

it had a life of approximately sixty-two years or until March 3, 1882. On that day, some workmen employed at painting the neighboring Methodist Church somehow set it afire and with a strong northwest wind blowing, it was not long before fourteen of the eighteen buildings which then composed the town of Prince Frederick were burned, and among the lot was the courthouse.

Fourth Courthouse at Prince Frederick

The seat of justice and of county government was thereupon transferred to the Episcopal Rectory which had escaped the flames, and one term of court was held before it too was burned—at 2 o'clock in the morning of June 27. Since there could not have been a neglected warming fire at that season of the year and since no one was likely to be in the building for court business at that hour, it was suspected that the fire was of incendiary origin; but nothing was ever proved.

When the General Assembly met again in 1884, permission was asked and granted to “rebuild” the courthouse.¹⁶ Since the amount authorized to be levied was limited to \$1,500, it is generally supposed that the foundation and walls of the courthouse were still usable and that, in fact, the courthouse had been gutted but not destroyed.

Fifth Courthouse at Prince Frederick

In time, this rebuilt courthouse became inadequate for the needs of the county. The General Assembly of 1914 was petitioned for authority to raze it and to build a new structure on or near its site in Prince Frederick. This petition was granted.¹⁷ A special building committee was named in the act, and funds up to \$25,000 were provided for building and equipment. The act also provided that no work should begin before the first day of June 1914, and that the work should be completed on or before the first day of October 1916. Construction of the new, and destruction of the old, courthouse appear to have gone on simultaneously, and presumably the contractual date was met. The architect was T. Kent Roberts, the builders the J. M. Robinson Construction Company. The new courthouse was built further back from the front street, and the site of the old courthouse was converted into lawn. It is this courthouse of 1914-1916 which is now in use but with extensive repairs and remodeling, especially those undertaken in 1948.¹⁸ The architects of the 1948 work were J. J. Baldwin and Frederick Tilp of Washington, D. C. The builder was William F. Sutter.

¹⁶ Ch. 91.

¹⁷ Ch. 436.

¹⁸ Ch. 690, Acts of 1947.