

Note

The State House at St. Mary's City, abandoned by the State to St. Mary's County when the capital was removed to Annapolis, was begun in 1674 as I noted under the illustration of the replica. Perhaps I should have made it clearer that the date of completion was, by contract, October 31, 1676 and we are quite certain it was not finished by that time. As a matter of fact it is questionable whether John Quigley really ever completed it properly.

The subsequent history of this building is confusing. I pointed out that it was given to the county to be used as a courthouse in 1695. It was so used at least into 1698. Thereafter, there is only silence until 1708 when the General Assembly noted that the public buildings had been diverted from the use for which they were intended, and the county was given permission, probably *ex post facto*, to establish the seat of government at Shepherd's Old Fields. It was also ordered that the public buildings and land be sold, but from what follows it is plain this was not done. In 1710, the justices of the county were authorized to remove the records from St. Mary's City.

After 1710 there is no word until 1720. In that year an Act was passed (Ch. 4) for the "Vesting in the Rector and Vestry of William and Mary Parish in Saint Maries County and their Governors an Estate in fee simple in the old Stadt house in Saint Maries City in Saint Maries County and the Lott of Land whereon the same stands for the use of the said Parish forever." (*Arch. of Md.* XXXVIII, pp. 262-63).

It is probable that the state house had been abandoned for the decade before the passage of this Act, and however bad its condition in 1710, it must have been worse in 1720. In any case the Vestry met on May 23, 1720 at Poplar Hill Church and "Then Agreed with Josh: Doyne and Francis Hopewell to Repair the State House. As Mentioned in an Agreement under hand & Seal. As also a Bond of Performance. And further say not" (Original minutes at the Maryland Historical Society brought to my attention by John D. Kilbourne, Assistant to the Director. It will be noted that this same Joshua Doyne built the courthouse in Charles County which was finished in 1727).

According to Forman the converted State House was called St. Mary's Church (*Jamestown and St. Mary's*, p. 291-92). The same scholar thought that it was used for this purpose "for over a century." (*loc. cit.*). But perhaps not continuously. A correspondent in the *National Intelligencer* for August 28, 1824 writes: "The edifice still stands, but is in a very ruinous state, and is sometimes used as an Episcopal Church, and is called St. Mary's Church." Dr. Forman seems to be of two minds about the end of the building. First he says "in 1829 the decrepit structure was torn down in order to construct with its bricks a new chapel, the Trinity Episcopal Church, . . ." He then quotes J. P. Kennedy, *Rob of the Bowl* as follows: "The mouldering and shapeless ruin of the ancient State House, whose venerable remains, . . . have been pillaged, to furnish building materials for an unsightly church, . . ." At least part of the building was then still standing when Kennedy wrote in 1838.

Forman also quotes the Report of the Maryland Tercentenary Commission (1935): "The State House was destroyed by fire in the early 19th Century." An examination of the archives of this commission now in the custody of the Hall of Records produced no substantiating evidence of a fire except the statement quoted by Forman. When Forman made his investigation in the 1930's, nothing of the original building remained above ground. What precisely happened during those hundred years of disuse?

Circuit Court

LAND RECORDS, 1781---. Includes Mortgage Records, 1781-1922. Original volumes predating 1827 were destroyed in the Courthouse fire of 1831. Under the provisions of Chapter 175