

Utie to the Assembly on April 3rd of that year, in the matter of alleged irregularities in the election of members of the Lower House from Baltimore County, where John Collet, who held both offices, acted as the election official (*Arch. Md. ii*, 74-75). At this same session the Assembly also passed an act prohibiting clerks and sheriffs from acting as attorneys in their own courts (*Arch. Md. ii*, 132), and in 1671 this prohibition was extended to subclerks and deputy clerks, as well as to deputy sheriffs (*Arch. Md. ii*, 322).

The duties of the clerk were to have the custody of the record books and papers, to keep minutes of the court sessions, and to enter the various papers which were brought to be recorded. He also issued writs and warrants to the sheriff for service, and furnished copies of court orders. For a brief time he seems to have sent a transcript of the orders of his court to the Secretary of the Province. The form of oath to be taken by a county clerk is to be seen in the Kent records under date of January 1661/2 (*Arch. Md. liv*, 203). There is an instance noted in the Kent court proceedings for November 1657, when the clerk, Thomas Hynson, was admonished by the court for an error he had made in an entry (*Arch. Md. liv*, 90-91); and in October 1676 the clerk of the same county, Charles Bancks, was sued for issuing a writ without proper authority (*Arch. Md. liv*, 349). The clerks' fees were fixed by acts of the Assembly (*Arch. Md. ii*, 137, 294).

An official, whose activities pervade the county court records, was the *sheriff*, or as he was occasionally called, the high sheriff. His office was later one of profit and power, as he represented both the provincial and county authorities. That in the hands of an unscrupulous person the opportunities for oppression and injustice, as well as for lining his own pockets, were great, is well brought out in the unabbreviated form of the sheriff's oath which recited the numerous things which he was not to do (*Arch. Md. iii*, 117; *li*, 373). He received no salary, his emoluments being entirely derived from fees which were fixed by successive acts of the Assembly. His official duties were to serve various writs issued by the Provincial, Chancery, or county courts, to carry out the orders of these courts in both civil and criminal cases, including execution upon the personal property and the body of the debtor in the collection of debts, the custody of prisoners, and the infliction of corporal or capital punishment, the impanelling of petit juries, the publication of public notices or proclamations, the supervision of the election of members of the Lower House of Assembly, the collection of the public levy, and various other duties. Occasionally he presented to the court for trial individuals accused of crime (*Arch. Md. liv*, 49).

Until 1666 the offices of sheriff and coroner seem usually to have been combined (*Arch. Md. i*, 55; *iii*, 61, 329). Under the act of 1642 the sheriff was to be appointed by the chief judge of the Provincial Court, who was usually the Governor, or by the presiding judge of the county court, from persons recommended by a majority of the bench, and his term of office seems to have been at the pleasure of the court (*Arch. Md. i*, 148). After the passage of the act of 1661, and as amended in 1662, he was to be selected by the Governor from three persons nominated by the county court, and his term of office was limited to one year (*Arch. Md. i*, 412, 451). During the disturbed period of the fifties