

Ringgold, although he was no longer a member of the court (p. 224); and in June 1662 it met at Mr. Henry Morgan's house (p. 233). Usually it is not specified where court was held; thus between 1668 and 1671 the place of meeting was specified only once, when it was held November 18, 1671, at the house of Mr. Robert Dunn (p. 317). The court records from 1672 to 1675 are missing, but under date of July 2, 1672, we find an order from Gov. Charles Calvert to "Mr. Thomas South and the rest of the Comission<sup>r</sup>'s", that "the place for holding your county Court be in some part of the easterne neck and not upon the Island as formerly" (*Arch. Md. xv*, 42). It would appear that the meetings were then held for several years at New Yarmouth.

Until 1658 the only established settlements on the Eastern Shore were those on Kent Island, although before this there may have been a few adventurers and squatters on the mainland. No patents to land on the mainland in the areas now occupied by Cecil, Kent, Talbot, Queen Anne's, and Dorchester counties were issued before 1658, although some warrants for lands near Kent Island had been issued as early as 1651. Whatever jurisdiction in judicial, civil, or military matters a local "frontier" court might exercise in this extensive territory on the Eastern Shore was exercised by the Kent Island Court, the Governor and Council having ordered, August 3, 1659, "that those Plantaõns allready seated, or to bee seated on the Easterne Shoare adjoining & neare to the Isle of Kent, shall bee esteemed as belonging to Kent County, till further Order" (*Arch. Md. xli*, 322). With the opening up of the mainland in 1658 for settlement many prominent Kent Islanders took out patents for land on which they had long had their eyes.

The order for a new county to be carved out of this widespread territory, until then under the jurisdiction of the Kent court, cannot be found, but early in 1662 Talbot County had actually come into existence, for under date of February 18, 1661/2, the Council appointed six commissioners to administer its affairs (*Arch. Md. iii*, 448), and on April 25, 1662, the first Talbot Court met at the house of Mr. William Coursey in Wye River (p. 356). Three of the newly appointed Talbot justices, Coursey, Foster, and Ringgold, had been members of the Kent Court up to the time of the creation of Talbot. Kent County now comprised the island, and extended on the north in a general way to an indefinite line running east and west between the Chester and Sassafras rivers. Until the erection of Cecil County in 1674, the bounds of Kent County northward were undefined. Baltimore County as originally laid out in 1660 extended around the head of the Bay, and included not only what is now Cecil, but also part of the present Kent County. The line separating Kent and Cecil counties, not finally clearly defined until 1707 as at the Sassafras River, was between 1658 and 1674, the period covered by these Kent records, apparently about midway between the Chester and the Sassafras. About thirty tracts of land recorded in the early Baltimore County records for this reason appear later in the Kent rent rolls. In 1695, however, Kent Island was taken from Kent County and included in Talbot; and in 1707 the island was made part of a new county, Queen Anne's, when the latter was carved out of Talbot.