

Large windowe at Each Gable End of the upper Roome Instead of the dorment windowes in Calvert County Court house with Rales banisters formes & tables in the place of Judicatory in the Clarks Office and in the upper Roome as in Calvert County Court house. Inconsideration of which the Said Justices doe agree to give the Said Robert Brothers fifty thowsand pounds of tobaccoe twenty five thowsand to be paid the next Levye the other Moyetoy the next yeare Following the Said house to be built at Charles towne At the place Appointed by the Justices of the Said Court And to Finish the Same between this and the twenty fifth day of December next Glazeing & plaistering only (Excepted) in Forfiture of one hundred thowsand pounds of tobaccoe ⁴

Unhappily, Mr. Brothers was no more efficient than any of the other courthouse contractors of this period; consequently the building was not ready in time.⁵ Tempers became short—another normal characteristic of courthouse building. The exchange of March 1697/98 will indicate just how exasperated the parties were:

Coll: Hollyday these few Lines are to Acquaint your Honr: that I am in good health & I am getting downe the Frame as fast as possible wee Cann but I have had a verry Sick family which hath been a great Hinderance to me but next week with Gods Leave you may Expect me over no more att Present but your Loveing Freind to Serve you.

Robert Brothers

Upon which it is ordered by this Court that if the Said Robert Brothers doth not bring over the Frame of the Court house to Charles towne by the 15th: day of Aprill next that then Coll: Hollyday doth prosecute the Law ag^t: the Said Robert Brothers upon the breach of Covenants for not performing his Contract Conserving the building the Court house at Charles towne According to Articles of Agreement made between the Said Coll: Hollyday and the Said Robert Brothers and that the Justices here present will Stand Abide and Assist the Said Coll: Hollyday in the procecution of the Same &c.⁶

The new deadline of April 15 must have been met approximately, for the clerk recorded the following at the beginning of the minutes of the court session of June 28, 1698:

The Court Immediately Adjourned into the New Court house and there Satt as above.⁷

First Courthouse at Upper Marlboro

Succeeding justices "Satt" here until the county seat was removed to Upper Marlboro. Even then, in the petition of several inhabitants of Prince George's County to the General Assembly, praying that the county seat be removed, it was not alleged that the courthouse was in disrepair, which was so often the case, but only that Charles Town was inconvenient to two-thirds of the inhabitants. The petition was granted and the justices of the court were authorized to sell the old courthouse and prison, to buy two acres of land in Upper Marlboro, and to build a new courthouse thereon, all of which was to be paid for by a tax of five pounds of tobacco per poll for one year.⁸ The total cost is difficult to establish, especially since it was noted in the petition that there had been some contributions on the part of individuals who were especially interested in moving the county government.

But when the interior of the courthouse was still incomplete these funds had been exhausted and there was nothing for it but to appeal again to the General Assembly. By virtue of an act of August 1721,⁹ the justices of the county were empowered to levy twelve pounds of tobacco per poll on all the inhabitants of the county for this purpose and for the construction of a prison which had not previously been provided for. On March 28, 1721, the justices of Prince George's County met at Charles Town and immediately adjourned to Marl-

⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 189.

⁵ That a start had been made by March 23, 1697/98 is proved by a report of that date by a legislative committee: "A new Court house is building in Prince George's County without any Chimney the Records att present are kept att the CLK: house till the finishing of the Court house and then to be lodged there." (*Arch. of Md.*, XXII, 102-03.)

⁶ *Court Proceedings, Liber A*, f. 298.

⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 316.

⁸ Ch. 13, Acts of 1718; *Arch. of Md.*, XXXVIII, 239.

⁹ Ch. 7; *Arch. of Md.*, XXXVIII, 239.