

Whether there had been an interruption of the court proceedings before this action of the Council is not known. We can be sure, however, that the court met only ten days later and that the place of meeting was Annapolis, for on July 23, the Council, which was then meeting in "Ann Arundel," notes the following example of the exercise of one of the Governor's prerogatives, namely, to sit as a judge in the county courts:

This morneing was sworne Of his Lordship Councell Mr Edward Lloyd and from the Councell went to assist the Governor at the County Court.⁶

From evidence of the same kind we learn that the court was still meeting in Annapolis or "Severne" in November 1661.⁷

First Courthouse at The Ridge

Annapolis seems to have continued as the seat of justice until well into the next decade, when The Ridge for a brief moment became second only to St. Mary's City as a center of governmental activity of all kind. In 1679/80, for example, this little hamlet which lay a few miles south of South River, near the present post office of Butlers, was host to meetings of the General Assembly and to the Council. There is also substantial evidence in the records of the Provincial Court that the county court met there. One example will suffice:

Att a County Court of the Right Hono^{bl} Charles Calvert held att the Ridge in Anne Arundell County on the Ninth day of March in the ffourth year of his Lordships Dominion and Annoq. Domini 1679/80. . . .⁸

The county court meetings at The Ridge were held until late in 1683 at the inn kept by John Larkin, while the Council met for at least part of the time in the house of Colonel Thomas Tailor. In the meanwhile, the building of a permanent courthouse, the first in the county, was undertaken. On September 17, 1681, a "Petition of Ann Arundell County" was before the General Assembly which set forth: "that they had Expended a great Deale of Tobacco for Building a Court house which had not been performed by the Undertakers, . . ."⁹

Some solution to the problem was apparently reached, for the courthouse seems to have been completed and put in use. It looks very much like this courthouse was still in use on October 2, 1683, for on that day the clerk of the Upper House notes that, "The Members of the Lower house were called to the Upper house being the Room over the Court Room where his lordship the Lord Proprietary Declares to them. . . ."¹⁰ It seems entirely unlikely that a small country inn would have two meeting rooms. In any case, if this was the courthouse, it had only about a day of life left, for on October 4, 1683:

John Larkin and Richard Broughton sent for by the Doorkeeper to appear before this house about the Court house here in Ann Arundell County which fell Down They Appeared and Ordered that the Clerk of the said County Capt Hauslop bring before this house the Agreement (or the Record of it) made about Building the same . . .¹¹

It has not been possible to follow the peregrinations of the court for a few years following 1683, but since the Governor and Council continued to meet at The Ridge and at Mr. Larkin's or Colonel Tailor's through 1685, it is a fair assumption that the Anne Arundel County Court met at the same place and at the same hostelrys.

Courthouse at Londontown

We are on sure ground again when we arrive at the year 1689. During that year and for a few years thereafter the court met at Londontown which was then enjoying a minor real

⁶ *Ibid.*, 352.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 456.

⁸ *Provincial Court Judgments, W. C., Part 1, 262, Ms., Hall of Records.* Unless otherwise noted, reference to *Ms.* means the manuscript is located in the Hall of Records.

⁹ *Arch. of Md.*, VII, 186.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 447.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 449.