

QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY.

Queen Anne's County, although not erected until 1706, includes within its borders the earliest settlement of Europeans along the Eastern Shore of the Chesapeake Bay. The early trading post of William Claiborne was erected on Kent Island in 1631, and settlements were made on the mainland about 1647, a few years prior to the agreement with the Indians made in the summer of 1652, which allowed the establishment of white settlements on either side of Chesapeake Bay as far south as the Choptank and Patuxent rivers.

The early settlements of Queen Anne's County were included first in Kent and subsequently in Talbot counties until the Maryland inhabitants had been so thoroughly distributed over the entire Eastern Shore as to make it advisable to take up with more care the division of the territory into counties. After several petitions had been presented to the Assembly of 1704 and referred to the next succeeding session the General Assembly of 1706 enacted a law which was approved April 18, 1706, entitled:

"An Act for the dividing and regulating several counties on the eastern shore of this province, and constituting a county, by the name of Queen Anne's County, within the same province."³¹

When this law was enacted there had been already erected on the Eastern Shore the counties of Cecil, Kent, Talbot, Dorchester, and Somerset, the latter two embraced all the territory south of the Choptank while the first four covered the territory north of this river. By the law of 1706 the region between the Sassafras on the north and the Choptank on the south was divided into three counties, the third being the new county of Queen Anne's. According to the law

"From and after the said 1st of May, 1707, the Island called Kent Island, and all of the land on the south side of Chester river, to a branch called Sewell's branch the said branch to the head thereof, and from thence with an east line to the extent of this province, and bounded on the south with Talbot county, to Tuckahoe bridge and from thence with Tuckahoe creek and Choptank river to the mouth of a branch falling into the said river, called

³¹ Chapter 3 of the Laws of 1706.