

death of Cooper and the illness of Cecil the records had not been perfected, but that an order had been made that by June court "the Said Cecell doe fully Compleate and perfect the Said Records." <sup>33</sup>

Cecil continued as clerk until the August 1698 court when Edward Willett presented a commission from Sir Thomas Lawrence as clerk and keeper of the records of Prince Georges County. Upon furnishing of the requisite bond in the amount of £100 sterling and taking the usual oaths, Willett assumed the duties of clerk. Cecil was ordered to make up all the records of the county already begun by him or in his possession to be recorded and then to deliver to Willett all the records, precepts, processes, papers, etc. belonging to the records of the county. Willett remained on as clerk under Governor Blakiston, Sir Thomas Lawrence continuing as secretary, and took the oaths appointed by act of Parliament at the August 1699 court. <sup>34</sup>

The appointment of Willett apparently stemmed from the fact that Cecil, along with the justices and Greenfield, the sheriff of Prince Georges County, had been presented by the grand jury of the Provincial Court "for Levying and receiving Several Sums of Tobacco of the Inhabitants of that County Contrary to Law." When the presentment was read before the Council Sir Thomas Lawrence disavowed any knowledge of Cecil's exaction, disclaimed his tenth in the illegally received tobacco and declared that he would take care to displace Cecil and "Constitute Some other fit and Capable Person in his Stead." <sup>35</sup> At the September 1699 court we also find an entry that the attorney general prosecute Cecil, late clerk of the county, for the recovery of certain sums of tobacco due the county by reason of a September 5, 1698 judgment of the Provincial Court. Cecil had earlier in the term refused to pay over the sum demanded by the justices. Ultimately both Cecil and Greenfield agreed to reimburse the county and the *scire facias* proceedings in the Provincial Court were halted by injunction of the Court of Chancery. <sup>36</sup>

In an attempt to give more formality and regularity to the administration of justice the Governor and Council, in September 1696, proposed a law empowering the justices of the county courts in case of death or disability of the sheriff, the clerk of the county court or the clerk of the indictments to appoint a successor *pro hac*

33. *Infra* 92, 162, 164-65.

34. *Infra* 360-61, 522. After Henry Bonner was commissioned clerk of the court in November, 1699, Willett served as deputy clerk. *PGCJ, Liber B*, 1, 25a, 49, 79a-80. From 1702 to 1708/9 he served as deputy clerk under Thomas Dent. From 1708/9 to 1711 he again served as clerk. Owings, *His Lordship's Patronage: Offices of Profit in Colonial Maryland* 155 (1953). Cf. the 1692 order (by way of information) of the Lower House that the justices of every county present a person to the secretary to be their clerk, "the house thinking that the properest meanes and way to gett persons fitting and quallified to serve the Countrey." 13 *MA* 371. In March 1697/8 the governor characterized as "inconvenient and Dangerous" the keeping of county records in clerks' houses, but was "glad that the County Records are Kept In so many of the Court houses," hoping that this would be "an Inducement for the rest to be kept in like Manner." 22 *MA* 31. In this connection it appeared that "A new Court house is building in Prince Georges County . . . the Records att present are kept att the Clerk house till the finishing of the Court house and then to be lodged there." 22 *id.* 103.

35. 23 *id.* 416. Upon presentment both Greenfield and Cecil submitted to the Provincial Court and judgments were entered that the former reimburse the county in the amount of 10,820 pounds of tobacco and the latter, 3,302 pounds. *PCJ, Liber IL*, 92-93.

36. *Infra* 613, 615-16. For the objectionable accounts submitted by Cecil and Greenfield see *PGCJ, Liber B*, 134-35. For reference to the debts to the county in the 1702 and 1703 levies and an agreement by Cecil in relation thereto see *id.* 206, 214a, 273. The reimbursement was apparently complete by November, 1704. *Id.* 340. For the *scire facias* proceedings and notation that further proceedings at common law were stayed by virtue of a writ of injunction served out of Chancery see *PCJ, Liber WT, No. 3*, 496-98, 646. For the allowances in the November 1700 Prince Georges County levy to William Dent and Sir Thomas Lawrence in connection with the prosecution of Cecil and Greenfield see *PGCJ, Liber B*, 83.