

some reason the records were moved back to the courthouse "to the room . . . formerly occupied by the clerk of said county."¹⁷

At the same session of the General Assembly the levy court was authorized to levy up to \$2,000 to prepare these quarters for the reception of the records, this sum to be augmented by the use of "materials of the old clerk's office."¹⁸ As a footnote it seems clear from the wording of this act that the building which had been put up in 1813 for the storage of the land records might now be torn down. But this authorization proved to be premature, for this building was still standing in 1839 when the General Assembly approved an expenditure of \$10,000 for building a new courthouse plus what might be raised by selling the materials from the old clerk's office and courthouse.¹⁹ For some reason not now clear the levy court decided against the new courthouse and after collecting \$2,000, went no further. Five years later they asked and were granted permission to use this money for repairs on the courthouse.²⁰ Between the time of the first request and the second, the steeple and part of the roof had burned in the fire of March 31, 1842, so that part of the money which became available in 1844 may have been used to repair fire damage.

Third Courthouse at Frederick

After the repairs of 1844, there were no further efforts of this kind, at least none large enough to demand the attention of the General Assembly. Suddenly, in 1861, the courthouse at Frederick became the center of public attention when Governor Hicks, having called the General Assembly into special session, changed the place of meeting from Annapolis to Frederick because the capital of the State was then occupied by Federal troops. The first session of the legislature took place in the courthouse on April 26th. However, these quarters were not suitable and so on the second day both houses moved to the new German Reformed Building and the short day of prominence for the old courthouse was over.²¹ But even had the General Assembly not willingly moved, it would have had only a few more days to remain in the old courthouse, for during the night of May 8th it was gutted by fire. It is said that as the flames engulfed the tower the old bell, following the normal procedure in such circumstances, tolled its own knell.

The presence of the General Assembly in Frederick made it possible for a bill to be introduced the next day authorizing the building of a new courthouse. After one more day the bill was passed.²² It was quite short, providing merely for the issuance of bonds by the county commissioners to the amount of \$40,000 for this purpose. On June 14, 1861, a more elaborate bill was passed which, among other things, repealed the earlier act.²³ It provided for a bond issue of the same amount, that is \$40,000, but it settled other problems too. The county commissioners were directed to provide rooms for the use of the Clerk of Court and Register of Wills elsewhere in the town and to take over the buildings which they had used until that time and, finally, to provide these officers with quarters in the new courthouse. Meanwhile, watchmen must be hired to guard these temporary quarters. According to the plan this would not be too long, for the new building had to be started not later than September 1, 1861, and its date of completion was set for September 1, 1862. The funds made available by this act, as usual, proved to be insufficient. The furniture and landscaping had to be cared for by an act of the next session, authorizing an additional bond issue of up to \$8,000.²⁴

Scharf gives an unusually full roster of those individuals and firms having roles in constructing the new building: "Thomas Dixon, of Baltimore, was the supervising architect.

¹⁷ Ch. 64.

¹⁸ Ch. 330.

¹⁹ Ch. 115.

²⁰ Ch. 254, Acts of 1844.

²¹ *Journals of the House of Delegates and of the Senate Sessions of April 27, 1861.*

²² Ch. 16, Acts of 1861, Special Session.

²³ Ch. 64, Acts of 1861, Special Session.

²⁴ Ch. 76, Acts of 1861, December Session.