

nificance is the case of Robert Martin and wife. Martin filed in the Kent County Court a deed of gift to his wife Elizabeth, dated January 25, 1656, in which he listed livestock, various articles of women's wearing apparel, household goods, and grain. He also recorded on the same date a release disclaiming any interest in these or anything else belonging to "my now lawful wiffe Elizabeth". Under the same date his wife, signing herself "Elizabeth Martin—the affected", renounced all claims upon her "lawful husband—that I have in him or his Estat at p^resent or for futer" (*Arch. Md. liv*, 81-82). What "affected" meant, or why this led to what was possibly a separation from her husband, is not revealed.

In addition to the minutes of the judicial activities of the county justices, or commissioners, and the record of their actions as administrators of the *civil affairs* of the counties, numerous entries of a very different character are to be found enrolled in the county court proceedings. Here are recorded various papers pertaining to land. We find patents, land rights, deeds, bills of sale, assignments, mortgages, leases, and alienation fines or fees, all of which by law or by custom might be recorded either in the county court where the land was situated, or in the Provincial Court at St. Mary's. More will be said later of these early land entries. Also recorded are letters of attorney, bills of debt, partnership agreements, servants' indentures, contracts with servants, apprenticeship indentures, findings of juries of inquest, records of births, burials and marriages, banns of matrimony, bonds to keep the peace and other bonds, proclamations by the Provincial authorities, writs for elections, commissions for justices, sheriffs, clerks, and other county officers, issued by the Governor, appointments by the courts of constables, and the registration of livestock marks. A record was also kept at this period in the minutes of the court, of various testamentary matters, including wills, inventory, accounts, guardianship appointments, and matters relating to orphans' estates (p. xxxvii).

Among the acts passed by the Assembly in 1638/9, but which failed to become laws because of the dispute between the Governor and the Assembly as to which had the right to initiate legislation, was one relating to the recording of *conveyances of land* from person to person. This was "an act for assuring the titles to land" which empowered the register of any court in the Province to record *upon request* conveyances, titles and successions to land (*Arch. Md. i*, 61-62), but the recording of all instruments of this kind was not made obligatory until the passage in 1674 of "an act for enrolling conveyances and securing the estates of purchasers" (*Arch. Md. ii*, 389-392). Under this act which *required* the recording of all conveyances affecting land, such papers might be recorded either in the Provincial Court, or in the court of the county where the land was located. Why an act similar to the last named, passed by the Assembly in 1663, received with many other acts the dissent of the Proprietary in 1669, and thus failed to become a law, is not clear (*Arch. Md. i*, 487-488). As this dissent was not made until six years after the passage of the act in 1663, in the interval it may have been considered in force and have been observed. An examination of the court records shows that the spirit of the abortive act of 1638/9, which failed of passage, *permitting* the recording of conveyances, was