

estate and shipping boom. It is a ghost town now, the only remaining building being the County Almshouse, located on the south shore of South River close by the present South River Bridge.¹² The year 1689 is fixed by a minute of the Council as follows:

The Deposition of John Hammond of Anne Arundle County Gentleman Sworn, saith that at August Court in the yeare 1689 at London Towne. . . .¹³

We know that some sort of building was set aside for the court during its stay in Londontown for in a conveyance of land of 1699 between John Larkin, grantor, and John Baldwin, grantee, we find the following:

. . . all those two Lotts of ground to him belonging in London Towne in the said County Together with all houses outhouses . . . excepted . . . the Twenty five foot house wherein the Court was formerly held as also as much ground besides between the said house and the water as shall be sufficient to erect and build a Twenty foot house upon.¹⁴

We know nothing further about this building.

Return to Annapolis: Courthouse in the First State House

The General Assembly moved to fix the county seat at Annapolis, May 8, 1695, when a law to accomplish that purpose was passed. Since this Act of Assembly set up a unique arrangement between county and State, it merits being cited in full:

An Act for settling Anne Arundell County Court att the Porte of Annapolis within the same County.

Forasmuch as there is not any good Court house built and fitted for the County of Ann Arundell, And That the Provinciall Court is now by Law Established to be held and kept forever hereafter att the Porte of Annapolis on the River of Seavern within the same County where there is and must of necessity be a Court house for the publick Service of this Province built which may be Sufficient for holding the County Courts in also and thereby the County saved the Charge of building a County Court house and the said Porte of Annapolis propagated and encreased Be it therefore Enacted by the King and Queen's most Excellent Maties by and with the Advice and Consent of this present Gen^l Assembly and the Authority of the same That the Justices of the County Court of Ann Arundell County do att their next meeting in their County Court adjourn themselves from the place the same Court shall be held to the Porte of Annapolis upon Seavern River in Ann Arundell and there att the said Porte in the Court house of the Province hold and keep the said County Court and so all County Courts for the s^d County shall forever hereafter be held and kept att the said Porte of Annapolis att Seavern River aforesaid in Ann Arundell County aforesaid & att no other place whatsoever in the said County and that the Records of the said County be removed to the s^d Porte there to be kept, and also that the Church to be built and Erected for the Parish in which the said Porte of Annapolis is shall be built and erected within the said Porte in such place and part thereof as to his Excellency the present Govern^r shall be thought fitt and Convenient, which shall forever hereafter be Denominated Called and Known by the name of the Porte of Annapolis and by no other name or Distinction whatever.¹⁵

The last possible date of transfer from Londontown to Annapolis is fixed by an item in the Proceedings of the Assembly for October 12 of the same year:

George Slacum his accompt examined for bringing the Cage Whipping post pillory and Stone from London Towne to Annapolis referred to the County for his pay, being the proper goods of the County.¹⁶

The last proved meeting of the court at Londontown was March 31, 1694/95, because a transcript of part of that session, including the date and place of meeting, appears in the Vestry Minutes of St. James' Parish for that year.¹⁷

¹² A history of Londontown has been prepared by Henry J. Berkley, "Londontown On South River, Anne Arundel County, Md.," *Maryland Historical Magazine*, XIX, 134-41. This publication is hereafter referred to as *Md. Hist. Mag.*

¹³ *Arch. of Md.*, VIII, 196.

¹⁴ *A. A. Co. Deeds, W. H. No. 4*, 168-69, *Ms.*

¹⁵ *Arch. of Md.*, XIX, 208-09.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 265.

¹⁷ *Record, St. James' Parish, A. A. Co.*, f. 1, *Ms.*