

SOMERSET COUNTY.

Somerset County was erected under a special proclamation, dated August 22, 1666, issued by Cecilius, second Lord Baltimore, and the new county was named in honor of Lady Mary Somerset, the sister of his wife, Anne Arundell, the daughter of Thomas, Lord Arundell. This proclamation also named the commissioners or justices of Somerset (pp. 633-635; *Arch. Md.* iii, 553-555). Although the county dates from 1666, the territory which it embraced had been opened for settlement in 1660, and was variously referred to in the old provincial records before the erection of Somerset as "the Eastern Shore below the Choptank", "the Eastern Shore newly seated and adjacent to Virginia", "that part of the Province of Maryland lying between the Choptank and Watkins Point", or sometimes merely as "the Eastern Shore".

Stirring events in this part of the Province had preceded the erection of the new county. Disputes about the location of the boundary line on the lower Eastern Shore of the Chesapeake between Maryland and Virginia had given rise in 1663 to border warfare on a small scale between these two colonies, but although the boundary had not yet been finally settled, matters had quieted down to such an extent in 1666 that the Lord Proprietary felt justified in creating the new county. With all the details of the dispute we cannot concern ourselves here, but it hinged upon the location of a certain landmark, Watkins Point, lying on the bay side, named in the Maryland charter as the point through which was to be run an east and west line marking the division between the two colonies on the Eastern Shore. The Virginia authorities under the influence of Colonel Edmund Scarborough, Surveyor-General of Virginia and the leading man of the eastern shore of that colony, sought by every subterfuge to identify Watkins Point with another point of land that lay thirty miles to the north of the true Watkins Point shown on the John Smith map, which in the Maryland charter was given as the southern boundary of the Province. It was this thirty-mile strip that was to be the battleground in the years immediately preceding the erection of Somerset County.

The Lord Proprietary, Cecilius Calvert, apprehensive of possible boundary disputes, had in 1651 and 1656 instructed his representatives in the Province to make every effort to attract settlers to this neighborhood with a view to more firmly establishing his territorial claims to it. But this was the period of the civil wars in England when the Puritan element in Maryland was in the saddle, so that little could be then done to effect actual settlement here. The first wave of immigration to the section took place in 1660 as the result of Gov. Berkeley's repressive measures against the Quakers in Virginia. In this year and in the year following a considerable number of Quakers moved across the border from what was then Northampton County on the eastern shore of Virginia and settled at Annessex. On November 6, 1661, the Governor of Maryland issued a proclamation inviting additional settlers, and appointed three commissioners with authority to grant land in this locality. Heading this com-