

CAROLINE COUNTY

Records

The major series of bound records have been preserved: the land records, the records of the judgments of the court, the wills and other probate records. Unfortunately, the administrative records, those of the Levy Court as well as those of the justices of the court acting as an administrative body, have totally disappeared. For some reasons the judgment records and minutes do not even contain the orders of court, a rich source for local history in other Eastern Shore counties. Most of the unbound records in the office of the Register of Wills have been preserved, but the early papers of the county court have been lost. Since there have been no fires in the courthouse, we can only guess that these losses came about at the building of the new courthouse or during one or more of the extensive renovations of which we have knowledge.

It is necessary to add, unfortunately, that in 1955, a large collection of 19th century miscellaneous court papers which had found its way to Delaware was offered for sale to the Hall of Records. They were not purchased and have perhaps disappeared by this time.

The searcher will note that there are two volumes of records of the Register of Wills listed here below which antedate the erection of this County. It is generally held that these volumes are copies of the records from the area which became Caroline County and taken from the records of Dorchester County. Scisco feels that they might even be original records of Dorchester County, but this does not seem possible.¹

Note

Subsequent to the appearance of Volume 1 of this work the question of Buckland's part in the design of the 1790 courthouse was reconsidered by Rosamond Randall Beirne and John H. Scarff in *William Buckland, Architect of Virginia and Maryland*, (The Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, 1958, p. 110). Here is their conclusion.

"The court house was not built until 1795, whether after Buckland's plans we do not know."

An interesting architectural judgment of the 1895 Courthouse by Roger D. Redden appeared in the *Baltimore Sun* of August 22, 1961:

"The building is a great hulk: it is large, ugly and totally inexpressive. The general pattern on which it was built was almost 50 years old in this [Caroline] county and the building gives no sign of local originality, ingenuity or need. It is marked by a stiffness and a coldness which is totally unrepresentative of the community."

In following the early meetings of the Court of Caroline County in the first volume of this study I mentioned Bridgetown and noted that this is now Greensboro (p. 45). Perhaps this should be clarified. The Bridgetown intended was chartered in 1732 and was referred to in the minutes of the Court interchangeably as Choptank Bridge or Bridgetown. In November 1791, the General Assembly authorized the purchase and laying out of up to 100 acres con-

¹ Louis Dow Scisco, "Colonial Records of Caroline and Harford Counties," *Md. Hist. Mag.*, 26, p. 137.