

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL.

December 15, 1936.

To the Maryland Historical Society,

GENTLEMEN :

With the publication of volumes LIII and LIV of the *Archives of Maryland*, containing the proceedings of four mid-seventeenth-century county courts and one manorial court, the purpose of the Committee on Publication to present a complete cross section of the judicial system of Maryland in this century has been carried out. Students of the history of colonial law now have available in printed form a partial record of all the courts of the Province. But to an even larger number of readers these county records will prove of interest for the light they throw upon the early settlers in their human relations with one another, as well as for that shed upon the legal, political, and economic background on which their lives are here projected.

The publication of these two volumes has been made possible by the help which the Committee on Publication has received from Mr. Louis Dow Scisco, who has served as associate editor in their preparation. He has not only deciphered and transcribed with meticulous accuracy the crabbed and often almost undecipherable seventeenth-century handwriting of various court clerks, but has made voluminous notes on the contents of the records, which have been of great assistance to the editor in the preparation of the introductory notes to the two volumes. Mr. Scisco has also prepared the indices. The committee is greatly indebted to Judge Carroll T. Bond, Chief Judge of the Maryland Court of Appeals and the recognized authority on early Maryland jurisprudence, for the invaluable help he has given the editor in clearing up sundry obscure points relating to early legal procedure as brought out by these records of seventeenth-century Maryland county courts.

Beginning with the highest, the courts of Maryland in the seventeenth century were: (1) the appellate court of the Governor and Council sitting as the Upper House down through the year 1694, and after this date sitting separately under the name of the Court of Appeals, (2) the Provincial Court, or general law court of the Province, (3) the Court of Chancery for hearing equity cases, (4) the several county courts, and (5) the manorial or leet courts which functioned on a few of the older and more important manors.