annarundell County."

The new Charles County, or Charles County as it is known to-day, was erected by the Governor and Council April 13, 1658.²⁴ The sheriff of Charles County is mentioned in the Assembly for 1659 and frequent references are made in succeeding years. The motive for the erection of this new county was the accommodation of the inhabitants in the growing settlements along the estuaries of the Nanjemoy and Port Tobacco creeks. Clearings at the time extended but a short distance away from the water's edge or the stream bottoms and though the number of inhabitants was small the distance from the Court House at St. Mary's City was sufficient to occasion inconvenience. The first definite statement found regarding the limits of Charles County are found in the general act of 1695, defining the limits of many of the then existing counties. According to this act Charles County was to begin upon the

²⁴ Md. Arch., 3: 341.