

been able to find documentation for this assertion. The court proceedings speak of a courthouse for the first time at a court held January 5, 1663:

The Commissioners have given order to the Sheriffe to procure a paer of Stocks Pillarie Whiping post and ducking stoole to bee finished betwixt this and the next Court appoynted to bee held the 3^d of february the ducking Stoole to bee sett up at Mr Popes Creeke and the stocks Pillary and Whiping post heare at the Court hows.⁷

The whereabouts of this "Court hows" has eluded the writer, but most likely it was an inn or a private residence.

Courthouse at Moore's Lodge

The first try at building a courthouse may have occurred in 1672, for in the levy approved by the court on November 13 of that year we find this item: "To Henry Moore for to build a C^rt house . . . 10000 lb tobacco."⁸ Nothing further is heard of this arrangement with Moore. In any case, he could not have accomplished much before his death which occurred sometime before May 9 of 1673 when his will was proved.⁹ Then, following the passage of Chapter 16 of the Acts of 1674 (May Session), entitled "An Act for Errecting a Court house and prison in every County within this Province,"¹⁰ the commissioners of Charles County entered into an agreement with John Allen to provide a courthouse and a prison and to be situated on a tract of land called "Moore's Lodge."¹¹ For a consideration of 20,000 pounds of tobacco, Allen contracted to have both the prison, a simple building, and the courthouse, which was of the cross style, ready for use by May 1675. The text of his agreement follows:

M^r John Allen acknowledges this ensuing Deed of Sale for a Court house & prison with an acre of Land belonging thereunto being a parcell of a tract of Land scituate & being in Charles County Called Moores Lodge to M^r Henry Adames & M^r Thomas Matthewes On th^e behalfe of th^e Right Honorable th^e Lord Propriet^r for th^e publicke use of th^e Inhabitants of Charles County for a Court house for his Ldps Justices to hold Court in, & a prison house to secure prisoners in when thereunto Comitted

To all Christian People to whom these presents shall come Greeetinge I John Allen of Charles County in th^e Province of Maryland Gentleman, For & in Consideraçon of twenty thousand pounds of good sound Merchantable tobacco raised in th^e s^d County by a publicke levy & to me in hand paid, th^e receipt whereof I doe hereby acknowledge & therewith to be Fully paid, Contented & satisfied, have granted, bargained & sold, & by these presents doe grant bargaine & sell unto the Right Hono^{ble} Caecilius absolute Lord & proprietary of Maryland & Avalon Lord Baron of Baltemore &c: his heires & Successors for ever, One acre of Land being parcell of a tract of Land scituate in Charles County afores^d Called Moores Lodge distant from th^e head of Portobacco about foure miles, & one dwelling house scituate upon th^e s^d acre of Land, twenty & five foot in Length & twenty & two foot in breadth, with a porch tenne foot long & eight foot wide thereunto Adjoyneing with a roome over th^e first roome & another over th^e s^d porch, & a shead behinde in breadth twelve foot & a halfe or thereabouts, divided with a partition into two roomes, with two bricke Chimneyes (that is to say) th^e one to be built in th^e Lower roome of th^e s^d house, & th^e other upon th^e same foundation in the upper roome thereof, with all necessary & Convenient doores, locks, keyes, bolts, latches, hinges, stairecases, staires, windowes, window frames, Casements & glasse to be well glazed & put up in the s^d frames throughout th^e s^d house above & below, & all th^e roomes to be well plankt on th^e floores, th^e lower roome to be well wainscotted,

⁷ *Ibid.*, LIII, 432.

⁸ *Ibid.*, LX, 431.

⁹ *Wills*, I, 525-26, 550.

¹⁰ *Arch. of Md.*, II, 413-14.

¹¹ Unfortunately, it has been impossible to locate this site more precisely. Moore's Lodge was patented to Henry Moore in 1661 (*Patents* 4, 575, *Ms.*, Land Office). It was described as lying on the north side of the Potomac River on the north branch of the "Sakaio Swamp." It was conveyed to John Allen in 1670 (Charles County *Land Records E No. 1*, 38, *Ms.*) and then from Allen to the Lord Proprietary in 1674 (Charles County *Land Records F No. 1*, 36-37, *Ms.*). In this last deed

it was described as lying "about four miles from the head of Portobacco Creek." We also know that it was not on navigable waters because in the Act of Assembly providing for the transfer of the county seat to Chandler Town it states, "The Place where the Court-house now stands, is so remote from any Landing, that the Charge of bringing materials . . ." (Ch. 11, Acts of 1727). The writer hazards the guess that Moore's Lodge and the courthouse of 1674 were located on a branch flowing into Zekiah Swamp somewhere near Newtown. Margaret Brown Klapthor and Paul Dennis Brown believe the location might have been on Clarke's Run in the vicinity of a farm called "Johnsontown" near the Charles County Fair Grounds (*The History of Charles County, Maryland*, La Plata, 1958, p. 20).