

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

To the Maryland Historical Society:

GENTLEMEN AND LADIES:

This volume of the proceedings of the Provincial Court of Maryland, 1681-1684, is Volume LXX of the *Archives of Maryland*, and number 15 of the sub-series on the Maryland courts. It is the eleventh volume on the Provincial Court. It begins on April 26, 1681, and runs until October 30, 1683. The text printed here reproduces, as well as a good modern press can do it, pages 385-771 of Liber W. C., now in the Hall of Records in Annapolis. Transcribing does not enter into the process at all: the text in these pages is set directly from photostats of the original. Thus there is one clear chance for errors which the *Archives* escapes. The handwriting of the seventeenth century is not that of the twentieth, but, with practice it can be read. The clerk of the Court, part of whose duty it was to take notes of the proceedings, and then later to write up the liber from his notes, might take chances with ordinary matters, but he was careful to write obscure material very clearly. When the justices or the parties felt offended by the failure of the clerk to put in something, they had not the least hesitation in saying so (*post*, p. 168). On March 6, 1681/2, it was "Ordered by the Court by and with the Consent of the Attorneys of both sides that the Depositions of the Plaintiffes Witnesses be taken in writing and to be admitted as Evidence at the Tryall of the action. & the deft by his Attorney aforesaid doth admit of the award and bond in the same action:" (*post*, pp. 168-169) Had the clerk been failing to record the evidence? To be sure, in fairness to the clerk, his work for the Provincial Court was by no means all he had to do.

Respectfully submitted,

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Committee on publications*

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