

remained uninspected because of a lack of warehouse space and that a nearby refinery building could be rented for five months for \$1,000. The board approved the lease.¹³

Among its other duties, the board also assumed command of the State House building. Not only did it superintend extensive renovations authorized in 1876, but it investigated a complaint by the Annapolis Water Works that water was being wasted in the State House and, on 27 March 1879, granted a Mr. Mayer "permission to take Photographs of certain painting in the State House provided he does not remove them from the walls, and that he must notify the Governor when he is ready to take the same." The board also arranged for lightning rods to be installed on the building and saw to the repair of the dome. It was in connection with the dome repairs that the board for the first time employed an outside consultant—an engineer from Johns Hopkins Hospital—and received a (two-year) guarantee of the repair work by the contractor.¹⁴

As with most of its new duties, the board's particular responsibility for the State House was the product of specific legislative direction and delegation, some of which now seems amusing. It appears from some of this legislation that, in those Victorian times, the State House was not the nicest place in which to work. For one thing, the building was regarded as a fire hazard; for another, it lacked a decent ventilation system. In 1884 the General Assembly directed the board to remove the boilers and furnaces to a different building—i.e., to have heat imported from an outside heating plant—and to assure that "no furnace or steam boiler shall be placed in any part of the state house building." In the same act it told the board to construct a ventilating apparatus for the two halls of the General Assembly (there presumably being too much uncirculated hot air). In 1890 the General Assembly authorized the board to buy a 1,000-foot fire hose to protect the building.¹⁵

Conditions in the State House apparently did not improve very much. In 1892 the legislature ordered the board to remove the "water closets" and build an annex to house them, also to clean the basement, get rid of the trash there, repair or replace the furniture and "hangings" in the executive chambers, and, once and for all, provide a proper and efficient ventilation system.¹⁶ And so the board exercised a few janitorial duties.

The board also became the state's procurer and collector of art. Beginning in 1894 the General Assembly periodically manifested a desire to commemorate the state's glorious past, and at the same time to beautify the public buildings, by commissioning paintings of one kind or another. It charged the board with commissioning these works, negotiating with the artists, and seeing to the proper placement of the paintings when completed. In 1894, for example, the legislature authorized the board to purchase from artist Frank B. Mayer *The Planting of the Colony of Maryland under Leonard Calvert* for an amount not exceeding \$4,000.¹⁷

The legislature must have liked Mayer's work; in 1898 it authorized the board to purchase another of his paintings, *The Burning of the Peggy Stewart*, for \$2,000. Beginning in 1900 the General Assembly looked to the board not only to negotiate with the artist but actually to *select* the artist. In that year it appropriated \$600 for a painting of Henrietta Maria, for whom the state was named, leaving it to the board to find a suitable artist.¹⁸ The board chose Florence MacKubbin. Similarly, in 1906 the board commissioned Katharine Kent Walton to do portraits of Matthew Tilghman

13. BPW Minutes, 23 May 1876, vol. 1851-83, p. 290. The next reference to a lease approval was on 13 February 1877, p. 305, when the board approved a lease with the Potomac Lock and Dock Company.

14. *Ibid.*, 6 December 1876, 27 March, 19 June 1879, pp. 298, 317, 319-20. The "Mr. Mayer" is almost certainly the Annapolis artist Frank B. Mayer, from whom the General Assembly purchased two paintings, as detailed below.

15. Acts of 1884, ch. 286; 1890, ch. 454.

16. Acts of 1892, ch. 245.

17. Acts of 1894, ch. 507.

18. Acts of 1898, ch. 91; 1900, ch. 720.