

All three elections were needed before Towsontown was chosen, February 13, 1854.<sup>76</sup>

Plans were now completed for the necessary public buildings. The county commissioners were authorized to accept a gift of land for a site and to expend \$30,000 for the courthouse out of the money which had been received from Baltimore City as half payment for the old courthouse there.<sup>77</sup> When this sum proved to be insufficient, a further expenditure of \$20,000 was authorized.<sup>78</sup> The architects were Dixon and Baldwin, and the builder, William H. Allen. The cornerstone was laid October 19, 1854. On Monday, January 5, 1857, the first session of court was held in the new building, the records having been moved the previous week; and on the following May 15 the courthouse and prison were formally accepted from the builder by the county commissioners.<sup>79</sup>

On several occasions during the first years of this courthouse it was threatened with destruction. On August 24, 1861, a deliberate attempt was made to burn the courthouse; the building was saved but the civil dockets and papers in the office of the clerk were lost.<sup>80</sup> In 1864, following the Federal defeat at Monocacy, Confederate forces under the command of Colonel Harry Gilmer raided through the area toward Baltimore. They were in Towson on July 11 and the officers of the county were fearful for the safety of the building and records. Neither was molested.<sup>81</sup> Three years later, about midnight on the night of May 7, 1867, three disguised men broke into the courthouse and blasted the lock off the treasurer's safe. Fortunately, the powder explosion did no other harm.<sup>82</sup> There were no important alterations until 1882, when an addition to contain a vault for the clerk of court was authorized.<sup>83</sup> The original allotment of \$10,000 proved to be sufficient for the structure—an additional \$2,000 was required to furnish the vault and the clerk's office and to purchase and install proper shelving.<sup>84</sup>

## Addition of 1910

In the last years of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth, Baltimore County continued to grow rapidly. With this increase in population the business of county government expanded too. By 1908 the need for another and larger addition to the courthouse was felt. The General Assembly of that year authorized an expenditure of \$60,000 for this purpose.<sup>85</sup> Apparently this act was not implemented, for at the next session it was repealed and reenacted, but with the difference that this time the amount allowed was \$75,000.<sup>86</sup> The architects for this building were Baldwin and Pennington and the builder, David M. Andrews Company.

## Additions of 1925 and 1956-1958

A new enlargement of the courthouse at Towson was completed in 1925. This addition was planned by architects Josias Pennington and Pleasants Pennington, and the builder was Thomas Hicks and Sons. The cost was approximately \$117,000.

Meanwhile, some of the administrative offices of the county were being housed in other buildings in Towson. This movement out of the courthouse culminated in the erection of a modern office building. But even this release of space in the courthouse could not keep up with the increased demands of the remaining offices and a new enlargement was undertaken in 1956. This work was not completed until late in 1958. It was directed by Lucien E. D. Gaudreau & Paul L. Gaudreau, architects of Baltimore. The builder was John McShain, Incorporated, the contract price, \$1,948,972.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>76</sup> For this complicated chronology of events the author is indebted to Scharf, *History of Baltimore City and County*, pp. 62-64.

<sup>77</sup> Ch. 144, Acts of 1854.

<sup>78</sup> Ch. 280, Acts of 1856.

<sup>79</sup> Scharf, *op. cit.*, p. 896.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 898.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 899.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> Ch. 286, Acts of 1882.

<sup>84</sup> Ch. 25, Acts of 1886.

<sup>85</sup> Ch. 213, Acts of 1908.

<sup>86</sup> Ch. 11, Acts of 1910.

<sup>87</sup> Information about these new developments was supplied by Paul J. Grubb, County Architect.