

INTRODUCTION

This record of the proceedings of the Charles County Court for the 1666-1674 period is a direct continuation of the previously published proceedings of the court for the first nine years following the county's establishment in 1658. The latter, covering the 1658-1666 period, have been printed in Volume LIII of the *Archives*. In the introduction to that volume will be found a history of the early Maryland county court system, its origin, development, jurisdiction and procedure, and also of the relation of the county courts to the superior courts of the Province, viz.: the Upper House sitting as the court of appeals, the Provincial or General Court, and the Court of Chancery, as well as of the relation of county courts to the inferior manorial courts (*Arch. Md.* LIII, xi-lx). In that volume will also be found a sketch of the beginnings of the Charles County court and some mention of those who served as its early justices or commissioners (*ibid.*, lxvi-lxvii). There also will be found a brief history of the manorial courts of the Province (*ibid.*, lxi-lxv).

The Charles County material printed in Volume LIII was taken verbatim and literatim from libers A and B of the original court records, occupying in all 788 manuscript folio pages of these two original record books. The material in the present volume, some 748 manuscript pages of the original record books at La Plata, the county seat, is to be found in libers C, D, E, and part of F. Volume LIII ends with the minutes of the court session which opened on March 13, 1665/6. The present volume opens with a heading bearing this same date, which is followed immediately by entries of a number of Charles County deeds and warrants enrolled before the next meeting of the court, held in June, 1666.

THE COURT

The court met on June 12, 1666, with six justices present, James Lindsay, Zachary Wade (Waed), Francis Pope, Joseph Harrison, William Marshall, and Thomas Mathews. The only member of the court, as it was then constituted, not present, was Walter Beane (p. 11). An Ordinance of Governor Charles Calvert and the Council is the first entry in the court minutes proper. This is dated at St. John's, St. Mary's County, May 20, 1666. The Ordinance decrees that no changes which may have been made by the Governor by the renewal of the commissions of any of the justices should affect the validity of any suits or processes then pending before the courts, or affect the continuance of suits (pp. 11-12). The Ordinance is followed by the Governor's formal proclamation of it to the several county courts and sheriffs (pp. 12-13).

The court usually met six or seven times a year. Sessions were ordinarily, but not invariably, held in January, March, June, August, September, and November, but there was occasionally an October meeting. Fifty-five are recorded as having been held in this nine year period. It was at the June court