

Most of the members of the court were the prominent men in the county, and several of them had held other public offices such as burgess or sheriff. The attendance was ordinarily very good but, for some unexplained reason, this slumped badly in 1674. At the January court of this year, Stone, Wade, Henley, Douglas, Barton, and Hussey, were each fined for non-appearance, and at the November court Stone and Causine were amerced for the same reason "in accordance to the Act of Assembly" (pp. 515, 590). The amount of the fine is not stated. At a former session held in 1664, justices had been fined for absence at the request of litigants (*Arch. Md.* LIII, 511). The religious affiliations of the members of the court are of some interest. Of the four justices of the quorum of this period, Henry Adams, Thomas Mathews, James Lindsay, and John Stone, the first three were Roman Catholics. Of the thirteen associate judges only one, Ignatius Causine, is known to have been a Catholic.

The Charles County Court before 1675 seems to have met at inns or houses in the neighborhood of Portobacco. This is disclosed by items in the county levies showing payments to innkeepers. In compliance with the act of the Assembly of 1674, requiring each county in the Province to erect or provide a suitable court house and prison (*Arch. Md.* II, 413-414), Charles County purchased on November 10, 1674, from John Allen, one acre of land, part of Moore's Lodge in Zachia Hundred, to the southeast of where the town of Portobacco stood, Allen obligating himself to erect a court house and a prison thereon for a total of 20,000 pounds of tobacco for land and buildings (pp. 615-618). Interesting architectural details about the buildings erected upon it are discussed later in this Introduction (pp. xlvi-xlvii). Allen also obligated himself to keep the buildings, the foundations excepted, in repair "forever", and to keep nearby "a public ordinary".

THE CLERK OF THE COURT

The *clerkship of the court* during the period covered by this nine year record was several times in a chaotic condition. George Thompson was clerk when the record opened. He appears as clerk on March 11, 1665/6 (*Arch. Md.* III; 539), and signs a paper as such between the March and June, 1666, court sessions (p. 11). He had served as clerk since his appointment May 25, 1658, except during the period of Fendall's rebellion in 1660, when Thomas Lomax held this position under Fendall (*Arch. Md.* LIII, lxvii). How long Thompson continued to hold the clerkship is uncertain, however. Neither this record nor the minutes of the Provincial Court discloses, but it may have been until the close of the year 1667, when another clerk was commissioned. Thompson's fight, or impromptu duel, with Thomas Oakley at Edmund Lindsey's inn, in which he wounded Oakley with a rapier, did not take place until some two years after he ceased to be clerk, so could have played no part in bringing about the change (*Arch. Md.* LVII, xxxiv-xxxv).

On December 23, 1667, a new commission for justices was issued and at the same time Richard Boughton was formally commissioned as clerk (*Arch. Md.* V; 21). Due to the error of the recording clerk who made the original entry