

There were, during the 1666-1674 period, 177 conveyances of land recorded in the Charles County Court. In bulk these conveyances comprise nearly half, 303 pages, of this volume of 617 pages. The General Assembly at the March-April, 1674, session, passed an act requiring that all conveyances of land to be valid be recorded as explained in the preceding paragraph (*Arch. Md.* II; 305-308). A somewhat similar act, passed in 1663, does not seem to have been sufficiently stringent to have effected the purpose for which it was intended (*ibid.* I; 487-488). In the early years following the settlement, the usual method of conveyance was by assignment on the back of the original patent, which then passed from hand to hand. This method of conveyance was, of course, impossible after the land originally patented was divided up and portions sold to different purchasers. Conveyance by "indenture" or deed, had, as a matter of fact, become the usual method of transfer before the act of 1671 was passed. We find, however, in the case of a few tracts recorded in this volume, that such assignments are noted as being on the back of the patent. It was, of course, also to the interest of the Lord Proprietary that he should have a record of all land conveyances, so as to insure the payment to him of his alienation fee, which was equivalent in amount to a year's quit rent. Thus, at the August, 1666, court, five recent purchasers of land appeared before the court and "acknowledgeth a years Rent dew [to the Lord Proprietary] for an allienation" upon the land purchased (p. 30).

In form most of the deeds are lengthy, with the repetitious verbiage of that day, averaging nearly one thousand words, or about two printed pages of this volume. The longer the deed, the higher was the clerk's fee for recording, and doubtless the larger the fee paid to the attorney or conveyancer for drawing it up. Some thirty-five, or nearly one in every six, of the deeds conclude with the phrase that the deed to the purchaser was delivered "with livery and seizin by turfe and twigge"; in one instance "by the delivery of twelve pence" (p. 302); and in several instances "by seizin" alone. But in general, the feudal custom of delivery of possession by livery of seizin with "turf and twig" became relatively less frequent towards the end of our period, and acknowledgement of the conveyance in open court was the usual attestation of its validity. Attempts to ascribe the old feudal terminology "with turf and twig" to any particular lawyers in Charles County have not been successful.

There was a steady increase annually in the number of land transfers, those recorded in 1674 being almost double the number in the years 1666 or 1667. This increase went hand in hand with the opening up of lands further up the Potomac, on Nangemy (or Avon) Creek, and in the Portobacco and the Zachia neighborhoods. Land prices would also appear to have been rising. Several of the larger transactions involved payments of as much as 12,000 to 20,000 pounds of tobacco for plantations of 250 to 300 acres or even less (pp. 37, 85, 97, 384, 425, 454). One plantation of 162 acres at Portobacco brought 30,000 pounds. There were a few land transactions as far up the Potomac as the present District of Columbia line (pp. 3, 110, 424, 486, 533). The main or west branch of the Potomac was at this date called the Anacostin River and the deeds thus designated it. What is now the Anacostia River was then known as Saint Isidore's Creek (*Md. Hist. Mag.*, xxxiii, 1938, pp. 134-5).