

horns of cattle. In 1669 an additional buttock-brand is found coming into use. In Somerset County these additional brands began to be registered in 1672. The lists of individuals registering their livestock marks with the county court are of much interest, as they serve as a sort of rough census of the several counties where these records were well kept. It would appear, however, that in some cases servants were allowed to own livestock and to register their marks, so that the lists include a few names of other than free men and free women. In one instance in Somerset County there were registered the earmark and brand of a negro servant of Mary Johnson, a free negro (*Arch. Md. liv*, 760). The registration of livestock earmarks made necessary the filing in the county courts of the record of changes in livestock ownership. Hog-stealing for obvious reasons was more prevalent than the theft of other kinds of livestock.

*Bills of sale* for various kinds of personal property, such as livestock, household goods, and farm produce, are found recorded. The county records also contain numerous deeds of gift, frequently to children, of livestock. It has been suggested that many of these were gifts from godparents to their godchildren. *Discharges*, as they are usually called, or releases, for debts of all kinds are frequent entries. In one instance a marriage settlement is recorded (*Arch. Md. liv*, 45).

In addition to the justices or commissioners there were several county officers who assisted the county courts in carrying out their judicial and administrative functions. These were the clerk of the court, the sheriff and his deputies, the coroner, the constables, and the court cryer.

The office of *clerk* of the county court was a more important and dignified one than might at first be appreciated, as he was in a sense the representative of the authority of the bench when the court was not in session. Like the members of the court, he was usually an appointee of the Governor, although in 1657 there is a record of his appointment by the Kent court itself (*Arch. Md. liv*, 115). At the time of the organization of Somerset County, December 11, 1665, the court appointed George Johnson clerk, and a few months later, July 30, 1666, thanked the Governor for appointing Edmund Beauchamp clerk (*Arch. Md. liv*, 611, 626). Later in the century the appointment of county clerks, however, became a perquisite of the Secretary of the Province, and under Sir Thomas Lawrence gave rise to much scandal. It is probable that at first the clerk himself kept the records, although at times he is known to have been assisted by a deputy. Always a prominent member of his community, and of necessity an educated man, the position of county clerk was a lucrative one, dependent upon the fees received for recording various legal papers and other entries. The changes in personnel are at once indicated by the change in the handwriting of the record. Changes in the clerkship during the period covered by these records, when the position was less profitable than it became later, were more frequent than in the following century, when some of the incumbents seem to have had what was virtually a life tenure of office. Down to the year 1666 the offices of clerk and sheriff were not infrequently held by the same individual, but in that year an act was passed by the Assembly prohibiting this double tenure (*Arch. Md. ii*, 132-133), probably as a result of complaints made by Col. Nathaniel