

chimney. Indeed, if the copyist can be believed and if this drawing is not simply a work of fancy, this courthouse had pretension to elegance. All that we know positively of its location, in addition to the fact that it was on "Moore's Lodge," is found in the preamble to an Act of 1727 granting permission to build a new courthouse. There it is stated that "the Place where the Court-house now stands, is so remote from any Landing, that the Charge of bringing Materials together by Land-Carriage, for that End, will be much greater than if the same was to be built at the Head of Port-Tobacco Creek, where they may be easily Waterborn."

Courthouse at Chandler Town-Charles Town-Port Tobacco

Fortunately, the new site was described more precisely in the body of the act:

That the Justices of Charles County-court, . . . are hereby authorized, . . . to go to such Place commonly known by the name of Chandler-Town, on the East Side of Port-Tobacco Creek. . . .¹⁸

When the site had been chosen and the courthouse was building, another act was passed by the General Assembly permitting the laying out of land and erecting a town adjacent to the new courthouse, and this town was to have its name changed from Chandler Town to Charles Town.¹⁹

There had been a settlement at Chandler Town—lots laid out and buildings erected—perhaps as early as 1686; but by 1727 the buildings were in ruin or gone and titles uncertain. Therefore, the justices of Charles County appointed a commission to choose three acres within the town, to have them surveyed, and to fix a fair price. This work was completed December 20, 1727, the price set at 2,000 pounds of tobacco.²⁰ The same commission then agreed with Robert Hanson and Joshua Doyne to build a courthouse and prison, stocks and pillory for 122,000 pounds of tobacco. The courthouse was to be built according to specifications which the contractors had previously filed with Colonel John Fendall.²¹ Unfortunately, these specifications appear to be lost, and lacking any other evidence, we are totally without knowledge of the structure. Because of the cost, however, we may assume it was of brick. The exact date on which it was completed is known because of a note in the court proceedings of August 11, 1730:

The Court adjourns til tomorrow morning Eight oclock to meet at the new Court house in Charles Town.²²

Shortly thereafter, April 26, 1731, the old courthouse and its site were sold to James Maddock and he sold them the next day for three hundred pounds of tobacco less than he had paid to John Hanson, but reserving the right to the timber and other materials salvaged from the courthouse.²³

Second Courthouse at Charles Town-Port Tobacco

In time, the building of 1727-1730 became old and inadequate. The effort to replace it began, curiously enough, with a demand for a new jail. In 1811, an act was passed to permit the Levy Court of Charles County to raise \$2,000 for this purpose.²⁴

Four years later the special commissioners who had been appointed to build the jail were authorized to levy an additional \$3,000 in the same manner and to devote the entire sum to the building of a new courthouse at Charles Town, and nothing further is said about the jail.²⁵ But this courthouse, following the example of all public buildings, could not be finished

¹⁸ Ch. 11, Acts of 1727.

¹⁹ Ch. 6, Acts of 1729.

²⁰ *Court Proceedings, Liber Q No. 2, 59-61, Ms.*

²¹ *Ibid.*, 61.

²² *Ibid.*, 410.

²³ *Ibid.*, *Liber M No. 2, 249-50, Ms.*

²⁴ Ch. 55.

²⁵ Ch. 126, Acts of 1815.