

The area included between this line and the Potomac River became a part of Charles County as it is to-day.

CHARLES COUNTY ELECTION DISTRICTS.

- 1798 Ch. 115. County divided into 4 election districts.
1799 Ch. 48. Confirms Act of 1798 Ch. 115.
1799 Ch. 50. Commission appointed to divide county into 4 election districts.
1819 Ch. 157. Polling place of 2d election district at Allen's Fresh changed.
1856 Ch. 174. County Commissioners authorized to appoint examiners to lay off a new election district.
1868 Ch. 138. Commission appointed to divide county into not less than 6 nor more than 9 election districts.
1870 Ch. 264. Amends Act of 1868 Ch. 138 giving County Commissioners the right to change lines of election districts upon petition.

DORCHESTER COUNTY.

The lowlying shores of Taylor's Island immediately across the Bay from the Patuxent River and the deeply-indented estuary of the Choptank early attracted the colonists toward the Eastern Shore, but the activity of the Indians and the isolation from their neighbors prevented for a time any extensive settlements. Even the first Delegate, Richard Preston, elected in response to the call of 1669 appears to have lived not in Dorchester, where he owned large tracts of land, but on the shores of the Patuxent River. By 1659 considerable land had been surveyed on the shores of the Choptank, Taylor's Island, about Tar Bay, and the Honga River, and on either side of the straits. It is estimated that there were at that time in the territory which now is included within Dorchester County at least 500 inhabitants, as more than 100 settlers are shown from the rent rolls of that period.²⁵

It is not known exactly when Dorchester County came into being. The records now extant show no act of Assembly or fiat of the proprietor erecting the same. Certain facts point to October 22, 1668, as the date of its erection. The first evidence of its existence lies in the writ issued to Raymond Stapleford on the 4th of February, 1669, by Governor

²⁵ Jones: History of Dorchester County, p. 52.