

1637-8 (Md. Arch., 1:361; 3:62). The establishment of the shrievalty usually implies the existence of a county and this date has been adopted as the date of erection of Kent County. There is, however, among the Maryland archives (Md. Arch., 1:55) a copy of a law which was introduced in the Assembly on the 25th of the same month and subsequently engrossed on March 8, succeeding, which calls for the erection of the Isle of Kent into a hundred of St. Mary's County. The text of the law which, however, was never passed (Md. Arch., 1:39) runs as follows:

"Be it Enacted By the Lord Proprietary of this Province of and with the advice and approbation of the same that the Island commonly called the Isle of Kent shall be erected into a hundred & shall be within the County of St. Maries (untill another County shall be erected of the Eastern shoare and no longer) and shall be called by the name of Kent hundred. . . ."

It is interesting to note from these records the indefiniteness of the county idea as held in Maryland at this time. Two years later, in October, 1640, the summons to the Assembly does not refer to the Isle of Kent as a hundred but the summons is addressed to its Commander (Md. Arch., 1:87). In the commission appointing Richard Thompson and William Luddington commissioners on the 2d of August, 1642 (Md. Arch., 3:105), the territory is spoken of as the "Isle and County of Kent." This is apparently the first definite calling of Kent County as such. At this date, also, a county court was established.

From its earliest recognition Kent County appears to have been analogous to St. Mary's County, the one representing the settlements on the Eastern Shore, the other on the Western. No changes were made upon the Western Shore until the erection of Anne Arundel County in 1650 and none on the Eastern Shore until the erection of Baltimore County in 1659. In neither instance were territorial limits assigned to the counties until the subsequent establishment of contiguous jurisdictions.

Prior to the establishment of Baltimore County in 1659 and Talbot County in 1662, the scattered inhabitants along the Eastern Shore of the Bay apparently transacted their business either at Kent Island or at St. Mary's City. With the erection of these new counties the jurisdiction of Kent appears to have been limited to that part of the Eastern Shore about Eastern Bay, while Talbot County exercised jurisdiction