

and Council on March 31, 1698 covering a number of issues. As to the Cranford matter it was stated:

[T]his board does think the said address has been Sufficiently answered and rather too mildly when you have presumed to Question his Majestyes Royall Prerogative, and his Excellency would have you read and consider well the Case of my Lord Chiefe Justice Heath who was not permitted to plead at the barr without the King's Especial leave as you may see in my Lord Cookes reports anno domini Caroli Regis in Banko regis folio 375, and his Excellency would know by what Law or Charter any of the attorneys of this province do plead in his Majestyes Courts with in this Government with out the Kings special leave or lycense and you often mentioned your Rights or Lybertyes, the particulars of which he would know and does advise you to read and consider those Enumerated by the Right Honorable the Lords and Commons of England anno primo Gulielmi 3. and Marie Conteyned in the acts of Parliament now lying before you, his Excellency hath formerly and now tells you againe he knowes of no Custome in this Country that can tantamony the Common Law, which if you know of any you are required to Shew it.²⁹

What were the qualifications of the attorneys practicing in Prince Georges County during the period covered by the *Liber*?

Joshua Cecil (d. 1717) was an attorney in Calvert County and deputy clerk of the court (1694) before the formation of Prince Georges County. He served as clerk of the court in Prince Georges from November 1696 to August 1698, as clerk of the indictments from January 1698/9 to August 1701 and for some period as Deputy Commissary. He was admitted an attorney of Charles County Court in June, 1696 and had some practice in the Court of Chancery. He married a wealthy widow and at his death had extensive land holdings.

William Stone (1666–1730), a grandson of William Stone, the first Protestant governor of Maryland, was a prominent lawyer in Charles County Court before the creation of Prince Georges County. He was admitted an attorney of the Provincial Court and also had some practice in Calvert and St. Marys counties and in the Court of Chancery. He served as clerk of the indictments in Prince Georges County for part of 1698 and then was reappointed in August 1701. He appears as acting clerk of the indictments in Charles County when William Dent was absent in Annapolis. He was a member of the House of Delegates from 1708 to 1710. He appears as a vestryman of Nanjemy Parish in Charles County in 1696.

John Meriton (d. 1701), a resident of Anne Arundel County, was admitted as attorney before the Baltimore County Court in April 1688 and before the Provincial Court in February 1695/6. Presumably he was also admitted in Anne Arundel. He left a very modest collection of law books consisting of *Statutes at Large* (2 vols.), "*The Abridgement of the New Statutes at Large*", "*An Epitome of all the Common and Statute Laws*" (Sheppard?), *Compleat Clark*, "*The Laws of Virginia and Jamaica*", Molloy, *De Jure Maritimō*, *Office of the Clerk of the Peace*, Godolphin, *Orphans Legacy; or Testamentary Abridgment* and "4 old books of presidents" (perhaps manuscript precedent or commonplace books).

William Bladen (1673–1718), born in England and a member of the Inner Temple, came to the province in or shortly before 1696. He served as clerk of the indictments in Prince Georges County from May 1696 to June 1698. From 1695 to 1698 he also served as clerk of St. Marys County Court. He was admitted as an

29. 22 *id.* 54–55. See also the version at 22 *id.* 139–40. When a few days earlier the House of Delegates had refused to transmit the journal of the Committee on Grievances "it never to have been practiced," the Governor and Council stated that the House "have no right to insist upon any thing as matter of Custom in this Country which is not agreeable to the Laws of England." 22 *id.* 39, 40. The reference to Heath appears in Cro. Car. 375.