

justices accepted Captain Henry Smith's offer to finish the courthouse and their agreement was duly recorded in the records of the county :

At a County Court by ajournment held the 28th day of November Annoque Dom. 1683 before His Lorp^s. Justices thereunto assigned and Authorized

Whereas Captⁿ. Henry Smith made a proposall to ffinish the Co^{rt}: house for and in consideration of Twelve Thousand pounds of tobacco to be paid this present year out of the County Leavy & five hundred pounds of tobacco for the fine of Elizabeth Dorington due to be paid by John Walter as security to be performed in Work of his Trade Captⁿ. John Winder Security to see the same performed This Co^{rt}: taking the premises into their Consideration Doe ord^r. that there be paid this present year out of the County Leavy to Captⁿ. Henry Smith on his order Twelve Thousand pounds of tobacco and also That John Walter as security for Elizabeth Dorington pay unto the said Captⁿ. Henry Smith five hundred pounds of Tobacco. The said Captⁿ. Henry Smith to ffinish or cause to be finished the Court house well plankt above and also below with good and substantiall sleepers in both the lower roomes and the upper roome to be divided into Two the outermost Doore of the house with hinges locks and keys staires Glass Windowes Carpenters Joyners & Turners work Barr seats for Justices & pinacles Tables & all other necessities to the Compleating of the said Co^{rt}. house/

This same Day Commissioners as afore Whereas Captⁿ. Henry Smith made a Proposall to this Court to build or Cause to be built & finished an sufficient dwelling house Twenty foot long & Sixteen foot wide with an Inside Chimney and alsoe one Stable thirty foote long Twelve foote & ahalf wide with rail & Mannger for and in Consideration of the severall fines for Spinning of Wooll into good yarne; It is ordered that the severall persons Concerned for the payment of such fines pay the same unto Captⁿ. Henry Smith on his order in Tobacco: And that the said Captⁿ. Henry Smith Cause the said House to be built accordingly on the County Land where the Court house now is.³

The site of this courthouse, finished by Captain Henry Smith, has been positively located on the south side of Manokin River on a part of a tract of land called "Webley" whose bounds are known.⁴

It is not possible to determine now whether Smith's work was unsatisfactory or whether the justices changed their minds later about how they wanted the courthouse. In any case, on November 14, 1688, the justices made an agreement with William Venables

to cover the court house and to remove the stairs that now are and to make a staircase in the next corner and to remove the partition further in and to make a table for the justices as also to make a seat for the justices with agreeable chairs in the middle and a panell overhead, the said chairs with my Lord's coat of arms to be carved in the same and a barr with a table and seat for the clerk and the same and every part thereof to be made well according to plat.

Venables was to furnish the materials and he was to receive 5,500 pounds of tobacco.⁵ The plat, were it now in existence, would have inestimable value as a historical document.

But this courthouse which was so long in building was destined to have an extremely short life. We do not know why, but on March 1, 1694, it was ordered by the justices of the county

that Mr. Francis Jenkins and Capt. William Whittington purchase a tract of land, . . . near Dividing Creek, and that they erect or build a court house thereon, viz: fifty feet long and twenty feet wide, the gable ends of brick with a chimney below and above, to be underpinned with bricks and to be solely left to the care and management of said Jenkins and Whittington, which charge to be defrayed by the County aforesaid.⁶

However, the attempt to abandon the old courthouse met with strong resistance. By July of that year this conflict had been brought to the attention of the Council which ordered that because the new site was not convenient for the majority of the inhabitants

the person or persons managing the said work wholly desist from carrying on the aforementioned building for any such use. And further ordered that the sheriff of the

³ *Deeds, Liber L, O-7*, front of page 14, *Ms.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 409.

⁴ Torrence, *op. cit.*, pp. 408-09.

⁶ Fillmore Lankford, *op. cit.*