

J. Edward Sifford & Co. contracted on August 8th to do the granite-work, cut-stone work, marble steps, sills, plinths, and floor tiling for four thousand and fifty dollars, to be completed by September 1, 1862. Samuel H. & John F. Adams, of Baltimore, on the same date, contracted to build the remainder of the edifice in the same period of time for thirty-three thousand one hundred and ninety dollars." Scharf's judgments of quality with which he concluded his sketch of the courthouse are also worth repeating: "The court-house was finished in the fall of 1862, and is one of the best and most commodious in the State. Its courtroom in the matter of acoustics is hardly surpassed by any in the country."²⁵

One of the corollaries to the rule that courthouses are rarely built for the price contemplated is that they are also never completed at the time set in the contract. This third courthouse in Frederick was no exception. It was not until October 6, 1864, that the county authorities were able to settle with Sifford. Meanwhile, the county officers had been ordered to move into their quarters by February 1, 1864, or as soon thereafter as possible.²⁶

The exterior of this building remains practically unchanged. About 1890, the fence which surrounded the square was removed and the fountain and cherubs, as well as the walks, were placed substantially as they are today. During the summer of 1896, the courtroom was radically rearranged. The balcony was removed and a false ceiling of steel was hung about six feet below the true ceiling in an effort to improve the acoustics of the room which proved not to be so good as Scharf had thought.

No other significant changes were made in the courthouse until late in 1953, when the crowding in the various offices, especially in that of the Clerk of the Court, became intolerable. At that time, the county commissioners undertook extensive remodeling which cost, before it was completed in 1956, close to \$400,000. The architect chosen was Charles F. Bowers and the general contractor, Lloyd C. Culler, both of Frederick. The changes included remodeling of the courtroom and judges' chambers, additional rooms for the clerk of the court, installation of an elevator and of air conditioning in the courtroom and chamber, a new heating plant, and individual air-conditioning units for the other offices. As a result of this remodeling, the one-hundred-year-old courthouse has been converted into an efficient, comfortable seat of county government.²⁷

²⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 425.

²⁶ Much of this information and what follows is from Parsons Newman, *Remarks on the Opening of the September Term*

1955 of the Circuit Court for Frederick County, Maryland, Ms., furnished by Honorable Ellis C. Wachter, Clerk of the Court.

²⁷ Details of this remodeling of 1954-1956 have been supplied by the present Clerk of the Court, Honorable Ellis C. Wachter.